CHAPTER- V

RESUME

Child development can be understood as the physical, cognitive, social and emotional maturation of human beings from conception to adulthood. The process of growth in intellectual abilities such as thinking, reasoning and understanding, is a major component of early childhood. According to the World Health Organization, the period of childhood is the most important phase of development in the life of a human being. Across the World, today eight million children are living in institutions.

Most of the children are poor and disabled, and they come from minority communities. Thousands of children are separated from their families and are consequently institutionalised. Cognitive development refers to the process of growth and change in intellectual and mental abilities. It includes the acquisition and consolidation of knowledge. Parents, family members, friends, caregivers, teachers are the factors which play a vital role in supporting the cognitive development.

In this present investigation, the researcher aims to find out the differences in the cognitive competence of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children. The cognitive competence of the children depends on the environments in which children live. There are different environmental factors which are conducive for the development of cognitive competence of the children and these are chosen for this study.

The information relevant to the environmental factors was collected through semi-structured interview-schedule prepared by the investigator. To collect the data for the present study two tools were used viz, the Pass Along Test and the Embedded Figure Test. The Pass Along Test was developed by W. P. Alexander as one measure for assessing
intellectual skills among the children. The Embedded Figure Test which was originally developed by Witkin is adopted to assess the psychological differentiation and perceptual competency among the children.

The present project is an attempt to investigate the different aspects and their influences on the development of cognitive competence among the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children. The main objectives of the present study were:

- To compare the intellectual skills of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children.
- To compare the perceptual competency of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children.
- To compare the intellectual skills of the male and the female students among both the groups.
- To compare the perceptual competency of the male and the female students among both the groups.
- To investigate the environmental impact on the development of cognitive competence among the children.
- To suggest for developing skills for improving cognitive competence.

In view of these objectives and measures adopted for the present investigation the following hypotheses are formulated.

- There will be no significant differences in the intellectual skills of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children.
• There will be no significant differences in the perceptual competency of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children.

• There will be no significant differences in terms of the intellectual skills among the male and the female children.

• There will be no significant differences in perceptual competency of the male and the female children.

In the present study the total sample size is 320. The 320 samples have been classified as 160 institutionalised children and 160 non-institutionalised children who were selected randomly using purposive sampling technique from Greater Guwahati area of the state of Assam. Of the total samples 50% male and 50% female were selected among both the groups i.e. from institutionalised and non-institutionalised group. The ages of the samples range from 8 years to 12 years. Different institutions, such as Snehalaya, Children’s Home, Sishu Kalyan, Sishu Sadan and State Home have been selected for collecting data and relevant information. Non-institutionalised samples were collected from Government and Private schools which includes both English and Assamese medium schools. The non-institutionalised children are drawn from different schools located in the Greater Guwahati area of the Kamrup Metropolitan District. The present project adopted the 2x2 factorial designs for its study. Two groups i.e. institutionalised and non-institutionalised and male and female were compared on various measures. The parametric test like mean, S.D, t-test and ANOVA was worked out to see the differences amongst the groups.

For the present study a semi-structured interview schedule prepared by the investigator was used to collect the demographic information and other related personal data about the subjects. It contains 13 questions relating to age, sex, education, relationship, extra-curricular activities etc. Each subject was interviewed individually by the investigator. Environmental factors like institutionalised residence/family residence, duration of stay in institutionalised residence, status of parents i.e. having both
parent/single parent or whether the child is an orphan, whether the child has brothers/sisters or not, friendship, time devoted for study, involvement in extracurricular activities were found to play important role in the development of cognitive competence of the children. The infrastructural facilities of the state run institutionalised residences are not up to the mark. It was observed during the investigation that the inmates of the state run institutionalised residences are not getting due emotional care. On the other hand, infrastructural facilities of the institutional residences run by Trusts were found satisfactory. During the investigation the researcher felt that the inmates of the institutionalised residences run by Trusts are getting due emotional care to some extent. Among the institutionalised children, most of them are orphan and some of them are having single parent. A few of them only have both parents but due to separation of their parents they are to stay in the institutionalised residence for which they have been deprived of parental care. Due to lack of interaction with parents the institutionalised children fail to develop intellectual skills and perceptual competency. All the non-institutionalised children have both parents and thus are able to have sufficient interaction with their parents which results in increase in their cognitive competence.

The performances on Pass Along Test are capable of assessing the intellectual skills of the subjects. A significant difference has been found between the obtained scores of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children. The institutionalised children showed poor performances compared to their counterparts implying that the non-institutionalised children have more intellectual skills than the institutionalised children. Differences in performances among the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children are quite significant. The results obtained on Pass Along Test rejected the hypothesis No. 1 which states that “There will be no significant differences in intellectual skills of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children”

The outcome of the Pass Along Test shows that the male children have performed better compared to the female children. The performances on the Pass Along Test of the male and the female children is quite significant. Again, in both the institutionalised and
the non-institutionalised group, the male have shown better performance compared to the female subjects signifying that the male have more intellectual skills as compared to the female. Differences of the institutionalised male and the institutionalised female children as well as of the non-institutionalised male and the non-institutionalised female children are quite significant. The results obtained on the Pass Along Test rejected the hypothesis No. 3 which states that “There will be no significant differences in terms of the intellectual skills among the male and the female children”.

On the basis of the performances of the Pass Along Test of the institutionalised children and the non-institutionalised children, they have been categorized into different categories viz, Superior, Bright, Average, Dull and Borderline. It was found that among the total samples of 320, 9.1% are Superior children, Bright children is 31.9, Average children is 39.1, Dull children is 11.3 and Borderline children is 8.8.

The performances of the institutionalised children on Embedded Figure Test were found to be lower compared to the non-institutionalised children. This has indicated that the institutionalised children have lower perceptual competency i.e. they are poor in disembedding task. The non-institutionalised subjects have performed significantly better compared to the institutionalised subjects signifying that the non-institutionalised children have more perceptual competency than the institutionalised children. This indicates the non-institutionalised children are more field independent than the institutionalised children. Differences in performances among the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children are quite significant. The results obtained on Embedded Figure Test rejected the hypothesis No. 2 which states that “There will be no significant differences in the perceptual competency of the institutionalised and the non-institutionalised children”.

The result of the Embedded Figure Test shows that the male children have performed better compared to the female children. The performances on Embedded Figure Test among the male and the female children are quite significant. Again, in both the
institutionalised and the non-institutionalised groups, the male have shown better performances compared to the female subjects. This indicates that the male have more perceptual competency as compared to the female children. Thus it shows that the male children are more field independent than the female children. Differences of the institutionalised male and the institutionalised female children as well as of the non-institutionalised male and the non-institutionalised female children are quite significant. The results obtained on Embedded Figure Test rejected the hypothesis No. 4 which states that “There will be no significant differences in perceptual competency of the male and the female children”.

From the findings of the study it may be concluded that the non-institutionalised children possess higher intellectual skills and perceptual competency compared to the institutionalised children. Hence, the non-institutionalised children showed high cognitive competence than the institutionalised children. The present study is one of the few studies conducted on the cognitive competence of the institutionalised children and the non-institutionalised children of the Greater Guwahati Area of the Kamrup Metropolitan District of Assam. The investigator has been greatly inspired to work on such subjects. On the basis of the findings of the present study the investigator would like to recommend the following suggestions.

1. Efficient and highly motivated trained caretakers and experts should be employed in the institutionalised residences so that the institutionalised children could get proper guidance and due care for improving their overall performance/cognitive competence.

2. In the state run institutionalised residences infrastructural facilities should be improved and these should be maintained properly.

3. In the state run institutionalised residences inmates should be given lessons in maintaining good health by imparting valuable guidance for improving
their sense of hygiene. In this connection the caretakers are to accomplish their responsibility religiously.

4. Interaction between the caretakers of the institutionalised residences and the inmates residing there should be like that between parents and children. Such interactions are desirable for improving their skills which will help enhance their cognitive competence.

5. The participation in extracurricular activities by the inmates of the institutionalised residences should be highly encouraged by the concerned caretakers so that they can improve their latent skills.

6. The Central Government as well as the State Government must come forward to extend their helping hand by providing sufficient financial grants to the institutionalised residences located in this region.

7. The members of the Civil Society can also play important role by involving themselves in the management of the institutionalised residences with all devotion.

8. The investigator humbly submits that the conclusions arrived at are not the last say on the subject and they are to be evaluated by conducting further study.