CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
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Foremost among the world's resources is the human resource. Civilization, that we have today is the result of conscious efforts of the human beings. It could not have been evolved had the human beings not utilized their brain power in various resources both natural and human to transform them into usable. Childhood on which our human resource largely depends is a universal human experience. Children are the most important asset of parents and occupy a prominent place in society. It is through them that social values and norms are transmitted from one generation to another. Children especially of younger age group form the most vulnerable segment of population of any country on all counts, that is, nutrition, health, education, socialization, etc. It is due to this that most of the human activities are converged on them. To invest in them in any form is considered an investment in their future. The conditions under which they grow indicate the level of development of any nation. Throughout the world now there is a greater realization of the importance of children in the context of socio-economic development.
World's population of 4.5 billion at present is estimated to exceed six billion by the turn of this century. The world's population of one billion in 1830 increased to 4.5 billion at present. It is indicated that Asia's population is expected to touch 3.5 billion representing 58 percent of the world's population. This sharp expansion would have serious implication for the societies (Sato, 1984).

Infant mortality rate during the years 1975-1980 is reported very high in developing regions of the World, for example, Afghanistan (181), Nepal (156), Ethiopia (150), Bangladesh and Nigeria (140), Pakistan (131) and India (129). Whereas in the developed regions it is very low, for example, Japan (7.1), Sweden (0.9), United Kingdom (12.1), Spain (11.1), France (10) and United States (12.5). The difference in infant mortality of developed and developing countries is five to twenty times. These differential rates are attributed to differential quality of life provided to the growing population.

Infant mortality is the single factor which is a rough indicator of conditions of the children. It is understood that there are many problems that still face
children in developed countries. However, with regard to paramount necessities of life, such as, food, shelter, clothing, education, health care, etc., they are better placed and the problem is more lamentable in the under developed and developing countries.

India's population has almost doubled during the last three decades. It increased from 361 million in 1951 to 685 million in 1981. As per population projections, population of India in 1986 is 758 million, and the number of children is estimated at 285 million. Census, 1981, reveals that of the 685 million persons in India 354 million were males and 330 million were females. Percentage of urban population was 23.31 as against 17.29 in the year 1951. About forty per cent of population consists of children below the age of 14 years. Of the 272 million children about 80 per cent were living in rural areas.

It is also revealed that literacy rate, that is, percentage of literates to total population was 36.23. There were variations as regard to literacy among different sexes and regions. Literacy rate among males was much higher (46.89 per cent) compared to females (24.82 per cent). Similarly it was 57.40 in urban areas (males
65.83 and females 47.82) and 29.65 in rural areas (males 40.79 and females 17.96). However, percentage of literates was highest in Kerala (70.42) and lowest in the state of Rajasthan (24.38). Literacy rate in the age group of 5-9 years was 30.56 per cent. The state of Kerala occupied the top position where it was 75.06 per cent, and the lowest in Uttar Pradesh (23.35 per cent). It was also reported that in the age group of 5-9 years 38.45 per cent children and in the age group of 10-11 years 50.45 per cent children attend school. Percentage of female children in both the age groups was low i.e., 32.31 and 37.47, respectively. The problem of drop-outs had been very discouraging, because during the years 1973-78, the drop out rates at primary and middle stage were 62.1 per cent and 77.1 per cent, respectively.

Percentage of workers to total population was 33.45. Number of females entering into labour force was low (13.39 per cent) as compared to males (51.62 per cent). Children below the age of 14 years were reported to be entering into labour force. Number of male children entering into labour force was higher 5.46 per cent (rural 6.30, urban 2.40) as
compared to 2.95 per cent for female children (rural 0.88 and urban 3.50). According to official statistics based on sample survey in 1983 there were 17.76 million child workers in our country. The unofficial report, however, indicates 100 million working children in our country (Times of India, March 22, 1985).

Life expectancy at birth is estimated to be more than 55 years. Child population which was over 18 crores in 1961 increased to 27 crores in 1981. However, child dependency ratio which was 770 in 1961 decreased to 733 in 1981. The birth rate which is reported to be 32.5 during the years 1981-86, is still higher as compared to the estimated birth rate of 29.5 for the years 1981-85 and 27.0 for the years 1986-90. Higher birth rate indicates large scale expansion of India's population in future.

In general, infant mortality was 110 per one thousand live births and it was higher in rural areas (119) than in urban areas (62). The highest infant mortality was in the State of Madhya Pradesh (134) and the lowest in Kerala (37). But infant mortality in India is much higher than that of developed countries.
Keeping in view the above statistics it can be believed that high birth rate (32.5) indicates fast expansion of India's population which would have serious consequences. With the increase in child population it would not be possible to look after the children properly. High infant mortality rate represents poor state of health of our children. Shanti Ghosh (1977) a renowned Indian Pediatrician had pointed that most immediate causes of infant mortality are diarrhoeal disorders, respiratory infections, and even the malnutrition is an important cause in many cases. Repeated illnesses coupled with malnutrition result in stunting, and it is feared that such children may not be able to achieve their full intellectual potential. Hundred million child workers reflect that they are being exploited as they have been compelled by prevailing circumstances to find employment in factories, shops, hotels, restaurants, etc. Very high drop out rate indicates the poor educational status of our younger generation. Most of the children live in uncongenial environment inflicted with poverty, ignorance, and lack of basic necessities, such as, health, food, nutrition, education, etc.

Certainly, lack of opportunities bereft our children
to attain their full growth and development. It does not
mean that our society is not concerned with this appalling
fact, but rather their importance has been recognised in the
context of socio-economic development. Measures have been
initiated for welfare of children. As in the words of Late
Smt. Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister, "The nation is judged
by what it does for its children" (Rao 1984).

From 1850 onwards alongwith many legislations aimed
at improving the conditions of our younger generation, there
came into being several voluntary agencies and societies,
offering services to children and this was the result of
people's effort (Luthra, 1975). After India's independence,
attention on development plans for children has experienced
varying degree of importance. In 1974, Government of India,
being alive to the cause of child development prepared a
comprehensive document which stated, "the Nation's children
are a superanely important asset. Their nurture and solicitude
are our responsibility. Children's programmes should find a
prominent place in our National Plans for the development of
human resources, so that our children grow up to become robust
citizens, physically fit endowed with skills and motivations needed by society," (National Policy, 1975).

With the purpose to provide better opportunities to children for their growth and development, our country has earmarked increased plan outlay to be spent on health, education, and other welfare activities. For example, in the Sixth Five Year plan, the outlay on health was Rs. 1821 crores as against the Rs. 65.2 crores in the First Five Year plan. In terms of health facilities as on January, 1984, there were 28961 health centres (including hospitals, dispensaries and sub-centres) functioning in India. Expenditure on education was Rs. 2526 crores compared to Rs. 170 crores in the First Five Year plan. As far as educational amenities are concerned by the end of 1983 there were 12,716 Pre-Primary Schools, 5,03,741 Primary Schools, 1,23,323 Middle Schools, and 52, 279 High and Higher Secondary schools. There were 63267 Anganwadi centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme. They were functioning in India with the assistance from UNICEF.

The measures adopted by international organizations, like UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, and the State attest our concern for the proper development of children. These agencies with
the help of advanced technology in the field of science and medicine have been laying more emphasis to the development of children world over. Services have been extended to provide children with facilities of supplementary nutrition, better education, recreation, immunization and health, shelter, etc., for their proper growth and development. Efforts are being made to cover all the children under these programmes. It is, however, disheartening to note that inspite of these efforts children in developing and under developed countries continue to face problems of various diseases, infections, and malnutrition, especially in India, where infant mortality rate still continues to be very high. The problems which beset our children are considered the product of problems of pervasive poverty, illiteracy, and social injustice afflicting our society. However, this leads us to believe that though a lot is being done in favour of children by various agencies, but so far, their interventions have not been able to bring any radical change in the conditions of our children.

Accomplishment of the task of assisting and providing children with better services in the field of education, health, and welfare, for their development is a difficult task. Success
of any policy depends upon the information available on children, and the quality and quantity of problems which they face. In India there is paucity of data in this regard and also on different aspects of child development. This demands that future activities and their success for the development of children, a strong base of child development research on various aspects of child's life is a pre-requisite. Above all it requires understanding of child development.

It implies that dealing with the individual from conception through the life cycle. Interest in the field concerns on three dimensions: firstly, his growth and development; secondly, his interaction with the social and cultural environment; and thirdly, inner mental functioning. The process of growth and development, that is, of change and accommodation, takes place continuously throughout the life of the individual. When one considers the complex factors that produce the individual at any point of time, it is obvious that it is a study which depends on a number of disciplines, such as, Biology, Pediatrics, Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology, and Education, because all these sciences must study the development from a particular perspective to thoroughly explore the field of child development.
Sears points out that it was in the early twentieth century that scientists from several non-professionally oriented (Pure science) disciplines began to join researches (from the child oriented professions) to create the scientific field of child development. Unlike other sciences which evolved from basic sciences, child development was essentially a product of social needs. Now child development is a reflection of the tremulous partnership that always seems to exist when pure and applied science and the services of scientist are directed towards fulfilling social rather than intellectual needs. The field of child development has grown out of relevance. Its contact and multidisciplinary structure are a product of the demand for social usefulness, "(Sears; 1975).

It is universally known that chief characteristic of a living organism is his ability to grow. From the beginning of first lusty yell when child vacates his mother’s womb and from the moment of creation to our last breath, our lives are governed by one overriding principle: change. Through every moment of every day of every life, we change.
Therefore, child grows into an adolescent who in course of time grows into an adult. Two fundamental facts characterise childhood: growth and development. The growth of whole body is an intricate process and applies to all aspects of human organism from conception to maturity. It is a quantitative change and fairly straightforward and relatively easy to measure. Whereas development is a qualitative change and more complex. Development means, a progressive series of changes in orderly, coherent pattern toward a state of perfect function. It is a process in which the internal physiological changes and the psychological processes stimulated by them are integrated.

After birth every child is exposed to external environment i.e. physical and socio-cultural. As the development advances, child makes complex adaptive responses to the environment. Child's mental development can be inferred from his intelligence by comparing it with other individuals of similar age. Psychologists have often described 'intelligence' as the ability to learn from experience. 'Personality' has been defined as the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychological systems that determine the unique adjustment to his environment.
It is responsive to factors, such as, parent-child relationship, family, peer contacts, school, society, culture, etc. Child reacts to the situation on the basis of his life experiences. Environmental factors seem to exert a variety of influences and they act upon individual's mental development. Psychosocial development is a skill, to be learnt, in order to strike a balance between personal urges and social demands. It is the part of personality development and denotes the ways in which individual responds socially. Sociability is not function of heredity. Social development and emotional development are the two sides of the same coin. Former is nothing but a social reference of emotional development and latter is nothing but a psychological reference of a social behaviour. Individual develops in a particular socio-cultural setting that affects social development. New recruits are socialized to play adult roles.

The terms growth and development are often used interchangeably, and it is certainly true that each depends on the other for fruition and any separation would be artificial one (Falkner, 1962). However, Washburn (1950) maintains that changing structure and function in a child are inseparable
and there can be no sharp dividing line between the two terms, namely, growth and development. But these divisions are arbitrary and rarely neat since each type of development affects the development in the other sphere. Sullivan (1953) pointed out that there is nothing haphazard about development. It follows a well defined path: (1) development always proceeds from simple to complex; (2) development proceeds from general to specific; (3) physical development follows the rules of cephalocaudal (head-to-toe) development; (4) cognitive development (the development of logical processes) also proceed along orderly lines. Although the precise timing of all these facts of development varies from each person, their sequence is invariant in conformity with the overall principles involved.

To understand human development in a more comprehensive way it is necessary to take into account information on physical, biological, intellectual, social, and other types of behaviour. However, an important question rises here that how various factors, for example genetic, biological conditions, various social-cultural factors interact in the process of development of the human organism? To understand this a probe into the subject matter, facts, and theories pertaining
to child development would help us to know how various factors interact with development.

History of child development as a field of scientific endeavour can be traced in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before the middle 1850s there were essentially two prevalent notions about the nature of man: theological and philosophical. The theological doctrine regarded man as an agent guided by God, and Philosophical doctrine saw man as a creature with the ability of free choice who conducts himself on the basis of reason. These doctrines persisted unchallenged until Darwin published the 'Origin of Species' in 1859 and the 'Descent of Man' in 1871. The main contention of these works was that man was an animal and differed from lower animals only in that he had acquired a higher level of physiological development. Since it was believed that animal behaviour was determined by instincts, it followed that man was also a creature of instinct and that certain inner determinants guided his behaviour. The instinct thesis, sometimes called Social Darwinism, strongly influenced the development of personality theory in sociology (Stephen, 1969).
Hurlock (1964) pointed out that Darwin was the first British Biologist to publish a detailed account of one of his ten sons. However, scientific studies on children got impetus when Hall (1891) published "Children's minds on Entering School". Hall is often referred to as the father of child study movement.

Since then many scholars who devoted most of their time to explore this field developed several theories of child development. A brief discussion of the findings of relevant theories would throw light on the process of development and help us to know how heredity and environment interact. For the sake of convenience various theories of child development are grouped under four categories viz; psychoanalytic, behaviouristic, cognitive, and sociological.

1. **Psychoanalytic theories**

Psychoanalytic theories are derived from the works of Freud and Erikson. These theories hold that development of the individual is dependant upon natural instincts. The individual acts in order to satisfy these instincts. Society on the other hand, to which he belongs imposes certain constraints on him in
order to maintain its normative orders. Hence, individual always faces conflict between his natural urges and social
demands. Advocates of these theories maintain that individual
is a reactive organism and psychosocial development proceeds
through stages with the shift in instinctual energy from one
body region to another. At each stage individual/child
undergoes major conflict either in the sexual realm (Freud,
1937) or social realm (Erikson, 1963). The way conflict is resolved determines individual's development.

Implicit in these theories is that though the natural
instincts are responsible for development but these are
realised in the context of socio-cultural environment. However,
psychoanalytic theorists lay equal importance on heredity and
environment in the process of development.

2. Behaviouristic theories:

Behaviouristic theories hold that it is the learning
which facilitates development of the individual. Learning
takes place in a stimulus - response situation. The surroundings
in which an individual grows in, serves as a source of
stimulus and leads to development of behaviour. The quality
and quantity of stimulus determines development. Main focus
of the behaviouristic theories is that individual is made to learn the behaviour. The behaviour is external/objective and can be measured. Behaviouristic theorists attempt to isolate the discrete factors in the environment that make certain individuals behave in a particular way and to know how earlier experiences affect later behaviour (Watson, 1925; Pavlov, 1927; and Skinner, 1939). They maintain that it is not only the heredity but the environment which determines development. In other words, individual is considered the product of environment and conditions in which the child is put in provide learning situations, and quality of the situation determines development. In short, behaviouristic theories lay more stress on the role of environment in development of the individual.

3. **Cognitive theories**

Jean Piaget (1952) was the chief exponent of cognitive theory. This theory lays emphasis on heredity. Individual is considered active organism. Human organism explores the environment around him and initiates his own development. The way individual perceives the situation and
responds leads to development. Experiences are viewed as catalysts in development process. It is maintained that development of individual occurs in a set of sequence of qualitatively different stages which are continuous. In short, cognitive theorists lay much emphasis on the role of heredity in development rather than on the environment. However, role of environment is not denied, but it is understood that it plays its role to some extent in the process of development.

4. Sociological theories:

Sociological theorists contend that individual and society are related to each other. Individual after birth becomes member of society or a particular social group, and endowed with biological potentialities comes in contact with the outside socio-cultural environment. It is stressed that individual interacts with socio-cultural environment. It is the interaction between individual and socio-cultural environment which facilitates development (Mead, 1934; and Cooley, 1963). In other words, the life opportunities and socio-cultural situations made available to the child determine development of the behaviour, that is, biological potentialities inherent
in the child are moulded into social behaviour by the external forces which operate in the socio-cultural environment. Thus, sociological theories lay more emphasis on social situations in the process of development.

The theories explained above highlight the process of growth and development of human child. These theories have taken broadly three stand points. One, growth and development depends upon capabilities child has at the time of birth. It is argued that external forces have limited role to play. In other words, the hereditary factors can be moulded to certain extent beyond which external environment cannot intervene. Second set of argument revolves around the influence of social environment. Advocates of this explanation argue that whatever we are, we are made by the external forces. It all depends upon quality of the external forces which would give a particular shape to human child, that is, not regard to his face, color, bodily make-up, etc., but with regard to his behaviour pattern which is the subject matter of social sciences.

Third, the social psychologists have realized that controversy between heredity and environment does not help us to understand
the social reality. Further, these are the pseudoquestions which have no meaningful answers. Therefore, they take the middle position and contend that the interaction between the two give rise to a particular personality type. It all depends upon how they interact and with what proportions and under what conditions. In short, for the purpose of understanding growth and development of human child we have to account for both the variables. There is another school of thought which goes a step further. It is argued that social forces start functioning from the very conception of the human child. Mother's physical and mental health is very important for the quality of the child she gives birth to. Some scholars have even collected statistics pertaining to weight and height of the new born child not only of different regions but also according to socio-economic status of the parents (Khanduja et.al., 1967; Datta Banik et.al., 1970; Idnani et.al., 1979; Bhargava et.al., 1980; and Kumar, 1983). We may have certain reservations to this line of approach. Yet it cannot be denied that to change the living organism into social being external environment plays a very important role. In other words, the quality of life under which child grows has everlasting imprint on his personality configuration.
Motivated by these general theoretical frameworks, different scholars have tried to understand the phenomenon of growth and development of human children under different life conditions. A review of these studies would be very helpful not only to understand the state of our knowledge regarding child development but this would also help us to find out the gaps in the field of child development. As the present study is being conducted in the rural hilly villages of Himachal Pradesh, India, we shall take into account only those research studies which have considered the Indian population residing in different regions of the country.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH STUDIES:

Different studies conducted on child's growth and development can be broadly grouped under three heads. One set of studies can be called as methodological studies in which attempts have been made to formulate and evolve research tools for the purpose of understanding the pattern of growth and development. The second type of studies take into account the child's attributes and relate them to his pattern of growth and development. In the third set we find studies which have tried to find out the impact of socio-economic background on the development of the child. In the following pages a
brief review of these studies is being attempted.

1. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL NURSES:

In Indian conditions it is contended that on an average birth weight of the child is 7 lbs., and by the age of two years the weight increases by four times the birth weight. Similarly, ideal length of a full term newborn is about 20 inches. In the first year an increase by 10 inches results. Thereafter, between 2-5 years there is an annual increase of 3 inches. By the age of four years height and weight correspond and similarly at the age of seven years. Thereafter there is a gain of two inches every year till adolescence (Gupta, 1979).

These details are, however, applicable to well nourished child. The growth potentials of a particular child are dependant on the number of factors like, the state of mother's mental and physical health during pregnancy, the economic, emotional, and social environment provided to the child which are related with social standing of the family to which the child belongs. In other words, factors influencing growth are located in the external environment.

Indian Council of Medical Research has come out with height and weight of the normal Indian child which differ
according to age and sex of the child. At one year the boys
height has been worked out 75 cms, and weight at 8.4 Kgs,
whereas in case of girls it is 73.5 cms and 7.3 Kgs, respectively.

At the age of five the differences are almost narrowed down,
that is at the age of five height for boys is 104 cms and for
the girls it is 103 cms, and in case of weight for boys it is
14.8 Kgs, and for girls it is 14.5 Kgs. These figures, however,
do not account for the onset of disease, quality of food,
nutrition, and child care practices. These norms are the
averages which imply that these would differ from child to
child depending on his life situations. In some of the
studies it is concluded that height and weight of children of
the upper segment of society in India corresponds to the height
and weight of the children in the developed countries (Aggarwal et al., 1970; Bhargava et al., 1980). This clearly
establishes that height and weight is dependant on the life
chances and life opportunities provided to the child which are
determined by socio-economic conditions of the parents.

A number of studies have been conducted during the
last fifteen years to develop norms pertaining to mental,
motor, language, adaptive milestones, etc., (Muralidharan,
These studies have either been conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, and the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, in different regions of the country. In these studies norms for growth and development of children have been established. Environmental variables, such as, home, school, residence, social class, etc., have been accounted for to investigate their influence on development. Findings of all these studies favour that children living in urban areas showed faster rate of motor development than that of those living in rural areas. It is also revealed that higher socio-economic status goes with a faster rate of motor development. Further, age of the child and nutritional status have been found to influence motor and mental development. Findings again establish that socio-economic conditions, that is, the life opportunities determine the development of the child.
2. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

A number of studies have been conducted to find out the impact of personal attributes of child on his or her development. These attributes include: age, sex, order of birth, etc.

Age and Child Development:

Influence of age on development of the child has been studied by various scholars. Age has been found to be associated with behaviour problems of children. It is reported that behavioural problems of children decreased with the increase in chronological age (Muralidharan, 1973).

Indulekha (1977) reported that age affects visual attachment and behaviour of infants. Jesudason et al., (1979) revealed that higher age is positively associated with motor and mental development of infants. Bhogle and Fatima (1981) found that child's age has association with qualitative thinking.

Monga (1981) concluded that age is positively associated with social maturity of children aged 1-5 years. Age has also been found to be associated with the development of perception (Mehta, 1983), Cognitive development (Bishnoi, 1983; Dash and Das, 1984), and action categories (Priya and
and inversely associated with aggression and dependency (Bhogle et. al., 1986). On the other hand, Pandey and Tiwari (1982) found that age does not influence the social preference of adolescents. It is clear that majority of studies quoted above go in favour that age of the child is associated with behavioural development.

Younger child is primarily dependant on the mother and other members of family. As he grows beyond pre school period dependence on the mother decreases and child comes in contact with wider environment around him. Child is expected to learn norms of behaviour prevalent in a particular social set-up, and therefore, with increase in age child meets with different treatment from his family and the outside environment which influences his process of development. Age per se does not have any meaning because children in different strata are required to play different roles at the same age levels. Similarly, girls are expected to assume household responsibilities much earlier. Boys assume economic responsibilities. Children belonging to lower socio-economic status play economic roles as adults at much earlier age in comparison to children of the upper segments of society.
Hence, age has a social meaning in addition to only a biological fact.

**Sex and Child Development**

Some studies have examined influence of sex on the development of child. Dass and Sharma (1973) reported that girls show superiority in language and social field while boys tend to be ahead in motor and adaptive milestones. Reddy et al., (1979) in their study of teenagers found that girls show higher conformity than boys. Pandey and Pandey (1981) studied creativity in relation to sex among high school students and found that boys show higher conformity in terms of fluency and flexibility than girls. Sulochana (1982) revealed that girls show higher intellectual and social development than boys. Another study indicated that sex of child is associated with achievement and anticipation (Mishra, 1983). It is reported that boys have higher anticipation and achievement than girls. Sex is found to be associated with cognitive performance (Kalyan, 1985). Singh and Singh (1986) studied perception of parental behaviour among adolescents and found that adolescents perceived their same sex parents for more favourably than opposite sex. Bhogle et al.,
(1986) found that boys are more significantly aggressive and dependent than girls. Kandeth et al., (1971) found no sexwise significant differences in development. Luthra (1980) and Monga (1981) concluded that sex of child is not related with social maturity. Singh (1981), Katiyar (1981), Jarial (1982), and Katiyar and Jariyal (1983) in their studies found no sex differences as far as creativity is concerned. Kale (1983) and Roma Pal and Shamim Kiran (1984) indicated that sex did not significantly contribute to development of self concept. It is not associated with cognitive development (Dash and Das, 1984). Similarly, Shukla et al., (1986) observed middle school children and revealed that boys and girls did not significantly differ on various measures of scientific enquiry. Bhogle et al., (1986) revealed no sex differences in the type of aggression and dependance. It is clear from the above that studies on sex and behavioural development do not give clear picture, as some of the studies support its association with development and others do not. This is because of the fact that parents manifest differential role definitions for boys and girls. Girls are expected to perform a particular role and boys the
other. Girls are expected to accomplish household responsibilities and boys the economic responsibilities. Thus children of different sexes are trained differently to learn their role in society. This may have differential influence on their development. Preference for male children and differential treatment given to male and female children by the parents would also influence development. Sex roles have a cultural and as well as class specific meanings, that is, definition of sex role differs from group to group and culture to culture. Since the above quoted studies have been conducted in different groups based on region, class, etc., therefore, clearcut association is not forthcoming with.

**Order of Birth and Child Development**

Order of birth is a significant variable in sociological context because it indicates the quality of attention and interaction a child meets from other members of family. Youngest sibling demands more attention than the older ones. However, when number of sibs increases the quality of attention is also diluted. The influence of the birth order on child development has been investigated in a few studies. Mahal and Sexena (1978) reported that birth order is relevant in
cognitive development. Luthra (1980) in a study of urban children found that early born children have higher level of social maturity than the late born. In another study on rural children in the villages of Union Territory of Chandigarh, it is revealed that birth order is positively associated with higher level of social maturity of children (Monga 1981).

In another study Shete (1983) found that firstborn infants have higher motor development than the lateborn. Contrary to above findings, Devi (1975) concluded that order of birth is not associated with social development. Similarly, Jarial (1982) reported that birth order is not significantly associated with creativity. A few studies are found to have reported which examined impact of birth order on the development of child. Therefore, no clearcut association between birth order and development seems to emerge from the above findings. However, order of birth is an important sociological variable when it is looked with reference to quality and quantity of interaction children of different order of birth would have in a particular socio-cultural set-up.

4. Schooling and Child Development:

Schooling though not a personal attribute of child
has a reference because it helps the child to have interaction
with wider sphere in a formal situation where he learns to
confirm to the roles and specific pattern of behaviour by
providing better chances and opportunities of learning.
Exposure to school is conceived vital in the development of
children. Some of the studies have investigated its influence
on the development of child. Muralidharan and Banerjee (1973)
reported that pre-school exposure enhances intellectual
development. It was also found that children exposed to
school perform better on enumerative and qualitative ability
than those who had never been exposed to a pre-school experience.
Malani (1975) studied impact of schooling on concept
formation and personal-social adjustment among non-school
going and school-going children, and found that school going
children showed a higher level of acquisition of concepts than
the other group. In another study pre-school exposure was
found to be important for all round adjustment (Muralidharan
and Banerjee, 1975). Animasen (1977) maintained that
schooling is instrumental in developing child. However, not
only school exposure, but quality of the schooling has also
been indicated to play important role than exposure (Mishra
and Gupta 1983). Kalyan (1985) found that educational attainment of children is associated with their cognitive performance. Findings of some of the studies go contrary to the fact that school-exposure facilitates development. For example, Sinha and Verma (1972) studied knowledge of moral values among children aged 6-11 years. It was found that schools have no influence on the knowledge of moral values. Similarly, Malani (1975) observed that schooling is not associated with personal-social adjustment. Chadha (1975) indicated that pre-school exposure or attendance did not significantly influence adjustment in personal, academic, and social terms. In another study exposure to pre-school programme, is indicated not influencing personal social, home, and academic adjustment of children. Monga (1981) examined the influence of pre-school exposure on social maturity of children and found that pre-school exposure is not significantly associated with the level of social maturity among children aged 1-5 years. Education is reported to have no association with development of self-concept (Kale, 1983) and cognitive development (Dash and Das, 1984). Bhogle et.al., (1986) concluded that schooling
does not influence the expression of aggressive and
dependence behaviour among boys and girls.

Results of the studies do not provide clear picture
because some scholars maintain that schooling is associated with
development of the child, whereas findings of some other
studies indicate that schooling is not associated with
development. Controversial findings on this aspect may be
due to the fact that all the studies have taken different
measures of development and have been conducted in different
population and different parts of the country. Further in
these studies no reference has been made with regard to
physical and social conditions prevalent in schools which
would play significant role rather than schooling per se.

It does not mean that schooling as a sociological variable
has no meaning. Schooling is the most important process
which helps individual not only to learn formal rules but
also to learn social norms, and provides him opportunities to
adjust with others who are not his kinsmen.

3. **FAMILIAL BACKGROUND AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT:**

Child after birth becomes member of a family in a
particular social setting and family for a long time especially
for the child remains the chief agency on which he depends for his survival. Family on the other hand performs responsibility of rearing the child. Rearing of child is influenced by social standing of the family, its cultural and social norms, child-rearing practices, age of the parents, occupation, caste, structure and composition of family, socio-economic status, etc. During formative years of child's life familial background factors are clearly the primary influences on him and that is why these factors in various studies have been considered to influence development of child.

**Parents' age and Child Development**

Older parents are generally equipped with intensive and extensive experience of upbringing and socialization of children. Younger parents are in the process of learning upbringing of the child as they have lesser exposure to family roles than the older parents. Differential exposure to family roles may exert varied influence on the child. Monga (1981) found that mother's age does not influence social maturity of pre-school children. Contrary to these findings, Bishnoi
Based on the study of pre-school children, it indicated that the age of the mother is associated with cognitive expression. These two studies are not sufficient to examine the influence of age of parents on development of the child. However, age of parents is one of the important sociological variables because parents of different age groups have differential experience of upbringing children in a particular socio-cultural set up.

**Parents' education and Child Development:**

Education brings change in attitudes, values, and child-rearing practices of the parents. Educated parents more consciously train their children with modern methods of child-rearing, whereas illiterate parents are more traditional and have a narrow outlook of rearing children.

A few studies have investigated what bearing education of parents has on the development of the child. Pathak (1974) found that father's education is positively associated with intellectual development. Education is reported to be associated with child's participation in activities (Begum, 1975), social development (Devi, 1975), cognitive development (Mahal, 1978), intellectual development, (Om Parkash, 1982),
and academic achievement (Singh, 1983). In another study Bhan (1984) found that higher educational level of parents is associated with relatively lower level of aggression. Khan (1986) concluded that parents' education is positively associated with social and language development among pre-school children. However, contrary to the above findings educational attainment of mother has been found to have no association with intellectual development (Pathak, 1974), adolescent conformity (Reddy et al., 1979), and with social maturity (Monga, 1981). In these studies level of educational attainment of parents have not been differentiated. It is clear from above findings that majority of studies favour that parents educational level positively influences development of the child.

**Parents' Occupation and Child Development**

Nature of occupation in which parents of a child are engaged in affects the child indirectly because it influences standards of living provided to the child. From the experience of work in a particular occupation parents know attitudes, skills, and qualities one should have for success in life. Occupation governs the quality of life opportunities to the dependant
members. Certain occupations are associated with better prestige in comparison to others, and hence influence child development. Devi (1975) concluded that parents' occupation of high prestige are positively associated with social development of children. This association is supported by the findings of some other studies which indicate that occupation of parents is associated with cognitive development (Mehal, 1978), social maturity (Luthra, 1980), intellectual development (Suiochana 1982), achievement motivation (Kharangar, 1983), intelligence (Om Parkash and Sen, 1986), and social development (Khan, 1986). However, the findings of studies conducted by Pathak (1970) and Monga (1981) indicate that parental occupation has no bearing on intellectual development and social maturity of children. In these studies the nature and structure of work have not been differentiated, it is for this reason that no association was found. From the above it becomes clear that occupation of parents is definitely associated with child development, because majority of studies reviewed above found positive association between parental occupation and child development. Thus occupation is one of the important sociological variables,
because it is related to the parents who hold responsibility of socialization of their children.

**Caste and Child Development**

Caste is not only associated with individual's standing in a social set up, but also demands and values of parents for the child differ in various castes. Values of parents for the child are translated into actions through child rearing practices and hence influence the development.

Viewing child development in the context of caste researchers have reported different conclusions. Mehta (1982) studied adjustment in obedient and disobedient students belonging to different castes. He reported that disobedient students belonging to Kashatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras have less level of adjustment than those from Brahmin castes, and obedient students of Brahmins, Kashatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras, do not differ on adjustment. Sulochana (1982) also reported that caste is associated with intellectual development of children. A few other studies have indicated that caste has no bearing on the development of child. Caste has been found to have no association with social maturity (Monga, 1981), intelligence (Om Farkash, 1982), perception
( Mehta, 1983 ), academic success ( Uniyal, 1984 ), and cognitive development ( Cm Parkash and Sen, 1986 ). These studies throw light that caste has no significant impact on the development of child.

From the above no clearcut pattern emerges. Caste as a sociological variable has a cultural meaning. Moreover it is related to parents in different socio-cultural set up and hence influences expectations of parents. It is therefore, one of the important sociological variable to be investigated.

**Structure and Composition of Family and Child Development**

Human child is the most helpless creature. He is born and develops in the family and depends upon others for his needs and protection. The pattern of family life markedly differs from society to society and may have differential influence on the growing child.

Primarily, family is the agency which influences personality of the individual particularly during childhood. Let us now examine the outcome of research studies conducted to find out its influence on child development. Jesudason et al., ( 1979 ) revealed that infants belonging to joint
families show higher level of motor and mental development than that of those who hail from nuclear families. Studies conducted on social maturity (Luthra, 1980) and on intellectual development (Sulochana, 1982), of children support the above results. However, studies conducted by Monga (1981) on social maturity and Kale (1983) on development of self concept in children go against the above findings. These studies indicate that structure of family, that is, nuclear or joint has no effect on the development of self-concept and social maturity in children. It is, however, difficult to have clearcut picture from the results of these studies. Probing further into studies which have taken into account size of the family rather than its structure, may provide more information about the impact of family on child's development. Muralidharan (1969) found that family size is significantly associated with the problem behaviour. Large sized families i.e three child family units showed significantly less of problem behaviour than children from one or two child families. Mudkhedhane and Shah (1975) revealed that large size of family is negatively associated with intellectual development. Begum (1975) found that
participation among pre-schoolers is associated with the size of the family. Khan (1981) demonstrated that morality among children is higher in the larger families. Tiwari and Pal (1986) indicated that size of the family is associated with parental-acceptance rejection. In medium families with high socio-economic status the acceptance is more than that of small families. It is also more in small families with low socio-economic status. Whereas parental rejection is more in small families with high socio-economic status. Contrary to this Devi (1975) pointed out that association between family size and social development is not clear, but more socialized children belong to large families. Contrary to this Monga (1981) reported that family size is not associated with the development of social maturity. The results of these studies largely go in favour that large families foster higher level of development but no definite conclusions seem to come out and hence this aspect requires more researches in future.

**Child Rearing Practices and Child Development:**

Development of the child takes place through socialization. The content of socialization varies from group to group. Values
of parents are translated into actions through child rearing practices. These are instrumental in the context of child development because they leave an enduring impact on child's life especially during the formative period. Various Indian studies have reported that child rearing practices and parental attitudes towards child rearing practices differ in various groups based on education, caste, religion, region, employment status, socio-economic status, etc. (Thaman et al., 1964; Seth and Ghai, 1971; Patodi et al., 1976; Saraswathi and Sundersan, 1979; Luthra, 1980; Monga, 1981; Narayanan et al., 1981; Small, 1984; Jerson, 1986; Singh and Kapoor, 1986; and Khan et al., 1986). These studies reflect that generally mothers from urban areas belonging to higher socio-economic status foster better feeding practices and wean their children earlier than that of mothers of low socio-economic status. A few studies have attempted to find out the impact of child rearing practices on the development of child. Joshi and Deharwal (1977) and Luthra (1980) indicated that nature of the child rearing practices have differential influence on the personality of children. Naidu (1979) found social practices are associated with development. Monga (1981) reported that awareness of
mother's social practices is positively associated with higher level of social maturity of the child. Khan (1986) concluded that child rearing practices influence development of child. On the basis of his study on preschoolers he concluded that those children who had more interaction with their parents have higher level of cognitive, social, and language development. From empirical point of view this area should be explored more to establish the relationship between child rearing practices and nature of development of child. It is this area which has attracted the largest number of studies in India. To find out association between child rearing practices and child development one need to have common research tools which have not been properly evolved and standarized.

**Socio-economic Status and Child Development:**

Socio-economic status is one of the major indicators of style and standard of living of the family. It determines the parental standards for the child and provides differential life opportunities in which the children grow. Parents of high socio-economic status provide better life opportunities to
their children, than the parents of low socio economic status who are unable to provide better life chances because of poor economic conditions. These variations in the socio-economic positions influence the development of child. A number of studies have examined its influence on the development of children. A few studies conducted in various regions of our country and children of different age group and samples show that children belonging to higher socio economic status manifest faster rate of mental, motor, and language development. (Pathak, 1970; Kandeth et. al., 1970; ICMR, 1972; Pathak et. al., 1976; Jesudason 1979; and Kumar, 1983) Whereas children of families with lower socio-economic status show slow rate of development particularly in the development of language functions (Kandeth et. al., 1970; Purohit et. al., 1978).

Findings of some of the studies reflect that higher socio-economic status goes with high level of social development. (Devi, 1975; Kumar, 1983; Khan 1986) and social maturity (Chatterjee and Bhattacharya, 1979; Luthra, 1980; Monga, 1981; Chattopadhyya and Bhattacharya, 1981). These studies further indicate that children of families with poor socio-economic
status show low level of social maturity and social development. Socio-economic status has also been found to be significantly associated with cognitive development (Mahal 1978; Bishnoi, 1983; Kalyan, 1985; Omparkash and Sen, 1986; Chakravarty and Kundu, 1986; and Khan, 1986), intelligence (Urn Parkash, 1982), and creativity and creative abilities (Singh, 1981; Kalyan et. al., 1981), self concept (Gangwar, 1982), learning (Mukerjee, 1985), participation in activities (Begum, 1975), comprehension abilities (Sahni, 1973), and academic achievement (Kapur, 1972). Gunthey and Sinha (1983) reported that higher social class is positively associated with anxiety, adjustment, and affiliation among teenagers. Reddy et. al., (1979) indicated that it is the middle socio-economic status which is associated with conformity behaviour of the children rather than high and low socio-economic status. Sharma (1980) showed that children from high socio-economic group demonstrated more sociability, emotional stability, thoughtfulness, and less masculinity as compared to the children of low socio-economic group. Bhan, (1984) found that better economic condition of the family is associated with relatively lower level of aggression. Studies of Bhogle
Kalpana (1981), and Kharangar (1983), did not find significant association between socio-economic status and development of the child in terms of qualitative thinking, social maturity and academic achievement, respectively, which may be attributed to the fact that researchers have used their own method of working out SES and no common tool has been used to group respondents into different strata. However, the overall picture that emerges from different studies which have taken into account the socio-economic status to assess child's development is that socio-economic status has significant bearing on the development of child.

It becomes clear from the above that only recently Indian social scientists have shown greater interest in the field of child development and during the past two decades a number of studies have been conducted on children in India. Perusal of the past research highlights certain gaps. Firstly, findings of these studies cannot be used for the purpose of generalizations which could be applicable for whole of the country, because of the fact that findings are based on the studies conducted in different regions of our country, and on children of varied age groups belonging to different socio
economic strata of society. Additionally, research studies have taken into account different designs, techniques, tools, and also different evaluative measures of child development, such as, personality, intelligence, performance, cognition, creativity, social development, social maturity, etc. which restrict generalization.

Secondly, though in general, there are many studies on children in India, but only a few studies are found reporting on social maturity and social development of children.

Thirdly, a review of literature further reveals that children in the Himalayan regions of this country have been less researched upon particularly from the viewpoint of their social development. To the best of our knowledge no systematic study on this aspect of child development has been conducted in rural areas of District Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh.

Various studies mentioned above show the impact of many factors, such as, child's age, sex, order of birth and schooling, and child's familial background, parents' age, education, occupation, caste, family structure and composition, child rearing practices, socio-economic status, etc., on the development of child. Studies indicate variations in the
development of children based on these variables, however, the variations favour that differential level of development of children is largely due to the inequalities in the socioeconomic structure of our society. In other words, differences in the development of children should be looked into from the structural perspective. This is because the child with enormous biological potentialities is born in society, and becomes the member of a particular socio-cultural situation in which he grows up. Every society trains its new recruits according to its prevalent normative order and hence it is the structural inequalities which are believed to have differential influence on the development of child.

From sociological viewpoint child development is not evenly distributed throughout the social structure. There is much empirical evidence available that child development can be predicted from sociological variables, such as, class position, ethnicity, occupational status, etc. The structural theory implies that child development takes place in a particular social situation. The contents of child rearing differ from group to group. The family moulds its child rearing practices according to the social values. The underlying belief in the
structural-functional theory is that society is a stable state and development of its participants is desirable to maintain the organised life. The social system finds out sub-systems in which individuals are trained so that they are able to play their appropriate role to keep the system alive. In other words, the social system evolves mechanism in which the structural components of the system function to achieve the goal of transforming human beings into social beings. In short, it is the structure of society that determines the developmental pattern of the growing population.

As indicated earlier, no systematic research has been conducted on children residing in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, particularly on their social development, hence an attempt has been made through the present study to fill in the gap in the available literature on child development.

At the start our major assumption is that child development is influenced by the socio-economic conditions of society. The inequalities that effect the socio-economic structure of society would have differential influence on the development of children. This assumption would be empirically verified in the present study.
The present study has the following objectives:

1. To evolve a research tool to measure level of development of children in the age group of 6-11 years.

2. To explore the impact of different sociological variables on child development.

3. To find out inter-group and intra-group variations in terms of social development with different socio-economic status.

Following hypotheses which emerge from the above discussion will be tested in this study:

1. Children of higher age group have high level of development.

2. Boys have high level of development.

3. Firstborn children have high level of development.

4. School-going children have high level of development.

5. Children of middle-aged parents have high level of development.

6. Children of educated parents have high level of development.

7. Children of agriculturists have high level of development.
8. Children of higher castes have high level of development.
10. Conscious training of children fosters high level of development.
11. Children from high socio-economic strata have high level of development.