9. Summary

The family is the important primary group in all the societies known to us. It occupies a “nuclear position in the social structure”. The family is composed of persons who interact and communicate with each other in their social roles, such as husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, and brother and sister. The most widely recognized function of family is to care and socialize the new generations. A stimulating home environment has been shown to be a major factor that influences the overall development of children. Availability of stimulating objects, books and play materials within the home are critical indicators for the overall quality of the home environment.

Families are the first environments with which children interact from birth. They are critically important in providing children with stimulation, support, and nurturance. These qualities, in turn, are influenced by the resources that families have to devote to child-raising (strongly influenced by income), their style of parenting, and their tendency to provide a rich and responsive language environment (strongly influenced by parental levels of education).

A greater part of the Indian population lives in villages. The infants get fewer opportunities to develop their full perspective as their mothers lack knowledge regarding scientific child care, stimulatory activities and conducive environment which are essential for hale and hearty development. The parents’ educational levels have an important impact on children’s achievement, and higher levels of adult education have a positive bearing on both the educational future and the income level of the children in a family. The optimal development of a young child requires an environment ensuring gratification of all basic physical needs and careful provisions for health and safety.
The toddler years (one to three years of age) are ones of rapid change and can be among the most exciting and challenging for parents and clinicians. The development occurs in all the domains of development such as Gross motor, Fine motor, Language, Self-help and Personal-social skills. The most remarkable advances occur in language and interpersonal skills, but progress is evident in all areas as development proceeds along the traditional lines of affective, motor, cognitive, and physical growth. Many developmental assessment tools are available to assess the psychosocial development of children and most of them are comprehensive or multi-domain tools assessing gross motor, fine motor, language personal-social, self-help, and cognitive developmental domains.

The present cross-sectional study assessed the various domains (Gross motor, Fine motor, Language, Personal-social, and self-help skills) of children aged between one and three years old brought up by the literate and illiterate parents living in urban and rural areas of Bangalore by using Denver II and Psychosocial development screening test and related their developmental status with home environment, location of residence, preferred parenting style, type of family, socio-economic status of family, birth order of child, number of siblings, and maternal employment are the influencing factors for the development of toddlers.

The major milestones are attained by the children in the toddlerhood. As only a few tools are available for assessing the motor development of toddlers and also as many of them are not suitable for toddlers being reared in Indian cultural context, a new measure for assessing the gross and fine motor skills of toddlers was developed as a part of this study.

It is clearly evident from the data analysis that stimulating home environment and authoritative parenting styles were the major predictors of development of toddlers.
A preliminary validation was done for the new measure (MSATT) developed in this study by using Denver II as a gold standard tool, which showed an excellent criterion validity. The test-retest and inter-observer reliability were also found to be excellent. Further validation of MSATT among the children with disabilities and against other developmental assessment tools are warranted.