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PARENTING IN DUAL-CAREER FAMILIES: CHALLENGES, ADAPTATION AND CHILD-REARING PRACTICES

(A Study Conducted in the Nayagarh District of Odisha)

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ABSTRACT

The increasing participation of women in the workforce and changing socio-economic conditions have contributed significantly to the rise of dual-career families in India. In Odisha, particularly in Nayagarh district, dual-income households are becoming increasingly common among teachers, healthcare workers, government employees, bankers, and private-sector professionals. The present study examines parenting practices, work-family balance, child-rearing patterns, and psychosocial challenges among dual-career families in Nayagarh district. A descriptive survey method was adopted with a sample of 120 dual-career couples selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean score analysis, chi-square test, and correlation analysis were used to interpret the data. The findings reveal that while dual-career families experience better economic stability and educational opportunities for children, they also face significant parenting challenges related to time constraints, emotional stress, academic supervision, and work-family conflict. The study further identifies gender disparities in household responsibilities and highlights adaptive strategies adopted by working parents. The research concludes that institutional support, flexible work policies, and shared parenting are essential for healthy family functioning in dual-career households.

Index Terms: Dual-career family, parenting, work-life balance, child-rearing, Nayagarh district, Odisha, family stress.

INTRODUCTION

The structure and functioning of families in India have undergone rapid transformation due to industrialization, urbanization, women's education, and economic modernization. Traditional family patterns where fathers served as primary breadwinners and mothers managed domestic responsibilities have gradually shifted toward dual-career family systems.

A dual-career family refers to a family in which both spouses are engaged in paid employment and simultaneously manage family and parenting responsibilities. Such families have become increasingly common in semi-urban and rural districts like Nayagarh in Odisha. Rising educational attainment and economic aspirations have encouraged women to pursue professional careers alongside family responsibilities.

Although dual incomes improve financial security and social mobility, they also create challenges associated with parenting, emotional bonding, childcare, and family adjustment. Studies indicate that work pressure, role conflict, and time scarcity significantly affect parenting quality in dual-career households. Workplace flexibility and family support systems play an important role in reducing parenting stress among working couples.

The present research attempts to analyze parenting practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms among dual-career families in Nayagarh district with empirical statistical evidence.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several scholars have studied work–family balance and dual-career family dynamics in India and abroad. Early studies on dual-career families focused mainly on role conflict and marital adjustment. The concept of the “dual-career family” was introduced to describe families in which both husband and wife pursue professional careers alongside family responsibilities.

Several researchers have highlighted work–family conflict as a central issue in dual-career households. Work–family conflict occurs when occupational demands interfere with family responsibilities or vice versa. Contemporary studies reveal that dual-earner couples often struggle to maintain equilibrium between work commitments and parenting duties. **(Anu Sohal, Dipanker Sharma, 2025)**

Studies conducted in Asian contexts highlight unique socio-cultural dimensions of dual-career parenting. In many Asian societies, traditional gender expectations continue to shape parenting practices despite women’s employment. **(Peh Joo Ho, 2024)**

A growing body of literature suggests that dual-career parenting can produce both positive and negative outcomes for children. Economically, dual-income families enjoy better financial stability, educational opportunities, healthcare access, and improved living standards. **(Ratna Anjani, 2024)**

Research indicates that parenting practices in dual-career families are shaped by socio-economic, cultural, and psychological factors. A systematic review on childcare in dual-career families found that parents frequently depend on grandparents, daycare centers, domestic helpers, or relatives for childcare support. **(Merida Reformasi, 2022)**

Researchers observed that balancing professional and domestic roles often created stress, time constraints, and emotional pressure, particularly for women. Studies reported that working mothers frequently experienced guilt and anxiety because of societal expectations regarding childcare and household responsibilities. **(G.S. Tryon, 2018)**

Adaptation strategies adopted by dual-career families have become an important area of research. Effective communication, cooperative decision-making, flexible work arrangements, and time management are commonly identified coping mechanisms. **(Roberta A. Neault, 2007)**

Existing literature indicates that although economic conditions improve in dual-career families, parenting challenges remain significant due to lack of institutional childcare and unequal gender roles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study parenting practices among dual-career families in Nayagarh district.
2. To identify parenting challenges faced by working couples.
3. To examine the impact of dual-career parenting on children.
4. To analyze gender distribution of childcare responsibilities.
5. To suggest measures for improving parenting effectiveness in dual-career households.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive and analytical research design.

Area of Study

The research was conducted in Nayagarh district of Odisha.

Sample

A total of 120 dual-career families were selected through purposive sampling from Nayagarh Municipality, Daspalla, Khandapada, and nearby semi-urban regions.

Sources of Data

Primary Data

- Structured questionnaire
- Personal interview
- Observation method

Secondary Data

- Journals
- Books
- Government reports
- Research articles

Statistical Tools Used

- Percentage analysis
- Mean score analysis

DATA ANALYSIS**Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents****Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Group	Percentage
25–30 years	20%
31–35 years	31.7%
36–40 years	28.3%
Above 40 years	20%
Total	100%

The majority of respondents belonged to the 31–35 years age group, indicating active career-building and parenting stages.

Table 2: Occupational Distribution

Occupation	Percentage
Government employees	30%
Teachers	26.7%
Bank employees	15%
Healthcare workers	11.7%
Private sector employees	16.6%
Total	100%

Government employees and teachers formed the major occupational groups among dual-career families.

Parenting Practices in Dual-Career Families

The study found that parenting in dual-career households involves planned routines, shared responsibilities, and dependence on external childcare support.

Table 3: Parenting Practices Adopted

Parenting Practice	Percentage
Shared parenting	35%
Grandparental support	23.3%
Daycare/maid support	15%
Scheduled parenting routines	16.7%
Digital monitoring	10%
Total	100%

Shared parenting emerged as the most common parenting strategy among respondents.

Parenting Challenges Faced by Dual-Career Families

Table 4: Major Parenting Challenges

Challenges	Percentage
Lack of quality time	38.3%
Academic supervision difficulties	20%
Emotional stress	18.3%
Childcare arrangements	13.4%
Work–family conflict	10%
Total	100%

Lack of quality time with children was identified as the most significant challenge.

Research findings from Indian dual-career studies similarly indicate that work pressure and time constraints negatively affect family interaction and parenting quality.

Gender Roles in Parenting

The study revealed significant gender differences in childcare and domestic responsibilities.

Table 5: Distribution of Parenting Responsibilities

Responsibility	Mostly Mothers	Shared	Mostly Fathers
Homework supervision	62%	28%	10%
Healthcare management	68%	24%	8%
School communication	70%	22%	8%
Recreational activities	24%	46%	30%

Women continue to shoulder greater parenting responsibilities despite employment outside the home.

Impact on Children

The study identified both positive and negative impacts of dual-career parenting.

Positive Effects

- Better educational opportunities
- Improved financial security
- Higher exposure to technology and modern learning
- Increased independence among children

Negative Effects

- Emotional loneliness
- Reduced parental supervision
- Increased screen time
- Behavioral issues in some children

Research also indicates that parental stress may negatively affect emotional sensitivity and child attachment.

Adaptive Strategies Used by Parents

Respondents adopted several coping mechanisms to maintain family balance:

1. Time scheduling
2. Shared parenting
3. Weekend family activities
4. Emotional communication
5. Dependence on grandparents
6. Flexible work arrangements
7. Online academic monitoring

These adaptive practices helped reduce work–family conflict and strengthened emotional bonding.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Dual-career families are increasing rapidly in Nayagarh district.
2. Most respondents belong to middle-class nuclear families.
3. Lack of quality time is the major parenting challenge.
4. Women experience greater childcare burden than men.
5. Shared parenting improves child wellbeing.
6. Work pressure significantly influences parenting stress.
7. Economic stability positively affects educational opportunities for children.
8. Institutional childcare support remains inadequate.
9. Emotional stress affects parent–child relationships.
10. Educated couples increasingly prefer collaborative parenting models.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Employers should provide flexible working hours and family-friendly policies.
2. Government should establish affordable daycare facilities in semi-urban areas.
3. Parenting awareness programmes should be organized through schools and community centres.
4. Fathers should actively participate in childcare and domestic responsibilities.
5. Counselling services for working parents should be strengthened.
6. Schools should maintain stronger parent–teacher communication systems.
7. Community support groups for dual-career parents may help reduce parenting stress.

CONCLUSION

The rise of dual-career families represents an important socio-economic transformation in contemporary Indian society. In Nayagarh district, educational advancement and employment opportunities have increased the prevalence of dual-income households. While such families enjoy improved economic conditions and social mobility, they also face substantial parenting challenges associated with time management, emotional stress, and childcare responsibilities.

The study clearly demonstrates that parenting effectiveness in dual-career families depends on shared responsibilities, supportive workplace environments, and strong emotional communication between parents and children. Gender equality in domestic work and institutional childcare support are essential for improving family wellbeing.

The findings emphasize that parenting in dual-career families should not be viewed merely as a private issue but as an important social concern requiring policy support, organizational flexibility, and community-based childcare systems.

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