CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of human development focuses on issues of growth, development and behavioural change across the lifespan. According to Dr. Alexander’s model, human development is a “U” shaped function; first developing inwardly until transcendental consciousness is reached, then developing outwardly as it brings the qualities of transcendental consciousness into all levels of mind and activity (Orme-Johnson, 2000). This includes all aspect of human growth, including physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and perceptual and personality development.

Cognition is a term used to describe the psychological process involved in the acquisition, organization and use of knowledge emphasizing the rational rather than emotional characteristics. Cognition refers to the processing of information about the environment that is received through the senses. Etymologically, it is derived from the Latin word ‘cognoscere’ (to learn), which in turn is based on ‘gnoscere’ (to know) (Woods, 2001). Cognition is the mental process of attention, perception, memory and information processing by which the individual acquires the knowledge; solves problems and plans for future.

Cognition is a term referring to the mental processes involved in gaining knowledge and comprehension. These processes include thinking, knowing, remembering, judging and problem solving. Cognition refers to the processing of information about the environment that is received through the sense. Cognitive process involves:

- The selection of information,
- The making alterations in the selection of information,
- The association of items of information with each others,
- The elaboration of information in thought,
- The storage of information in memory, when needed,
- The retrieval of stored information.
“Cognitive” is the adjectival form of the word ‘cognition’. It is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge; relating to processes of the use of reasoning, intuition and perception. Cognitive development—the brain’s development often is associated with intellectual capacities, but also includes memory and sensory development. The general expectation of every society is to see their childhood develops in such a successive manner that their cognitive competence will march each stage of development. Child development refers to the biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the end of adolescence as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2002). The development of a child’s cognition takes place through the process of sensing, perceiving, using symbols and reasoning. Cognitive development is a term that covers human perception, thinking and learning. Cognitive development is the development of the thinking and organizing systems of the brain. It involves language, mental imagery, thinking, reasoning, and problem solving and memory development. (Morrow, T.M, Lucas, A and Morley 1999).

Cognitive abilities are the function of brain and develop with age. As the brain matures more and more abilities develop, not only in number, but also in quality. The infant initially can only take in the information but gradually he develops the ability to process this information and use it for his own benefit. It is the growth and refinement of cognitive abilities which is referred to a cognitive development.

Cognitive development refers to the process of growth and change in intellectual/mental abilities such as thinking, reasoning and understanding. It includes the acquisition and consolidation of knowledge. Parents, family members, friends, teachers and caregivers play a vital role in supporting the cognitive development of children by providing the healthy interpersonal or social-emotional context in which cognitive development unfolds. It is the construction of thought processes, including remembering, problem solving and decision making from childhood through adolescence to adulthood (Peterson2008, Children’s Health Encyclopedia, 2009).
1.1 Factors that influence in cognitive development:

During the childhood period various factors play a significant role in cognitive development. A child’s home environment, the amount of time taken to teach the child new skills, and how well the child interacts with others may all play a role. Children who have been abused or neglected may have average, but they may develop more slowly. The factors that influence in cognitive development are as follows:

- **Biological factors:**
  
  For proper development, biological aspect is said to be a one, which helps to lead cognitive development.

  i) Sense organs: in cognitive development, sense organs play an important role because they receive stimuli from the environment. Their proper development helps in receiving correct stimuli and the correct concepts are formed. Defective sense organs collect defective stimuli as a result wrong concepts can be formed and the cognitive development will not be perfect.

  ii) Intelligence: Intelligence affects all mental capacities. It has been seen that cognitive development of intelligent children is better. Children with low Intelligence quotient are not able to receive stimuli from the environment properly, thus their cognitive development lags behind.

  iii) Heredity: Cognitive development is also influenced by the hereditary traits; one gets from his parents. Their development is similar to their parents.

  iv) Maturation: As the child gets matured he gets more interactive with his environment. For a good cognitive development interaction with environment is very necessary which the child does with the help of his mental and motor maturation. They help directly in the development of cognition.
• Environmental factors:

i) Learning opportunities: The opportunity the child gets to learn, affects the cognitive development. The more opportunities he gets the better is the cognition, because he will be able to add to his mental capacities by learning through these opportunities.

ii) Economic status: Economic state of the family also helps in the development of cognition. Children from better economic status get more opportunities and better training and it helps in cognitive development.

iii) Play: Play is also quite important in developing cognition. Through play activities, the child interacts with new processes, acquire knowledge and also all areas of a child’s development can be enhanced.

• Various types of stimuli:

As child grows, he gets various stimuli from environment through his senses and perceives their meanings. These stimuli form concepts and symbols. Parents and other people around the child could assist him get the right meanings of stimuli. Parents also teach their child various social skills by being a good role model.

• Family and society:

The child learns observing and imitating others. He learns language, habits, by observing family and people around them. If society provides encouraging atmosphere, facilities, health facilities etc. to the children, they will develop possibility and good cognitive capacity. So, the family and society, both plays an important role in the development of cognition of the child.

1.2 History of cognitive Psychology:

Since the beginning of experimental psychology in the nineteenth century, there had been interest in the study of higher mental processes. But something discontinuous happened in the 1950’s, something so dramatic that it is now referred to as the “cognition
revolution” and the view of mental processes that it spawned is called “cognitive psychology”.

Philosophically, ruminations of the human mind and its processes have been around since the times of the ancient Greeks. In 387 BC, Plato has known to have suggested that the brain was the seat of the mental processes. In 1637, Rene Descartes posited that humans are born with innate ideas and forwarded the idea of mind-body dualism, which would come to be known as substance dualism (essentially the idea that the mind and the body are two separate substances). From that time, major debates ensued through the 19th century regarding whether human thought was solely experiential or included innate knowledge.

In the mid-20th century, three main influences arose that would inspire and shape cognitive psychology as a formal school of thought:

- With the development of new warfare technology during World War II, the need for a greater understanding of human performance comes to prominence. Problems such as how to best train soldiers to use new technology and how to deal with matters of attention while duress became areas of need for military personnel.

- Developments in computer science would lead to parallels being drawn between human thought and the computational functionality of computers, opening entirely new areas of psychological thought.

- Developing the concept of artificial intelligence (AI) and later worked with cognitive psychologists regarding the implications of AI. The effective result was more of a framework conceptualization counterpart in computers (memory, storage, retrieval etc.).
1.3 Cognition in Renaissance and Beyond:

Renaissance philosophers and theologians seemed generally satisfied that knowledge was located in the brain. During the 18th century, when philosophic psychology was brought to the point where scientific psychology could assume a role, the British empiricists George Berkeley, David Hume and later, James Mill and his son John Stuart Mill suggested that internal representation is of three types:

- Direct sensory events;
- Faint copies of percepts, or those that are stored in memory; and
- Transformation of these faint copies, as in associated thought.

During the 19th century, psychologists started to break away from philosophy to form a discipline based on empirical results rather than on speculation. Conspicuous as a factor in this emergence was the activity of the early psychologist’s Gustav Fechner, Franz Brentano, Hermann Helmholtz, Wilhelm Wundt, G.E. Muller, Oswald Kulpe, Hermann Ebbinghaus, Sir Francis Galton, Edward Titchener and William James.

By the last half of nineteenth century, theories of the representation of knowledge were clearly dichotomous.

1.4 Cognitive Psychology: The Early Twentieth Century:

The representation of knowledge took a radical turn with the advent of twentieth-century behaviorism and Gestalt psychology. The behaviorist views of human and animal psychology were cast in a framework of stimulus-response psychology, and Gestalt theorists built elaborate conceptualizations of internal representation within the context of isomorphism—one-to-one relationship between representation and reality.
Psychological studies of mental processes as conceptualized in the late nineteenth century suddenly became unfashionable, displaced by behaviorism. Studies of internal mental operations and structures such as attention, consciousness, memory and thinking were laid to rest and remained so for about fifty years.

1.5 Theoretical Background of the cognitive development:

Kagon and Kagon (67) have traced the historical theoretical background of cognitive development in their article “Variation in cognitive Processes.” They have touched the differential cognitive structure of the children and the effect of various factors on the cognitive development.

1.6 Cognitive Approaches: Piaget:

Childhood is not only a period of amazing physical growth; it is also a time of remarkable mental development. Cognitive abilities associated with memory, reasoning, problem-solving and thinking continue to emerge throughout childhood cognitive development, it would be impossible to avoid mentioning the work of psychologist Jean Piaget.

The most well-known and influential theory of cognitive development is that of French Psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget’s theory, first published in 1952, grew out of decades of extensive observation of children, including his own, in their natural environment as opposed to the laboratory experiments of the behaviorists. Although Piaget was interested in how children reacted to their environment. He proposed a more active role for them than that suggested by learning theory. He envisioned a child’s knowledge as composed of schemas, basic units of knowledge used to organize past experiences and serve as a basic for understanding new ones.

Schemas are continually being modified by two complementary processes that Piaget termed assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation refers to the process of taking in new information by incorporating into an existing schema. In other words, people assimilate new experiences by relating them to things they already know. On the other
hand, accommodation is what happens when the sche4ma itself changes to accommodate new knowledge. According to Piaget, cognitive development involves an ongoing attempt to achieve a balance between assimilation and accommodation that he learned equilibration. Piaget developed a systematic study of cognitive development in children. His work included a theory on cognitive development, detailed observational studies of cognition in children and a series of tests to reveal differing cognitive abilities. Through his work, he showed that children think in considerably different ways than adults do. Piaget’s work showed that children are born with a very basic genetically inherited mental structure that evolves and is the foundation for all subsequent learning and knowledge. Cognitive development is a progressive reorganization mental processes resulting from maturation and experience.

The theory of cognitive development focuses on mental processes such as perceiving, remembering, believing and reasoning. Reasoning is the essence of intelligence and reasoning what Piaget studied in order to discover “how we come to know” (Singer & Revension, 1997, p-13).Piaget’s prominent work is his theory on the four stages of cognitive development. He was one of the most influential researchers in the area of developmental psychology in the 20th century. (Singer & Revension 1997, p-13). He believed children will construct an understanding of the World around them, and will then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discovered in their environment.

Piaget’s theory of cognitive development is a comprehensive theory about the nature and the development of human intelligence, first developed by Jean Piaget. It is primarily known as developmental stage theory. To Piaget, cognitive development was a progressive reorganization of mental processes as a result of biological maturation and environmental experience. Piaget relied on observational research, carefully watching children and listening to them reason as they tried to solve problems. He proposed that children’s thinking changes qualitatively with age, and it differs from the way adults think. Piaget believed that cognitive development results from interplay of maturation and experience, and he viewed children as natural-born “scientists” who actively explore and
seek to understand their World. At the center of Piaget’s theory is the principle that
cognitive development occurs in a series of four distinct universal stages, each
characterized increasingly sophisticated and abstract levels of thought. According to him
the cognitive development of a child progresses through four stages.

- **Sensory Motor Stage:** This is the first of the four stages in cognitive development
  which “extends from birth to the acquisition of language.” In this stage infants
  construct an understanding of the world by coordinating experiences (such as
  seeing and hearing) with physical, meteoric actions. Infants gain knowledge of the
  World from the physical actions they perform on it.

- **Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 years):** The preoperational stage starts when the child
  begins to learn, to speak at age 2 and lasts up to the age of 7. During the
  preoperational stage of cognitive development, Piaget noted that children do not yet
  understand concrete logic and cannot mentally manipulate information.

- **Concrete Operational Stage (7 to 11 years):** This is the third of four stages from
  Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. This stage which follows the
  preoperational stage occurs between the ages of 7 and 11 years and is characterized
  by the appropriate use of logic. During this stage, a child’s thought processes
  become more mature and “adult like”. Abstract, hypothetical thinking has not yet
  developed and children can only solve problem that apply to concrete events or
  objects.

- **The formal operational stage:** The final stage is known as formal operational stage.
  Intelligence is demonstrated through the logical use of symbols related to abstract
  concepts. At this stage, the person is capable of hypothetical and deductive
  reasoning. During this time, people develop the ability.
1.7 Bruner’s Theory of conceptual process:

A major theme in current research on the development of concepts concerns the relationship between language and conceptual processes. Bruner (1964) has focused the attention on the developmental aspects of this broad topic. Bruner suggests that as the child develops, he or she changes his or her modes of representing the environment. This occurs finally the child employs a symbolic mode in which language is used to record experiences as well as to represent them. To Bruner, language is the greater emancipator in child’s cognitive age, for it frees him from perceptually demanding characteristics of his environment.

A very important contribution in the field of cognitive development is by Bruner, Oliver and Greenfield (1966). They suggest that there are changes in a child’s favored mode of representation of his work as he grows older. The word “enactive” is used to describe the very young child’s dependence upon sensor motor activity in representational process, as the child grows, the emphasis shifts to “ikonic” mode. The child can now represent the world in the form of an image or scheme that is relatively independent of motor cognitive growth culminates with the achievement of the” symbolic” mode. The enactive, ikonic and symbolic sequence parallels the developmental sequence described by both Piaget and Waraer.

1.8 Cognitive – Approach-Information Processing:

Perhaps the second most influential cognitive theoretical approach to conceptual behavior next to Piagetian Psychology is the information Processing theory. This approach is exemplified in the work of Newell, Simon Show (1953), Hunt (1962) and Reilman (1965). They analyzed conceptual behaviour into its various processes. Such as reception, classification storage and retrieval of information for hypothesis, generation and testing purposes. Neimark, who studied the genesis of the child’s ability to analyse and solve experimental problems and the role of memory factors in such tasks, argues that his particular experimental strategy provides data on the nature of the kinds of information
processing that underlie the behaviour of the children at different cognitive developmental stages described by Piaget.

1.9 Recent Theoretical Approach to the study of cognitive development:

Cairns & Valsiner in their article in child psychology Annual Review (1984) have suggested that shortcomings of stage theorizing have long been recognized by many psychologists. Flavell (1963), Kessen (1965) and recently by Brainerd (1981) and Flavell (1982). All this suggests that it is not enough to simply explain cognitive development in the form of stages. To completely understand cognitive development there must be an inquiry into the precise skills, strategies and capabilities required to solve particular kinds of problems.

Fischer (1980) proposes the integration of Piagetian experimental assumptions. Fischer’s model (1980) is a serious attempt to integrate cognitive, social, motor and linguistic dominions but Keil (1981) seems to have proposed a non-developmental account of cognitive development.

There are some theories which are in accordance with the Piagetian framework. These theories are by Feldman’s (1981) “essay in human development.” These theories emphasize the difference between stage, level, phase and interval. Flavell (1982) observes that multiple list conditions, contexts and prior experience can affect test performance. The term stage is reserved by authors for the interval of time in which there are qualitative differences and that together imply “some form of progression towards an expected and state”.

The theoretical contribution to cognitive development cannot be complete without note on Meta cognition or one’s own cognition. One of Meta cognition’s offsprings is the concept of Meta memory, which has been carefully evaluated and roundly criticized by Cavanaugh & Perlmutter (1982). These authors conclude that Meta memory has been loosely employed and does not seem to have added a great deal to our understanding of the
cognitive process. This term involves in role of conscious (unconscious) processes involved in performing cognitive operations. (Wellman, 1988).

1.10 Vygotsky: The social Context of cognitive development:

When Piaget focused mainly on children’s independent exploration of the physical World, Russian Psychologists Lev Vygotsky (1935-1978) emphasized that children also live in a social World, and that cognitive development occurs in a socio-cultural context. In all types of daily interactions, including fantasy play, adults and older peers stimulate children’s cognitive growth and provide them with knowledge about the World.

1.11 The term competence:

The development of higher order cognitive competence enables individuals to engage in the most complex forms of theoretical and practical problem-solving activities. As such, cognitive competence i.e. the capacity to engage in critical and hypothetical thinking plays a key role in positive development, and indeed can be considered the most important outcome of the cognitive development process.

Competence is more than a skill. It is the ability to make and keep promises. It is the ability of an individual to do a job properly. It indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. The word “competence” is a direct derivative of the Latin word “competence”, literally meaning “competing”, an objective indicating that one is able to engage in a competition (Encarta English Dictionary, 2009). The term “competence”, first appeared in an article authored by R. W. White in 1959 as a concept for performance motivation. Later, in 1970, Craig C. Lundberg defined the concept in “Planning the Executive Development Program”. In essence the word competence presupposes an action, a form of activity, not a state. It is the degree of success in function within a specific environment with apparent discrepancy in age related trends.
A competence is: “A person’s ability to effectively perform in a certain task or problem situation in a way that is objectively perceptible and assessable” (Hoekstra & Van Sluijs, 1999).

Goldfriend and D’Zurilla (1961) define competence as the effectiveness or adequacy with which an individual is capable of responding to different problematic situations.

Perrenoud (2000) defined competence as a capacity to mobilize diverse cognitive resource to meet a certain type of situation. In essence, the exercise of competence involves complex mental situations and schemes of thought which allow a performance of action which is relatively adapted to a situation. (Indian journal of applied research).

A competency is a set of behaviour that provides a structured guide enabling the identification, evaluation and development of the behaviour in individual. It is a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or situation. Competency is also used as a more general description of the requirement of human beings in organizations communities. It is a less common term for competence which refers to the state of being well qualified.

Competency is defined as a standardized requirement for an individual to perform a specific job. It entails the combination of knowledge, behaviour and skills which are utilized to improve the performance. It is sometimes thought of as being shown in action in a situation and context that might be different the next time, a person has to act.

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external environment. In accordance with Hogg et.al (2008), competence is more precisely defined as the behaviour that employees must have or must acquire, to input into a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance. It is a person’s generic knowledge, motive, trait, self-image, social role or skill of a person that is causally related to performance on the job. It can be defined as “display behaviour within a specialized domain in the form of consistency demonstrated actions of an individual that are both minimally efficient in their execution and effective in their results. (Handbook of Competence and Motivation, Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck (2005).

According to Piaget, Cognitive competence constitutes the cyclical processes of assimilation and accommodation, which indicates that people can manipulate their personal experiences as well as organize and adapt their thoughts to guide their behaviour. A review of the many scientific uses of the terms “competence” and “competencies” shows that they are ascribed a variety of meanings. All performance abilities and skills, inherited, domain specific prerequisites necessary for acquiring primary knowledge systems (especially language), learned (demand specific) knowledge and skills, individual needs for effectiveness, subjective evaluation of the self and the entire set of cognitive, motivational and social prerequisites for successful action (action competence). (Ref. Concepts of Competence, Frenz E. Weinert)

Competence has been defined, described and interpreted theoretically. These include competence as:

(a) General cognitive competence the prototypical approaches that focus on general competencies include psychometric model of human intelligence, information processing models, and the Piagetian model of cognitive structural development. Psychometric approaches understand intelligence as a system of more or less content and context-free abilities and aptitudes (Caroll 1993). They provide the cognitive prerequisites for purposeful action, reasoning, successful learning and effective interaction with the environment.
(b) Specialized cognitive competencies refer to clusters of cognitive prerequisites that must be available for an individual to perform well in a particular content area, for example, chess playing, automobile driving, mathematical problem solving, trouble-shooting in complex systems.

(c) The competence-performance model one of the most influential theoretical paradigms in competence research is derived from a distinction between competence and performance used by the linguist Noam Chomsky (1980). Chomsky understood linguistic competence as a universal, inherited, modularized ability to acquire the mother tongue. A limited system of linguistic principles, abstract rules and basic cognitive elements (competence) combined with a specific learning process allows each normal human to acquire the mother tongue, including the ability to create and understand an infinite variety of novel, grammatically correct sentences (performance). Linguistic competence thus underlies creative, rule-based language learning and language use.

(d) Modification of the Competence-Performance model the competence-performance approach was energized with the postulation of a competence-moderator-performance model (Overton, 1985). In this model, it is assumed that the relation between competence and performance is moderated by other variables, for example, cognitive style, memory capacity, familiarity with the task situation and other individual difference variables.

With developmental psychology, another modification of the competence-performance model, even more influential than Overton’s moderator model, involved a conceptual differentiation of competence into three components (Gelman & Meck, 1992; Gelman & Greeno, 1989; Greeno, Riley & Gelman, 1984, and also Sophian, 1997). These three components are:
i) Conceptual competence, which refers to Chomskian rule-based, abstract knowledge about an entire domain.

ii) Procedural competence, which refers to the availability of procedures and skills that are necessary to apply conceptual competence in concrete situations.

iii) Performance competence, which refer to the all those skills required to evaluate the relevant features of a problem, so that suitable solution strategies can be selected and used.

(e) Cognitive competence and motivational action tendencies: The close relation between cognitive competence and motivational action tendencies was “discovered” by R. H. White in 1859. In an influential article, he defined competence as an “effective interaction” (of the individual) with the environment. White postulated an intrinsic need to deal effectively with the environment.

(f) Objective and subjective competence Concepts: Analogues to the general differentiation of competence into cognitive and motivational aspects, Sembill (1992) distinguished between objective competence, (performance and performance dispositions that can be measured with standardized scales and tests) and subjective assessment of performance relevant abilities and skills needed to master tasks and solve problems.

(g) Action competence: It includes all those cognitive, motivational and social prerequisites necessary or available for successful learning and action. The concepts of action competence have been applied especially in the analysis of the necessary and sufficient conditions for success criteria in selected fields of action. General problem-solving competence, critical thinking skills, domain-
general and domain-specific knowledge, realistic, positive self-confidence and social competence are included in action competence.

1.12 The term ‘Institutionalization’:

The term “institution” is commonly applied to customs and behaviour patterns important to a society as well as to particular formal organizations of government and public services. The word “institute” comes from the Latin word “institutum” meaning ‘facility’, or ‘habit’. As structures and mechanisms of social order among humans, institutions are one of the principle objects of study in the social sciences, such as political science, anthropology, economics and sociology. Institutions are also a central concern for law, the formal mechanism for political rule-making and enforcement.

Institutionalization refers to the process of embedding something within an organization, social system or society as a whole. Institutionalization is a process which translates an organization’s code of conduct, mission, policies, vision and strategic plans into action guidelines applicable to the daily activities of its officers and other employees. It aims at integrating fundamental values and objectives into the organization’s culture and structure.

Institutionalization is the placing of children in institutions out of the home. An institution is any structure or mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given community. Institutions are identified with a social purpose and permanence, transcending individual human lives and intentions and with the making and enforcing of rules governing cooperative human behaviour. Institutionalization has a deep impact on the life of a child.

Institutionalization is the placement of children in institutions, such as orphanages. Their placement in institutions during early critical developmental periods, for lengthy periods of time, is often associated with developmental delays due to environmental deprivation, poor staff to child ratios, and lack of early childhood stimulation.
1.13 Developmental significance of institutionalization:

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. This principle underlines the importance of the family in the nurturing and development of the child. This is recognition of the right of the child to a family, where his or her personality is formed developed.

A child should grow up in a family. Permanent parental care is the ideal situation for every child. Every child has a right to be permanently placed in a family. However, this is not always possible. There have been decades of research on the topic of institutionalization and the extreme negative effects it has on children. While methods of treating institutionalization may vary amongst these professionals, they all agree that the sooner a child is placed in permanent parental care the better off the child will be. Permanent Parental Care can be achieved through: reunification with family (that are adequately reviewed and approved), national adoption and inter Country adoption.

1.14 Statement of the problem:

Protecting and nurturing the children is a universal goal across human cultures. In many countries there are thousands of children living in orphanages for reasons, including abandonment, death, neglect and poverty. Life in an institution is not conducive to healthy development for a child. Especially for cognitive development children need special care. Taking into account the differences in the cognitive competency of both the institutionalised and non- institutionalised children, the investigator felt to study the existing cases of these differences between both the groups of children. The investigator finds it appropriate to have a better knowledge in this area, which will ultimately prove to be very helpful in the long run.

After getting a rough idea about the institutions, it was felt necessary to know about the reasons. It was felt that personal care, good family environment, have been marked as the secrets behind the success of non- institutionalised children’s. So, it was felt necessary
to know thoroughly about the environmental factors which are responsible for the
cognitive development of both the groups of children. This inspired the investigator to
select the topic under the following head “Cognitive competence among institutionalised
and non-institutionalised children in Greater Guwahati Area”.

1.15 Objectives of the study:

The present project is an attempt to investigate the different aspects and its
influences on the development of cognitive competence among institutionalised and non-
institutionalised children. Very few psychological researches have been made on
institutionalised children in North-East region particularly in Assam. This is a good
attempt in this direction to produce fruitful results which may be helpful in facilitating the
development of institutionalised children.

The main objectives of the study are:

- To compare the intellectual skills of institutionalised and non-institutionalised
  children.

- To compare the perceptual competency of institutionalised and non-
institutionalised children.

- To compare the intellectual skills of male and female students among both the
groups.

- To compare the perceptual competency of male and female students among both
  the groups.

- To investigate the environmental influence on the development of cognitive
  competence among the children.
➢ To suggest for developing skills for improving cognitive competence.

1.16 Hypotheses:

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

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

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

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

1.17 Limitations of the Study:

• The area of the study is confined only to the Greater Guwahati area of the state of Assam.

• The age group of the sample for the study is in between 8 to 12 years.

• As there are a few number of Children’s home, State Home and Orphanage in the area of the study. The number of sample considered for the study remains limited to 320 (160-Institutionalised and 160 Non-Institutionalised) only.