CHAPTER - V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of education is to make the children with special needs more independent and competent members in the society. Teaching through play way method assists in the process. Play is the best medium in which the child expresses and becomes more aware of himself through interaction with the world around him. Also play stems from the child’s personal perception of reality. It is a platform for imagination and fantasy where the child juggles with reality by pretending that certain events actually happen.

The present study was undertaken to find out the perspectives of play behaviour in children with autism. Children with autism in the age group of 5-14 years from nine schools in Trichy were chosen for this study using census method. The dependent variables selected for the study were social interaction, communication, play and imagination and the independent variables were sex, age, ordinal position of the child, degree of Autism, years of schooling, age of diagnosis, type of family, family size, area of residence and educational qualification of parents. The data was collected using Gilliam Autism Rating Scale - 2 (GARS-2) and Observation Profile for rating the play behaviour of children with autism. The study aimed to assess the perspectives of play behaviour in children with autism in terms of social interaction, communication, play and imagination in relation to the selected variables and to conduct an Intervention /Training programme for the Special Educators and parents of autistic children to enhance their play behaviour.
Statistical analysis using the Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was done to interpret data and differential analysis to find out the improvement in their levels after they attended the Intervention / Training programme for a period of one year. Based on the objectives, several hypotheses were formulated and tested and the results have been presented in this chapter.

**Objectives of the Study**

This study titled “Perspectives of Play Behaviour in Children with Autism” aimed to study the

- family characteristics of children with autism,
- social interactive behaviour of children with autism during play,
- communicative ability of children with autism while playing,
- play and imagination of children with autism when they play,
- prepare a play manual on games for parents /Special Educators to enhance the play skills of children with autism and
- find out the impact of games on children with autism in terms of social interaction, communicative ability and their play and imagination behaviour.

**Major Findings of the Study**

**A) Background information of children with autism**

With regard to their area of living, 13 percent of the children were from rural area and 87 percent of the respondents were from urban area. 80.5 percent of them were from nuclear families and only 19.5 percent of them were from joint families. Majority of the selected children (52%) had mild level of autism, 26 percent of them had moderate level of autism and 22 percent had severe level of autism. Their age ranged from 5-14 years. Majority 71 percent of them were boys and 29 percent of
them were girls. With regard to their ordinal position, majority (64%) of them were firstborns and the rest of them were secondborns. 63.5 percent of the children with autism hailed from families that had the family size of 1-4 members.

**Major Findings of the study**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the age of diagnosis of children with autism and their overall social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

Z test was applied and a highly significant difference was found between age of diagnosis of the children with autism and the overall mean scores for social interaction (within three years), communication (after three years), play and imagination (after three years).

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 12, 13, 14)

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no difference between the age groups of children with autism and their overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

Z test was applied and a significant difference was found between age groups of selected children with autism (5-8 years) and the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 15, 16, 17)

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the number of children in the family and their overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination of children with autism.

Z test was done and a considerable difference was found between the family size (large- above four members) of selected children with autism and the overall scores for social interaction communication, play and imagination.
Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 18, 19, 20)

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant association between the years of schooling of selected children with autism and their overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

The Karl Pearson’s Co-efficient of Correlation was applied and a highly significant association was found between the years of schooling of children with autism and the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 21, 22, 23)

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant association between Parent’s educational qualification and the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination of children with autism.

The Chi-Square test was applied and it was found that there is no significant association between parent’s educational qualification and the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination of children with autism.

Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. (Table - 24, 25, 26)

**Hypothesis 6:** There is no significant association between the degree of autism and the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination of children with autism.

In order to test the hypothesis Factor analysis was performed with a view to extract factors. Each time variables that measure a single dimension were keyed in to extract a single factor measuring the dimension. It was made sure that Eigen values were kept at 1.00. Only factor loadings equal to or more than .45 were considered valid to include variable within an extracted factor.
A post hoc Turkey test was done with every one-way analysis to determine if there were a significant difference among the three groups namely children with mild, moderate and severe degree of autism. The results showed that degree of autism has effected a change in the play behaviour of children with autism.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 34).

**Hypothesis 7:** There is no significant difference in the intervention given to children with autism and their overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination.

Z test was done to find out the improvement in the overall scores for social interaction, communication, play and imagination in children with autism after they had undergone the Intervention programme by their parents and Special Educators for a period of one year. The results showed that there was significant difference in the overall mean scores for play behaviour after the intervention programme.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. (Table - 35, 36, 37).

**Findings related to the Dimension of Social Interaction**

- Children with autism hailing from joint families were more involved in most of the dimensions of social interaction than children from nuclear families. (Table -3)

- There was significant difference between the ordinal position of children with autism (firstborns) and scores for the various dimensions of social interaction. (Table -6)

- There was no significant difference between the gender of children with autism and scores for various dimensions of social interaction. (Table -9)
There was significant difference between age of diagnosis of children with autism and the scores for dimensions of social interaction. (Table-12)

There was significant difference between the age of children with autism and scores for various dimensions of social interaction. (Table-15)

There was significant difference between the size of the family and the dimensions of social interaction (Table-18)

There was significant relationship between the years of schooling of children with autism and the scores for various dimensions of social interaction. (Table-21)

Children with autism, whose mother’s educational qualification was high, performed better in the aspect of social interaction. (Table-24)

An Inter Correlation Matrix test was conducted to find out if the variables correlated. The test yielded a significant result. The overall significant co-efficient value was 0.977 at the level of 0.01 significance. (Table -27)

A significant relationship existed among all the seven aspects of social interaction in children with autism. (Table - 30)

Mild and moderate degree of children with autism had better social interaction in terms of the sub aspects included in it. (Table-34).

**Dimension of Communication**

There was significant difference between type of family and scores for various dimensions of communication in children with autism. (Table-4)

There was no significant difference between the ordinal position of children with autism and scores for various dimensions of communication. (Table-7)

There was significant difference between the gender of children with autism
and scores for various dimensions of communication. (Table-10)

- There was significant difference between the age of diagnosis of children with autism and scores for the dimensions of communication during play. (Table-13)

- There was significant difference between the age of children with autism and scores for various dimensions of communication. (Table-16)

- Children with autism from large family size had a good communication skills compared to the others. (Table-19)

- There was significant association between the years of schooling of children with autism and the scores for various dimensions of communication. (Table-22)

- There was no association between the scores for communication of children with autism and their fathers educational qualification. (Table-25)

- There was significant correlation between the aspects of communication in children with autism. The overall significant co-efficient value was 0.967 at the level of 0.01 significance. (Table -28)

- A significant relationship was found among all the four aspects of communication in children with autism (Table - 30)

- The children with mild and moderate degree of autism (M=36, M=30 respectively) scored higher on the dimensions of communication than the children with severe degree of autism (M=25). (Table-34)

**Dimension of Play and Imagination**

- The children with autism from joint families performed better in play and imagination than children from nuclear families. (Table -5)
• Firstborn children with autism had significant difference in the overall scores for play and imagination than the secondborns. (Table -8)

• There was significant difference between the gender of children with autism and scores for various dimensions of play and imagination. (Table-11)

• There was significant difference between the age of diagnosis of children with autism and scores for the dimensions of play and imagination. (Table-14)

• Children in the age group of 5-8 years had better play and imagination skills.

• There was significant difference between the autistic children’s family size and scores for various dimensions of play and imagination (Table-20)

• Autistic children’s years of schooling and the various dimensions of play and imagination are positively associated. (Table-23)

• There was no significant association between fathers’ educational qualification and various dimensions of autistic child’s play excepting in pretend play-symbolic and pretend play- fantasy. (Table-26)

• There was significant correlation between the aspects of play and imagination in children with autism. (Table-29)

• There was significant relationship among all the nine aspects of play and imagination in children with autism. (Table-30)

• The children with mild degree of autism exhibited enhanced play behaviour compared to children with moderate and severe degree of autism. (Table-34)
Suggestions for future

1. All the Special Teachers may need to be oriented about play perspectives for children with autism at the beginning of the year so as to rejuvenate them to work with more passion and enthusiasm.

2. The Regular Teachers may be helped to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the children with autism, thus leading to better support and co-operation in working with them.

3. Counseling sessions can be organized periodically for the parents of children with autism where they can vent out their emotional problems and guidance can be offered for their smooth functioning and peaceful living.

4. Workshops and seminars can be arranged for both the Special Educators and Regular Teachers with focus on augmentative communication strategies and the assistive technologies available for children with autism.

5. Siblings and Support groups may need to be oriented about autism, to have better understanding of their play needs and its fulfillment for the growth of autistic brothers/sisters.

6. Parents of special children may need to be highlighted on the importance of early diagnosis so as to enable better rehabilitation and therapeutic services.

7. Social interaction can be assessed in naturalistic settings, including classrooms and homes, with children and adults as interactive partners.

8. Research on environmental enhancement and skills interventions may need to be promoted to support the creation of ‘therapeutic play’ environments for promoting social interaction, communication and imagination for young children with autism.

10. Since play occupies a significant place in the lives of children with autism, government can organize “In service Training” for all the regular and special teachers working in the SSA scheme.

11. Training programme on Activity Based Learning (ABL) based on the concepts of play may be organized for all the regular teachers employed under Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS).

12. Establish a working relationship between parents and administrators to match the personality and characteristics of prospective teachers to the students with autism.

13. Encourage home visits by teachers to better understand family dynamics and appreciate the challenges faced by parents.

14. Schedule frequent parent-teachers conferences so both parents and teachers can reach agreement on managing current social and academic challenges faced by the children with autism.

15. To identify classrooms emphasizing peer group support for academic and social issues so as to enable children with autism to develop good play skills and learn through play way method.

Suggestions for further research

1. Comparative study between children with autism and normal children in the area of play.

2. Role of Special Educators in enhancing the play behaviour of children with autism.
3. Attitude of parents of children with autism in the area of play.


5. Play in enhancing social language and communication in children with autism.

Conclusion

Play is a cherished part of childhood that offers children with autism important developmental benefits. This research clearly points out the perspectives of Play Behaviour among children with autism in relation to social interaction, communication and play and imagination. As children with autism have manifested improvement in play development, both the professionals and the parents need to be reoriented to use play as a medium of instruction, so as to rekindle the desire for play in children with autism and to have social interaction with the peers and the significant others. In the process of creating the optimal developmental milieu for children, it remains imperative that play be included along with academic and social-enrichment opportunities and that safe environments be made available to all children. Children with autism deserve to be nurtured in ways that will optimize their skills in social interaction, communication and imagination, which will ultimately assist in mainstreaming them in the society.