Chapter Six

SUMMARY

Study I: Locale and Social Competence
Study II: Socio-Economic Status and Social Competence
Study III: Education and Social Competence
The development of social competence is considered to be one of the important milestones of personality. Some investigators of children's social development have suggested that preschool years of life are critical in the evolution of social abilities. Although the term social competence may have no universally accepted meaning, those who have studied the variable conclude that, for preschool children social competence is related to the success of attempts to influence the behaviour of a peer; positive active behaviour; effectance motivation; and coping in superior ways in day-to-day situation. Social competence also seems to be related to cognitive competence and affective and cognitive perspective-taking ability. It has also been suggested that social competence is simply one aspect of the general competence and is reflected in autonomous striving to gain mastery over the social world.

The term social competence is generally labelled as assertiveness in adult and social skill in children and refers to an outgoing interaction between individuals and their environment. It has been defined as the attainment of relevant social goals in specific social contacts, using appropriate means and resulting in positive developmental outcomes. It has also been explained as being manifested by the extent to which an individual is able and willing to conform to the custom, habits and standard of behaviour prevailing in the
society in which he lives; by the degree to which he is able to do so independently of direction and guidance; and by the extent to which he participates constructively in the affairs and conduct of his community.

There are various methods of assessing social competence. Generally assessment of social competence includes the measurement of three primary response systems, i.e. cognitive, motoric, and physiological. The cognitive response system includes sociometric techniques, rating scales, interviewing, self-report inventories, and social cognitive tasks. The motoric assessment deals with naturalistic observation and role-playing, and in physiological assessment, some physiological functions are studied.

Among the factors which may influence social competence, are many aspects of child's experience, including both objects in the environment and people with whom the child interacts. There are some demographic correlates (e.g., age, sex, socioeconomic status, culture) which have been found to affect social competence. Various personality factors, for example, physiological factors, intelligence, physical attractiveness, self-concept, locus of control, autism, anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, cognitive styles and several other personality factors have been found to be related to social competence. Similarly, attempts have been made to relate various social factors to the children's social competence.
It has been observed that certain social factors are associated with competent behaviour of the children. For example, parental attitudes towards child-rearing are related to the ways in which parents interact with their children, which, in turn, have an effect in the development of social competence of children. Children's experience with the peers has also been found to be related to social competence.

There is a large amount of research employing parental attitudes, child-rearing, and parent-child relationship as they relate to various aspects of social competence. Since the behaviour of the individual is largely determined by the environmental and circumstantial factors, it is reasonable to assume that various environmental and circumstantial factors like culture, socioeconomic factors, education etc. associated with parents, would have a significant role in the development of their children's social competence. Although there are some studies which have examined the role of locale, socioeconomic status and education in the development of social competence, this important aspect has been neglected so far in Indian context. Therefore the present study has been undertaken.

The study tested the hypothesis that social competence of the children would be influenced by their parents' locale, socioeconomic status and education. Although education is generally included in socioeconomic status but since education plays a very vital role in the development of personality, it was thought appropriate to study the role of parental education separately in social competence of children. The specific
problems and their related hypotheses are detailed below:

1. The first problem of the present study was to investigate the locale-difference in social competence. Here it is noteworthy to mention that we have used the word 'locale' to refer to three different cultures, i.e. urban, rural and tribal. The problem was to examine whether the urban, rural and tribal subjects differ significantly in their social competence. It was hypothesized that those living in urban areas would show the highest social competence and those living in the tribal areas would show the lowest of it.

2. The second variable studied as the determinant of social competence was socioeconomic status. Since socioeconomic status has its own significance in the development of several behaviours, it was thought that social competence too should be determined, to some extent by socioeconomic status of the family. While making an investigation into the dynamics of social competence, it was examined whether the children coming from high and low socioeconomic statuses show differential social competence. It was expected that those belonging to high socioeconomic status would exhibit greater social competence as compared to those coming from low socioeconomic status.

3. Another factor contributing to most of the acquired behaviours is education. A larger section of our population is still illiterate whereas some have achieved distinctions in various fields because of their education. Since a child
acquires social competence in his family, it is imperative to think to what extent the education of the parents contributes to the acquisition of social competence. It was expected that the children reared in high-educated family would show higher social competence than the children reared in low-educated family.

4. The fourth problem was to investigate whether the subjects of high and low age differ significantly in their social competence. It was reasoned, since with increasing age increased biological maturation is obtained which enables the child to experience his environment in more sophisticated way, the children of high age would show higher social competence than the children of low age.

5. The last problem subjected to empirical investigation was the role of sex in determining social competence of children. Studies investigating the role of the sex in social competence have generated controversy and confusion. Some studies have revealed males to have higher social competence than females whereas some have observed females to be more socially competent than males. Some studies show no sex-difference in social competence. This leaves us with a question about the role of sex in social competence. To ascertain the role of sex, the present study tested the hypothesis that the male subjects would show higher social competence than the female subjects.

In order to achieve the goal, one thousand and two hundred preschool children equally and randomly selected from tribal
rural, and urban areas of Chhattisgarh, a part of south M.P., were used as subjects. The subjects from each area were equally selected from two different age-groups, i.e. 30-36 and 48-54 months. Half of the subjects from each subgroup were males and the remaining were females. The urban subjects were taken from Raipur city whereas rural subjects were taken from different villages of Raipur district. Tribal subjects were taken from the tribal villages of Bastar district. Special care was taken that while selecting the urban subjects, rural and tribal populations temporarily shifted to cities were not included. Similarly, while selecting rural subjects tribal population residing in the villages was not taken.

Two measures were used in the present study. The social competence of children was measured by Hindi adaptation (by researcher) of Rochester Adaptive Behaviour Inventory (RABI): Preschool Form (Revised) developed by Fredric H. Jones. The RABI attempts to measure social competence on 12 dimensions. These dimensions are: cooperation with family, cooperation with other, friendship patterns, timidity in social settings, fearfulness/nervousness, activity level, bizzare/symptomatic, whinny behaviour, demandful of mother's attention, depression, imaginary play, and persistence. In the present study total social competence score (summation of the scores obtained in various dimensions) has been taken into consideration.
The socioeconomic status (SES) of the parents was ascertained by administering a modified version of socioeconomic status Scale (SESS--Form A & B) developed by S.P. Kulshreshtha. Form A of the SESS was used for the urban sample whereas Form B was used for the rural and tribal samples. Both the Forms (A & B) of SESS were modified by the researcher so as to make them suitable for the present research purpose. Both the forms collect information regarding the 5 component variables, i.e. (1) parental occupation (ii) parental education (iii) economic indicator, (iv) cultural indicator, and (v) psychological indicator.

The educational level of the family was determined by the informations obtained from the respondents in response to items related to educational components of SESS (Form A & B).

For the administration of RABI and SESS, the parents of each child were contacted individually by the researcher. After establishing proper rapport, the responses for the items of RABI and SESS were collected.

As mentioned earlier the present research investigated the role of locale, socioeconomic status, education, age, and sex in the development of social competence of preschool children. For this purpose, three studies using factorial design were conducted. Study I examined the locale-difference in social competence. Study II was conducted to investigate the difference in social competence arising due to difference in
the degree of socioeconomic status, and the study III explored the role of education in social competence. Since the criteria of classification of high and low levels of SES—and education—dimension for the tribal, rural, and urban subjects were different, the data were analysed separately for tribal, rural, and urban samples in order to examine the role of SES and education. Since the subjects were taken from two different age-groups (i.e., 30-36 months, & 48-54 months) and from both the sexes, it provided a good case for studying age-and sex-effect in social competence. Now the results obtained from the analyses of data and conclusion drawn thereby for each study would be discussed separately.

STUDY I

LOCATE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE

As mentioned earlier, study I examined the role of locale, (i.e., urban, rural, and tribal) in the development of social competence of children. For this purpose one thousand and two hundred children were randomly selected in such a fashion that they represented equal number of urban, rural, and tribal children of both the sexes with high (48-54 months) and low (30-36 months) age. In this way 3 (locale) x 2 (age) x 2 (sex) design was obtained. Therefore the data were analysed through a three-way analysis of variance in which locale, age, and sex were considered as the independent variables and social competence scores of the subjects as the dependent variable. The analysis of the data revealed that:
1. The \( F \)-ratio for the factor 'locale' was found to be significant at a very high level which indicated that locales do have significant role in the development of social competence. The urban subjects showed the highest social competence whereas the tribal children exhibited the lowest. The rural children occupied an intermediary position. The obtained results confirm the hypothesis that the urban subjects would show the highest degree of social competence whereas the tribal subjects would show the lowest of it. The results have been discussed in the light of different patterns of socialization which the urban, rural, and tribal children receive. Attempt have also been made to explain the obtained results in the light of some neurological basis.

2. The \( F \)-ratio for the factor 'age' was found to be significant at a very high level which revealed that the subjects of high age show higher social competence than the subjects of low age. The result confirmed the hypothesis regarding the role of age in social competence. The obtained result was interpreted in the light of theories related to skill and competence acquisition which presume that competence is acquired slowly as a part of broader biological maturation process that involves small day-to-day increments throughout the infancy and childhood. That is why, with increasing age, increased biological maturation is obtained. As children mature, their physical structure becomes more competent, and
they are able to experience their environment in more sophisticated way which enables them to be more socially competent.

3. The F-ratio for the third main effect, i.e. 'sex' was found to be significant which confirmed the hypothesis that the males would be more socially competent than the females. The obtained sex-difference in social competence was explained in the light of different socialization processes that males and females receive in the society. Women are encouraged for a more dependent role in the society and, therefore, they are not able to develop as much social competence as men. The traditional functional stereotyped biological differences between males and females were also presented to understand as to why the males show higher social competence than the females. Similarly, an attempt was also made to understand the sex-difference in social competence in the light of some neurological factors.

4. The three first-order and one second-order interactions were found to be insignificant. These insignificant interactions provided sufficient statistical evidence of independent working of these factors (i.e., locale, age, & sex) in influencing the social competence of the children.

STUDY II

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE

The study II was designed to examine the role of socioeconomic status (SES) on social competence of the urban, rural, and
tribal subjects. Since the criteria of classification of high and low levels on SES dimensions were different for urban, rural, and tribal subjects, the data were analysed separately for urban, rural, and tribal samples.

A total of one thousand and two hundred subjects (i.e. 400 subjects each from urban, rural, and tribal areas) which were used in study I, were also served as the initial subjects of this study. Half of the subjects from each locale were males and the remaining were females. Half of the subjects were in the age-group of 30-36 months and the remaining were in the age-group of 48-54 months. In this way, the role of three independent variables, i.e. SES, age, and sex, in social competence of the urban rural, and tribal children were examined in study II. The data were analysed through three 2x2x2 ANOVAs in which x 2 SES(high & low), 2 age (high & low) and 2 sex (male & female) were taken as the independent variables and the social competence scores of the subjects as the dependent variable. The first ANOVA analysed the data obtained from the urban sample whereas the second and the third ANOVAs examined the role of SES in the development of social competence of rural and tribal subjects respectively.

As mentioned earlier, the SES was taken on two levels (i.e., high & low). For the purpose of dividing urban subjects into high and low SES subgroups, out of 400 urban subjects, 150 scoring high from the top, and 150 scoring low from the bottom
(excluding the subjects falling within the semi-interquartile range) on SES were considered as the subjects of high and low SES subgroups respectively. Since the subjects were already taken from two different age-groups and sexes, a 2(SES) x 2(age) x 2(sex) design was obtained. Since the number of subjects falling in each cell was not equal, systematic rejection technique (i.e., random-rejection) was used to eliminate additional observation and to keep the number of subject in each cell equal (i.e., n=30). In this way a total of 240 children were used as the final sample in order to investigate the role of SES in social competence of urban children. Similarly, rural and tribal subjects were also divided into high and low SES subgroups and number of subjects in each cell was equated (n=30) through systematic rejection. In this way three 2x2x2 ANOVAs, one each for the analysis of data of urban, rural, and tribal samples, were computed in order to examine the difference in social competence of urban, rural, and tribal subjects arising due to difference in SES, age, and sex. The obtained results are briefly discussed below.

1. The F-ratios for the main effect 'SES' were found to be significant at a very high level for the urban, rural and tribal subjects which point out that the urban, rural and tribal subjects of high SES show higher social competence than their low counterparts. The obtained results confirmed the hypothesis. It was interpreted to imply that various factors like physical
care, family interaction, language, child-rearing practices, opportunities for development etc. varies with the socioeconomic position of the family which, consequently, influences the child's development of social competence.

2. The F-ratios for the main effect 'age' were found to be significant at a very high level for the subjects of all the three locales, i.e. urban, rural, and tribal. The significant F-ratios reveal that the subjects of high age show significantly higher social competence than the subjects of low age. Thus, the hypothesis formed in connection with the role of age in social competence was retained. Similar results were also obtained in study I. The higher social competence of the subjects of high age as compared to low has already been explained in the light of theories related to skill and competence acquisition as discussed in study I.

3. The F-ratios for the main effect 'sex' were found significant for rural and tribal samples but it was not significant for urban sample. The significant F-ratios for rural and tribal samples indicated that the rural and the tribal males show higher social competence than the females but the insignificant F-ratio for the urban sample revealed that the urban male and female children do not differ significantly in their social competence. Thus, the hypothesis that the males would show higher social competence than the
females was accepted for rural and tribal samples and was rejected for urban sample. The higher social competence of males as compared to females in rural and tribal samples was discussed in the light of different socialization processes that the rural and tribal boys and girls receive in their societies. Generally, the girls are encouraged for a more dependent role in the society and, therefore, they cannot develop as much social competence as the boys.

The insignificant sex-difference in social competence of the urban subjects was also explained in the light of socialization process. In the cities because of the spread of education, the attitudes of parents towards girls have changed. Boys and girls, both are being considered equally competent in the most aspects of life, and so, there does not seem to be any difference even in the parenting of boys and girls to the extent that one may become independent and other dependent. The boys and girls both are getting equal opportunities and facilities for development. This may be the reason of insignificant sex-difference in social competence of the urban sample.

4. The interaction effects of the three independent variables (i.e., SES, age & sex) for the urban, rural, and tribal samples were found to yield insignificant F-ratios (except the interaction of age and sex in urban sample) indicating thereby an independence among these factors in affecting the extent
of social competence. Although they did exert their effect independently but not jointly.

STUDY III
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE

Study III was designed to examine the role of education in determining the social competence of urban, rural, and tribal subjects. One thousand and two hundred subjects which were used in study I and study II, were also used as the initial subjects for this study. The urban, rural, and tribal subjects were divided into high and low education subgroups by adopting the procedure followed in study II. Since the subjects were taken from two different age-groups and sexes, a 2(education) x 2(age) x 2(sex) design was obtained. As the number of subjects falling in various cells was not equal, n in each cell was equated \( n=30 \) by eliminating additional observation through systematic rejection technique. In this way 240 subjects, from each locale, served as the final sample. Then three 2x2x2 ANOVAs, one each for the data obtained from the urban, rural, and tribal samples, were computed in which education, age, and sex were considered as independent variables and social competence scores of the subjects as the dependent variable. The obtained results are briefly discussed below:

1. The \( F \)-ratios for one of the independent variable i.e. 'education' were found to be significant for the urban, rural,
and tribal subjects. The significant F-ratios confirmed the hypothesis indicating that the subjects with high parental education show significantly higher social competence than the subjects with low parental education. It was discussed that child-rearing practices, language, behaviour-patterns etc. are significantly affected by education which, consequently, influence the development of social competence of children.

2. The F-ratios for another independent variable i.e., 'age' have been found to be significant for the urban, rural and tribal locales. The significant F-ratios confirmed the hypothesis and indicated that the subjects of high age show higher social competence than the subjects of low age. Similar results were obtained in study I and study II. The results were explained in the light of theories related to skill and competence acquisition as discussed in study I.

3. The F-ratios for the third independent variable, i.e., 'sex' confirmed the result of study II. The F-ratios for the rural and tribal samples were found to be significant which confirmed the hypothesis that the males would show higher social competence than the females. The results were explained in the light of different socialization process that boys and girls receive in the rural and tribal societies. In the urban sample no sex-difference was observed. This result was interpreted to imply that in the urban areas, because of the spread of education, boys and girls both receive equal
facilities and opportunities for their development which lead them to become socially competent equally.

4. The interaction effects of the three independent variables, i.e. education, age, and sex, yielded insignificant F-ratios which provided sufficient statistical evidence of independent working of these three factors—education, age, and sex—in affecting the extent of social competence.