Chapter V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
This chapter is systematically structured into four parts. The first part gives an outline of the objectives and the hypotheses framed for the study. Secondly, it gives the method adopted for this investigation. The third part presents the major findings and the last section provides suggestions for the future research.

The present study is an attempt to explore the cognitive and behavioural analysis of autism and test the efficacy of parent training intervention for improving the conditions of children with autism. A few objective and hypothesis are formulated for this purpose. They are given below:

**Objectives**

1. To assess the cognitive functions in relation to the different levels of autism.
2. To explore the behavioural pattern in relation to different levels of autism.
3. To explore the role of age and gender on the cognitive functions and behavioural pattern among children with autism.
4. To evaluate the usefulness and efficacy of parental training intervention on skill improvement and reduction of problem behaviour among selected children with autism.

**Hypotheses**

1. Cognitive skills differ with different levels of autism.

3. Behavioural pattern differ with different levels of autism.


7. Autism Quotient can be predicted by means of cognitive and behavioural patterns of children with autism.


10. Parental training intervention significantly reduces the severity level of children with autism.

Participants

The sampling of the present study has been drawn using purposive sampling method. The present study consists of 60 children with Autism including both boys and girls, in the age range of 3-12 years with a mean age of 6.5 years. The autistic groups in the present sample are those who have been diagnosed and certified as cases of Autism from the Institute for Communicative and Cognitive Neurosciences (ICCONS), Shornur, Palakkad.
Those who have been clinically diagnosed and are attending three Special schools in Calicut district of Kerala are also included in this study.

**Measures**

The measures used in this study include five standardised observation/interview schedules and socio-demographic data sheet.

1. Socio-demographic Data Sheet.
2. Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS).
5. Behavioural Assessment Scale for Indian Children with Mental Retardation (BASIC-MR).

**Procedure**

The above mentioned measures are individually administered and parent training intervention was given to a selected group. After this the data is analysed by appropriate statistical methods.

**Major Findings**

The major findings of the present study are as follows:

1. The children with autism have more skills in the receptive language and problem exists in the sphere of expressive communication.
2. The written communication is very poor in children with autism and great variability in communication skills.
3. Children with autism develop the number concept very poorly with more individual variability.
4. Expressive language and overall communication ability significantly differ in children with average and above average children with autism.

5. Preschool and school age children with autism significantly differ in receptive language.

6. A very striking feature is that while the average scoring boys were better in number and the above average scoring girls also turned out to be better in number.

7. Average scorers are better in receptive, expressive, written, number and overall communication domain skills.

8. Personal skills are comparatively better in autism especially self help skills.


10. Domestic, community and coping skills are poor in children with autism.

11. Gender has no significant effect on behavioural skills of children with autism.

12. Preschool and school children with autism significantly differ in personal, domestic and overall daily living skills.

13. Personal, community, overall daily living skills and problem behaviour differ significantly between average and above average scores in autism.

14. Above average children has more problem behaviour.
15. School age children with autism have more ability on personal and domestic skills than preschool ones.

16. Cognitive variables are significantly and negatively related to autism quotient.

17. Problem behaviour is positively and significantly related to autism quotient.

18. Other behavioural variables are negatively and significantly related to autism quotient.

19. Autism quotient could be predicted by the overall communication skills, problem behaviour and community skills of children with autism.

20. Parental training intervention is effective for improving the cognitive and behavioural skills of children with autism.

21. Autism quotient is effectively reduced through parent training intervention.

**Conclusions**

The present study strongly corroborates the scientific notions related to the autism disorders. This is one of the major findings of this study, which clearly substantiates;

- There is a proportionally significant relationship between the ability level and autism symptomatology of the child.

- Autism severity can be predicted through the analysis of the communication skills, adaptive behaviour and problem behaviour of the children with autism.
Summary

- Parent training intervention focusing on cognitive and behavioural competence will specifically enhance the overall skills of the children with autism.
- Parent training intervention consistently reduces the severity level of the children with autism.

Limitations of the present study

Although the result of the present study is quite inspiring, it would be earnest to point out a few limitations.

- The sample size for the intervention phase of the study is quite small.
- The parental training intervention is conducted only for very short time duration. Related to this, the systematic assessment of parent-child interaction was not conducted.

Suggestions for future research

The present study highlights the major practical and methodological difficulties in undertaking a training intervention programme for the parents of the children with autism. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the modest findings of improved communication competence, behavioural skills and the reduced autism severity levels of the child, emphasize a greater need for further work on the parent training approaches. This should include methodological rigour to confirm and extend these tentative findings and more clearly demonstrate whether parent training approaches focused on cognitive skills and behavioural skills have a specific beneficial effect on the overall competence of children with autism. However, if these interventions are replicated, as this study suggests, a developmentally oriented, focused
approach to parent training intervention treatment can be a useful addition to the regular care in managing autistic disorders.