CHAPTER IV

SOCIO - DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES
AND
CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Present study was undertaken with two fold objectives. First, to find out the level of development of the children residing in hilly villages of Himachal Pradesh, and second, to find out the sociological variables which promote or retard development. To attain these objectives our first requirement was to find out a suitable device with whose help we could measure social development. The devices so far evolved could not be used for the present study for reasons already discussed in previous chapter. Such a situation demanded development of a research tool with the help of which social development of the rural hilly children could be measured. With the help of Social Behaviour Inventory, specially designed for this study, social development of three hundred children under study was measured. Dispersion of the scores on the developmental scale was calculated with the help of Mean (110.20) and Standard Deviation (20.17). They were divided into three levels of development, that is, two extreme categories (High and Low) and the third in between the two
extremes i.e. average, as under:

Scores $>(M + 1 \text{ s.D})$ = 1st Category

Scores $<(M - 1 \text{ s.D})$ = IIIrd Category

Scores between $(M - 1 \text{ s.D})$ to $(M + 1 \text{ s.D})$ = IIInd Category

that is,

Category I $=$ Scores $>130$ $=$ High

Category II $=$ Scores $90-130$ $=$ Average

Category III $=$ Scores $<90$ $=$ Low

In this way we had three levels of social development i.e., high, average, and low and the distribution of sample comes to 40, 210, and 50, respectively (Table 4.1).

The sociological variables considered for the present study were divided into two broad categories. In the first set of variables an attempt was made to find out the impact of child's personal attributes and his development e.g., sex, age, order of birth, and schooling. In the second section the impact of social background factors, that is, parents' age, education, occupation, family composition, social practices, castes, and socio-economic status was considered.
Sex and Child Development:

Each society trains its younger generations for future adult roles, which are generally associated with sex of the child. Sex roles are inculcated through the process of socialization and the division is attributed to parental values as well as social norms. In the preceding chapter it was pointed out that parents under study treated boys and girls differently. Hence the content of socialization and expectations would differ according to sex of the child. No doubt, children of both sexes were expected to extend a helping hand to their parents in domestic as well as economic activities, yet it was the duty of female child to learn domestic role responsibility rather than that of the male child. Additionally, the female child was expected to assume her role responsibility earlier than the male child.

Tabulation of results on sex and development reveal that majority of children had average level of development. However, higher proportion of female children was represented in the high development category in comparison to the male children (Table 4,1A).
Conversely, high percentage of male children vis-a-vis female children was found at a low level of development. How is it that female children had higher level of development? Is it the attribute of their sex or social expectation and training? The answers to these questions are to be found out in the differential expectations with regard to development at differential age group. Girls are expected to learn household chores and adapt to the environment and familial needs at younger age in comparison to boys. With regard to chronological age of children under study there was no marked difference in their age groups. It is for these reasons that girls of the same age group mature early than the boys which has resulted into differences in the level of their development.

Statistical analysis of the results indicate no significant association between sex and development because the value of chi-square is found to be significant at 0.05 level of probability.
The expectations from the child vary according to his or her age. As the child grows, the dependence on the mother decreases, and the child interacts more with the outside environment. Hence, the child develops greater independence which indicates his development.

A positive association was found between age and level of development. There was a progressive increase in the percentage of children in the high development category if we move from lower age group to higher age group. Conversely, there was an increase in the percentage of children in the lower level of development if we move from higher age group to lower age group (Table 4.2).

These results are in line with the assumption that when children grow in age, not only their dependence decreases but on the other hand through wider social contacts and interactions their level of development also increases which is in line with social expectations.

The value of chi-square at degree of freedom 4 is also found to be significant at 0.01 level of probability which indicates that age is positively associated with
development of the children.

**Birth Order and Child Development**

In a number of studies, order of birth has been found to be associated with level of development. Order of birth becomes a significant variable because it reveals the quality of interaction a child would have with other members of the family. Further, his dependence would decrease (as already established) with increasing age. On the birth of a new child in the family, the youngest child needs more attention from the parents as well as from the elder sibs. Under these circumstances order of birth per se has no meaning unless it is related to the quality of interaction, the children of different order of birth would have. In the present study an attempt was made to find out association between the order of birth and the level of development.

Analysis of data does not reveal any positive association between ordinal position of the child and level of development though in the low level of development category the lateborn children had highest representation in comparison to firstborn and secondborn (Table 4.3).
The results clearly establish that order of birth per se has no role to play in attaining development. In the present analysis we have not taken into account the quality of interaction the children under study occupying different ordinal positions had with other members of the family. It is for these reasons that clear cut association had not been found.

The statistical calculation also indicates no association between the ordinal position and level of development as the value of chi-square at degree of freedom 4 is insignificant beyond 0.05 level probability.

Schooling and Child Development

Schooling provides a formal situation in which child not only gets wider sphere of interaction but is also subjected to formal control. It is in the school that he bears to cooperate with others who are not his kinsmen. In other words, schooling provides him or her an opportunity not only to learn adjustment with other members who are not close to him/her and such a situation helps the child to become a useful citizen. Conformity to the formal rules and scholastic achievements are recognized
through formal reward system whereas non-conformity and deviation, are met with formal punishment. The children who are not exposed to formal schooling are denied these opportunities and hence may face difficulties in the process of their adjustment with rest of the society. In this way it can be argued that exposure to formal schooling and non-exposure would have differential influence on their development.

The tabulation of data brings out very interesting results. Majority (58.70 per cent) of the non-school-goers had low level of development. On the other hand only a small percentage (9 per cent) of the school goers had low level of development. Majority of the school-goers had either average or high level of development (Table 4.4). The results clearly establish that exposure to school facilitates development.

The statistical analysis also establishes association between schooling and child development. The value of chi-square comes to 65.15 which is significant at degree of freedom 2 at 0.01 level of probability.

Taking into account the personal attributes of the child we notice that age and schooling has association with development whereas sex and order of birth were not found to
be statistically associated with development.

In addition to personal attributes of the child, his or her social attributes are also likely to have bearing on the level of development. As the children in the age group of 6-11 years are still dependent on their parents, an attempt was made to find out influence of familial background on their development. In this exercise we took into account age of the parents, their education, occupation, caste, familial composition, and child rearing practices. After having discussed these variables individually, an attempt was made to find out association between composite socio-economic-status and level of development on the part of children.

Parents' age and Child Development:

Keeping in view the chronological age of the parents they were grouped into three categories. Fathers in the age group of 21-30 years were designated as younger, those in the age group of 31-40 years were labelled as middle aged, and those above 40 years of age were treated as old parents, because they are expected to socialize their children differently. Sinha and Krishna (1971) found
differential child rearing practices according to age of the parents. Older parents have greater experience in upbringing of the child and hence are better equipped than the younger parents. On the other hand, the older parents are more likely to be tradition oriented in comparison to younger ones. Further, the younger parents themselves would still be in the process of learning child upbringing. It is the middle-aged parents who are likely to combine traditional and modern methods of upbringing and to be more realistic with regard to facilitating development.

The data reveals that out of forty children having high level of development 55 per cent were the children of middle-aged fathers (Table 4.5). Conversely among the children with low level of development, the children of the middle-aged fathers had low representation. This pattern was not discernible in case of mothers. This may be attributed to the fact that wife is generally younger to the husband. It is for this reason that in place of 29 young fathers we had 131 young mothers which means that
wives of the middle-aged fathers were young mothers so far age grouping was concerned.

In table 4.6 it is clear that among children having high level of development about 50 per cent of children had mothers in the younger age group, that is, 21-30 years. Similarly these mothers had low percentage of the children with low level of development. Though we do not find statistically significant association because majority of children had average level of development, yet the differential age brackets of the parents have differential association and bearing on the child development. Our assumption that middle-aged parents would have children with high level of development is partially substantiated.

Parents' education and Child Development:

Instead of age per se it was educational attainment of the parents which was more likely to influence child development, because exposure to formal education brought about change in the attitudes and values as well as child-rearing practices of the parents. Further, formal education helped the parents not only to develop
rationality but they were likely to accept modern aids
and techniques of child development.

Among child's own attributes, schooling was found to
be positively associated with development. It was assumed
that parents' education would also have bearing on child's
development.

The table about fathers' education and child development
shows that the percentage of children with low level of
development decreases with the increase in educational
attainment of the fathers (Table 4.7). In other words the
illiterate fathers had 24.81 per cent of children with low
level of development. Literate fathers had only 12 per cent
and educated fathers had only 4.42 per cent with low level of
development. On the other hand, out of 40 children with high
level of development, 30 belonged to those fathers who were
literate and educated. The results clearly establish that
fathers' literacy positively influence child's level of
development.

The statistical calculations of the data also support
the above contention. The value of chi-square being 23.55
at degree of freedom 4 is significant at 0.01 level of
probability which indicates that not only results are significant but these two variables are positively associated.

In case of mothers, two categories of literate and educated were clubbed because of a low frequency in the cells. As in case of fathers' education we also noticed the same type of results in case of mothers. The educated mothers had the least percentage (3.22 per cent) of children with low level of development in comparison with illiterate mothers who had more than 20 per cent children in this category of development (Table 4.8). Hence again we found a positive association.

**Occupation and Child Development**

Occupation of the father directly or indirectly determines the quality of life opportunities for the dependant members. Certain occupations are associated with better economic returns as well as social prestige in comparison with other occupations. Additionally, certain occupations foster traditional outlook of life whereas other activities demand greater independence and adjustment in changing conditions. In short, economic activities in which the parents are engaged in, provide
a specific type of life opportunities to the children
which would have bearing on child's development.

In the villages under study the fathers vocations
were grouped into three categories: agriculture, service
and business, and labour & artisan. Their influence on
development of the child was worked out. It was noticed
that parents engaged in business and government service
had less than 6 per cent of children with low level of
development in comparison with agriculturists who had
20.61 per cent, and labourers more than 30 per cent in
this category (Table 4.9). However, when we confine
our discussion to children with high level of development.
We donot find such type of associations. It is the
agriculturist class which had higher representation and it
may be attributed to the fact that all agriculturists were
grouped together irrespective of their economic status.
However, if we take each occupational category individually
we notice that it is the service/business group which had
the least representation of the children in the category
of low level of development (Table 4.9A) implying thereby
that the parents working in government service and those engaged in business were more concerned about their children which had positively contributed to the development of their children.

The value of chi-square at degree of freedom 4 beyond 0.01 level of probability indicates positive association between parents vocation and child development.

**Caste and Child Development**

Caste not only determines the hierarchical position of its members but is also associated with prestige and specific type of behaviour pattern. Parents belonging to higher castes may demand greater compliance to the normative pattern than those who are at the bottom of the scale. Differential expectations and training would have bearing on child's growth and development.

The tabulation of results reveal positive association between higher castes and higher level of development. Of the higher caste parents more than 71 per cent of their children had average level of development, 15.71 per cent high level of development and less than 13 per cent low level of development (Table 4.10). On
the other hand the lower caste parents had less than 8 per cent of children with high level of development and approximately 26 per cent with low level of development. If we restrict our discussion to children with high level of development that is 40 we notice that more than 82 per cent belong to higher castes. The result support the hypothesis that higher the caste higher would be the level of development of the children.

Statistical analysis also supports the above findings. The value of chi-square being 9.27 designate significant association between caste and child development at degree of freedom 2 at 0.01 level of probability.

Composition of family and Child Development:

The human child is the most helpless creature at the time of its birth and is dependent upon others not only for his physical survival, and social recognition, but also for his proper placement and socialization. It is the family which looks after needs of the child and provides him with congenial atmosphere for his growth and development. However, the content of socialization differs from one family to the other depending upon its
social standing in the social structure as well as its own structure and composition. As the child is completely dependent on his parents it depends upon parents to treat him the way they like. If the father is autocratic, domineering, and authoritarian type, he would demand strict obedience and hence would foster submissive type of personality on part of the growing child. On the other hand the democratic family would give greater freedom to its members which would facilitate the development of independent personality.

Familial structure was broadly divided into joint and nuclear for the obvious reasons that in the joint family there are more members and they have different kinship relations. To hold all the members together it is desirable that the members have only submissive personality. On the other hand this type of emphasis is not given in the families with nuclear structure. Another reason for grouping the family into these types was that the quality and quantity of interaction between parents and children differ, it is, in the nuclear family where parents are directly responsible for development of their children and
when there are large number of kinsmen in the family the responsibility is diffused and no one assumes the responsibility. On the other hand there is always someone to help the growing child which hinders his independent development of personality.

The results of the tabulation on this variable clearly indicate that it is the nuclear family which had high proportion of children (17.39 per cent) with high level of development in comparison to 8.64 per cent in the joint family. (Table 4,11). However, if we limit our discussions to children with low level of development we donot find much difference according to the family type. Similar are the results of the discussion pertaining to average level of development. In brief, it can be concluded that with the exception of high level of development family structure was not found to be associated with level of development on part of the children. Statistically also the association was not found to be significant.

If family structure has no association with level of development on the part of children, what aspect of family
than influences child development? To answer this question we probed further into the information collected and instead of depending on the family structure we took into account the family size, because it is the size, that is, number which is more important. Because, it is quite possible that even in a nuclear family the parents have a large number of children and may not be in a position to provide desired attention. On the other hand, in joint family there may be two or three conjugal units but they might have less number of children and hence devote more time to the needs of the growing child. Further, greater the number of kinsmen, greater is the demand from the child to make adaptation and adjustment to different expectations whereas in case of small size mild maladaptibility may be tolerated. Hence, the size is expected to have greater bearing on the adaptibility, that is, development on the part of children than the structure of the family per se.

The tabulation of the information collected on the family size indicates that in the large families more than 21 per cent of the children had attained high level of
development in comparison to medium and small families where the percentages were 10.43 and 13.58, respectively. On the other hand if we restrict our discussion to the low level of development we find that children belonging to large families had least representation (Table 4.12). It helps us to conclude that large size is more conducive to development than small and medium size.

The statistical analysis also reveals positive association between family size and level of development. The value of chi-square being 9.69 is significant at 0.01 level of probability.

Social practices and Child Development:

It is through socialization that the living human organism is changed into a social being. It is through the process of socialization that normative patterns of the family and society are inculcated in the growing child. Socialization as a process is value free. It depends on the content of socialization which makes one child different to another child so far his behaviour pattern is concerned. Parental values are translated in the content of socialization with which they train younger generation. Some parents are
very conscious of their role obligations whereas others adopt an indifferent attitude and leave the child to pick up certain behaviour pattern by imitation and observation. The child rearing practices and involvement of parents in proper up keep of the children leave an imprint on the child's development. In other words, parental concern, and social practices in the form of child rearing have direct influence on child's development.

It is a difficult task to find out association between each child rearing practice and child development. However, if we take into account the level of awareness of the parents about child rearing practices and their involvement to train their children then this would help us to assess the collective influence of the child-rearing practices on level of development of the children. For this purpose awareness of parents was assessed by using information collected by using child-rearing practices scale as discussed earlier in chapter II. Based on Mean (72.74) and Standard Deviation parent respondents were grouped into three categories as under:


Association between levels of parental awareness and child development was worked out. Those parents who had shown greater concern to their children had least number of children (5.36 per cent) with low level of development. On the other hand those who adopted indifferent attitude had more than 20 per cent children with low level of development (Table 4.13).

However, if we take into account the higher level of development of children we find that this association is not forthcoming, which means that high level of involvement of the parents make the children more dependant and hence their representation was lower in the high level of development. If we combine high and average categories into one and compare the parents adopting different practices of child rearing we find that parents who consciously helped their children to adapt to the external social situation were better placed in comparison to other
levels of parents' participation in child rearing. The table does not depict clearcut relationship between the level of parental guidance and development. Nevertheless the statistical calculations indicate positive association which is significant at 0.05 level of probability.

**Socio-economic status and Child Development**

After having discussed different background factors individually, and their impact on child development it would be desirable if we know how these social variables in conjunction influence the child's growth and development.

For this purpose purpose a composite socio-economic status of parents was assessed by using standardized socio-economic status scale (Rural) by Pareek and Trivedi (1964), as discussed earlier in chapter IIId. The socio-economic status was divided into three categories i.e. High, Medium, and Low, and their influence on child development was calculated.

The tabulation of data clearly establish relationship between socio-economic status and level of development. In the low level of development category we find that there is progressive decrease in the percentage of children if we
move from low status through middle to high status. On the other hand, if we restrict our discussion to high level of development we find a progressive decrease in percentage of children having high level of development if we move downward, that is from upper to lower. Similar trend was also noticed with regard to average level of development (Table 4.1). In short, tabulation of data helps us to conclude that higher the socio-economic status, higher is the level of development on the part of children. In other words, child development is directly dependent on socio-economic status of the parents. The parents of higher status provide better life opportunities to their children which facilitate high level of development. The statistical calculation also support the above hypothesis and positive association was discernible because the statistical results were found to be significant at 0.05 level of probability.

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