Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In a democratic set-up like ours primary education is a must. It is, however, discouraging that even after 22 years of independence adequate educational facilities have not been provided even to children in the age group 6-14 years who are expected to take up the responsibility of nurturing the growing democracy. No doubt certain States like Kerala and some parts of Maharashtra (The Education Commission 1966 & Second All India Educational Survey 1967) have recorded remarkable increase in enrolment at the primary stage, but mere increase in number may not be sufficient. Specific educational programmes are needed to suit the requirements of pupils of different abilities. A pre-requisite to implement such programmes is the availability of effective instruments which may help in assessing the ability of the child and thereby aid in identifying bright from the retarded so that educational programmes can be geared to their respective needs.

The study (Long and Mehta 1966) of available tests of intelligence, especially for the younger age group, however, presents a dismal picture. Most of these tests do not even fulfil the basic requirements of a good test. The present study is an attempt to meet this very requirement. It aims at developing a reasonably valid and reliable scale of intelligence for children.
Most of the intelligence tests developed in India so far have tried to measure intelligence through such test material with which children are not quite familiar. Most commonly used item types are verbal reasoning, number series, analogies, matrices, coding and decoding etc. Children do not experience such situations in their normal school activities. The test material itself, thus, becomes a testing situation. The child's score on such tests would also depend on how quickly he understands the instructions and prepares his mental set to respond in a particular way. The score thus obtained, therefore, may not be a true index of intelligence. For school children especially, solving arithmetical problems, answering questions on different subjects in the class, telling meanings of words, comparing two things or terms of daily life are very common experiences. And, if the intelligence test includes such common experiences or behaviours, children may not feel any difficulty in understanding the test material and they are likely to respond in a more natural way. Children's abilities can best be revealed through the experience or behaviour with which they are familiar. The score obtained on such tests may, therefore, be a better measure of intelligence. The investigator has attempted a measure of intelligence with such common experiences.

As would be revealed by the review of the intelligence tests in the chapter III, most of the tests developed in our country are group tests which are not quite suitable for young children who have not yet mastered sufficient reading skills and by nature are more distractable. For these children
individual tests are preferable to group tests as the tester can often learn much more from individual tests than what the mere subject's score would indicate. Moreover, in an individual test child has to know the correct answer before he gets at that whereas in group tests of multiple choice type he can very often arrive at correct answer on the basis of this partial information only. He can even mark this or that alternative already provided and some of them may be correct for which he gets the credit. Though corrections for guessing are there but they too have certain limitations of over-correction and under-correction. These considerations led the investigator to choose the individual instead of group form.

If primary purpose of devising an intelligence test is to make it available to persons in the field of education for their use in dealing with educational problems they face in the school, then the tests to be included are to be judged against that background. Verbal tests are better tools than performance ones in identifying the slow learners and accelerated ones in the class. They also prove as better predictors for children's scholastic success. A very common argument against verbal items is that they demand certain verbal skills which are acquired. This remains with non-verbal items also as they demand certain perceptual discrimination skills which may be acquired (Mitra 1959). It is, however, verbal materials i.e. language or symbols that prove better media for measuring abstract thinking and reasoning than the performance material as it may not discriminate at the very bright level of
intelligence (Terman 1921). Moreover, verbal media are very familiar ones to children and they have no difficulty in responding to those items whereas our children fare unfavourably on tests with spatial fundamentals like the Block Design test (Sinha 1968). It was, therefore, decided to include the verbal tests in the present scale.

The study (Long and Mehta 1966) of existing tests has also revealed that tests of intelligence are required for children of almost all ages. But to develop an intelligence scale, especially the individual one, for the entire age range of children needs tremendous time and resources. It was rather difficult for single individual to attempt a scale for the full age range. It was, therefore, restricted to the small age range of 8 to 12 years only. This age range is significant by other consideration also. There are some scholarships instituted by the Union Government, State Government and other agencies for promising children in this age range. It may, therefore, be quite useful if we have a test to get the valid information about children's intellectual abilities. It is also during this age range when there is a greater rush for admission in Public schools, Sainik schools and other schools. They cannot obviously admit all those who apply. A verbal scale of intelligence may help these school authorities in selecting children who have the potentialities to show high scholastic success later on.
It is in this wider context that the present work of the development of an individual scale of intelligence was taken up for limited age range, though small but educationally very significant one, with the expectation that it may be utilized by all those who feel concerned about educational problems at that age. It may also prove useful for research workers who employ it for conducting studies on educational problems.
REFERENCES


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