

‘Responsible Nurturing’: Asian Hindu Mothers’

Perception of Parenting in Britain

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By

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ABSTRACT

‘Responsible Nurturing’: Asian Hindu Mothers’ Perception of Parenting in Britain

By Sara Carr

There is a dearth of research on aspects of child rearing and parent-child relationships in Asian families living in Britain. The literature indicates that there are variations in child-rearing practices that are informed by values and socialisation goals. Models of parenting provide frameworks for understanding parenting in different cultures, however, none specifically relate to Asian parenting in Britain. The effect of ethnic minority status on parenting and the acculturation process are important influential factors. Discovering these important aspects of parenting is a prerequisite for the development of culturally appropriate standardised measurement tools, which are lacking at present.

This study explored Asian Hindu mothers’ views regarding child-rearing practices and socialisation goals in an attempt to understand parenting in a cultural context. Grounded theory method was employed to structure and analyse the interview data, in order to generate a conceptual framework that accounted for this process.

The findings generated a core theme, which encapsulated the mothers’ perception of parenting, in terms of ‘responsible nurturing’. This relates to the mother’s responsibility in preparing the child for life. A process was identified in which perceived threats work to undermine the mother’s confidence in her role and also affect the course of the preparation for life. Balancing strategies, such as cultural propagation and seeking help, are employed by the mother in order to set the process of preparation for life back on course. The mother first weighs up the intervening factors that act to hinder or facilitate the use of balancing. These factors include the mother’s sense of cultural belonging, family trustworthiness and child characteristics. This study has clinical implications for the way in which parenting in Asian Hindu families is understood and identifies an active parenting model which may be used to guide assessment and intervention with Asian families who experience parenting difficulties. These findings are placed in a cultural context and are related to the literature on ethnic minority parenting,

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this section is to introduce this research area and track the process by which the current study and methodology were chosen. Despite a large Asian population in Britain, there is a dearth of research on aspects of child rearing and parent child relationships in British Asian culture. This account will suggest that the low representation of Asian children and families in child mental health services may be related in part to their use of culturally inappropriate child socio-emotional development and parenting models. The literature indicates that there are variations in child rearing practices in different cultures that are informed by different values and socialisation goals. There are several theories of socio-emotional development, including attachment theory, which may not be directly applicable to Asian families due to differing child rearing practices and values. Models of parenting provide frameworks for understanding parenting in European-American cultures but they do not specifically relate to Asian cultures. The effect of ethnic minority status on parenting in ethnic minority groups is also considered along with the impact of the acculturation process. The research conducted with British Asian women is reviewed and demonstrates that research is sparse in this area. It will be suggested that discovering the important aspects of child rearing and socialisation goals is a prerequisite for the development of standardised assessment tools to measure parent-child relationships instead of making comparisons to white European-American norms. A qualitative methodology was employed, as there are currently no appropriate standardised measures in existence to investigate this area adequately. The details of this brief summary are explored and elaborated in the following section.

1.1 Terminology

A description of the terminology used in this study is outlined below in order to provide clarity of understanding. However, it is recognised that meanings of the concepts of race, culture and ethnicity are diverse and these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature. This study has adopted the definitions and uses described by Fernando (1995). The word 'culture' refers to a way of life, including, patterns of behaviour, beliefs, values and language, which is dynamic and responsive to other cultures. The concept of race is a social entity, which implies that skin colour and ancestry determine the way in which people

are treated. A sense of belonging based on both culture and race is encompassed by the term 'ethnicity'. The term 'black' is commonly used in a political sense to refer to people who are united in their past and present experiences of exploitation by 'white people' (Fernando, 1995).

The terms 'Western' and 'Eastern' are often used to describe differences in values in the cross-cultural literature. 'Western' refers to the dominant culture of the industrialised or developed countries of Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand whose parenting attitudes and practices are considered more similar to each other and more different from the rest of the world (Campion, 1995). The term 'Eastern' encompasses 'Asian' aspects of life and these terms are often used interchangeably in the literature (e.g. Dwivedi, 1996). They may also relate to underdeveloped countries.

People who would describe their ethnic identity as Asian may have ancestors from the Indian subcontinent, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and, also from Africa, such as Kenya and Uganda, whose ancestors emigrated from South Asia. Hence, the term 'Asian' is all encompassing and includes a heterogeneous group, with different cultures and religions, including Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Although the term Asian is defined geographically, it also relates to a cultural heritage and sense of identity that is much more than a country of origin.

1.2 The Asian Population

Britain is a multi-ethnic society. There is a large and growing ethnic minority population. Data from the 1991 census (the first census to include data on ethnicity) indicates that there is now in excess of 3 million people of ethnic minority origin living in Britain, representing 5.9 per cent of the population. 2.7 per cent of the population are South Asian, including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (Mason, 1995). The East Midlands has an ethnic minority population of 4.8 per cent. Leicester's ethnic minority population is 28.5 per cent of the total population of which 22.3 per cent is Indian (Mason, 1995). Leicester also has a large proportion of people of East African Asian origin, following the expulsions triggered by Idi Amin (Marett, 1989).

1.3 Child Mental Health Services and Psychological Problems in Asian Children

There is evidence indicating that even in areas with large Asian populations, Asian children and families are under-represented in child psychiatric services (Vyas, 1991). Stern et al (1990) discovered that despite this ethnic group making up 33 per cent of school age children, only 12 per cent of referrals were of Asian origin. This has also been the experience in Leicestershire (Andrews, 1991). Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain this phenomena including a wider range of behaviours being acceptable to Asian parents (Kallarackal & Herbert, 1976); lower rates of disturbance due to good psychological adjustment (Cochrane & Stopes-Roe, 1977); and, the existence of a range of factors that prevent the accessing of services, such as cultural norms of family support or communication difficulties (Deyo & Inui, 1980). However, many of these prevalence studies are methodologically flawed and there are few reliable epidemiological studies. For example, Kallarackal and Herbert (1976) used an assessment procedure, which had not been validated on Asian families. Thus, it's appropriateness for recently emigrated Gujarati speaking Asian families is questionable. Furthermore, European methods for assessment and case identification were employed in these studies that may not be appropriate in the Asian community.

Stern et al (1990) conducted a retrospective study of case-note analysis comparing Asian and non-Asian referrals in a London borough and suggested that under-representation was partly due to cultural differences concerning acceptability of children's behaviour. They concluded that the needs of the Asian population were being satisfactorily met and that cultural factors did not influence outcome. However, referrers may have selectively referred those whom they felt would engage in the service. This suggestion was realised in Andrew's (1991) study in Leicester who discovered that referrers, mainly G.P.s, felt that child mental health services were inappropriate for Asian families. However, there was no indication of the ethnicity of the GP and how this may have influenced the outcome.

Hillier et al (1994) evaluated Bangladeshi parents' satisfaction with child psychiatric services using semi-structured interviews. Dissatisfaction was related to a lack of congruence between the parents and therapist regarding the understanding of the problem and expectations for treatment (Hillier et al, 1994). Although, the importance of congruence for

successful therapeutic outcome has been widely documented in studies with non-ethnic minority groups in Britain (Gowers and Kushlick, 1992), congruence between therapists and clients from different cultural backgrounds may be impeded by misunderstanding of, and insensitivity to, beliefs and values, in addition to a lack of social courtesies and common language. The theories and models used to understand and inform interventions within child and adolescent mental health services are based on white Anglo-American values. Thus, these intrinsically may prevent congruence forming between the therapist and client. Vyas (1991) suggests that culturally appropriate interventions are more important than matching the ethnicity of therapist and patient.

Damle (1989) reported that ethnic minority families experience negative attitudes towards their culture, language, and religion and are stereotyped by members of the caring professions. Beliappa (1991) conducted semi-structured interviews with 200 randomly selected Indians representing each of the language groups of Asians derived from an electoral register. The study revealed that barriers to using available services included stereotypical views and the failure to consider specific family dynamics, belief systems and cultural constraints. A third of the participants expressed concerns regarding their children's upbringing and education in addition to the British values to which they were exposed. Experiences of isolation and racism were common and were reported to cause distress. (Beliappa, 1991).

Newth's (1986) review of emotional and behavioural disorders in children of Asian immigrants in Britain highlighted the lack of empirical research in this area. However, research has not been forthcoming. There are a few studies of child mental health problems in Asian children both in Asian countries and in Britain. Psychiatric disorders, including enuresis and behaviour problems, were discovered at a rate of 6.7 to 8.2 per cent in a south Indian city in a survey of 747 children between the ages of 4 and 12 (Verghese and Beig, 1974). However, this also included learning disability. Lal & Sethi (1977) found that 11 per cent of 272 children under the age of 13 in an urban community in north India, suffered from psychological disorders. These rates appear to indicate similar rates to those found in non-ethnic minority children in Britain (Offord, 1990).

The need to consider cultural factors in the assessment and treatment of Asian children and

their families is a consistent theme in the literature (Dwivedi, 1993; Lau, 1984; Maitra, 1995). However, there has been little theoretical reformulation or modification of developmental and intervention models to incorporate cultural differences in values and child rearing.

1.4 Child-Rearing Practices and Parenting

Anthropological studies have revealed the extent of different child rearing practices across the world (Minturn & Lambert, 1964). There has been some cross-cultural research aimed at identifying differences and attempts to establish the consequent effects on parenting. Ogbu (1981) described child rearing, as the process by which parents and other caregivers transmit, and by which children acquire, the skills or competencies required by their social, economic, and future adult tasks and roles. The nature of these functional competencies determines the techniques parents employ to raise children and also how these children gain specific attributes as they grow older (Ogbu, 1981).

According to Ogbu's (1981) cultural ecology perspective, child-rearing practices form a part of a culturally organised system, which evolves through generations of collective experiences in tasks designed to meet environmental demands. Child-rearing practices are a part of a people's cultural knowledge of their adult tasks, of essential skills, and of the methods of transmitting these skills to succeeding generations. These competencies are based on shared success systems, which determine the goals and means of achieving a successful status. Thus, they are considered necessary for survival and success and are culture specific.

The literature on child rearing suggests that practices and competencies vary among different societies and provide a survival mechanism that enable societies to perpetuate. For example, historically, agrarian societies have relied on values of socio-centricity whereas hunter-gatherer societies have reinforced egocentric values (Ambert, 1992). Although, the nature of these different societies have changed to some degree, their philosophies and values still underpin many of the values of modern societies. This division is apparent between Westernised and developing countries. However, cultures are dynamic and there is much evidence to suggest that these values change and are influenced by the political and

economic situation (Garcia Coll et al, 1995). Exposure to the values of other cultures, often transmitted via the media, is also influential. Ogbu (1981) developed a cultural-ecological model in response to the growth of research advocating the universal model of child development and the practice of using white middle class child-rearing practices and values as measuring standards.

1.4.1 Western Child Rearing

Western child rearing is influenced by the theories and models developed from academic research and study over the past century. The concept of the child and child rearing changed according to the predominant theories of social and emotional development at the time. The reconstruction of childhood in terms of respecting the rights of the child, the sentimentalisation of the child and preoccupation with the 'inner world of the child', followed industrialisation and children's freedom from the labour market. These views have dominated Western thinking about children. One of the most influential theories of socio-emotional development is Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory. Child services and day care provision have been informed by this theory in an effort to promote the optimal psychological health of children. It is also widely used by clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals to understand and intervene in child and family psychological difficulties. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

Western cultures, like hunter-gatherer societies, have been regarded as 'egocentric' compared to more 'sociocentric' Eastern cultures (Strathern, 1992 cited by Dwivedi, 1993). Western cultures advocate separateness, individuality and autonomy within relationships and Western values include individualism, self-sufficiency, independence and free emotional expression (Dwivedi, 1993). Child-rearing practices are aimed at facilitating the child to achieve these socialisation goals or desired qualities, and parents encourage independence as soon as possible as dependence is viewed as an undesirable state, attracting stigma.

There is very little research on black families and child rearing in Britain. However, there is an abundance of literature examining child rearing and parenting in other ethnic groups in the U.S.A., including African American, South East Asian and Hispanic families. This suggests that there appears to be more interest and acceptance of diversity in the U.S.A. than in Britain.

1.4.2 South East Asian Child Rearing - U.S.A.

There have been several studies comparing child rearing in South East Asian and white Caucasian families in the U.S.A.. Kelley and Tseng (1992) found differences between Chinese-American and Caucasian-American mothers of children aged three to eight in terms of parenting practices and child rearing goals using two questionnaires: the Parenting Dimensions Inventory (Slater & Power, 1987 cited in Kelley & Tseng, 1992) and the Parenting Goals Questionnaire (Moll, 1987 cited in Kelley & Tseng, 1992). Although similar goals were discovered, they found that these were achieved through the use of different parenting methods. In Chinese culture socialisation is based on the moralistic stance of Confucianism (Ekblad, 1986). Chinese parents believe the child is not responsible for its own actions until the age of three and they are lenient until then. Once the child reaches 'the age of understanding' strict discipline is imposed. The child is taught mutual dependence and self-discipline. Kelley & Tseng (1992) discovered that Chinese mothers were more likely to use a degree of physical control over their children and were more restrictive. American mothers were found to be more concerned with the child's psychological needs whereas Chinese mothers expressed more concerns about the physical needs of their children. However, they included mothers at different stages of the acculturation process and there was no recognition of the effect of socio-economic or ethnic minority status. Furthermore, the measures used were not standardised on this population.

1.4.3 Asian Child Rearing

There is very little empirical research in Britain investigating Asian child-rearing practices and parent-child relationships. However, the literature that is available is dominated by personal reflections and anthropological studies (e.g. Minturn & Lambert, 1964). Although comparisons are made between Eastern or Asian and Western values and practices, there are few objective empirical studies. As a consequence the literature is laden with assumptions and generalisations.

Influential commentaries on Asian values, customs and practices have incorporated psychological frameworks. Kakar's (1981) psychoanalytical interpretation of Indian society has been influential and is widely quoted in the cultural literature on child rearing. Although

this has provided insights into Western and Eastern differences, it is based on psychoanalysis, a framework developed from Western values.

Asian or Eastern cultures construe the person as part of the 'embedded interconnectedness of relationships' (Strathern, 1992 cited in Dwivedi, 1993), emphasising interdependence as opposed to independence (Roland, 1980). According to Dwivedi (1993), Asian parents strive to provide an atmosphere in which the parents are a model of dependability.

Indulgence, prolonged babyhood, physical closeness, including common sleeping arrangements, and immediate gratification of physical and emotional needs are all common child-rearing practices, that are intended to create a strong bond and a sense of security. Separation experiences in infants and young children are avoided as they are considered traumatic and the caretaker is always in close proximity to the child.

The literature suggests that as the child matures the expectations of children in Eastern cultures changes and the child is taught increased sensitivity to others' feelings whilst controlling the expression of his/her own emotions. Parenting styles are based on obedience and the child is taught to control his/her impulses, and respect and adhere to external controls (Bhate & Bhate, 1996). Dwivedi (1993) suggested that the value placed on the extended family is a manifestation of the interconnectedness of relationships. Extended or joint families involve generations living together in one household, such as a son, his wife and his parents and his brothers' families. Although this is a declining tradition, historically in India most children were reared in extended families which maintained the cultural ideal of filial loyalty through sharing accommodation and daily life activities. However, there is recognition that joint or extended families are less common in urban areas in India due to accommodation pressures and the changing economic and socio-political context. This is apparent in Britain, where there are accommodation restrictions as well as changing values in response to Western culture (Modood et al, 1994).

In the traditional extended family all family members, particularly the women, play a part in child rearing. Bhate & Bhate (1996) suggest that the child develops close emotional bonds with other relatives involved with the caretaking, without lessening the one with the mother. In terms of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980) they suggest that the child develops differential attachments to various family members. This enables the child to recognise

his/her place in the family hierarchy whilst forming an expectation that his/her needs will be fulfilled. Kakar (1981) describes the hierarchical family relationship structure with the superior, head of the family, as characterised by a nurturing role whilst subordinates are respectful and compliant, with a mutual sense of personal attachment. The concept of intergenerational reciprocity, whereby the children go on to care for dependent elder parents, is central to the value of dependability (Dwivedi, 1993). Thus, the various cultural components such as interdependence, extended family life and dependability mutually support each other.

Eastern and Western views of the self are different and underpin many of the values held by those societies. Bharati (1985) examined constructions of the 'self' within Hindu ideology and suggested that notions of the self had a metaphysical origin as opposed to Western notions of the self which were based on ancient Greece and Judaeo-Christian doctrines of the soul as a self conscious entity. There are adequate accounts of the self in different cultures in Marsella et al (1985).

Beliefs regarding the nature of childhood differ across cultures. The innocence of all children is central to Islamic beliefs on childhood with the emphasis on obedience and the role of parents to teach them using sensory rewards and punishments (Gil'adi, 1992). It is also acknowledged that there is a wide range of what are considered as developmentally or age-appropriate behaviours that may differ across cultures. For example, in India the practice of young children sharing the parents' bed is widespread (Kumar, 1992) whereas this is less common in Westernised countries. Weaning is begun earlier in Westernised countries whereas breast-feeding is more common and prolonged in Asian cultures (Gatrad, 1994). However, particularly in Westernised countries, these practices have changed over time in response to fashions and trends. Thus, these cultural values affect child-rearing practices that interact to influence personality and socio-emotional development.

1.5 Asian Child Rearing in Britain

Dwivedi (1996) suggests that cultural ideals differ from actual reality, although they are influential. He warns that the influence of other cultures and their media impair the transmission of traditional values, even within societies in which they originated.

Transmission to ethnic minority children growing up in the West is impeded as these values are undermined by the emphasis on autonomy and independence in Western culture, as Eastern values are devalued. Asian families are often criticised for being too self-contained and not being prepared to adjust to the British way of life (Littlewood and Lipsedge, 1989). Ethnic minority cultures are often described in a way that makes them seem bizarre or imply that their problems are somehow caused by the nature of their culture (Mares et al, 1985).

As Maitra & Miller (1996) suggest that "the relationship between the parent and child is based on a mesh of beliefs about the nature of parents and parenting, the nature of children and childhood, and are transmuted by experiences such as immigration, economic mobility, exposure to White (British) culture, the nuclearization of family units that had been 'joint', the movement of women into the public sphere, or by marrying into another cultural group" (p. 117).

There is little known as to the extent that traditional Asian values are adhered to by Asians living in and born in Britain and the influence of values and practices advocated by dominant, Western culture. There is some evidence that certain practices are not as common in Britain, such as extended family living (Modood et al, 1994). It is probable that there are many different variations, from people who have continued to practice and transmit cultural values and those who have adopted more Western ideals and practices. There is a danger of making global assumptions, as the Asian population is by no means homogeneous. Indeed, as Johnson (1985) warns, generalisations stressing differences between East and West, gloss over diversity within both traditions themselves, over different eras, and how they are individually experienced. The literature on the values and practices of British Asians are scarce, relying on personal and professional views, which are often based on clinical experience.

1.5.1 Empirical Research on British and Asian Values of Family Relationships

Research has been conducted to investigate the generation differences in Asian families of attitudes and values, in order to evaluate the impact of British culture. This has also empirically measured values pertaining to both cultures. Stopes-Roe & Cochrane (e.g. 1990) have conducted much research in comparing Asian and British cultures, especially in terms of the family. A study comparing traditionalism in the family, found that older

generation Asians, born in the country of origin, had more traditional views of family life in terms of respect, obedience and obligation to the family, compared to British families of low socio-economic status according to the Index of Traditionalism (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1989). Asian families displayed generation differences with young people (aged 18-21 years and resident in Britain for at least 10 years) being less traditional than their parents compared to the British sample. This is explained in terms of the absence of the hierarchical structure of the extended family that was disintegrated on migration, resulting in the young people not having models for the hierarchical system rather than purely due to the influence of British culture (Holm, 1984). Most British families, however, advocated a non-traditional attitude with emphasis on the importance of individuality and personal responsibility and entitlement to personal fulfilment.

In a study evaluating child rearing values using Kohn's (1969 cited by Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990) values in child rearing, Stopes-Roe and Cochrane (1990) made comparisons on the basis of ethnicity and generation. Overall, Asians were found to value conformity more and self-direction less than the British. This effect was more pronounced in the older than the younger generation. Stopes-Roe & Cochrane (1990) suggested that this was due to the older generation being more traditionally oriented and more likely to value obedience and respect than individuality and independence. For young people a greater change in their own customs and personal identities involved increased choice of self-direction qualities, related to their assimilation and contact with British customs and identity, through schooling and shared activities with young British people. Thus, traditionalism appeared to be the crucial factor influencing conformist qualities.

The empirical evidence therefore suggests that child-rearing values differ between Asian and British cultures which reinforces the existing anthropological and descriptive literature. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the way in which British culture has influenced young Asian people's values. However, there is a dearth of research into the views and experiences of British born people of Asian ethnic identity, in terms of the effects of acculturation or biculturalism. The existing studies have explored the views of Asian parents on aspects of their relationship with their adult offspring in terms of traditional values. However, there has been no specific research into the Asian parents' views of their relationship with their young children and child-rearing expectations and practices.

This gap has become increasingly evident and some researchers have begun to consider British Asian families and the impact of living with two cultures in the context of child rearing. Woollett and her colleagues (e.g. 1994) have embarked on some pioneering work researching Asian women's experiences of family life in Britain. This has mainly involved interviewing women about their views and experiences about family size (Woollett et al, 1991), the support of relatives at childbirth (Woollett et al, 1990), and ethnic identity (Woollett et al, 1994).

Woollett et al (1994) analysed Asian women's accounts of their childcare and rearing experiences in relation to their ethnicity and ethnic identity. They discovered that women's experiences differed according to how traditional they perceived themselves to be, which was influenced by the length of time spent in Britain. It has been suggested that the level of acculturation is a crucial aspect the extent to which the host culture's values are embraced by the person (Vyas, 1991). Thus, this is an important aspect to consider when researching child-rearing practices and values.

Qualitative analysis of interviews revealed that women's accounts varied greatly. It appeared that women who had spent the majority of their adult life in Britain tended to rely more on the support of husbands as opposed to women relatives for support at childbirth (Woollett et al, 1990) and are more likely to plan a longer gap between children (Woollett et al, 1991) than those who have spent less time in Britain. Woollett and Dosanjh-Matwala (1990) suggest that expectations about childbirth may be changing rapidly and traditional practices in the subcontinent may not always be a reliable guide to current ideas, especially for women brought up in the UK. However, these studies reported that there was much variation and that it was difficult to identify general trends.

These studies involved a heterogeneous group of Asian women, who differed in religion, time spent in Britain and how traditional they considered themselves to be. Although the length of time in Britain was recognised an important factor, the effect of acculturation was not explored in any structured way. A comparison group of non-Asian women included both Black-African and Black-Caribbean women whose own cultural heritage was not acknowledged in this work. However, the interviews that were analysed qualitatively were

only conducted with Asian women so there is no directly comparable data. Although these studies used some qualitative analysis they did not specify the procedures which were employed so it may not be directly replicable. Themes of the content of the interviews were reported but the findings were not conceptualised to enable the generation of theory. Furthermore, the findings were not related to existing models or theories. This research was also conducted with a heterogeneous group of Asian women. There are no studies that investigate more homogenous groups, such as including only those belonging to a particular religion, such as Hinduism.

1.6 Models of Parent-Child Relationships and Parenting

There are a number of gaps or omissions in current approaches to parenting and parent-child relationships. Mainstream theoretical and conceptual frameworks around children and parenting have tended to be based on and evaluated with white and middle-class families. These findings are then generalised and assumed to be applicable to all families (Phoenix and Woollett, 1991). Although there has been some research focussing on ethnicity and culture, this has neglected women's experiences as mothers bringing up children. Most research relies on stereotypical notions (Marshall and Woollett, 1997). Furthermore ethnic minority families only tend to be the focus of research when 'abnormal' family structures and processes are being investigated (Phoenix, 1990).

The paucity of empirical research on child socialisation and parenting behaviour within and across culturally diverse groups, renders it necessary to rely mostly on broad theoretical concepts of parenting. These are often based on a universal theory of child development.

1.6.1 Attachment Theory

The main theory examining the parent-child relationship and its impact on socio-emotional development is Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory. Attachment is a central feature of the developing relationship between the child and primary caretakers, usually the mother, and serves as a biological function of survival. The quality of the care provided by the primary caretaker is viewed to be influential in the socio-emotional development of the infant and child and is predictive of later mental health functioning or psychopathology (Bowlby, 1973). The quality of care or attachment is determined by the caretaker's ability to provide

a secure base from which the child is encouraged to explore his/her surroundings. The role of the attachment figure or parent is to be consistently available to the child, responsive to his/her needs and sensitive to the child's individuality. This is intended to promote security and encourage independence in the child. Attachment is differentiated from 'dependency' as it is not considered to be an immature phase, but rather a mechanism that enables mature socio-emotional functioning (Sroufe et al, 1983).

Bowlby (1969) postulated that a major function of proximity seeking is protection. Attachment behaviours, such as crying, clinging and reaching, serve to mediate the infant's proximity to the primary caretaker or attachment figure. Exploration and attachment systems have been the subject of most research. These systems are complementary and mutually inhibitory. Thus, the child's exploration of his/her environment is fostered by the knowledge that the attachment figure would be available, accessible, and appropriately responsive to the attachment behaviours should he/she feel threatened or unsafe.

Ainsworth et al (1978) further developed attachment theory with the introduction of a standardised laboratory procedure. She suggested that the display of attachment behaviours is sensitive to contextual variants, which may affect the infant's sense of security, such as familiarity, preceding events, the infant's mood and developmental level. The infant develops a stable representation of the attachment figure's general availability and responsiveness despite these factors, and this is hypothesised to underlie individual differences in attachment behaviour (Waters, 1978). This attachment relationship has been studied over the past few decades using a measure devised by Ainsworth et al (1978) known as the Strange Situation. This examines the amount and quality of contact with the mother and the child's exploration of the environment. The child was classified into one of the following groups: secure or 'normal' attachment, anxious insecure, or ambivalent insecure. The latter two classifications were both considered indicative of 'abnormal' attachment. A secure attachment, based on appropriate independence, is deemed necessary for optimal socio-emotional functioning.

The central tenets of attachment theory have received much support from empirical research (Belsky & Cassidy, 1994). The Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al, 1978) has been applied mainly to one year olds, and has been revised for use with pre-school children (Greenberg et

al, 1990). Other procedures include the use of representational devices to measure attachment, such as the Separation Anxiety Test with older children (Shouldice & Stevenson-Hinde, 1992; Wright et al, 1995) and the Adult Attachment Interview with adults (George et al, 1984 cited by Crowell & Feldman, 1991). Thus, the development of the attachment relationship in infancy and childhood has implications for adult socio-emotional functioning. Bowlby (1980) explained this connection through internal working models or representations of the self and others, which are developed in childhood and are used to predict and inform relationships across the lifecycle. A mother's maternal role with her children is informed by her own caretaking experiences when she learnt the role of caretaker. This is described in the literature as the transmission of intergenerational patterns of attachment (Crowell & Feldman, 1988).

1.6.2 Cross-cultural Studies of Attachment Theory

Research findings indicated that attachment classifications were discovered to occur in different proportions in other countries and cultures than had been demonstrated in the U.S.A.. Although the secure classification was modal, other classifications differed. For example, Type A (anxious-avoidant) was more prevalent in Western European countries, such as Germany (Grossmann et al, 1985) whereas group C (anxious-resistant) were more common in Israel (Sagi, et al, 1985) and Japan (Miyake et al, 1985). Studies of African-American infants also reported a high proportion of anxious-avoidant infants (Hansen, 1980 cited by Jackson, 1993). Furthermore, substantial variation has been demonstrated among infants from differing regional and socio-economic populations within the same country (Van IJzendoorn & Kroonberg, 1988).

These findings challenged the notion that attachment theory was universally applicable.

Several cross-cultural attachment researchers have proposed that although a universal repertoire of attachment behaviours may exist among infants across cultures, the selection, shaping and interpretation of these over time appear to be culturally patterned (Bretherton & Waters, 1985). Thus, large proportions of children classified as Type A or C may not necessarily be maladaptive in terms of socio-emotional functioning.

These differences in attachment classifications were proposed to be a consequence of differing child-rearing practices, which are informed by culturally construed socialisation

goals and competencies for success and survival. Although, this was recognised as an important influential factor in affecting the attachment classification, little research was undertaken to evaluate and examine this effect in a culturally sensitive and appropriate way.

The Strange Situation was used in all the studies based on the assumption that brief separations and reunions had the same meaning for all children across cultures. However, the perceived stress of the Strange Situation was influenced by caretaking experiences. For example, it has been demonstrated that Japanese infants who rarely experience separation from their mothers perceive the Strange Situation as more stressful than do middle class U.S.A. infants (Takahashi, 1990). This is also similar for kibbutz-reared Israeli infants who have infrequent contact with unfamiliar people (Sagi, 1990). Thus, children experienced the situation differently according to their own caretaking experiences. This suggests that the Strange Situation was not sensitive to culturally different caretaking circumstances and that the 'normative' pattern assigned to U.S.A. was not appropriate.

Thus, the validity of using the Strange Situation in other cultures has been criticised as the infants may not be experiencing comparable situations and hence, it may not actually be measuring the same phenomena. Harwood et al (1995) suggest that modifying the Strange Situation may actually be masking important differences in the meaning of attachment behaviours in different cultures.

In a special issue on cross-cultural research in attachment theory in 'Human Development', several researchers suggested that the cultural context of attachment behaviours are important in their own right (Sagi, 1990). Although the universal importance of the attachment relationship between caretaker and infant has been demonstrated, the role of cultural values and norms has remained largely unexplored and hence unexplained.

Differences in cultural meaning systems and socialisation patterns may account for the observed variation in the distribution of attachment classifications (Van IJzendoorn, 1990). Grossman et al (1985) suggested that the large proportion of Type A attachment in their North German sample may have reflected a cultural preference for early independence training among mothers. The high percentage of Type C infants in a Japanese sample was attributed to aspects of Japanese society that encourage the child's emotional

interdependence on family members, whereby separations from the mother are rare (Miyake et al, 1985). The large proportion of Type A attachment in African-American children was associated with multiple caregiving and the encouragement of sociability at an early age (Jackson, 1993).

Some attachment researchers (Harwood et al, 1995) have suggested that each culture has its own values and goals of socio-emotional functioning, such as interdependence in Japan and independence in Germany. They argued that children's behaviour should be interpreted in the context of the wider socio-cultural setting in addition to parental and socialisation goals. Thus, the distress that was elicited in Japanese children in the Strange Situation may not have been viewed as maladaptive but rather an appropriate response in the context of the valuing of emotional interdependence. This compares to the valuing of autonomy in American children. Thus the meanings awarded to behaviours as opposed to just the relative incidence of specific behaviours is an important consideration. Furthermore, Harwood et al (1995) suggest that it is the meanings given to optimal patterns of attachment behaviour by different cultural groups that is important in gaining an understanding of cultural definitions of social competence, and the ways in which those definitions organise parent-infant interactional routines from infancy onwards.

Although attachment researchers have alluded to the cultural context, there have been few explicit links formulated between attachment and theories of culture. Harwood et al (1995) combined quantitative and discourse analysis methodologies in order to examine socio-cultural differences in the meanings given to desirable and undesirable attachment behaviour among Anglo American and Puerto Rican mothers. The effect of socio-economic background was also investigated. Interviews included questions regarding long-term socialisation goals, desirable and undesirable child behaviour, and desirable and undesirable attachment behaviour. Vignettes of a culturally sensitive Strange Situation, which were based on mothers responses, were then used to evaluate attachment behaviours. Categories were developed from the open-ended questions and were statistically analysed. 'Self-maximisation', similar to independence and achievement, was valued more by Anglo American mothers whereas 'Proper demeanour', similar to respectfulness, was valued more by Puerto Rican mothers. Harwood et al (1995) suggested that these represented central cultural constructs in the meaning systems that determined the interpretation of attachment

behaviours.

Although it is apparent from the literature on culture and child rearing that different cultures and ethnic groups have different valued socialisation goals and corresponding appropriate behaviour, this has only recently begun to influence attachment research. In order for the attachment relationship to be adequately measured in a culture, the socialisation goals and behaviour would need to be defined. Appropriate measures could then be devised within that culture.

1.7 Parenting Models and Culture

Parenting has been the subject of much research and debate. There are several models and perspectives on parenting outlined below which provide some frameworks with which to explore parenting. However, although attachment theory has developed a classification system which is proposed to have provided norms as to the competencies expected in children and the type of parent-child relationship that nurtures this norm, there is a lack of any clear parenting norms by which to compare parenting in most cultures (Gfellner, 1990).

1.7.1 Process Model

Belsky (1984) identified three determinants of parenting infants and young children: (1) parental personality and psychological well being, (2) contextual subsystems of support, and (3) child characteristics. Although the impact of stress and lack of support for mothers was recognised, particularly in relation to maternal depression, there was little consideration of the cultural context. Belsky's (1984) process model of parenting was largely influenced by findings from attachment studies and based on dysfunctional and abusive families. Thus, this model is derived from white norms and although it may have relevance to other cultural groups, there has been little research into the appropriateness or modification required for its application.

1.7.2 The Developmental Niche

Super and Harkness' (1986) developmental niche is a theoretical framework for examining the cultural regulation of the immediate or 'micro-environment' of the child in order to understand the developmental process, including socio-emotional development, and the

acquisition of culture. They described three major subsystems that operate together as a larger system and each of which operates conditionally with other features of the culture. The three components are: (1) the physical and social settings in which the child lives; (2) culturally regulated customs of childcare and child rearing; and (3) the psychology of the caretakers, or parents. These provide the cultural context of child development. They conducted several studies, which investigated the child-rearing environments in various cultural groups, such as the Kipsigs in Kenya (Super & Harkness, 1986), and highlighted cross-cultural differences. This model is widely quoted in the relevant literature, however, few studies use this model in a comprehensive way to inform and structure their research.

1.7.3 Context of Development

Bronfenbrenner (1979) examined human development in terms of the broader context of socialisation. His ecological perspective encompassed the individual with his/her interactions and roles in the immediate setting, such as the family, known as the 'microsystem'. These activities are embedded in the 'mesosystem', which involves connections and interrelations between different settings, such as home and school. This is then encapsulated by the 'exosystem' which refers to the settings in which events occur that affect the person, but they are not active participants, such as parents' work. The 'macrosystem' refers to the consistency within a particular culture in the nature of the other systems and any belief systems or philosophies on which these are based. Thus, Bronfenbrenner advocated the importance of detailed exploration of the environmental context, including ethnicity and culture in order to understand developmental processes that are inadequately researched comparing child rearing across cultures. Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggested that successful parenting might be best achieved through systematic support from the family and community and congruence at these levels of context of development.

1.7.4 Cultural -Ecological Perspective and Ethnic Minority Parenting

Ogbu (1981) suggested that child rearing and socialisation in the family and other settings in childhood and adolescence are geared toward the development of instrumental competencies required for adult economic, political, and social roles. He developed a cultural-ecological model, which examines competence in the context of the cultural imperatives in a given population. This was designed to prevent the measurement of ethnic minority groups' child rearing and children's competencies against white middle class

standards or norms. Ogbu (1981) refers to competence as the ability to perform a culturally specified task. He developed the cultural-ecological model specifically to explore ethnic minority children in U.S.A. and recognised the importance of measuring ethnic minority child development in their respective context. A general theory of child rearing and development emerges from data that is derived from mapping out patterns of child rearing and development of different groups or societies in their respective contexts.

Ogbu (1981) researched various ethnic minority groups in the U.S.A. and concluded that minority status and the communities in which these groups live, such as ghettos, and life experiences, such as unemployment, poor housing conditions and low socio-economic status, have consequently developed socio-emotional competencies and the corresponding child rearing practices that incorporate the effective management of being of minority status as well as the inherited ones from generations and ancestors. This suggests that this is a dynamic process, which is influenced by experiences, to maximise the survival and success of individuals and communities of ethnic minority status. Thus, even though ethnic minority groups may live in the same country and be exposed to similar conditions as indigenous peoples, they may have very different environments, resources and use different strategies to survive in their circumstances.

Ogbu (1981) analysed literature on black ghettos in the U.S.A. and suggested that although socialisation goals, such as power, money and self-esteem, were the same as white middle class goals, the methods by which these could be attained differed. Street economy often results in the involvement of other relatives and friends in rearing children. Child rearing practices are designed to promote functional competencies, such as resourcefulness, self-reliance, mistrust of people in authority and ability to fight back. These are achieved through techniques, such as warmth and affection, establishment of competitive child-adult relationships, inconsistent demands for obedience. These are usually further reinforced by negative school experiences.

Garcia Coll (1990) reviewed studies of various ethnic minority groups in the U.S.A, including African-American, Native American and Cuban families and concluded that there are differences in parent-child interaction, parental behaviours, health care practices and family structure. She acknowledged the confounding effect of socio-economic status and

the impact of acculturation. She concluded, like Ogbu (1981), that these factors affect developmental outcomes that cannot be compared to white middle class norms. This enables ethnic minority parenting to be placed in context, whereby racism and the effects of low socio-economic status effect the parenting process and the way in which differences are perceived and judged.

The combination of ethnic minority status and low socio-economic status and the experiences that these provide, has been recognised as risk factors to psychiatric disturbance in children in Britain (Rutter et al, 1974 cited in Offord, 1990). There has been no research examining or directly applying the above model with ethnic minority groups in Britain.

1.8 Methodological Criticisms and Qualitative Research

The literature on parenting and culture is critical of the trend of employing pre-existing models and frameworks to conceptualise family relationships and child rearing in different cultures, particularly ethnic minority groups. Although some researchers have attempted to redress the balance, the available literature is sparse and lacks explicit theoretical links and the development of new theories or models. This is particularly relevant to ethnic minority groups in Britain. Furthermore, such work has been hindered by the lack of existing parenting models (Gfellner, 1990).

There is a growing literature on the validity of measuring phenomena, particularly relationships and parenting, using measures derived from and standardised on a specific cultural group and applying it to other cultures. Cultural anthropologists and other researchers in this field have criticised cross-cultural attachment research for being overly reliant on evaluative criteria specific to traditional white middle class American culture (LeVine, 1990). This view has been echoed by other researchers in this field, who are sceptical of the validity of applying eurocentric values and measures to other ethnic groups. Berry (1979) differentiated between 'emic' and 'etic' approaches. Emic ones focus on one culture in order to ascertain conceptions of phenomena from the viewpoint of the members of that culture whereas, etic approaches compare many cultures from an external viewpoint and from a fixed analytical framework. He suggests that instruments should be proved valid for a specific culture in order for comparisons to be made with other cultures.

The values, beliefs and practices of the European-American culture have been translated into norms for parenting behaviours and optimal child socio-emotional functioning (Garcia Coll et al, 1995). Consequently, ethnic minorities have often been viewed as deficient or defective in terms of their parenting as compared to white middle class standards. Forehand & Kotchick (1996) expressed their concern regarding the impact of this on parent training programmes and the lack of the acknowledgement of cultural and socio-political influences on parenting behaviour.

There has been much recent interest in the influence of values in research. This has included general research or 'scientific' values of positivist, empirical study (Howard, 1985; Schwartz, 1990) and also the researchers own values (Stanfield, 1994). These values are usually implicit in research but it has been suggested that they have a confounding effect on the data obtained, as it is biased towards the values of the researcher and neglects those of the subject. This appears to be particularly important in terms of cross-cultural research, as outlined earlier. Qualitative research methods have been advocated as methodologies that overcome these difficulties as they make explicit the values of the researcher in an attempt to understand and construct the meaning of the research phenomenon for the participant rather than imposing a pre-existing, value laden structure. Some researchers, however, have criticised this and call for the development of qualitative methods that are specific to cultures (Stanfield, 1994).

1.9 Research Focus and Questions

There are numerous myths stemming from the literature regarding Asian parenting in Britain. Although it is often recognised that there are differences, the extent of these is unknown for women of Asian ethnic origin who were either born or brought up in Britain. This requires exploration as assumptions of either traditional child-rearing practices or alternatively the adoption of Westernised practices and values may be erroneous. A framework is needed for assessing 'normal' behaviours that includes normal variations within the traditional culture, effects of migration, and subsequent cultural transition.

The research literature on Asian child rearing in Britain especially in relation to socialisation goals and the impact of acculturation and biculturalism is sparse. Woollett and colleagues (e.g. 1994) have begun researching this area using qualitative methods in order to discover these aspects from those experiencing this dynamic culture first hand. There is a relatively high representation of Asian families in Leicester and it was considered important to bring the experiences of parenting in non-white families, specifically Asian families to the forefront of this research and to investigate women's accounts within theorising about good parenting and normal development.

The aim of this research was to challenge oversimplified notions around the relation between child-rearing practices and ethnicity and assumptions of Asian families as homogenous with the same values and needs (Woollett et al, 1994 cited in Marshall and Woollett, 1997). The existing studies include heterogeneous groups of Asian women, of different religions and whose ancestors originated from a variety of regions. The aim of this research is to involve a more specific, homogenous group to limit the overgeneralisations that are often made when Asian families are grouped together and differences are acknowledged, but not explored nor explained. The author's aims reflect those expressed by Salmon (1992 cited by Marshall and Woollett, 1997): "to work for a view which recognises the diversity and complexity of real life, which pays attention to socio-political factors and the cultural constitution of experience, which takes seriously the terms in which people make sense of their lives".

The methodology that may be appropriate to this study requires consideration. As demonstrated in reviews of the literature previously, there are few available measures that can be validly employed as they are based on eurocentric values and standardised on white norms, such as the Strange Situation (Ainsworth, 1978). Alternatively, a qualitative method has been utilised to guide the collection and analysis of the data in this research study for several reasons. Firstly, qualitative methodologies facilitate the construction of the meaning of phenomena for individuals, where imposing existing frameworks and models may be inappropriate and insufficient in improving and extending the knowledge base and understanding of an area of interest. Secondly, as a consequence of the sparse research in this area, there is a dearth of suitable existing procedures to measure this relationship. Indeed there is very little research investigating the views of parents or mothers about child

rearing and socialisation goals in any culture, with most of the research based on objective value laden models and theories. Thirdly, qualitative methodologies enable the views of Asian women to be recognised and valued. This is unusual as both women and ethnic minority groups are under-represented in research literature (Stanfield, 1994).

Dwivedi (1996) suggests that Western European ethnocentric expectations of normality about the family and family interactions are often inappropriately applied to ethnic minority families. It is hoped that the development of a framework for understanding how mothers construe their relationship with their child may enable clinical psychologists to work with families based on a shared understanding, which is crucial to the therapeutic process. Indeed, it may also contribute to the "bringing together of attachment concepts and other formulations of relationships so that each may profit from the contributions of the other". (Rutter, 1995 p. 566)

1.9.1 Research Questions

Thus the aims of this study were to understand and conceptualise a specific group of Hindu Asian mothers' views and experiences about bringing up their children within the context in which they live. The research questions were:

- (1) What child rearing practices and approaches to parenting are used by British Asian Hindu women, in terms of socialisation goals and corresponding behaviour, including both concrete and conceptual information?
- (2) How can the views and experiences of these women be conceptualised?
- (3) What are the implications for attachment theory and other parenting models?

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to introduce and discuss the methods used in this study. It begins with an overview of the use of qualitative research methods in psychological research and then outlines the choice of method, and the rationale for using a qualitative method in this study. The selection criteria and recruitment process of participants are outlined. This is followed by an account of the procedures used for data analysis according to grounded theory. The evolution of this study is also outlined and the process of the research and decision making is explained.

2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

The past decade has seen resurgence in the use of qualitative methods in human and social science research. However, the adoption of such techniques, and research paradigm, within the discipline of psychology has only recently been considered as a viable and respectable option in psychological research. There have been an increasing number of studies published in reputable journals including the British Journal of Psychology (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992) and the British Journal of Clinical Psychology (e.g. Clegg, 1996). The Clinical Psychology Forum have published several articles on, and have devoted an issue to, clinically relevant qualitative research (e.g. Orford, 1995; Henwood et al, 1998).

As 'scientist-practitioners', clinical psychologists have an established research tradition which underpins clinical practice. The very individuality of clinical problems and the meaning of experiences for individuals, suggests that the qualitative methods may bring detailed insight into the variety of meanings of experiences, thoughts and feelings and enable exploration of the extent of variation. Indeed, Stiles (1993) draws a number of parallels between qualitative research and clinical work.

Historically, the use of qualitative approaches has been limited, as an adjunct or pilot to quantitative research, not deemed appropriate in their own right (Henwood and Nicolson, 1995). However, this stance appears to be changing as qualitative methods are gaining increasing recognition for their rigour and value to extending the psychological knowledge base.

Qualitative research methods are based on a naturalistic or contextual paradigm (Henwood and Nicolson, 1995) which suggests that meanings of experience and behaviour are constructed by persons within a personal, social and cultural context. The research process tends to involve the more open-ended and detailed analysis of verbal material in order to arrive at description or meaning from the point of view of the participant rather than that of the researcher. This allows the emergence of conceptual information or theory as opposed to imposing meanings or fitting the participant's experience into preconceived theories.

There appears to be increasing discontent with the more traditional quantitative methods as they neglect the impact of the context and mental processes on human experiences (Gillett, 1995). Charmaz (1995) suggests that qualitative methods, such as grounded theory, may render these aspects of humanness more accessible to psychologists whilst retaining some of the positivistic assumptions of a discoverable external reality. This is similar to traditional quantitative methodology.

There is wide recognition that principles employed to evaluate quantitative research are inappropriate for the assessment of qualitative research due to the contrasting epistemologies from which they are developed. Thus, the aims of the methodologies and the procedures they employ differ widely. There are few guidelines as to the most effective way to assess qualitative research and this debate is ongoing (Woods, 1998). Aspects of evaluation are outlined in the Discussion section of this thesis.

2.2 Choice of Methodology

The Introduction section to this thesis outlined the process by which this study was conceived and demonstrated the dearth of research in this area. This process allowed the evaluation of procedures that had been used to investigate related areas of interest and revealed that there were no available standardised measures that could be employed to investigate how Asian Hindu mothers perceive the mother-child relationship, in terms of cultural values and socialisation goals. The parent-child attachment relationship has been studied using the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al, 1978), however, this was deemed inappropriate for the present study as cross-cultural research suggests that it is less valid for cultures other than Anglo American middle class infants. This is also apparent in other

measures that have only been standardised in one cultural group, such as the Parenting Goals Questionnaire (Moll, 1987 cited by Kelley & Tseng, 1992).

Any of these procedures may limit the investigation to certain aspects of the relationship and not adequately explore and account for the extent of variation that may be found in women's views and experiences. This seemed particularly pertinent in relation to how the women perceived their own ethnicity within the acculturation process. Qualitative methodologies are ideal to explore sensitive topics within their relevant socio-political context, which is important in considering ethnic minority status of people of Asian origin within British society. Research in this area would be severely lacking if it did not adequately consider this context.

The research conducted by Woollett et al (1990) discovered that qualitative techniques were valuable in facilitating the investigation of Asian women's views and experiences and enabled variation in these to be explored in a way that would not be possible if it was limited to using only a quantitative approach (Marshall & Woollett, 1997). Thus, a qualitative methodology was more appropriate to investigate the research questions considering the variation, sensitivity and context of the area.

There are an abundance of different qualitative methodologies that could be employed in this study however, grounded theory was considered to be the most appropriate considering the aims of the research. Discourse analysis focuses solely on language interactions or conversations in order to discover the structure and regularities of language, and to identify the functional relevance of certain communications (Tesch, 1990). This method was not chosen, as it would limit the potential richness of the women's accounts to looking at communication patterns as opposed to examining the content of the participants' views and experiences.

Ethnography involves the active participation of the researcher in the research environment, using observational procedures (Taylor, 1994). This was not deemed appropriate for this study due to time constraints and its limited ability to aid the development of a theoretical understanding of the area. There are numerous anthropological studies examining different

child rearing practices. However, these methods do not contribute to understanding British Asian mothers' perspective of the mother-child relationship.

Action research (Taylor, 1994) was not utilised in this study as it is most appropriately used to investigate specific problems with a view to changing situations. However, the present study is not examining specific problems and is acutely investigating a wide area of interest. Hence, it was felt that this would constrain the fruitful possibilities of a more encompassing approach.

On consideration of the possible qualitative methods available, grounded theory was considered to be the most appropriate for several reasons:

- (a) It conceptualises and generates theory that is relevant and useful, both in the clinical and research context.
- (b) It analyses the content of participants' discourse in order to understand and explain meanings.
- (c) It remains close to participants' words so that it reflects their views rather than imposing a structure.
- (d) It enables the exploration and explanation of the extent and variation of experiences and meanings.
- (e) The participants are not usually represented in research and this method would empower them.
- (f) It has systematic, but flexible, procedures, which provide research rigour comparable to more quantitative methods.
- (g) It is a well developed, and more widely used and respected qualitative method in psychology.

Thus, grounded theory enables the exploration of Asian mothers' views of the mother-child relationship from the perspectives of the participants. The use of systematic data analysis procedures facilitates the development of a conceptual framework for understanding aspects of this relationship.

2.3 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a method of

structuring and organising data collection and analysis with the aim of generating new theory that fits the data and is relevant to the area of study. They provided a set of guidelines for conducting rigorous and systematic qualitative research. These strategies were specified by Strauss and Corbin (1990), whose book has been instrumental in informing the development and data analysis of this study.

Grounded theory is valuable to psychologists as it enables the investigation of psychological processes, such as change and development over time (Charmaz, 1995). It is being used increasingly in psychological research as it facilitates the generation of new theory where existing theories are not adequate or appropriate at explaining psychological phenomena and processes in a meaningful way. Thus, grounded theory provides a set of statements about relationships or theoretical propositions (Tesch, 1990). This aspect is particularly relevant to this study.

The grounded theorist is interested in the meanings, intentions and actions of participants. Thus, the multiplicities and variations of the participants' worlds and experiences are inter-linked to produce a meaningful account. However, grounded theory has been considered one of the more empirical qualitative methods as it has a positivistic approach to systematic and rigorous data analysis (Van Maanen, 1988).

Data is usually gathered using interviews, which follow an open-ended conversational style. This achieves a balance in retaining sight of interesting theoretical issues that may require more direct questioning whilst remaining cautious about the constraints of pre-formulated questioning (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996). The interview transcripts are open-coded by describing the data conceptually (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This provides a language for representing the data. As links are developed between concepts, higher levels of abstraction are used to describe more central features of the data until one or several core categories are generated that can account for the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). There are two specific methods that make grounded theory different to other thematic analyses: constant comparison and theoretical sampling. These facilitate the generation of theory in addition to the development of conceptual and analytical depth (Pidgeon, 1996). These aspects will be discussed in more detail below.

Grounded theory has come under criticism from narrative analysts and postmodernists for fracturing the data and disregarding the totality of the individual's story (Conrad, 1990). However, the strive for conceptualisation as opposed to purely rich description makes grounded theory an attractive option for psychologists who are interested in generating frameworks to understand and explain phenomena.

2.4 Participant Selection and Access

This section details the selection criteria, recruitment process and the characteristics of the participants in this study. It also maps the evolution of the study.

2.4.1 Ethics Approval

This research was approved by Leicester University Ethics Committee. Participants were informed of the research process at the point of recruitment and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. This information was provided in both written and verbal modes of communication (see Appendix 1). Participants were also informed of confidentiality and anonymity issues, and these were reviewed during the data collection process.

2.4.2 Participant Selection Criteria

Participants were initially recruited on the basis that they described their ethnic identity as 'Asian'. This heterogeneous group included Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and those who were born in Britain, India and East Africa. It was acknowledged that the applicability of the findings was limited due to the heterogeneous nature of a small group of six participants. The findings would be more meaningful if the sample of participants was more homogenous. The current study has evolved from the initial study to increase the number of participants who have more similar characteristics. Thus, to increase the specificity (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) the sample was limited to those who considered themselves to be Hindu. It is however, recognised that there can be variations within this group.

The study was conducted in Leicester. The inclusion criteria for the present study follow below:

- (1) Women who described their ethnic identity as Asian, including those whose ancestors originated from India and East Africa.
- (2) Women who were born in Britain or who received some of their early education in Britain.
- (3) Women who were mothers of at least one child aged between 2 and 4.
- (4) The identified child was attending a playgroup or nursery.
- (5) Women who were Hindu.

The literature suggests that there are common child rearing practices and values within the Asian cultures (Cochrane & Stopes-Roe, 1989; Dwivedi, 1996). However, the exclusion of other religious groups other than Hindus was intended to increase the specificity of the study and reduce the variation in child rearing influences. The second inclusion criteria was specified in order to reduce the variation in acculturation experiences which is crucial in understanding the impact of both the Asian and British cultures (Vyas, 1991). It was also intended to maximise the possibility that participants were fluent in English in an attempt to reduce the occurrence of misunderstandings through language. The impact of ethnicity and language will be addressed in more detail in the Discussion section of this thesis. The age group of the child was chosen as it was one which when combined with the nursery attendance also met the required criterion of experiences of naturally occurring separations.

Although limitations to the use of some of these inclusion criteria is acknowledged, they were intended to reduce the possible variation whilst maximising access to participants.

2.4.3 Participant Recruitment and Access

Participants were recruited from private nurseries in Leicester. The leaders of the nurseries and community centres were approached initially and they advised the researcher to recruit participants via letters rather than approaching them in person. Letters describing the research and what it would entail were sent to mothers who fulfilled the inclusion criteria (See Appendix 1). Initially six mothers (out of 56 letters distributed) volunteered to participate, three from social service day nurseries and three privately owned nurseries. However, children who attend Social Service nurseries may not be appropriately representative, as there may be concerns regarding the home environment or parenting skills. These were not included in the present analysis, along a woman who was Sikh.

Four more Asian Hindu women whose children attended only private nurseries were recruited to add to the two Asian Hindu women whose children attended private nurseries in order to increase the homogeneity of the group. This attempted to minimise differences in socio-economic status, educational attainment and extent of Westernisation whilst excluding those with known parenting difficulties. One mother was recruited from a nursery out of twelve that were approached to participate. Two mothers were recruited from an Asian Women's Centre and another was introduced to the researcher by a participant. Although the researcher attempted to approach women directly, the people in charge of the establishments were reluctant to comply and advised the researcher to approach women via letters in order to recruit volunteers as done previously. This passive method of approaching participants may have contributed to the low response rate. This will be discussed in more detail in the Discussion section. The accounts of these six women were analysed together.

2.4.4 Participant Characteristics

Table 1 below depicts some of the characteristics of the women who participated in this study. All of the women were married to Asian men. Most of the women were born in Britain, and those who were not emigrated to Britain by the age of four. At least one parent of the mothers' emigrated from India and all the women spoke Gujarati. The group of participants was more homogenous than originally planned as not only were they Hindu but also five out of the six women had ancestors from Gujarat, India.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participants

Mother	Birthplace	Family	Age	Age of Children	Level of Education
1	Britain	Joint	26	2.5	GCSE
2	Britain	Joint	29	2	A-Level
3	Britain	Nuclear	29	2.5, 0.5	HND
4	Britain	Joint	27	3	Degree
5	India	Nuclear	26	4	GCSE
6	India	Nuclear	31	3.5, 1	B-Tech

2.5 Procedures

The main procedure involved conducting semi-structured interviews with participants. As is consistent with grounded theory, the interview schedule evolved as the study progressed in order to elucidate and develop the emerging conceptualisations, known as theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A more detailed account will be provided in the following section on data analysis. The interview guide was developed from two sources: the research literature and pilot interviews. The research literature includes attachment theory, culture and development, and parenting models, as outlined in the Introduction section. Two pilot interviews were conducted with Asian mothers in order to expand the researcher's awareness of the issues in this area and to identify relevant aspects that required further investigation. Thus, the initial interview guide was compiled from this information and that extrapolated from the literature (See Appendix 2).

The questions were designed in order to acquire concrete information on specific child-rearing practices that relate to aspects of attachment theory. This included questions to investigate separation experiences and contact with strangers, focussing on behavioural, cognitive and emotional aspects. Questions were also included about aspects of Asian family life and experiences, including the role of relatives and cultural expectations. Questions were also asked about the women's own parenting experiences and emotional welfare as these were specified as important determinants of parenting according to several models (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Super & Harkness, 1986). The interview guide also included questions to investigate specific desired socialisation goals and cultural expectations, based on Harwood et al's (1995) study. Questions were asked about acculturation experiences as this affected the extent to which the women were influenced by both cultural values and practices (Vyas, 1991).

The present study has developed through a process of evolution. Naturalistic observations of a separation and reunion experience at nursery were initially conducted in order to corroborate the objective data with the information gained from the interview. However, as they did not provide much information as to the nature of the relationship due to their short duration, these observations were quickly replaced by vignettes depicting a Strange Situation. This focused the interview using the existing information and the emerging

conceptualisations. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) this process is known as theoretical sampling which enables the research to evolve and promotes conceptual development. The vignettes described different reactions from children on the first day of nursery, corresponding to secure and insecure classifications according to Ainsworth et al (1978). The participants were asked a series of questions to guide discussion about their perception of different aspects of the mother-child relationship and behavioural expectations (See Appendix 3). As the study evolved further, a short description of a scenario with characteristics of a Strange Situation was embedded within the interview to facilitate the elicitation of certain expectations and views. Participant 1 was interviewed and then re-interviewed using the vignettes. Participant 2 was also interviewed using the vignettes and the others were interviewed with the aid of the scenario.

The interview guide provided a basic structure to the interview and questions were open-ended to encourage discussion and exploration of the topic (Burman, 1996). The interview was conducted in a conversational, non-judgemental but focussed manner to facilitate the exploration of the women's own views and experiences (King, 1996). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in preparation for analysis.

2.6 Data Analysis

Grounded theory has been regarded as one of the most empirical and rigorous of the qualitative methods as it has specified procedures for data collection and analysis. This study followed these specifications closely, which are detailed in Strauss and Corbin (1990), in order to achieve research rigour and allow these steps to be replicated. This analytic process was subject to three types of coding which enabled the data to be analysed at an increasingly conceptual level. Although there was a general progression through the coding process, there was some degree of switching between levels of coding, making this an iterative process. Overall, this involved the production of descriptive codes, the development of conceptual understandings or links, and ultimately the generation of wide theoretical interpretations (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1996). Three stages in analysis correspond to the types of coding that were used: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

2.6.1 Open Coding

Each transcript was coded at the most basic level using open coding. This involved analysing the text by lines and phrases and breaking down the data, comparing it with other data chunks and then giving it a conceptual label. This initial phase produced copious concepts that required grouping together in order to enable further and more abstract conceptualisation. Concepts were compared and similar ones were combined together under a more abstract concept known as a category. A section of text demonstrating how the lines and phrases were conceptualised through open coding is provided in Appendix 4.

The concepts contributed to defining the nature or properties of the categories. These properties (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and their dimensions were identified and subsequent analysis of future texts added to these to develop and make the category more robust. For example, a category, 'undermining confidence' had a property, 'confidence in decision making' and it's, dimensions were 'doubting' at one end of a continuum to 'assured' at the opposite pole. These properties and dimensions formed the basis of the developing relationships between different categories.

2.6.2 Axial Coding

Once categories had been produced they were analysed to identify connections and relationships between the various categories. This further conceptualisation is known as axial coding. This involved describing the data in terms of a paradigm model. This model was constructed from the existing conceptual data and was a method of organising the data into a meaningful framework to explain and connect certain phenomena. This higher conceptual label then encompassed the categories as certain aspects were specified, including their specific properties and dimensions. This identified the causal or antecedent conditions of the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs. Further concepts went to contribute the properties and dimensions to establish the set of conditions, such as culture, within which certain actions or interactions occurred in response to the phenomenon. The consequences of these were also specified. These components of the model each have their own properties along a dimensional continuum that provide a rich description of the phenomenon and specify the aspects that pertain to it.

As the conceptual data and links emerged, they were constantly checked against the original and subsequent data in order to stay close to the data whilst seeking further evidence for the growing theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990) referred to this as ‘grounding the theory’. This process of analysis informed further data collection by highlighting specific gaps in the emerging theory that required further information for clarification. Thus, it enabled further refining and focussing of the study. The later interviews were modified in order to explore further, and identify specific conditions for the paradigm model, relationship and socialisation goals, such as respect and interdependence, that were emerging in the data. This technique of collecting data to elicit information pertaining to the formulating theory in order to further its development is referred to as theoretical sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

2.6.3 Selective Coding

This involved systematically relating and integrating categories and forming a core category that encompassed them, acting like an umbrella category at a more abstract level of analysis. This core category, with its properties and dimensions were incorporated into a ‘story’ relating to the identified central phenomenon of the study. The paradigm model was used to relate the core categories to other categories. Relationship patterns and specific conditions in which the phenomena did and did not exist were identified. Strauss and Corbin (1990) referred to this as theory specificity. The process in the theory was identified to establish the way in which the categories interact and affect each other over time. The Results section of this study provides a detailed description of this analytical framework, which systematically integrates the results of the analysis.

2.6.4 Theoretical Sensitivity

Several techniques were employed to reduce the constraining bias stemming from the researcher’s assumptions, experience and the literature, in order to increase theoretical sensitivity. These strategies were employed throughout the analytic process. Questioning enabled the researcher to think creatively about the data, in order to identify possible categories and their properties and dimensions, and to inform future data collection. The method of constant comparison is a central feature of grounded theory and was integral to theoretical elaboration (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996) in this study. The use of systematic comparisons helped to free the researcher from existing thinking patterns through the

exploration of wider and different thought processes. This was achieved through comparing two or more phenomena and following through potential ideas, situations and reactions.

2.6.5 Documentation

The whole analytic process was documented in a series of memos, which tracked this process from the first interview to the final identification of the core category. This trail facilitated the development of the theory and provided analytical depth to the study. The author used the memos in different ways. Theoretical memos included the relating of concepts, possible categories and relationships to existing and emerging theories. Operational memos documented the procedures used in data collection and queries that required following up in future data collection, such as theoretical sampling or interview questions. Intuitive or initial impressions were also recorded in memos to be explored in the existing and following data (See Appendix 5).

In summary, grounded theory was utilised to structure and systematically analyse the data in order to generate a conceptually dense and rich account of Asian Hindu mothers' views of parenting and their relationships with their children.

3.0 RESULTS

This section outlines the findings of the analysis of the interview data using the procedures from grounded theory, detailed in the previous section. The main storyline of the analysis, that is the relating together of the main categories, is summarised. The nature of each of these categories is then described in further detail in terms of their properties and dimensions. The sequential relationship between these categories is explicated using the paradigm model outlined previously. This explains the phenomenon in terms of its causal conditions, the strategies undertaken in response to the phenomenon, the conditions that intervene to influence these strategies, and their following consequences. It is demonstrated that the findings suggest that this is not a static, but rather a process model (Strauss & Corbin, 1992) whose consequences proceed to influence the model by acting as intervening conditions at a later stage. A diagram is provided to depict graphically the relationship between the main categories (Appendix 6). This analysis is a representative conceptualisation of the mothers' accounts.

Each of these categories and subcategories are elaborated and illustrated with example quotations from the transcripts of the participants' accounts. The numbers in the brackets refers to the participant and the page number on which the quotation is situated in the text. Copies of the transcripts are bound separately for consultation.

3.1 Storyline – Responsible Nurturing

Mothers have aspirations for their children and particularly want them to be able to cope with what life brings along, as they grow older. They perceive this *preparation for life*, including instilling a sense of belonging, as one of their main responsibilities of parenting. This parenting process is known as *responsible nurturing*. The child, mother and family experience many situations and circumstances which threaten the child's preparation for life and undermines the mother's confidence and competence in her role as responsible nurturer. These *perceived threats* require the mothers to engage in *balancing*, which include *facilitating, cultural propagation and seeking help*. In order to do this the mothers, *weigh up*, a number of factors, including the mothers' own *cultural belonging, locus of control, family trustworthiness* and the *child's characteristics*. It is these intervening factors that

determine how the mothers differ from each other. The resolution of threats through *balancing* has various consequences for, the child's preparedness for life being *on course*, the mother's *confidence* in the role of responsible nurturer and for *family cohesion*. Thus, the parenting process is back on course.

3.2 Categories and Subcategories

*** Responsible Nurturing**

Responsibility

Preparation for Life

*** Perceived Threats**

Undermining confidence

Worries

*** Weighing Up**

Mothers' Cultural Belonging

Locus of Control

Family Trustworthiness

Child Characteristics

*** Balancing**

Cultural Propagation

Facilitating

Affirmation of Nurturing Role

Seeking help

*** On Course**

Confidence

Family Cohesion

Preparedness for Life

3.3 Responsible Nurturing

Responsible Nurturing pertained to the unique and important task for mothers of bringing up their children. It was a role that was regarded very seriously as it brought with it tremendous responsibilities and decisions. However, it had the potential to be an extremely rewarding process. The two subcategories that are encompassed by the term Responsible Nurturing pertain to the sense of responsibility that the mothers hold toward the task of preparing the child for life. This includes their goals and aspirations of what, and how, their child will cope with and do well in their lives.

3.3.1 Responsibility

The role of responsible nurturing was seen as almost the sole responsibility of the mother. However, some mothers, particularly those who lived in extended families and whose in-laws shared a part in the caretaking, acknowledged the role of other family members, particularly their in-laws, in sharing this role to some extent:

...they're such helpless little things when they're first born and they completely rely on you... (2:8) ...the family are important in giving her a starting point... (1:4)
...or my husband or my in-laws...she learns from us all really. (5:6)

This responsibility stems from the unique and special relationship between the mother and child:

...maybe because I'm her mum and we've got like that...got like a special bond that she doesn't have with anyone else... (5:4) ...he dotes on the mother because she's there to do everything for him and I suppose mum's up there and she's god so to speak... (2:7)

The properties of responsibility include, the mother's requirement of several competencies including a level of empathy, responsiveness to the child's needs, usually in response to developmental progression. The mother may be very understanding or dismissing of the child's feelings and needs:

...he probably felt lost and alone and just didn't know what to do... (2:6)

The mother may respond in a sensitive way to her child or respond in an inconsiderate manner:

We're hopefully giving her the opportunities and the skills and the experience where she can actually think 'yes my parents have given me this and I can apply it' once she's out there. But it's very difficult when you look at things long term and you think it's about getting it right now while she's young...and hopefully that will carry through. (1:7)

3.3.2 Preparation for Life

It was important for children to be prepared to be able to cope with life and a sense of belonging was crucial to this process. As the child developed and had increased contact outside the mother-child relationship, the child was required to fit into first the extended family, then school, and society. This involved having a sense of belonging to some extent to both Asian and Western cultures. The mothers' aspirations for their child to fit in to these elements of their lives and by achieving this they thought their children would attain a sense of belonging and personal contentment

A proper manner was a property of preparation for life as mothers felt that this characteristic was one, which enabled them to achieve a sense of belonging within the different structures, such as the extended family, community and society. Proper manner encompassed several qualities such as being compliant, polite, respectful and obedient. These were desirable qualities that would facilitate them in their life, and particularly their sense of belonging:

...I'd like him to be sensible in his ways and, you know, not get into trouble and behaving in a responsible manner really...that's what I want him to be like nothing extreme or anything... (6:3) ...to grow up to be very honest and polite... (3:4)

This also involved a level of sociability, from just getting on with people to it being instrumental to their happiness:

... be good for her to mix and socialise with other children... (4:1) ...get on with everybody... (3:4)

Having a close knit, cohesive family was really important, whether or not they lived in an extended family and this was important in protecting and supporting the child through life:

...the families are very close and it's very important that we get in touch all the time. Even at bad times even at good times, you know we've all been there. It's important that we stick together... (3:5)

Displaying a proper manner to the elders, particularly the in-laws, was also important especially where the child was living within the extended family:

*...to look out for each other and to respect their elders, respect their mum and dad. (3:5)
...it's really important for people to respect each other and I think it starts in the home...with the family... ...so I'll bring her up to respect her elders, especially her family. (5:5)*

Proper manner was extended to the community and society as an important feature of fitting in and this concerned mothers if this was not achieved:

...I don't want her to get into any trouble or anything, like drugs or get into the wrong crowd...not do anything illegal... (5:4)

One important aspect of preparing the child for life is a sense of belonging to the Asian culture. Most mothers, particularly those living in extended families, had instilling a sense of cultural belonging and awareness on their agenda for preparation for life:

...I'm trying to bring her up with a cultural base on which she can build so that she keeps her own culture... to set her up for life really... (4:3) ... it's important that she grows up with a strong identity of what she's about, where she's coming from um, so that the foundations are set basically so she can carry that throughout her life... (1:4) ...I think it's really important to keep our religion and culture...I mean it's who we are and you

need to know that...where you come from...and you need to pass it on to our children, to their children and like that... (5:7)

Although all mothers were concerned that the children should have an awareness of their cultural heritage, some emphasised the importance of the child adopting more Western ideals in order to fit into society:

I mean in this country we've got to, you know, live the way people live here... (3:3)

Well, I think that it's important to be able to live in society as a whole...um,...and to comply by the rules and that in society... (4:3)

Spiritual belonging was a property of being prepared for life, which ranged on dimensions from being able to follow the Hindu way of life to just being respectful and praying occasionally:

...well I'd like him to know about his Gods and you know, and how we like to do our... how we pray for God... (6:6) ...being religious and praying is important too. (5:4)

Language was an important part of belonging to Asian culture and learning Gujarati was instrumental in instilling that. The ability to speak Gujarati was considered a necessity as it facilitated communication and important relationships with elders in the family, such as grandparents:

...to be able to do Hindu versions of hymns...and um...to be able to read and write Gujarati.. (6:6) ...when he talks to my dad, my dad will never reply in English because he thinks that he should be speaking Gujarati...so he'll just reply back in Gujarati... (3:7)

Fitting in to the society was also believed to be achieved through education. For many mothers education was viewed as particularly important for Asian children as a way of getting on and fitting in to British society that could not be achieved through other means. At the opposite pole of this dimension were mothers who viewed educational attainment more as a bonus than an intrinsic part of being prepared for life:

...it's the only way of getting on in this society...and being accepted... (4:6)
....I don't mind if she's not that clever or anything but a good education will help her get on in life...(5:4) ...maybe a few qualifications behind him to help him get on...encourage him to go as far as he wanted at school... (4:3) It's important for them to have an education...that's obviously going to have a major influence on the way their lifestyle is going to be. Not having an education might lead to problems with other kids on the street and that sort of thing. If they've got a proper education they'll grow up to be educated people, get a good job and they'll be around people that are sort of sensible ...(3:4)

Another characteristic that the mothers valued and deemed important for the preparation of life was a sense of independence or self-sufficiency. This was seen as an important quality to fitting into the British society at large. Mothers who were relatively isolated from their families, felt this was particularly important as family could not necessarily be relied upon:

...give him time to become an independent person and give him the freedom to be like...he can do things on his own... (2:6) ...we don't have close family in the area and we are pretty much on our own and it's important that he's independent and that we don't have any problems... (3:4) ...that way inclined of doing things for himself... not depend on another person...be to his wife or mother or sister or whoever...just like him to do it for himself... (6:4)

Thus, as part of preparation for life the mothers saw their responsibility as engendering a proper manner and an appropriate level of independence. These qualities were encouraged as they were perceived to be crucial to the child acquiring a sense of belonging in the family, society, and both Western and Asian cultures.

3.4 Perceived Threats

The course of responsible nurturing may run smoothly. However, as the child and family encounter various influences, experiences and changes these may be perceived as threats to the process of preparation for life and the mother's responsibility for this task. This has

potential to offset the preparation for life and may require the mothers to balance the situation in order to set the responsible nurturing process back on course. Perceived threats have two subcategories: undermining confidence and worries.

3.4.1 Undermining Confidence

Certain situations may be perceived as threatening the mothers' role as responsible nurturer. All the women were employed and had experienced sharing their role of caretaking and responsible nurturing with others. However, mothers experienced this differently and responded and adjusted to the situation in different ways. All mothers experienced their confidence being undermined to some extent and reflected on this process. This had several properties including, confidence in decision making and effectiveness.

Confidence in decision making and responsible nurturing is sometimes undermined if the child has had problems adjusting to alternative caretaking and the mothers' sense of guilt when leaving the child is most pronounced. At these times the mothers doubted their decision-making:

...there are times when I think is this the right thing, should I be at work... (2:2)

...I could hear her screaming and crying from outside... it was awful... I suppose I should've given it longer... (4:1)

Some mothers doubted their decisions each time the child moved on to a new childcare environment, where as others adjusted easily as the child was perceived as settling progressively better. These mothers felt more assured in their decisions and that their children were on course:

...because he'd been to a childminder, going to a playgroup wasn't a problem...he was raring to go... (6:2)

Mothers were concerned about the effect of sharing childcare on the relationship with their children as they spent less time together and the child was forging relationships with others. This concern was more worrying for mothers who shared the caretaking with a mother-in-law:

...when I started work I thought that's it he's gonna...the bond will no longer be there and he'll just never want me because I won't be there and he'll be so used to being with somebody else and I used to really dread that quite a bit... (2:3) ...there's a little bit of jealousy there. I think, god, you know, I need to be spending that time. Not the fact that they're spending it, it's the fact that I can't actually do it. And sometimes, like because she's been there all day, she doesn't want to come home... (1:11)

The mothers perceived themselves as fulfilling different roles and tasks, including working, caring for other children and completing domestic chores. They sometimes experienced difficulties in co-ordinating these roles, resulting in some level of stress and frustration in their lives. This is perceived as impairing their ability to fulfil their role as responsible nurturer. This reduced the mothers' tolerance levels they felt they had neglected their responsibilities:

*I have to say sometimes I get angry and impatient...I think it's usually when I'm...in the week when I come home from work and I've had a long day and it's been really stressful and the last thing you want is a child screaming at you... (2:3) ...being at work full time and then going home and I'm not able...I can't give him all the attention I would have liked to and having and having to do other chores in the house or what have you...
...maybe I don't spend as much time as I would've liked to... (6:2) ... He wants to do all the painting and colouring and all this...sometimes with the little one you don't have much time... (3:2)*

A sense of guilt results from the perception that they are neglecting their duties in some way, thus undermining their self-efficacy in their nurturing role:

...you miss the first things really, like the crawling...he did something at the childminders place and you think it was like your job to be there for him... (6:2)

A sense of ineffectiveness also undermined the mothers' confidence. This occurred in situations in dealing mostly with her children's behaviour and trying to prepare him/her for life:

...when I get angry and maybe shout...and you know, it doesn't get you anywhere 'cos the child thinks it's a joke and carries on... (2:5)

3.4.2 Worries

Preparation for life is also perceived to be threatened by situations in which the child demonstrates a behaviour that doesn't comply to that expected according to the preparations for life. Properties of this include a lack of proper manner, independence, and variations in the sense of belonging to the family, society and Asian cultures. These require the mother to intervene through balancing in order to set the child on course again.

A lack of proper manner may be dimensionalised from, demonstrating a lack of respect for parents to, that of extended family:

...he doesn't have much respect because he was able to just hit her... (2:7)

...disobedience...lying... ...if he won't do as he's told the first time round...(6:5) ...she'll throw herself on the floor and scream and shout till she gets her own way... (4:3)

The child's level of independence may be at two extremes, either too independent or may be too dependent on the mother:

... he became very close to me and very reluctant to go to others and be around others when I'm around... (3:1)

Sociability is also an indicator that may highlight if the child is off course, with being too sociable seen as threatening as is not mixing at all:

...he did find it hard to mix in with the kids... (3:1)

Concerns regarding the child's cultural belonging may be instigated when this is not being adequately addressed. This is threatened for example, if extraneous influences, such as media and nursery, are biased toward instilling a sense of belonging to only one particular culture, usually Western:

...but I think she's always going to have the English because it's going to end up being her main language because she's been brought up here. But she's not going to have the cultural input as much if we put her in full-time... (1:4)

Instilling a sense of family belonging may be threatened if for example, there is infrequent contact or the family is isolated. A sense of family and community isolation may result by mothers who do not adhere to the advice given by in-laws:

*...I mean my in-laws weren't really happy about me going to work and leaving * with a childminder but I had to... ...you know if you don't please your in-laws then that gets back to the community and that can be hard because they start talking about you...saying you're a bad mother... (5:6)*

Thus, these perceived threats work to undermine the mother's confidence in her role as responsible nurturer and threaten to knock the child's preparation for life off course. These properties require the mothers to act by balancing the perceived threats in some way so as to enable the responsible nurturing to resume its course.

3.5 Weighing Up

The perceived threats instigate the mother to act by balancing in order to set the preparation back on course and enable the mother to fulfil her role as responsible nurturer. There are many factors that operate within the child, mother, family, society and broader context in which the child lives, which facilitate or hinder the mothers' use of balancing strategies. It is impossible to mention them all in this account, however, the main influences are outlined in terms of the subcategories, their properties and dimensions. As culture is a focus of this research, this will be expanded on in most detail. Weighing up has several subcategories: mothers' cultural belonging, locus of control, family trustworthiness and the child's characteristics.

3.5.1 Mothers' Cultural Belonging

Cultural belonging was important in the preparation for life of the mothers' children. This was passed on down generations and mothers wanted to pass it on to their children. However, the extent to which this was transmitted was determined in part by the mothers' own sense of cultural belonging. Cultural belonging was defined in many ways, including dress, food, language and traditions:

...I think I'm very traditional really in some ways but also Westernised...like I wear Westernised clothes most of the time like this and I suppose I have different ideas from my in-laws about some things, like going to the childminder and that ..but I'm really because my religion is really important to me... (5:7) ...my parents when I was at home always made me realise I was Asian and of our traditions and what have you but I've never separated that from myself... (2:9)

Mothers who had a strong sense of belonging and recognised the importance of the child having an awareness of their cultural identity and heritage had experienced some sort of confusion regarding their own identity. They also tended to be mothers who lived in extended families and hence were exposed to Asian culture through their daily lives:

...I did have problems with my...um, identity when I was a teenager... ...I didn't know where I belonged but I sorted myself out and I'm secure in myself now. (4:5) .I was so busy trying to be accepted by the Western... ...I don't ever want to put J in a position, or for her to be in a position where she has to feel she has to be accepted by the Western culture... ...I want her to feel like she knows who she is... (1:10)

The sense of choice meant that women had a personal identification that was fluid and altered according to different situations as they chose aspects of each culture which made sense to them whilst rejecting others. Thus, women adopted different aspects of cultural values and traditions and referred to this as the 'best of both worlds':

... In Asian society it has been more like male chauvinistic and women do everything...I find that anyway...men sit back, you know that kind of attitude but then even in this day and age it ha changed but not as much as it should I think... (6:3)

...it's good to be able to take the best from both worlds... (4:6)

Mothers had different experiences of fitting into the extended family and wider Asian community, which this influenced the way in which this was encouraged:

...sometimes you can live very close together and there can be a lot of bickering and that sort of thing because you are sort of with each other practically everyday and you run into sort of everyday problems ... (3:6) If something goes wrong all the other family members will pull together, community will pull together. These things go terribly wrong you will get chastisement, the shame or whatever from the community, from the extended families... (1:6)

The mother's own upbringing was influential in informing their approach to bringing up children:

...now it's my choice how I bring up my children and I will put things right that I felt were wrong in the way I was brought up... (3:12)

3.5.2 Locus of Control

The sense of control and choice mothers exert in their circumstances, affects how situations that are perceived as threats to responsible nurturing are balanced. Control may have an internal or external attribution. The extent of the sense of influence over the child may differ. In sharing the responsible nurturing role, the mother may be relinquishing some of influence on preparing the child for life:

..it does worry me because after a certain point you don't have much control, do you really... (3:4)

Sharing the caretaking role with another agency was regarded as a necessity, constrained by financial and work commitments:

...you have to weigh up your responsibilities...I mean if I could work part-time I probably would have done but there's circumstances that you can't change unfortunately... (2:4)

... I had a new job and I got pregnant straight away...so that didn't give me more than the maternity leave...and that's not much and so I had to go back straight away really... and we needed the money as well. (5:1)

The sense of control has an impact on the use of strategies to balance the process, as the mothers may feel limited in what they are able to change and how it may be accomplished.

3.5.3 Family Trustworthiness

The strategies used to balance the off course responsible nurturing may be hindered or facilitated by family trustworthiness. The family is less likely to be used for cultural propagation if it is reliable. Family trustworthiness varies across families and is not necessarily related to family status. Properties of family trustworthiness include dependability and similarity of ideas. Dependability may be dimensionalised along a continuum, from dependable through to not dependable:

... they're excellent. They're really good...I'd leave the children with them if I need to and that at any time... (6:8) ...for some reason I'm late or something then my mum-in-law will pick her up and take her home and they get on well... (5:6)

Similarity in beliefs about childcare can increase the sense of trustworthiness. Cultural and generation differences between mothers and their in-laws were recognised and valued by some but not by others. This differs in its impact, causing more friction in extended families and those who share childcare:

I try to tell her that you can't just give in all the time, you've got to draw the line somewhere I suppose. But I suppose being her age and that...the old fashioned style of bringing children up is probably different to now... (2:3)

The mothers may differ in the extent to which they trust their in-laws as alternative caretakers:

So I can got to work and think 'yeah, I know she's going to be looked after'. (1:10)

I suppose even though he's with the family, you've still never been away so you hope that they're going to look after him as well as you do... (2:1) ...can take care of her when I'm at work...um, so I can go to work and not have to worry about her... (4:4)

3.5.4 Child Characteristics

The child's characteristics also influenced, through hindrance or facilitation, the strategies used to restore the responsible nurturing. Properties include the child's developmental level and personality. The child's level of development influences the mother's ability to respond to his/her changing needs. The child may be developmentally prepared for certain situations but not others and requires some action by the mothers to keep the parenting on course:

... looking back on it maybe he was a bit too young to go away for a week...any longer is probably too much for him till he's a bit older. (4:6) ...she was at this stage were she was wanting actually to do more things and that extra bit of socialising with children and stimulation... (1:2)

Certain behaviours may be construed as developmentally appropriate in comparison to the behaviours of other children. These are interpreted and responded to differently:

... she has the odd tantrum but all children do. I don't think that's not showing respect really... (5:5) ...but I suppose most children go through all that... (2:1)

In their role as responsible nurturer, the mother is required to understand the child's behaviour in order to decide on the appropriate balancing strategy to set the child's preparation on course. The child's behaviour may be affected by developmental level but may also be understood in terms of the child's personality and his/her past experiences and circumstances:

...she's caring and very loving...kind... (4:4) ...he's a very happy child. From quite an early age he started to communicate well... (3:2)

This is important in all situations and it is exemplified by the understanding a mother gives to her child's distress at starting nursery. This will influence how she responds to him, such

as giving him time to adjust or removing him from nursery. Also, a child's difficulty in learning English is understood in terms of having to cope with Gujarati as well:

...I think it was ...he's not been around other children at home , and at home it's a lot more ...he know everybody there... (2:1) ...I think she'll grow out of it when she goes to school full time ...it's learning the two languages at the same time... (5:3)

Cultural values and practices influence the way in which the mothers interpret these situations:

...she sleeps in me and my husband's bed but we're trying to encourage her to sleep in her own bed... ...not a problem at all...Asian families let children sleep with their parents till they're quite old... (4:1)

3.6 Balancing

Having weighed up the factors that hinder or facilitate the different strategies available, the mothers are able to attempt balancing. This involves using strategies to set the responsible nurturing in the form of preparation for life and the confidence of mothers in the nurturing role, back on course. Balancing has several subcategories including cultural propagation, facilitating and seeking help.

3.6.1 Cultural Propagation

All mothers expressed a desire for their children to feel part of their Asian culture in addition to fitting into the Western culture. Mothers considered it their responsibility to ensure that their children fitted into their Asian culture. Cultural propagation was a means by which a sense of cultural belonging was instilled in the children. It occurred at different levels ranging from everyday practices, such as cooking and clothing through to language and customs:

...I'll split my evening meals. Like one day it will be Chinese, one day Indian, one day pizza...but with (mother -in-law) she'll cook Asian food all the time ... (1:4) ... we still try to keep the traditions... (2:9)

Mothers relied on the child's grandparents, particularly in-laws, to facilitate cultural propagation. They were perceived to be ideal cultural propagators as they had more personal knowledge and experience of their Asian culture than the mothers themselves who felt incompetent to do this appropriately alone:

...although we give it (parents), it's slightly diluted from us but from (grandmother) ...from the way she dresses, from the way she speaks, from the way she behaves, it's the grass roots and that's what she needs. (1:5)

Children learn Gujarati through communicating with the family, as this is not used at school:

...she has to speak to (mother-in-law) in Gujarati... (1:4) ...I'm trying with her (sister) now, and maybe he will sort of fit in and start speaking more as well... (3:6)

Those mothers, who evaluated themselves as being very religious, tended to accept responsibility for spiritual propagation. However, the women saw this as a facilitator role in which the child would eventually accept their own spiritual responsibility:

...when A grows up we'll make him realise what his religion is, but the choice is his...but it's up to me to say this is our religion, our tradition or whatever and then it's up to him really... (2:9) ...I take her to religious places and involve her praying with me... (4:3)

In order for the children to fit in to the British society as well, the mothers balanced this by facilitating exposure to both cultures:

...at the moment she's with (mother in law) three days a week and she's got nursery two days. So she's getting a lot of the language, the cultural input, conversation and things round the family... (1:4) ... take children to parties and swimming... ...we'll tell them about ...this is your culture and show them the religious side of things or whatever but at the same time we do the other side of things... (2:9)

Instilling a sense of cohesion in the family, when this was perceived to be threatened, particularly in nuclear families and when relations lived far away, was actively co-ordinated through ensuring contact:

...we have this ritual were my husbands sisters bring their kids around to the in-laws and all the kids just eat and play and mess about and that's for a couple of hours every Friday...so they get to see each other and things...I think it's important for them to be together and be a like a big family... (6:6) ... we go to my parents and spend time with them and I've got brothers and sisters and, you know we always try and get to see each other as much as we can...so although we're far away it's still important that we still see them or they come to see us... (3:6)

This was also achieved by example, or modelling:

...they've got to see that, I don't think you can teach them to be like that...they should just be like that from the way we get together with family...it's for them to see and learn and you can't just sit down and say you'll stick together, you just learn that... (3:5)

3.6.2 Facilitating

Mothers employed different strategies to facilitate the child in his/her preparation for life in a response to perceived threats. These were required in situations in which the child displayed an imbalance in proper manner, independence and sociability. Some mothers used moral education and reprimands when there was a lack of proper manner in order to instil this quality in the child where as others used a more encompassing approach:

...if she does anything wrong then I tell her she's wrong and tell her what she's supposed to do so she can learn for next time...it's like if she's naughty and doesn't do what she's told then I tell her off and say 'no, you shouldn't do that should you' and tell her she's got to do what I say... (5:6) ...the only way that they would learn respect is from what they see around them and what the parents actually give back to the children so the children feel they're respected and they will actually give that back... (1B: 2) ...I try to make him understand... (2:3)

Independence was encouraged through managing aspects of general everyday life, such as doing tasks alone:

...we're trying to encourage her to sleep in hr own bed now since we moved into a new house and she decorated her room... (4:1) ...when I'm in the kitchen... ...I just let him get involved as much as he likes. If he wants to peel a potato he will get a blunt knife and chop it up... ...as he grows older I'll probably set him chores... (6:4)

Independence and sociability were achieved through taking the child to places in which there were other children, such as nursery. This was particularly important for those who had relatively little contact with peers:

I took her to playgroup because I thought it would be good for her to mix and socialise with other children... (4:1)

3.6.3 Affirmation of Nurturing Role

Perceived threats to the mothers confidence in her ability to conduct responsible nurturing were often situations in which the mothers perceived themselves as having no control over the situation, in which the only strategy available was that of inaction or waiting for adjustment to occur. For example, mothers have to work and so the only strategy for them to use to cope with their child's and their own distress and loss of confidence is to wait and see how things develop. If the adjustment is swift then the mothers sense of confidence and self-efficacy returns. If not then the mother may consider other courses of action:

...I think it was a bit hard...eventually you get used to it... (5:1) ... I used to phone up 'is he OK'. Has he stopped crying now... (3:2)

Some of these strategies are the only ones available to mothers who feel there are few options to change the situation. At these times, mothers attempt to assuage their own feelings of lack of confidence in their role through affirmations. This resolves the conflict they face of not being able to remove their child's distress and reaffirms that they have made the right decision:

...he still knows I'm his mother and um, I'm there to look after him... (2:4) ...she likes going to school...Even I'm glad because she's got company and friends... (5:1)

Perceived threats to the relationship between the mother and child due to sharing childcare is often balanced through compensation, spending extra time with the child. This acts to assuage the mother's sense of neglecting her duties and has the effect of increasing mothers' self-efficacy and confidence in her role.

...I try to make it up to him at the weekends... (2:4)

3.6.4 Seeking Help

At some point the mothers feel that they need alternative support to balance the situation. Properties of seeking help include the provider of help, the extent and nature of help needed, and how it is received. The family tends to be the first port of call whether the mother lives in a nuclear or extended family. Advice may be offered by family members but not necessarily acted upon as decisions tend to be left to the parents after consultation. Family trustworthiness hinders or facilitates this process. The advice of in-laws may be valued and sought if it relates to specific cultural or religious practices:

...my mum-in-law tends to be the first port of call.. ...my husbands family who are quite up on...like herbal medicines, if you like... ...they know how to do things properly...that have been done over centuries and are traditions that have been passed down... (6:7)

Advice may be received in different ways. It may be welcomed or it may be tolerated, depending on what it is, the similarity of views and level of understanding:

...and she (mother-in-law) couldn't believe we were paying so much a day and then she was saying 'no, leave her with me and I'll look after her'... (1:10) ... I mean my in-laws weren't happy about me going to work and leaving her with the childminder but I had to... (5:6)

3.7 On Course

Balancing has many different consequences not only for the child's preparation for life, but also the mother's confidence in the nurturing role and family cohesion.

3.7.1 Confidence

Balancing had many consequences for the mother in enabling her to carry out her duties in responsible nurturing and in increasing her confidence in her role. Balancing had consequences for the relationship between the mother and child, which facilitated the mothers in preparing the child for life:

...we get on very well...we're very close... I think it helped now I spend more time with her...but we have a really close relationship... (5:2) ...I'm glad I put him in nursery because it gave us that bit of distance... (3:2)

Parenting was perceived as a learning process, trial and error, and experience from their first born child went on to inform this process and their relationship with following children. The initial parenting experience affected mothers' confidence and self-efficacy in dealing with similar situations and future parenting:

... so I try and try and say I won't do that again... (2:3) ...I think I'm going to be bringing this one (baby) up very differently because I've made a mistake with the other one... ...well, it was all new to me...(3:4) I think because she's my first and I think T (husband) and I will be a lot more relaxed with the second one... (1:12)

Mothers also gained from the balancing process. Their own sense of cultural belonging was strengthened through sharing cultural propagation techniques with their children. This enabled them to be more competent at cultural propagation and thus increase their confidence in fulfilling their role. One mother spoke of attending Gujarati classes:

I would've liked to have gone to Gujarati classes when I was younger... ...I'll probably go to classes at the same time so that we can go together and we can help each other... (4:6)

3.7.2 Family Cohesion

Balancing, such as cultural propagation, not only instilled a sense of cultural belonging but also a sense of belonging to the family. Furthermore, this affected not just the child but also other relatives, particularly grandparents. This increased a sense of family cohesiveness:

... it's really good because that means my mum-in-law gets to spend some time with her grandchild and like I said before that's good because she'll learn about being in a family... ...so it's really important for my in-laws... (2:6) ...I'd want them to be like that because that's how we treated our parents ...and in times of need we've always been there for them and I'd want them to be there for me as well... (3:1)

3.7.3 Preparedness for Life

These balancing strategies had both short and long term effects. It instilled a sense of belonging at different levels, including family, society and cultural. They also enabled them to learn qualities, such as proper manner and independence.

Although used in the short term these balancing strategies had potential long-term effects. Mothers and other cultural propagators intended these to have long lasting effects that would carry the children through life. Parenting and preparation for life will be off course if the strategies are not used to enable the child to fit into the British culture. The child may experience difficulty on a continuum, from some minor problems of socialising with other children to not getting on in society. For example, one mother was concerned about the effect on her son of following the Hindu custom of shaving off his long hair:

...because he's at nursery I don't know how he'll take that...if he's teased...I'm a bit worried about the teasing aspect of it... (4:6)

Thus, responsible nurturing explains the process by which mothers prepare their child for life.

4.0 DISCUSSION

This section reviews connections between the findings of this study and previous research in this area at a conceptual level. It relates the model of responsible nurturing to other parenting models, particularly those based on ethnic minority parenting. This account will focus on the cultural context of parenting due to its influence on the model. Strauss and Corbin (1990) reported that cross-referencing findings with the research literature is one method of validation. Each of the categories are explored below in relation to the existing literature in order to validate the conceptual findings of this study.

4.1 Interpretation of the Findings – ‘Responsible Nurturing’

Mothers have aspirations for their children and particularly want them to be able to cope with what life brings along as they grow older. They perceive this *preparation for life*, including instilling a sense of belonging, as one of their main responsibilities of parenting. This parenting process is known as *responsible nurturing*. The child, mother and family experience many situations and circumstances, which threatens the child’s preparation for life and undermines the mother’s confidence and competence in her role as responsible nurturer. These *perceived threats* require the mothers to engage in *balancing*, which include *facilitating, cultural propagation and seeking help*. In order to do this the mothers, *weigh up*, a number of factors, including the mothers’ own *cultural belonging, locus of control, family trustworthiness*, and *the child’s characteristics*. It is these intervening factors that determine how the mothers differ from each other. The resolution of threats through balancing have various consequences for the child’s preparedness for life, being *on course*, for the mothers *confidence* in her role as responsible nurturer and for *family cohesion*.

The mothers’ perceptions of the parenting relationship with their children has been conceptualised in terms of an active process. This overall process in which parenting is perceived by a mother or parent as an active process, is seldom documented in the literature. Most accounts of parenting have employed external, objective measures in which assumptions are made as to the nature of parenting as opposed to the actual views of parents (Wasserman et al, 1990 cited by Burman, 1996). There have been no other conceptualisations of the process of parenting in Asian Hindu mothers in Britain.

The theoretical framework generated in the present study appears to have conceptual similarities with the parenting models that were briefly outlined in the Introduction section. However, the theory of responsible nurturing is not wholly reflected in any one of the models. Furthermore, these models are derived from research in the U.S.A. and so have limited application to Asian Hindu women in Britain.

Ethnic Minority Parenting

Mainstream theoretical models of parenting do not adequately address the specific obstacles faced by ethnic minority families. The consequences of acculturation and biculturalism are relatively neglected in this research. The effects of racism and discrimination, and how to prepare children to cope with these particular demands are not incorporated into mainstream models, even though these issues are of concern to parents (Burgess, 1980 cited by Garcia Coll, 1995) and are central to the processes of parenting in ethnic minority families in the U.S.A. (McAdoo, 1983).

The importance of belonging is documented in the literature on values in Asian families in relation to interdependency and respect (Dwivedi, 1993). Although the importance of interdependence is examined at the community level, there is no research on British Asian families' sense of belonging outside the family. This concept of preparing a child in order to instil a sense of belonging to the British society has been relatively neglected in the child rearing literature.

The few theoretical models of parenting and family processes that have been formulated to incorporate the specific experiences of ethnic minority parents, specify and explain the unique sources of influence that are integral to the processes of parenting in these parents. Although none of these models include Asian families who are descended from the Indian subcontinent and are living in Britain, they may have some relevance in the absence of more specific models.

Harrison et al (1990) described ethnic minority families as having a set of beliefs and behaviours that have their origins in their ancestral cultures. These are distinct from European-American culture in their desire to continue the values and traditions of previous generations, and at the same time to have limited access to the larger society and its social

institutions. These values include a more inclusive conception of the self in contrast to individualism, as well as an emphasis on spirituality and religion. These historical and cultural legacies influence the attitudes, values, and care-giving practices of parents (Garcia Coll, 1990). This model may be applicable to Asian families living in Britain. It has several common themes to the parenting model of protective nurturing in that it explicitly accounts for the importance of the transmission of cultural identity. The importance of education may also be related to the limited access to the mainstream culture and is viewed as way of changing this on an individual basis.

In Ogbu's (1981) cultural-ecological model perspective on ethnic minority parenting, the range of economic activities available to members of the population, and the subsistence tasks and survival strategies derived to cope with these circumstances, are major determinants of the definitions of competence and the theories and techniques of child rearing. This model emphasised a low socio-economic variable for understanding the development of child rearing techniques in ethnic minority groups in the U.S.A. This appears to be less relevant for this specific group of women as they are all employed and can afford to pay for their children's private childcare, and are assumed not to be subject to poverty and its effects. However, this may be an important factor in parenting for many Asian families.

However, despite these differences, the model has some similarities with that of the present study as the mothers have adapted, to some extent to enable their children to survive in a Western culture through encouraging independence, education, and proper manner. The sense of belonging that mothers instil in their children prepares them for a life in which they are required to fit into two cultures and hence these may play a protective factor in terms of mental health risks. This may explain the importance for the mothers of this parenting process of preparation for life.

Ogbu's (1981) cultural-ecological model is based on the fact that ethnic minority children in the U.S.A. are directly and indirectly exposed to a host of problems associated with socio-economic disadvantage. These include parental unemployment, poor quality housing and may consequently experience poor physical and mental health, prejudice and discrimination, and, poor self-image (LeMasters, 1970 cited by Garcia Col, 1995). Although this was not

apparent for the participants in this study, it may be for some Asian families in Britain. These findings in relation to the other conceptual models set up hypotheses concerning the findings of Asian families from impoverished backgrounds. They may be more likely to conform to these models. Thus, despite an elevation in possible risk factors for mental health problems, Asian families, who are parenting often under extreme stress, are not presenting in the mental health services.

The present model enables the examination of Asian parenting in Britain that is not confounded by socio-economic hardship and the disadvantages and effects this brings. McLoyd's (1990) model, based on African-American families postulated that a mediator of the link between poverty and parenting behaviours was psychological distress stemming from an excess of negative life events, such as undesirable living conditions. Although the participants in the present study were not subject to this type of poverty and its associated effects, they may be influenced by McAdoo's (1982 cited by Garcia Coll, 1995) findings. These suggest that African-American families living in predominantly white communities showed more distress than those that had less direct contact with white families due to the concerns about discrimination.

The participants in the present study had regular contact with the white- Anglo population through their living environment, employment and childcare arrangements. Discrimination may be an ongoing concern and they may have encountered this in their daily lives, as indicated by Beliappa (1991). Although this was not directly explored in the present study, the model of responsible nurturing encompasses the importance of cultural belonging and the effect of the family being responsible for cultural transmission in a Western society which does not facilitate this. Further exploration of responsible nurturing, may reveal the importance of preparing the child to cope with oppression and discrimination. This could validly be incorporated into the model and narrow the gap which exists between the parenting process and the broader socio-political context.

The effect of socio-economic status and poverty on parenting will not be examined in detail in this thesis, as although it has relevance it is not directly applicable to the participants in this study. Furthermore the area is too wide to be adequately reviewed in this thesis. There is an excellent review by Hoff-Ginsberg and Tardif, (1995). However, the research suggests that there are different communicative styles of parenting in parents of low socio-economic status valuing conformity and using more authoritative, directive approaches to parenting

where as parents of high socio-economic status value initiative and independence and use less directive strategies (Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardiff, 1995). There was no clear indication that the balancing strategies the mothers employed belonged to these groups. However, a sense of conformity was important as seen through the valuing of a proper manner, which was seen to facilitate fitting into various contexts.

Thus, through the examination of this group's child rearing values and practices, it is possible to identify the level of congruence of those aspects with the dominant societal child-rearing practices and attitudes. This may indicate the areas of parenting and child development that may be most likely to create conflict and incompatibility between the groups and the societal practices (Garcia Coll, 1995).

Bronfenbrenner (1977) highlighted the importance of congruence between socialisation at different contextual levels and this may be reflected in a sense of belonging and fitting in to the extended family, community, society and both Asian and Western cultures.

4.1.2 Perceived Threats

The perceived threats to the parenting process of responsible nurturing and the child's preparation for life, include situations in which the mothers confidence is undermined or she is worried by situations which suggest that the process is off course. Sharing the role of responsible nurturer with other agencies has been examined by attachment theory and the effects of day-care on the attachment relationship (Melhuish, 1991).

However, the attachment relationship was not the focus of this study, but rather the parenting process.

Mothers expressed concern regarding the impact of working and alternative childcare arrangements on their children. Most women in the labour force work primarily due to economic necessity and secondarily for self-actualisation (Scarr et al, 1989). Mothers who receive little spousal support in their participation with child care and household tasks reported being stressed by their many roles (Pleck, 1985). However, Scarr et al (1989) suggested that many of the fears about childcare were based on socially determined theories regarding mothers' roles and obligations to their families. This may be especially important

for Asian mothers who live in a joint family or who hold more traditional views regarding women's roles in the family.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of socialisation within the context of increasingly broad spheres of influence and interaction has some relevance to the concept of perceived threats. These systems affect the individual child's development through several avenues. It may act directly through the child's interactions in the family or 'microsystem'. Threats may be perceived at this level through everyday interaction in the family, such as displays of lack of proper manner or changes to circumstances, such as childcare arrangements. Interactions and relationships between alternative childcare providers, including nurseries, and the family have the potential to threaten the parenting course. These extraneous influences, such as school and peers, act within this 'mesosystem', but also influence interactions in the 'microsystem'. These systems are embedded in broader contexts. Ethnicity and belief systems operate in the broader contexts and are relevant to the weighing up of intervening factors. These are explored in the relevant section.

Thus, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological perspective considers how the individual develops in interaction with the immediate social environment and how aspects of the larger social context affect what occurs in the individuals immediate setting. There are several conceptual connections between the present study and this model as perceived threats may occur at any point in the contextual hierarchy, either through interaction between the mother and child or through family isolation. Alternatively, this could occur with the nursery not providing for the child's cultural needs.

Belsky's (1984) process model of parenting has features that may account for some of the perceived threats in terms of how aspects of parenting undermined the mothers' confidence in their ability to carry out their tasks. According to Belsky (1984) this phenomenon could be viewed as a response to the lack of support that women felt in parenting as psychological distress was related to parenting and relationship difficulties. However, this model is derived from findings based on abusive and dysfunctional parenting. Furthermore, it does not consider cultural differences in parenting behaviour and values.

The mother's confidence in her role as responsible nurturer has rarely been studied in relation to ethnic minority parenting. However, this appeared to be crucial in the mothers' ability to fulfil her duties in preparing the child for life. Foss (1996) developed a conceptual model for studying parenting in immigrant populations modifying Belsky's (1984) determinants of parenting. Although, this is not directly relevant to the mothers in this study who have not undergone a recent transition, it does incorporate aspects of the mothers' well being including the meaning of and self-confidence in, the maternal role. It examines these in a context of migratory experiences and socio-political environment.

Parents may experience stress regarding acculturation as they bear the primary responsibility for rearing their children, fostering developmental success, and inculcating a sense of cultural identity (Garcia Coll, 1995). The responsibility on parents, and especially mothers, is great. This is pertinent in the present study, when threats are perceived as undermined confidence and worries about their role and the course of the child's preparation for life may be highly stressful, often requiring them to seek affirmation. The findings in this study reflect the concerns expressed by McAdoo (1993) that societal institutions, such as schools, fail to provide an environment in which respect for the cultural and historical context of the child is instilled.

4.1.3 Weighing Up

The findings of the present study suggest that the mothers' sense of cultural belonging had an impact on the way they dealt with perceived threats to responsible nurturing or the parenting process. The importance of achieving a balance between Western and Asian values and practices was emphasised. Two studies mentioned earlier in this paper, (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990; 1989) found that there was a change in the valuing of traditional values, such as conformity and self-direction in rearing children in younger generations of Asians in Britain. They reported a sense of resignation over these issues, such as extended family living, and a decline and devaluing of traditionalism. However, the model developed from findings in the present study viewed this as an active process, although the difficulty of doing this in the face of obstructions, such as the media was acknowledged. A sense of choice mediated this balance. Some of the mothers had rediscovered their Asian identities

having previously resisted this due to the pressures of a Western society.

Acculturation

Models of acculturation are most applicable to the conceptualisation of a sense of cultural belonging discovered in this study. As these mothers were born in Britain or had lived most their lives in Britain, the term acculturation, which refers to a gradual change in thoughts, feelings and behaviours as a result of ongoing contact between cultures, may be inappropriate to explain the effect of the Western culture (Phinney, 1990). Instead biculturalism concerns the extent of the individuals exposure with the majority culture (Rotheram-Borus, 1993) and may be more appropriate.

Ethnic identity is a complex of processes rather than an entity (Weinreich, 1988). Woollett et al's (1994) qualitative analysis of women's constructions of their ethnic identity indicated that they were fluid and altered in response to the changing contexts and demands, such as getting married and having children. Views of ethnicity had developmental and circumstantial aspects and did not just change with familiarity with the dominant culture. Religion is a key role in Asian women's conceptualisations of ethnicity, and family and social relationships often provide women with a positive sense of ethnic identity (Woollett et al 1994).

These findings correspond strongly to the conceptualisations of women in the present study by showing how the women's ethnic identity interacts with the parenting process. Religion was used to define their cultural identity and their sense of family belonging was crucial to their parenting role. Although this study touched on mothers' ethnic identities, it did not pursue this to any conceptual depth, as the effect on parenting was the main focus of the research. However, the results and the related literature suggests that it is important to explore this in further detail in order to account for specific and subtle differences.

Family acculturation level might have an impact on parenting style by influencing developmental expectations, mother-infant interactions, care-giving practices, and the role of the extended family. A study conducted in the U.S.A. by Perez-Febles (1992 cited by Garcia Coll et al, 1995) found that more acculturated Hispanic mothers were increasingly similar to Anglo mothers in both teaching and play interaction than less acculturated

mothers. Through the ongoing acculturation process, mothers in the present study may have some similar values and practices as white, Anglo mothers. However, the findings from this study suggest that a sense of Asian identity is also apparent in, and actively sought, by Asian Hindu women who are born in Britain, regardless of exposure to Western culture.

However, Gfeller (1990) discovered that there was a lack of consistency between ideal and actual child-rearing practices.

The acculturation level of the family affects the immediate care-giving environment and also influences decisions regarding alternative childcare, such as nursery school. As the children grow older they are exposed to other settings such as childminder, nursery, school, temple and community in which they may be expected to learn about dominant cultural values and roles and be expected to adapt. The family's level of acculturation may hinder or facilitate this process with consequences for the child's peer relationships and language proficiency (Garcia Coll, 1995)

These families become bicultural, maintaining some aspects of functioning of the traditional family and adopting some important values and behaviours. This may be more pertinent to mothers in this study, who have explicitly upheld, often against all odds, some methods of parenting their children whilst relinquishing others in favour of the majority culture's parental values and practices. The parents' control and choice may be influenced by other family members, societal pressures to conform, educational institutions and the political climate.

The concept of acculturation is useful as it highlights the heterogeneity within ethnic minority groups, and emphasises individual differences among members of the same group. It is these distinctions that enable movement away from superficial generalisations and stereotypes. This study has involved a homogeneous sample who have had similar life experiences, socio-economic status and exposure to both Western and Asian, more precisely Indian, and Hindu values. However, acculturation refers mostly to immigrants rather than those of a different ethnic descent but being born and raised in a majority culture.

Support has been widely documented as being necessary for psychological well being, particularly in mothers who are bringing up children (Scarr et al, 1989). Poor coping has

been related to insufficient support (Gable et al, 1992). Most mothers were satisfied with the role of their family and the support received, although many found this intrusive at times. The role of the family has been viewed as being important in Asian cultures, in helping with caretaking and decision making (Dwivedi, 1993). However, this was only partially the case for these mothers. For those living in a joint family, the in-laws played a major caretaking role. However, they were independent in their decision making. This may reflect changing cultural practices, partly due to living conditions rendering extended family accommodation more difficult, and also the Western values of living as a nuclear family (Modood et al, 1994).

Belsky (1984) described support as a major determinant of parenting. However, support was only evaluated in terms of marital and social supports and gave little consideration to the extended family. This may not be of surprise considering the notion that the extended family is not significantly involved in parenting. There is a dearth of research accounting for family relationships in Asian families. Furthermore, most research based on family relationships is concerned with dysfunctional families. The effect of child characteristics have been explored in Belsky's (1984) model to some extent, however, the 'goodness of fit' between the parent and child were considered more important than the child's temperament per se.

4.1.4 Balancing

Balancing was conducted when threats to responsible nurturing were perceived and it was intended to set parenting back on course. The feasibility of seeking advice from other family members depended to some extent on the similarity of views. This may be influenced by cultural and generational differences. Uneven acculturation among family members may result in disagreement and conflict regarding family values and parenting behaviours (Zuniga, 1992 cited by Garcia-Coll, 1995). This may have a bearing on the families in the present study as the mothers may be more bicultural due to their greater exposure to acculturation opportunities and demands, including school and work, than in-laws. This not only results in conflict, possibly due to not requesting or acting on advice, but also challenges the hierarchical nature of the family which is a fundamental feature of traditional Asian culture. Generational differences may be wrongly assigned to cultural variations.

Child rearing has altered throughout the course of the century in Western societies and this maturational effect has also occurred in Asian communities. Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggested that family, friends and community are important facilitators of parenting practices.

Cultural propagation was an important balancing strategy employed to instil a sense of cultural belonging. The relative importance that parents assign to ethnic socialisation differs across individuals. This is influenced by the person's history, family structure and acculturation process (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). The ethnic socialisation process includes specific and implicit messages that parents and other important socialisation agents impart to children about their ethnic group in terms of personal and group identity, relationship with the group and individual members, and relative position in the social hierarchy in preparation for adulthood in their ethnic group (McAdoo, 1990 cited by Garcia Coll et al, 1995). This also involves preparing the child to cope with discrimination and prejudice.

Boykin and Tom's (1985 cited by Garcia Coll, 1995) model of African- American child socialisation emphasises the role of parents in teaching their children to deal with mainstream American culture, African-American cultural heritage, and the minority experience. This socialisation process involves the learning of an array of complex coping strategies to manage racism actively or passively and to participate in mainstream society through maintaining or changing the status quo. Again, although this is based on a specific cultural group in the U.S.A., it may be useful to conceptualise and understand Asian families' experiences in Britain.

Although attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980) may have some relevance in terms of the relationship between the mother and child, this analysis focussed on the phenomenon of responsible nurturing as a parenting process. The importance of belonging to several groups may have implications for attachment theory, as they require different qualities in order to achieve this, such as independence in society and proper manner in the extended family.

Garcia Coll et al (1995) suggest that important issues in ethnic minority parenting include the preservation and/or loss of traditional views and patterns of parenting behaviours, the adoption/rejection of dominant views and parenting behaviours through the process of

acculturation, and the effects of exposure to chronic poverty and other life stressors in the context of racism, prejudice and discrimination.

The present study suggests that each individual differ according to his/her experiences. Thus, it would be neglectful to generalise these results to the whole Asian Hindu population of women. However, as the group is specific a statement may be made that would apply to mothers who fulfil the criteria of the participants in the present study: a desire to prepare the child for life through instilling a sense of belonging in their children, in terms of the extended family, society, and both the Asian and Western culture to some extent.

This review has attempted to relate connections between the present study and other pre-existing models on parenting in a cultural context. The cultural aspects of the model of responsible nurturing has been explored in more detail than other parts as it is the cultural context, including acculturation, that are crucial to the understanding of parenting in Asian Hindu mothers living in Britain. This influences the other aspects of the model, which can only be understood within the cultural context. It has been widely recognised since the beginnings of cross-cultural research that this area of research is fraught with methodological and conceptual difficulties (Berry, 1979). The nature of investigating culture and its effects makes it difficult to conceptualise as cultural research is inherently interested in concrete practices in order to specify and measure differences (Murphy & Murphy, 1970). In view of this, the present study recognises the limits to the conceptualisation of aspects of the findings, and the inclusion of concrete material.

4. 2 Methodological Criticisms

The following section explores the methodological criticisms of this study. The appropriateness of using a qualitative approach and the limitations of the procedures used for collecting and analysing the data are examined. An evaluation of the trustworthiness of the account in terms of its generalisability, validity and reliability is undertaken. Reflexivity in the research process is also explored.

4.2.1 Choice of Method

The Introduction section demonstrated the paucity of research and information on British Asian child rearing and parenting and highlighted the lack of appropriate measurement tools available to investigate this area. The few research studies that have been conducted with British Asian families have employed qualitative techniques in order to access the meaning and variation in women's accounts (e.g. Woollett et al, 1994). Existing measures related to this area, such as the Parental Attitude Research Instrument (Shaffer & Dell, 1958 cited by Holden, 1995) and the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al, 1978) only measure certain aspects of the relationship, such as attitudes to parenting or the degree of attachment. Furthermore, they are not sensitive to cultural differences. There are few measures that evaluate broad aspects of the parenting relationship from the mother's perspective. Quantitative approaches may have, by their nature, failed to identify subtle meanings and variations that are amenable to qualitative methodologies. Hence, in consideration of these issues, the choice of a qualitative method was appropriate for this study.

A tool designed to measure the strength of ethnic identity may have been useful to compare mothers' descriptions in a more structured way (Phinney, 1992). However, this was not employed in this study in consideration of the time and effort mothers were giving with interviews. This may have constrained the accounts that women gave.

It is widely acknowledged that black, ethnic minority women are under-represented in the research literature, and they are rarely provided with a research forum in which to express their views and perspectives. Although some researchers have criticised the use of a structured qualitative methodology that has been designed on white American people (Stanfield, 1994), this method provided such a forum for the women participating in this study.

4.2.2 Procedural Criticisms

Interviews

Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate the use of unstructured interviews, which are led by participants. This was only achieved to some extent, as it was necessary to focus the interview on specific aspects of child rearing so that relevant material could be generated

fairly quickly. This was important as on occasions their children were present and it was apparent that the interview session was intrusive and causing some disruption to their daily routines. If the mother talked about topics that were not specific to their parenting relationship this was tolerated to some extent in the assumption that it might be leading to something that the mother herself deemed relevant. However, some re-focusing was necessary at times.

The mothers varied in their fluency and willingness to initiate changes in the conversation. Hence, some interviews appeared largely interviewer-directed whereas in others, the dialogue flowed into areas that the mothers chose for themselves. Narratives of their experiences, such as marital difficulties or religious beliefs, cemented the research interviews into a context creating a sense of reality of the mother's life and relationships for the researcher. This enabled a balance to be achieved between following the interview guide to obtain relevant views on parenting and glean insights into the context of the participant's family life. Alternatively, some mothers appeared less willing to explore the wider context of their experiences. As most women were unaccustomed to personal interviews of this kind, focusing was employed to limit the possibility of mothers finding the interview process threatening. Participants chose for the interviews to be conducted in their own homes. The familiarity of the setting may have enabled them to feel more comfortable. However, it may have felt intrusive, particularly when children were present.

Some mothers who lacked confidence or had difficulty articulating and expressing their views appeared to struggle at times during the interview. Indeed the difficulty of talking about something that is often not shared in this way was commented on by most participants. Despite attempts to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings through language by recruiting people who had spent most of their education in Britain, there were occasional incidents in which participants had difficulty describing particular feelings. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in a later section. Thus, although some focusing was necessary and intended to ease the interview process for the participants, it has influenced the general direction of the study.

The interview focused partly on separation experiences, particularly relating to common experiences of attending nursery. This was useful in opening up the interview process in a

non-threatening manner as it focused on behaviour. Although, it provided necessary concrete information on child-rearing practices, it also served to limit the extent of conceptualisation of the accounts.

Vignettes

These were based on the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al, 1978) and were designed to focus the interviews in order to aid theory generation. Some mothers expressed discomfort about making assumptions and value judgements regarding the relationships from the sparse information in the scenarios. It may have been more fruitful to provide additional contextual information. The characters in the vignettes were assigned Indian Hindu names that were culturally validated. However, they were not validated according to the caste system and this may have affected the interpretation of the vignettes. Hence, they may have lacked some cultural sensitivity. As the analysis evolved and the onus on attachment theory was reduced, these vignettes were replaced by smaller scenarios embedded within the interview.

4. 2.3 Sampling

The participants in the initial study were from a heterogeneous group, encompassing a variety of cultures and religions. The current study was recruited from a more homogeneous group of Asian women who shared the same religion, Hinduism. This homogeneity was increased as the women's families all originated from India, five out of six from Gujarat. This increased the specificity of the findings.

Participants were recruited via nurseries and playgroups, as this was a natural separation experience that enabled observation in the initial study. This also provided a focus in the interview as it accessed aspects of the parenting relationship. However, the sampling bias is acknowledged as the sample only includes mothers whose children attended a nursery, thus excluding mothers whose children stay at home until a later age. This possibly excluded women who held the most traditional cultural values and beliefs. Sampling mothers who had one-year-old children may have corresponded more closely to the attachment literature. Recruitment via mother and toddler groups, and particularly via health visitors may have increased access to more culturally traditional mothers who rely on themselves and relatives for childcare. However, traditional families may be less willing to participate due to family

roles and language fluency. The selection criteria employed in this study possibly excluded the most traditional mothers who have recently immigrated to Britain. Although the use of an interpreter may have overcome this difficulty, it was felt that due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, subtleties or nuances in the accounts may have been missed.

The current study recruited women via private nurseries only as it was assumed that those attending social service nurseries had some difficulties regarding parenting and relationships with their children. Hence, despite variation in experiences the sample of women shared many common experiences and lifestyles, such as exposure to Indian, Hindu and British values and beliefs, similar acculturation experiences, employment, socio-economic status and family contact. Thus, this sample is very specific and may be very different to other groups of Asian women. Furthermore, as ethnic minority groups are over-represented among low socio-economic strata in society, most studies confound the effects of poverty with ethnic minority parenting (Garcia Coll, 1990) and as consequence important influences are overlooked. Although, poverty is a major factor in ethnic minority parenting, this study attempted to examine other influences of parenting by recruiting mothers from private nurseries, who were assumed to be existing above the poverty line.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate the use of theoretical sampling in grounded theory methodology to extend and increase the density of the evolving theory. This is achieved through selectively accessing the perspectives of others to maximise the discovery of further conditions and consequences, and so forth. Recruitment difficulties and time constraints has meant that this has not been possible in the present study and sampling increased the specificity of the theory. However, there are some elements of theoretical sampling as it was possible to interview mothers who attended an Asian Women's centre and were actively involved in the Asian community in addition to those who were not.

This study employed theoretical sampling techniques as the interviews proceeded through the modification of interview questions and the use of vignettes in response to the emerging theory. This provided more depth and specificity to the developing framework. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that theoretical sampling continues until saturation point, that is until the theory is dense and all the possible conditions, consequences and so on have been exhausted. The data gathered in this study was very rich and dense, due to the mothers'

varied experiences and views. It may have been useful to sample mothers who had lived in Britain for different lengths of time. It may also have been interesting and beneficial to interview fathers and relatives in extended families to find out their perspective on parenting and caretaking.

4.2.4 Generalisability

It is widely acknowledged that the application of the canons of reliability and validity in quantitative research is inappropriate in the evaluation of qualitative studies (Woods, 1998). The empirical generalisability of results from a sample to the wider population, is one of the goals of quantitative research. However, qualitative methods are more evaluated on theoretical inference, that is the extent to which the theory can be taken as truthful (Hammersley, 1996). The findings of this study apply to a specific group of women under specific circumstances. However, the conceptual framework that has been generated may be applied to a similar group of women experiencing similar circumstances, to some extent. This framework may be appropriate to understand other Asian Hindu mothers who were born, or lived since an early age, in Britain. They would have reached GCSE level of education and be employed. Their children aged between two and four years old would have experienced some childcare outside of the home and have attended a nursery. They would also have contact with relatives, particularly parents' in-law. The theoretic framework developed in this study may then be generalisable and applicable to any women who have similar experiences such as those listed above.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) prefer the term transferability, which refers to the application of the findings in similar contexts. However, Henwood & Pidgeon (1992) suggest that "rich dense grounded theory, which is contextually sensitive at diverse levels of abstraction, will in itself suggest its own sphere of relevance and application" (p. 108). In this respect it may be that these findings need to be applied in an appropriate setting to gauge its relevance.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) comment that the aim of grounded theory is to specify the particularities of a phenomenon and its context. Thus, the theoretical framework is only applicable to those particular circumstances. Additional research may find new specificities

that can be incorporated through amending the original framework.

4.2.5 Reliability

Strauss & Corbin (1990) guard against the canon of reproducibility with psychological phenomena, as it is difficult, if not impossible to recreate all of the original conditions or discover new situations whose conditions exactly match those of the original one. They suggest that the issue of concern is whether another investigator is able to arrive at the same theoretical explanation about the phenomena, given the same theoretical perspective of the original researcher, when following the same general rules for data collection and analysis in a similar context and set of conditions. Discrepancies that do arise may then be analysed in terms of the existing data resulting in the identification of different conditions and elaboration of the existing categories and theory.

The process of this research study has been documented, rendering it replicable by another investigator. However, the sample and context were specific. The theory is conceptually dense but, no doubt, further data collection would add to this, in terms of different conditions, which could be incorporated into the existing theoretical formulation. Hence, the process of responsible nurturing conducted by mothers may remain relevant, but further data may add to the properties and dimensions of different conditions in which destabilisation is perceived or other consequences not found in this initial study. It is acknowledged that this was just one way of interpreting the data, as qualitative research is not concerned with establishing a truth, but rather one plausible account of a phenomenon. A researcher with a different theoretical perspective or academic background may interpret the data in a different way and produce a different account.

4.2.6 Validity

The accuracy of any research can never be completely guaranteed (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). There is continued debate among the qualitative researchers regarding the evaluation of the validity of qualitative studies, as no definitive criteria have yet been agreed upon (Smith, 1996; Woods, 1998). There are several procedures that can be followed to ensure that the research study is 'good enough' and adheres to values of good practice. These

include staying close to the data through constant comparisons, respondent validation, documentation of the research process, negative case analysis, persuasiveness and internal coherence, and reflexivity.

Constant comparative analysis occurs at every level of analysis and is integral to grounded theory. This involves constantly checking that conceptual analysis, category development and the emergent theory fit the data. This was achieved throughout this study as the researcher returned to the data to substantiate and verify the analysis and any evolving conceptualisations, in order to remain close to the data. Documentation in the form of memos tracked this process of connecting data with increasingly higher levels of abstraction in order to integrate the theory. This has provided a coherent account of the data that explains variation and is meaningfully related to the area of research on the mother's perception of the parenting relationship.

The exploration of negative cases, that is cases that do not appear to fit an emerging conceptual system, is also encompassed in the constant comparison approach as it enables the challenging of assumptions and conceptualisations, and elaboration of the emergent theory. Although some negative cases were encountered in this study, through further analysis they were incorporated into the developing theory adding variation and conceptual density.

Respondent validation is the process by which the researcher presents the findings and interpretations to the participants to ascertain whether it is a recognisable and coherent reflection of the topic. This is a controversial procedure and its suitability may depend on the research topic. This procedure was not conducted formally at the end of the study, due to time constraints. However, some of the findings, in terms of conceptual categories and emerging theory, were shared with some participants at different points during the data collection process. This was beneficial to the analytic process as it confirmed and thus validated, some aspects whilst instigating the revision and further development of categories. Thus, this study adhered to the values of good practice.

4.2.7 Reflexivity and Bias

Instead of viewing the research as an impartial, neutral, value-free activity, qualitative research explicitly acknowledges the role of the researcher and the research process in influencing the subject of inquiry. Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) suggest that "the researcher and researched are characterised as interdependent in the social process of research" (p. 106). In this sense, the reflexivity is viewed as a valuable and integral component in research. This differs from quantitative approaches, which view this as a hindrance and attempt to reduce any bias or subjectivity. Reflexivity involves the awareness and reflection of the researcher, and participant, on their own feelings, values and biases. This practice attempts to redress the power inequalities in order to construct meaning and expand understanding (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). King (1996) proposed several factors that influenced the relationship between the participant and researcher, including the status of the researcher and the handling of sensitive material. Plummer (1995) suggested that characteristics of the researcher needed to be considered as to their effect on the research process, including age, gender, class, ethnicity and the pre-existing values and attitudes or biases. These affect the data collection, analytic and interpretation processes. These aspects are reviewed in respect to the present study.

The researcher was the same gender and of a similar age to the participants. This may have affected the way in which participants related to the researcher as being able to understand their position. The researcher did not have children and this may have influenced the relationship. Some of the mothers enquired about this and expressed a view that being a mother would increase the researchers level of understanding. Ethnicity may have been a more crucial factor in the relationship, as the researcher was white Anglo British. This may have affected the process in several ways. In the interview it may have influenced mothers in believing that the researcher could not really understand their worlds. Some mothers went into a lot of detail to explain certain elements of their culture whereas others may have felt that the interview was exploring differences that they didn't believe existed or were irrelevant. A researcher with similar ethnicity to the participants may have formed a more trusting relationship as participants felt that their situation would be understood. There may be a difference in the amount of contact participants had with Anglo British people and this may have affected the ease of relating. Some mothers expressed that their children were

surprised to see the researcher as they were only used to seeing other Asian people at home.

Marshall and Woollett (1997) comment on the issue of ethnicity and suggest that knowledge and experience of ethnic groups may temper the lack of ethnic matching. The present study acknowledges that although the researcher was of different ethnicity, her position was not of complete naivety. She approached the research with a background of familiarity with different ethnic and cultural practices and values stemming from living and working in a multi-ethnic city.

Socio-economic status may also have been an important factor. The researcher was of similar socio-economic status to most of the participants. However, she may have been perceived as being of a higher socio-economic status. Combined with higher education, the researcher may have been viewed as being in a privileged position. The professional identity of the researcher, as a clinical psychologist in training, was shared with the participants. This along with the other factors may have contributed to an imbalance of power within the relationship. Attempts were made to minimise this effect through adopting a non-judgemental stance, and maintaining a warm and respectful atmosphere through a conversational tone. The sensitive nature of the enquiry required the researcher to be empathic at times in understanding the mothers' position, so that they did not feel they were being judged. However, it is acknowledged that this area is highly emotive and contentious within a society in which judgements are made regarding parenting and relationships. Hence, mothers may have been guarded to some extent. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity were very important to some mothers and may have helped this to a degree. However, despite these factors some mothers were extremely frank in their discussions and welcomed the chance to talk about their views.

The researcher was also biased by the adoption of theoretical frameworks, including attachment theory and other parenting models. The researcher was familiar with this from clinical experience and reading. Strauss & Corbin (1990) advocate the inclusion of clinical and personal experience in the analytic process as it enhances theoretical sensitivity. Although attachment theory influenced the collection and analysis of the data, the final interpretation has attempted to achieve a wider view of the parenting process in an attempt to reflect the participants' perspectives. As the analysis progressed further familiarisation

with the literature expanded the discussion.

At the start of the research process, the Qualitative Research Forum provided ongoing support and peer group supervision, with input from an experienced qualitative researcher. This provided the opportunity to discuss and have validated certain aspects of the analysis, such as categories and also develop sensitivity to certain issues. This was particularly useful considering the researcher was independent in the research process. Opportunity to have feedback on interpretations and the emergent theory was provided by the academic supervisor and other clinicians.

4.2.8 Ethical Issues

Research examining the views and customs of other cultures, is sensitive and has to be handled in an appropriate manner so as not to be construed as discriminatory or offensive. Maitra (1995) suggests that the interactive effects of racism, minority status and socio-economic disadvantage need to be examined in relation to cultural aspects otherwise "a focus on culture alone will merely serve to keep minority groups in the position of exotic curiosities, rather like 'natives' to early explorers".

Consequently this work has been put into context of the community and society in order to understand the many influences on the parenting process and relationships in Asian families living in Britain.

The way in which this information is used will be non-exploitative when set in context. The interviews were carried out in a respectful manner of the individual's perspective. The participants are to receive some written or oral feedback, according to preference, on the findings of the study. The results will also be presented at a seminar for mental health professionals working in the Child and Family Psychiatric Service in Leicestershire so that it is available for clinicians to use to inform their practice.

The responsibility of the researcher in cultural research has been widely documented, and in particular the potential societal consequences of the interpretation of findings (Foster & Martinez, 1995). This is partly achieved through discouraging ethnocentric interpretations,

considering a wide range of hypotheses, acknowledging the limitations and potential biases of ones methods and findings, and ascertaining whether consideration of the issue will undermine the welfare of the ethnic group involved. These have been considered in this research study. The views of the participants have been respected and valued, rather than judged according to existing frameworks. This has been achieved through the use of qualitative methods.

4.2.9 Future Research Direction

The present study has highlighted a lack of research in the area of parenting and understanding relationships in Asian families living in Britain. This research has opened out some opportunities to explore areas using both qualitative and quantitative measures. For example, ethnic identity and parenting, longitudinal studies to investigate how these factors, such as identity and cultural propagation strategies change over time. It would also be beneficial clinically to explore how strategies to cope with discrimination are transmitted and developmental differences. This research study encompassed many areas. It would be useful to focus on a fewer number of issues and do a more in-depth analysis. Studies investigating differences according to socio-economic status, religion, length of time in Britain would be fruitful and add to the development of the existing theory.

4.3 Clinical Implications

Clinicians who have research interests in the area of parenting in Asian and other ethnic minority families have been writing about their concerns regarding the under-representation of Asian families in child mental health services (Vyas, 1991). Forehand and Kotchick (1996) expressed concerns that cultural differences in beliefs and values were not given adequate consideration in psychological interventions such as parenting training programmes. This has huge implications for the quality of the provision and implementation of mental health services.

The findings from the present study provide a theoretical framework with which to understand the process of parenting in Asian Hindu families in Britain. This model of 'normal' parenting may enable clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals

to assess families with parenting difficulties to understand at which stage of the model there maybe a problem. For example, the family may be perceiving and indeed experiencing some threats to the parenting process and may be finding difficulties balancing the parenting process in order to put the child's preparation for life back on course. Once the difficulty has been established, interventions may be implemented in order to facilitate the parents in continuing with their parenting process. However, it is also important to validate the parents' difficulties in the context of their parenting process. Thus, highlighting the effects of ethnic minority parenting. Indeed, this model suggests that there are many points in which the parenting process may veer off course. This may be more pronounced in British Asian families, with them being more prone to risk of psychological difficulties due to the importance of, and struggle to, feel a sense of belonging in both cultures and communities. However, the sense of choice that is involved may mediate this risk.

4.4 Personal, Clinical and Research Reflections

The present study has enabled the researcher to reflect on her personal development and her role as clinical psychologist and researcher. This research process has highlighted the ease with which value judgements can be made and the potential damaging effects of making such an error. In her work with Asian children and their families, the researcher has become more aware of the possible contributing factors to distress and how subtle forms of prejudice may still operate at different levels of service provision. As a researcher, she has learnt that the process of research is fraught with hurdles, particularly in recruitment, and that working with conceptually difficult and sensitive areas, such as child rearing and culture can be a challenging experience, which should not be undertaken lightly.

4.5 Conclusions

The present research study has provided an account of the parenting process of the Asian Hindu mothers who participated. As Marshall and Woollett (1997) suggest, the intention of this thesis was "not for the diversity to be measured up against and compared to a white middle-class norm resulting for adaptation or acculturation on the part of mothers, but that the diversity should inform adaptation and change in health and psychological practices."

Thus this research occurred within a political context with practical and clinical implications.

The aim was to conduct an exploration of 'normal' family patterns, relationships and practices arising from the multi-cultural context. Sampson (1991 cited by Marshall and Woollett, 1997) referred to this as an 'ethnopsychological' approach which attempts to "understand a concept or idea ... within the particular context that has generated it ... by letting others' formulations speak for themselves". In doing so, this research provided a forum for the expression of a viewpoint, which is rarely heard or valued.

Garcia Coll et al (1995) suggest that the basic parenting processes of adaptation and balancing demands from within and outside the family system are shared by most families, regardless of their ethnicity or minority status. As the findings of the present study indicate, there are however, "additional considerations that are critical for ethnic and minority families that need to be incorporated at the core of theoretical models and empirical investigations of parenting" (Garcia Coll et al, 1995). This research went some way in addressing these issues but the wealth of the work is yet to be done.

Meeting the needs of ethnic minority children and their families still remains an important challenge for mental health services.

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6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 APPENDIX 1

Dear

As part of the Clinical Psychology course at Leicester University, I am doing some research to find out about what it is like for Asian women bringing up children in Britain.

If you were to volunteer to take part it would involve talking with you to find out about your views and experiences, and things you feel are important to consider when bringing up your children. The interview would probably take about an hour and can happen at a time suitable to you, at your home if you wish.

No one will be able to identify you from the research as your name will not be used and nothing you say will be used in a way that could identify you. It will be anonymous. The information that I get will be used to understand your views and will not be used to judge your ability as a parent.

Are you able to participate?

Would you describe yourself as being of Asian ethnic origin?

Were you born in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Uganda or Britain?

Did you receive some education as a child in Britain?

Would you describe yourself as Hindu?

Do you have a child between the ages of 2 and 4 and attending a playgroup or nursery?

If you can answer yes to all of these questions and would be interested in talking to me, please fill in the slip and return it to the nursery. I will then contact you to answer any questions and arrange a time to meet you.

Thank you for reading this and taking part,

Yours sincerely,

Sara Carr
Psychologist

Name:

I would be willing to talk with you and you can contact me on _____
or at _____.

6.2 APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER

PURPOSE : Thank you again for making the time to meet with me. As I explained earlier, I would like to spend about 1 hour talking with you today to find out about your views on your relationship with your child. As you are already aware, I am interested in finding out more about Asian women's views and experiences of bringing up children in Britain..

I have already thought of some questions that may help to guide our discussion. However, I hope this can be like an informal conversation and you feel able to mention things that you think are important to you that I have missed.

CONFIDENTIALITY : I mentioned earlier that I would like to tape record the interview. This is so that I can capture your words and ideas accurately. I will also take some notes whilst we are talking to help me make sense of the tape when I listen to it again. No one else will have access to the tapes or notes except for myself and my academic supervisor at the University. When I write up the research, nothing will be used in a way that would enable anyone to identify you.

Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Child's experiences of separations and reunions

Separation reactions : Describe the situation when you drop him/her off at nursery (behaviour, feelings, thoughts - you and child).

Reunion reactions : Describe the situation when you collect him/her from nursery (behaviour, thoughts, feelings - you and child).

Separation experiences : What experiences has your child had of being separated from you?(who with, when, age, frequency)

Strangers: What is your child like with strangers - when you are there, when you are not there? (child behaviour, feelings, thoughts - you)

Your child and your relationship

Can you describe what your child is like.(age, personality, temperament?)

How do you know when your child is happy? (feelings, behaviour, situations)

How do you know when your child is unhappy/upset? (feelings, behaviour, situations - public vs. private?)

How do you respond?(feelings, thoughts, behaviour, situations?)

How would you describe your relationship with your child?

Cultural influences on child rearing - socialisation goals

Most mothers, when they have a child, have some idea about what sort of person they would like their child to grow up to be. When you think about your children, what sort of qualities would you like them to have as they grow older? Good things?

What sort of qualities or characteristics would you definitely not want them to have, bad things, as they grow older?

Think of a child between the ages of 2 and 4 who has at least the beginnings of some of

these qualities (can be own child or other known). Describe the good side of the child's personality.-behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

Describe the bad characteristics or naughty side of the child's personality - behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

Is there anything you, as parent, can do to affect what sort of qualities a child may grow up have?

I'd just like you to consider this situation for a moment.

Mrs Rajan had son called Sanjay who was one year old. She had to go to the doctor's one day and took Sanjay with her. Mrs Rajan had to complete some forms in the waiting room and then take them to the receptionist's room. There was one other patient in the waiting room who agreed to watch over Sanjay for a few minutes whilst his mum was out of the room.

How would you expect Sanjay to feel, think and behave and why - if good qualities & if bad qualities?

How would you expect Sanjay to feel, think, behave when you return?

How do you think mum would feel, think, behave and why?

How would you describe your own ethnic identity? (traditional - how?)

Prompt if not covered previously: Influences on the way you bring up your child

- Traditional Asian child rearing practices, values and beliefs (cultural, religious)
- Western culture (values, practices)

The role of the family

Where were you born, at what age did you come to Britain?

Who else lives with you at home?

Husband - ethnic identity, country of origin - differences - effect on child rearing?

The role of other family members. (those at home and not at home, contact)

How involved are they - decision making, physical childcare needs, minding.

How do you feel about their involvement (ideal vs. reality)

What is the relationship like between them and your child?

Information

Age, education - in years/level

Length of time in Britain - self, husband & family

Country of origin of family

Do you have any questions?

Thank you again for taking part.

6.3 APPENDIX 3

Vignette 1

Mrs Rajan had a son called Sanjay who was two years old. It was his first day at nursery. Mrs Rajan and the teacher thought that it he might be upset when his mum left him to go home as he had not been apart from his mum for long before except with relatives whom he was used to being with. Mrs Rajan planned to collect him in three hours so he was not on his own for long. Whilst Mrs Rajan was talking to the teacher, Sanjay played with some of the toys that were nearby. When Mrs Rajan came to leave she explained to him that she would come back for him soon, said goodbye and gave him a hug. Sanjay began crying and appeared very upset. He tried to stay close to his mum, clinging on to her leg. Mrs Rajan tried to reassure him and eventually left with Sanjay still crying. The teacher had difficulty calming him and he remained upset for a lot of the time. When Mrs Rajan arrived to collect him, Sanjay saw her and ran to her immediately, smiling and Mrs Rajan hugged him. She played with Sanjay for a while and then chatted to the teacher whilst he continued to play with the toys.

Vignette 2

Mrs Padmanabhan had a son called Ramesh who was two years old. It was his first day at nursery. The teacher had advised Mrs Padmanabhan to collect Ramesh after a few hours in case he was distressed. Whilst Mrs Padmanabhan talked to the teacher, Ramesh remained close to her and did not play with the toys nearby. When it was time for Mrs Padmanabhan to leave she explained that was leaving and gave him a hug. Ramesh began to cry and tried to cling on to his mum's leg as she tried to leave. Ramesh began to scream and seemed to be extremely upset. The teachers had difficulty calming him, and he remained very upset for most of the time. When Mrs Padmanabhan returned to collect him, Ramesh saw her and went up to her. She tried to give him a hug but he turned away from her. As Mrs Padmanabhan went to talk to the teacher, Ramesh approached his mum again but this time he hit his mum.

Questions

These vignettes describe situations in which a mother and child are separated from each other in an unfamiliar situation. The details of the situation, including how the child reacts to the mother leaving and returning, may give some clues about the sort of relationship that the mother and child have.

Vignette 1

1. How would you describe the sort of relationship the mother and child have in the first vignette? What makes you think that? (behaviour, thoughts, feelings)
2. Children rely on their parents to look after them in lots of ways. They can be seen as being dependent on their parents for providing their physical needs such as feeding and washing. They also depend on their parents to look after them so that they are safe and happy. What do you think about how dependent the child is? Why?

3. How much respect do you think the child has for his mum? Why?
4. How close do you think the child is to his mum? Why?

Vignette 2

1. How would you describe the relationship of the mother and child in the second vignette? What makes you think that? (thoughts, behaviour, feelings) Why do you think he reacts in that way?
2. How dependent do you think this child is on his mum? Why?
3. How much respect do you think the child has? Why?
4. How close do you think the child is to his mum? Why?

6.4 APPENDIX 4

OPEN CODING SPECIMEN

Participant: 2

Page: 4

.That time I really realised...I thought to myself is this the right thing...should I be at work when I really need to be at home, you know . . .erm. . .I suppose, you know, even when you started feeding him, you've got to build them up slowly and whatever and I was always telling my mother-in-law make sure you don't give him this and make sure you don't give him that. I was always thinking 'I wonder if she's doing what I was telling her'. the last thing I want is another reoccurrence of it, you know. . . I mean, yeah, generally our relationship is good. I mean the only regret I suppose is that I'd like to spend more time with him and do more things with him as well...'cos in the week, by the time you get home and have fed him it's time to sleep so you know I want to start him swimming, and you know, just take him to do things, see different things...which tend to be more in the week during the day which you can't do (laughs)...

Concepts

1. doubt (dimension of confidence; category: undermining confidence)
2. responsive (dimension of responsiveness; category: responsibility)
3. mistrust (dimension of trust; category: trustworthiness)
4. neglecting duties (dimension of fulfilling duties; category: worries)
5. divided roles (property; category: undermining confidence)
6. compensation (property; category: facilitating)
7. no control (dimension of sense of control; category: locus of control)

6.5 APPENDIX 5

HUNCH/THEORETICAL MEMO –ACCULTURATION/BICULTURALISM...

‘fitting in/belonging’

Influences of both Asian and Western cultures on mothers sense of identity and also child’s upbringing.

Participants 1, 3 &4 - difficulty in adolescence re ethnic identity and fitting into both cultures.

Participant 4 - use ‘best of both worlds’ when bringing up child. Recognise advantages in both culture and chose most appropriate or what mother agrees with.

Also recognise need to fit into host society and values to succeed in life. Education way of doing this - betterment - accepted by Westerners.

Issues of extent to which Asian culture accepted in Britain - sense that devalued but women report ways of ‘keeping’ culture

6.6 APPENDIX 6: DIAGRAM OF 'RESPONSIBLE NURTURING'

