CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS
The present study was motivated by two aims: first, to develop research tools; and second, to find out association between social variables and level of development of the children. Two research tools have been evolved for the present study. A scale called "Social Behaviour Inventory" evolved for the purpose of measuring level of child development based on which three hundred children under study were grouped into three categories depending upon the level of their development (the details pertaining to the construction of scale have been given in chapter II, and that of items finally selected have been given in the appendix II). Second research tool developed for the present study is "Composite Scale of Child-rearing Practices". Parental child-rearing practices were grouped into three levels of awareness and their influence on child development was worked out. For the purpose of determining composite socio-economic status of the parents we had used the tool developed by Pareek and Trivedi (1964), which has been standardized in different population in India. In short, development of research
tool which could be used in population of the rural hilly terrains of Himachal Pradesh, was one part of the study.

After having measured level of development on the part of respondent children with the help of Social Behaviour Inventory an attempt was made to find out the independent sociological variables. As stated earlier the design of the research was ex-post facto which implied that after having known the resultant situation (in the present case the level of child development) a probe was to be made to trace out the causal factors. After having identified the level of development of the children we probed their socio-demographic variables to find out their influence on the level of development.

In the preceding chapter the sociological variables were divided into two broad categories. In the first section child's attributes were taken into account, and in the second section the familial background factors were considered. Let us now summarise the results to find out which of the hypotheses of the present study have been proved, or disapproved.

Child's age and schooling were found to be positively
associated with child's level of development. In the case of age it was noticed that children in the age group of 10-11 years had higher level of development in comparison with the younger age groups. It was because of the fact that in the rural hilly areas under study, children in that age group were not only expected to be independent but were also required to extend a helping hand in the family activities both household and economic.

The results support our hypothesis that children in higher age group (10-11 years) attain higher level of development in comparison with younger age group, that is, 6-9 years. It becomes quite obvious that in hilly areas the dependence of children on parents is very much limited. Keeping in view the social expectations as well as the needs of the region the child-rearing practices are attuned in such a manner that children are prompted and encouraged to come out of the dependence at the earliest.
Our results support the findings of Monga (1981), Priya and Shrivastava (1985), and Bhogle et al., (1986).

Education facilitates the child to attain high level of development. When school-going children were compared with non-school goers it was noticed that school goers had high level of development and non-school goers had low level of development. The results support our hypothesis that schooling fosters high level of development. It does not, however, mean that all the children going to the school had higher level of development vis-a-vis non-school goers, but overall picture which emerged was that the school-goers had higher representation at higher level of development and non-school goers had higher representation at lower level of development.

Going to school helps the children in a number of ways. It exposes them to formal rules and discipline, and also imbibes in them a sense of cooperation and adjustment with their peers who are not their siblings and kinsmen. In other words, schools not only provide the child with greater interaction but also foster sense of civic life and responsibility. Though the school atmosphere provided
to the children under study was not congenial and of expected type, nevertheless it did provide them a different setting, hence a chance for them to learn in a formal learning situation. These results support the findings of Banerjee (1973), Malani (1975), Muralidharan and Banerjee (1975), Animasen (1977), and Mishra and Gupta (1983).

Sex and order of birth as two personal attributes of child were not found to be associated with level of development. In case of female children, no doubt, they did exhibit higher level of development vis-a-vis the male child, yet no statistical association was found between sex and level of development. It was assumed that the male child was more likely to have a higher level of development than the female child, but findings of this study did not support the hypothesis because of two reasons. One, in Indian society children are still trained with differential sex roles and this is more true in case of hilly rural areas. Girls are expected to have one personality type and boys another. Secondly, when Social Behaviour Inventory was prepared sex differences were not accounted for, and only those patterns of
behaviour which go with age were taken into consideration.

Further, girls are trained to assume household responsibilities at an early age in comparison with boys. Results of the present study go in line with the findings of studies conducted by (Kandeth, 1971; Luthra, 1980; Monga, 1981; Singh, 1981; Katiyar, 1981; Jarial, 1982; Katiyar and Jarial, 1983; Kale, 1983; Dash & Das, 1984; Roma Pal & Shamim Kiran, 1984; and Shukla et al., 1986).

However, in some other studies sex is reported to be associated with development of the child (Dass and Sharma, 1973; Reddy et al., 1979; Pandey and Pandey, 1981; Sulochana, 1982; Mishra, 1983; Kalyan, 1985; Singh and Singh, 1986; and Bhogle et al., 1986). Absence of clearcut association between sex and development implies that natural inequality, has a little role to play in social development. On the other hand, it is the social definition of sex roles which demand different type of role socialization for boys and girls.

Order of birth was also not found to influence the level of development. The findings do not support the hypothesis that firstborn children have high level of
development. Our results do not endorse the findings of Mahal and Sexana (1978), Luthra (1980), Honga (1981) and Shete (1983). However, they are in line with a few other studies where no association between order of birth and development was found e.g. Devi (1975) and Jarial (1982). Lack of association may be attributed to the fact that we have not controlled other influencing variables, that is, education of the parents, and presence of absence of other children in the family.

Further, the category of lateborn is composed of those whose order of birth ranged between 3-9 and because of a lesser frequency these were clubbed together. It is, therefore, suggested that to find out influence of order of birth on child development one should keep the above noted variables as constant.

Age of the children selected for the present study was purposely limited to 6-11 years. Because, it was thought that children below the age of six would not be able to respond properly to our inquiry and children above the age of eleven years might manipulate the real situation and may purposely give false responses. This
age group, that is, 6-11 years is very formidable for the individual in life and whatever he learns may leave an impress on his personality. Further, children in this age group are dependant on their elders, not only for life opportunities but also for guidance, supervision, and socialization. In other words, whatever, the child attains or fails to attain is directly or indirectly attributed to their elders who are expected to look after them. It, therefore, becomes essential for us to probe into familial back-ground of children under study in terms of parental attributes.

Age of the parents was not found to influence the level of child development though middle-aged fathers and younger mothers had higher percentage of children with high level of development. Lack of clearcut association may be attributed to the fact that we did not control the age at marriage, education of parents, and the number of children in the family. It is being assumed here that if these variables are controlled age of the parents would play an important role in child development.

Education of parents was found to be positively
associated with child development. It was in the case of educated parents who had higher percentage of children with high level of development, whereas higher percentage of children of the illiterate parents had lower level of development. As in the case of child's own attributes it was noticed that school-goers had higher level of development. Similarly, we found that educated parents had higher percentage of children with high level of development. In other words, education of the parents was found to be contributing positively in child's growth and development. The findings support our hypothesis that children of the educated parents have high level of development. Our results support the findings of Pathak (1974), Om Prakash (1982), Sulochana (1982), V. V. Jand Khan (1986), and Khan (1986), who have also found positive association between parents' education and child's development.

Occupation of the parents is another variable which was found to be associated with level of development. It is interesting to note that instead of the children of agriculturists it was the service/business group which had
higher percentage of children with high level of development.

The results are attributed to the fact that the parents engaged in these activities are more conscious and demanding type which facilitates child's growth and development. On the other hand, parents engaged in agriculture not only use traditional methods of production but have also traditional outlook on life and leave everything to fate. Further, they feel complacent that they have land and if their children do not come to their expectations, they can take up agriculture as a mode of living. So far as the labour class is concerned it is so busy in earning livelihood that they have no time to give proper attention to their growing child and the net result is that child is left to his own fate.

Our results do not support the generally held contention that children of the parents engaged in occupation of high prestige have higher level of development (Devi 1975), which may be attributed to the fact that in our sample we had only a few occupations which could not be compared with the occupational prestige categories of urbanites. In our sample we had petty business men
and government servants holding class III and IV positions in the administrative hierarchy, yet their children showed high level of development vis-a-vis other occupational categories. The findings of this study indicate that nature of occupation of the parents (business and service in the present study) facilitates high level of development of the children, which is attributed to the fact that these fathers are relatively more educated and have greater exposure to outside world than those engaged in agriculture. Further, they do not own much land to bank upon hence foster greater independence in their children.

Caste of the parents was another variable which was found to be associated with level of development of the children. Results of the study support our hypothesis that higher the status of caste, higher the level of development of the children. Caste as a social variable is associated with child-rearing practices, traditions, customs, etc. Parents of higher castes for the purpose of maintaining their social prestige consciously see to it that their children adapt their behaviour to their caste norms. In our study we found that caste played a very important role not only in hierarchically dividing the rural society but it was
also positively associated with level of development of the children. Our results do not support the contention of Monga (1981), Om Prakash (1982), Mehta (1983), Umlyal (1984), and Om Prakash and Sen (1986), because of the fact that these studies were not conducted in the hilly villages of Himachal Pradesh where caste still plays vital role in determining the social interaction between different groups.

Association between family and child development was worked out at two levels: Structure, and Composition. In the first exercise familial structure was divided into joint and nuclear to find out its impact on child development. Results of the present study did not bring out any association between family structure and level of development. However, when family was analysed with respect to its size it was noticed that larger size of the family contributes more to higher level of development. There was a positive association between family size and level of development.

Our results go contrary to widely held notion that small size is more suited for better growth and development of the children because children are provided better care
and facilities (Muralidharan, 1969; Begum, 1975; and Mudkhedkha and Shah, 1975). On the other hand, Devi (1975) and Monga (1981) did not find any association between family size and social development of children. As our results go against the widely propagated small family norms, the administrators would find it difficult to accept our results. Our results have to be understood with respect to area under study. In the hilly isolated villages which have remained relatively untouched by modern development and technological advancement, people still live in the traditional surroundings where more number means more hands for production and hence treat children as assets rather than a liability.

Our results pertaining to the role of family in Child's growth and development indicate two trends: one, the family structure, that is, nuclear or joint has no association with child development; and two, larger the size of the family the higher the level of development of the children.

Child rearing practices for the purpose of understanding child growth and development has been an
area of scientific inquiry which has attracted the attention of social scientists in India (Joshi and Deharwal, 1977; Naidu, 1979; Luthra, 1980; Monga, 1981; and Khan, 1986). There is mushroom growth of literature on this variable. However, a very few studies are found where they have been able to codify the qualitative information into quantity for the purpose of measuring its impact on the level of child’s development (Monga 1981). Based on the scale on child rearing practices developed for the present study association was worked out between level of awareness on the part of parents and development of children.

Findings of the present study indicate that parents with higher awareness regarding child training had least percentage of children (5.36 per cent) with low level of development. Statistical significant association was found between the level of development of children and awareness of parents about child rearing practices. The results support our hypothesis that conscious and responsible training by the parents fosters child development.

After having explained the impact of different variables individually an attempt was made to have a
composite socio-economic status to find out the affect of different social variables in conjunction on the level of child development. As explained earlier parental socio-economic status was worked out as per the norms developed by Pareek and Trivedi (1964). It was noticed that higher socio-economic status was associated with high level of development which means that social background factors in the shape of socio-economic status have direct bearing on child development. The results indicate statistical significant association and hence support our hypothesis that socio-economic status of the parents directly influences the level of development, that is, higher the socio-economic status of the parents, higher the level of child development, and lower the socio-economic status of the parents lower the level of development on the part of children. Our findings support the results of different studies conducted in different regions of India (Pathak, 1970; ICMR, 1972; Jesudason, 1979; Luthra, 1980; Monga, 1981; Kumar, 1983; Bhan, 1984; and Khan 1986),
The summary of findings discussed above support the following hypotheses:

1. Children in the higher age group have high level of development.
2. School-goers have high level of development.
3. Children of the educated parents have high level of development.
4. Children of higher castes have high level of development.
5. Lower the parental awareness of child rearing practices lower the level of child development.
6. Children belonging to higher socio-economic status have high level of development.

However, the findings of the present study do not support the following hypotheses:

1. Boys have higher level of development than girls have.
2. Firstborn children have high level of development.
3. Children of middle-aged parents have high level of development.
4. Joint family hinders child development.

5. Children of Agriculturists have higher level of development.

Sex and order of birth as personal attributes of the children under study were not found to be associated with their development. Sex as a sociological variable rather than a biological fact is understood differently in different socio-cultural situations. In the villages under study the female child is expected to learn her sex roles earlier than the male child. In other words, social definitions differ according to sex of the child. This demands that Social Behaviour Inventory should have been made taking into account sex of the child. As the tool developed was of unisex type it did not help in differentiating the development according to sex of the child. As far as ordinal position of the child is concerned we could not find any association, because of the fact that other variables like, number of children in the family, age of the parents, etc., were not controlled.

Our hypothesis that children of middle-aged parents have high level of development is partially supported which
may be attributed to the fact that the categories made according to age brackets of the parents were not very discrete because we had included parents of lower age group. Old parents who had grown up children, because of the sampling procedure were not included.

Structure of the family, that is, joint was not found to be associated with child development, however, large size of the family was found to be associated with high level of development. The results demand that to find out association between the family structure in terms of differential network of relationships and level of development one should control size of the family. In light of our findings the hypothesis is reframed as, larger the size of the family, higher the level of development. Findings of the present study may be applicable to hilly village only, because the geographical situation of Himachal Pradesh impose different types of constraints than those in the plain areas and therefore people have different style of life and expectations which have bearing on the level of child development.
However, our results also support a few studies already cited above where positive association was found between family size and development.

In the villages under study land is still valued and owner cultivators enjoy high prestige in comparison with other occupations like, petty-shop keeping, low class Government employees, landless labourers, and artisans. It was, therefore, expected that children of the agriculturist class would have higher level of development. However, our findings have not supported this hypothesis. On the other hand children of the business community and those occupying lower positions in the government bureaucracy, were found to have higher level of development, which may be attributed to the fact that businessmen and government employees have not only greater exposure but are also very conscious about their parental role and thus demand from their children higher level of achievement. The agricultural class on the other hand because of their better economy are relatively indifferent to their children and also demand from the help in the agricultural pursuits. Our findings have not helped us to find out any clearcut association between the nature of occupation and
level of development because of the fact that in the 
villages under study there were a few economic activities.
Secondly, as in the urban centres occupations are graded 
because of vast differentiation, we could not do the 
same type of exercise in the rural areas under study, and 
that is why, the generally held contention that the 
children of those parents engaged in occupations of high 
prestige have higher level of development could not be 
proved. Under these circumstances it is advisable to 
depend upon their composite socio-economic status to find 
out association with child development.

CONCLUSION :

The above discussion of the main findings helps us to conclude that child development is dependant on the 
socio-economic status of the family. The parents of 
higher socio-economic status by providing better life 
opportunities facilitate high level of development in 
children. In other words, poor parents by not providing 
better life chances and opportunities hinder child’s 
growth and development. The differential life opportunities
have differential impact on the growth and development of children. So long as children are provided differential life opportunities their level of development would continue to differ. The role of natural inequalities in the shape of sex, birth order, etc., can be identified only when we are able to provide equal life opportunities to our younger generations. In short, structural differentiation and social inequalities are responsible for differential level of child development.

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