Parenting in modern Britain: understanding the experiences of Asian fathers

YHRMP ID
11
Author(s)
Salway, Sarah; Chowbey, Punita and Clarke, Lynda

Aims

The study explores the relationship between cultural, religious, economic and social factors in the fathering behaviour and experiences of Asian men in the United Kingdom.

Methodology

Adopting a qualitative approach, the initial stage of the research involved identifying participants with children between 3-8 years of age from two locations [Sheffield and East London] who were from four religio-ethnic groups: Bangladeshi Muslims; Pakistani Muslims; Gujarati Hindus; and Punjabi Hindus. A total of 80 individuals were identified and engaged through a series of data generation methods including key informant interviews, focus groups discussions [mothers and fathers], open-ended

interviews with fathers and informal observation. The second phase involved 59 in-depth interviews with fathers and 33 with mothers. The lack of inclusion of white fathers was seen as a potential shortcoming of the research.

Key issues

Fathers contribute to their children's upbringing both directly and indirectly with the majority contributing materially and a large number regularly contributing to feeding, bathing and personal childcare tasks. While the ability to earn an income was seen as an important aspect of being a father, it practically constrained some fathers from contributing in other ways. Gendered norms and attitudes in their religio-ethnic community restricted some fathers' involvement in some childcare tasks, such as personal hygiene: adoption of a house husband role was felt to receive widespread condemnation especially if the mother was working. Family support services had little influence on the fathering practices of Asian men and attitudes to paid childcare were varied.

Conclusions

The research highlights the great diversity of practices within ethnic groups and there are common elements with fathers from other UK ethnic groups, including white fathers which suggest that the design of services specifically for Asian fathers is not warranted. At the same time it is suggested that policy and practice can do more to support fathers including: supporting

the transmission of language, religion and cultural identity to children; protecting children from racism; understanding that childcare takes place within the wider family; and understand how cultural norms and religious teachings influence parenting behaviours. The encouragement of more involved fatherhood requires gendered stereotypes to be broken down and high levels of father involvement legitimised. Great value is placed by Asian fathers on education and there is a need to expand initiatives that help migrant mothers and fathers gain familiarity with education system.

Web Link
Parenting in modern Britain: understanding the experiences of Asian fathers [li…
Migrant Group
Non-EU migrants
Topic
Children and young people
Children
Education
Pakistani
Place
Sheffield
Year
2009
Resource Type
Report
Contact Name
Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Email

info@jrf.org.uk

Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/research-entry/parenting-modern-britain-understanding-experiences-asian-fathers*