Chapter 1

Introduction

Young children learn through play as well as through interactions with people at home and his environment. Without effective interaction with these people and objects, the primary avenues for learning are blocked. The quality of child’s social relations and social preferences in their peer group can develop or inhibit the feelings of belongingness and connectedness, which in turn can affect the children’s perceptions and academic competence.

Child’s development at the primary stage is greatly influenced by the involvement of parents. When parents are involved in their children’s education at home, they do better in schools. And when parents are involved in school, children excel further in school and the schools that they go are better placed.

Parents and peer relations seem to complement one another. Parents provide affection and guidance, granting children the security and social skills they needed to enter the world of peers. Peer interaction in turn, permits children to expand their social skills further.

Peer relations serve as vital sources of security in threatening situations and contribute greatly to development. But they do so more effectively when combined with warm, supportive ties to parents.
Children first acquire skills for interacting with parents within the family. Parents influence children’s peer sociability both directly through attempts to influence children and peer relation and indirectly through their child rearing practices and play behaviour.

Peer interaction contributes to a wide variety of skills that help children and adolescents adapt successfully to their social worlds. Peers serve as socialization agents through reinforcement, modelling and direct pressures to conform to social behaviours.

1.1. Need and Significance of the Study

The importance of the early years in the formation of intelligence, personality, social behaviour and physical development is a acknowledged fact. It is during the primary classes, that our basic sense of ourselves and our relationship to the world is established. Learning occurs faster in the early years than at any other time and patterns are established at this time that has far-reaching implications. Parents need information about what is happening in their child’s classroom and how they can help. The best way to know is to get involved.

There is a clear backing for the belief that personal and social development is the corner stone of an individual’s capacity to make their way in society and to have that sense of emotional well-being. Parents can influence a child in a multidimensional ways. They can stimulate the various factors,
beginning even before birth and continuing throughout his or her life. The first school of a child is his own home and parents are the first teachers. When parents try to educate their child, they should confirm that their education is comprehensive and long-lasting. Their planning should be well enough to ensure the effectiveness. The benefits of the parental stimulation in the education of their children can be seen throughout the studies of their children at all levels. Parents should be involved in the education of their children not only at their homes but in their schools too. Parents should be encouraged to come forward to the school at all levels to see improvement in their children’s education. There should be inter-connection, between the school and home as without this inter-connection the progress is not significant. The key to achievement of the students is the development of attitudes that can be promoted when parents are seen to have great interest in the education of their children. These attitudes are dependent on the interaction ability of the family rather than the income or social class of the family. Parents do not take interest in the education of their children if they are not considered as important or powerful. Negative attitudes are developed in the parents and then in their children too. As a result, academic achievement is inhibited (Henderson, 1981). So we can say that the research regarding the Parental Stimulation is a vital factor in the development of a child, society or a nation itself.

Children are socialised by the people with whom they associate; through daily interaction over the course of many years, acceptable social customs are
taught and fostered. Peers can have a great impact on a broad range of issues in the child's life, including achievement in school. Understanding the way peer interactions affect academic achievement is important for parents, educators, and policymakers. In particular, academic achievement and the often corresponding level of peer experiences tend to predict the average earnings an individual may secure over a lifetime. For this reason, finding out the peer experiences on academic achievement can make a significant contribution for reforms in education.

Social relations have also a significant role to play. As a child grows up, the process of socialisation is also got improved. The family and the peer members are playing the significant role in the socialisation process of a child. Social relations theory of Vygotsky establishes that social relations play a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. Further, the social learning theory of Bandura emphasises the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the presence of their peers, a child is acquiring many rich and varied experiences which shape him to behave in a matured fashion than reared independently and separately. Thus the child’s interaction with the peers enables him not only as a confiding member in the group but also that the child in turn is contributing to the group equally for the socialisation process. Thus the peer interactions turn out to form peer relations which exerts a strong binding force for the child to remain in the company of peers as long as possible. Thus the study on the interacting effect of Parental Stimulations, Peer Experiences and Social Relations on the learning outcomes seem to be of paramount in present scenario. Thus the problem of the present study is worded as ‘Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences as Correlates of Select Social Relations and Academic Achievement of Primary School Children’

1.3 Definition of Key Terms

Some of the key terms that need clarification are operationally defined below:

*Parental Stimulation:* Parental Stimulation is the help extended by the parents to their wards in their school activities or work outside the classroom or the active role in the governance and decision making
necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education that supplements and enriches the child for better academic outcomes.

Peer Experiences: Thorkildsen, R. (1998), defined Peer Experiences as “any act or work of a child that interferes with the activities of their co-learners or individuals for a desirable minimum level of education”.

As used in the study, Peer Experiences refer to the experiences that a child acquires both inside and outside the classroom situation where in which the child is constantly exposed to and engaged in interactions with his peers by way of play and thus the socialisation circle of the child widens.

Social Relations: Trivette, P (1995), defined Social Relations as “children’s interaction with social environment, social preference, non preference, feeling of connectedness and loneliness, which leads to the development of sociability among the learner”.

As intended in the study, the term Social Relations indicate the child’s interactions with his peers in the social environment which is capable of instilling in him social preferences, choices and non-preferences, feelings of connectedness and isolations that shapes the child to make adjustments in social relationships in the given social environment.

Academic Achievement: Achievement of the child as evidenced by the scores obtained in the school subjects.
In the present study the marks obtained by the primary school children kept in the school records were considered.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives set for the study are given below.

1. To estimate the inter relationship of the variables selected for the study viz; Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on select Social Relations and Academic Achievement for the total sample and relevant sub samples based on gender, place of residence and type of management of schools.

2. To test whether the equivalent correlations obtained for the two gender groups rural urban groups and type of management of schools differ significantly.

3. To find out the correlation between Parental Stimulation and select Social Relations with the effect of Peer Experiences partial out.

4. To find out the correlation between Parental Stimulation and Academic Achievement with the effect of Peer Experiences partial out.

5. To find out the correlation between Peer Experiences and select Social Relations with the effect of Parental Stimulation partial out.
6. To find out the correlation between Peer Experiences and Academic Achievement with the effect of Parental Stimulation partial out

7. To develop Multiple regression equation for predicting Social Relations and Academic Achievement given Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences.

8. To study the combined effect of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on select Social Relations and Academic Achievement using Multiple correlation coefficient.

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were set for the study.

1. There will be significant relationship between the selected variables *viz:* Parent Stimulation and Peer Experiences taken on Social Relations and Academic Achievement:

   (a) for the total sample and

   (b) relevant sub samples based on gender, place of residence and type of management of schools.

2. There will be significant difference in the correlation obtained for Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on Social Relations and Academic Achievement with respect to:

   (a) the two gender groups,
(b) place of residence and
(c) type of management of schools.

3. There will be significant relation between:
   (a) Parental Stimulation and select Social Relations with the effect of Peer Experiences partial out and
   (b) Peer Experiences and Academic Achievement with the effect of Peer Experiences partial out and
   (c) Peer Experiences and Social Relations with the effect of Parental Stimulation partial out and
   (d) Peer Experiences and Academic Achievement with the effect of Parental Stimulation partial out.

4. There will be significant influence of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on select Social Relations and Academic Achievement.

1.6 Methodology

The study was intended to find out the influence of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on Social Relations and Academic Achievement of primary school children. So the investigator selected normative survey method.
1.7 Sample

The investigator selected 500 primary school children from three revenue districts of Kerala namely Kasragod, Thrissur, and Kottayam using proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

1.8 Tools used for the Study

The investigator used the following tools for the present study;

1. Parental Stimulation Scale. (Suresh and John, 1999)

2. Peer Experiences Scale. (Suresh and John, 1999)

3. Social Relations Scale. (Suresh and John, 1999)

Academic achievement of students are considered by including the Last Terminal Examination marks of the students.

1.9 Procedure for Data Collection

The investigator personally visited the primary schools. The purpose of the study was explained to the Headmasters and teachers of the schools. The researcher ensured the permission to conduct the survey and to administer the various tools.

The investigator established a good rapport with the primary school children before administering the tests. The investigator explained the purpose of the test and the testing procedure. Proper instructions were given to the
children how to mark their responses in the response sheets which were separately given to them.

The tests were conducted in the forenoon session as per the fixed schedule. Sufficient time was given to children to complete the tests. The investigator personally collected the filled up rating scales from the children.

1.10 Statistical Techniques Used

The study used Mean, SD, Pearson’s r, Partial r’s and Regression Equation and Multiple R as statistical techniques for the study.

1.11 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study basically aims to find out the influence of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on select Social Relations and the Academic Achievement of primary school children. It is envisaged that the study would throw light up on the extent of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on select Social Relations and the Academic Achievement of learning outcomes of primary school children. The findings of the study will help the parents to understand the shortcomings of the inspiration given to their children and show the ways and means to strengthen the Parental Stimulation in the learning activities of the children.

The study also focuses on the Peer Experiences exist among the primary school children and its effect on their Social relations and Academic
achievement. The results of the study would help teachers to include variety of curricular strategies to enhance healthy Peer Experiences among the children.

The study also makes a thorough investigation into the Social Relations exist among the primary school children and how much it is influenced by the Peer Experiences and Parental Stimulations. The results of the study would help teachers and curriculum planners to reorient the existing curricular activities and include activities which can inculcate desirable social behaviour among primary school children.

The study explicates the equal importance of Parental Stimulation and Peer Experiences on Social Relations and Academic Achievement of our children. So the curriculum planners, teachers and educational administrators would be able to organise curricular and co-curricular activities to augment the overall development and academic success of the child.

The study restricted its scope by confining it to the students of three districts in Kerala. It would have yielded more results if the study extended to all the districts in Kerala. The researcher did not get enough time to adopt mixed methods to reach into valuable conclusions.

The researcher took enough care and attention to reduce the limitations of the study and to make valuable conclusions.
1.11 Organisation of the Report

The study has been reported in six chapters as follows:

Chapter I  Contains a brief introduction, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, definition of key terms, objectives of the study, hypotheses, methodology in brief, and scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter II  Depicts the theoretical background regarding Parental Stimulation, Peer Experiences, Social Relations and their significance in the development of children especially in the primary stage.

Chapter III  Summarises the review of reported studies and related literature pertaining to the variables under investigation that have close bearing on the topic of research.

Chapter IV  Contains the methodology in detail including the description of the method adopted, the tools used in the collection of data, sample for the study, procedure adopted for data collection, and statistical techniques used.

Chapter V  Describes the analysis and interpretation of data with tables as far as possible.

Chapter VI  Deals with the major findings of the study and suggestions for further research.