CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY

This investigation aimed to study psychological disturbance in five to eight year old school going children. The study was carried out in two phases: the screening phase and the detailed study phase. In the first phase, a large sample (N=1535) of children were screened for the presence or absence of psychological disturbance (n=281) and scholastic backwardness (n=157), with the help of their class teachers. In the second phase, a detailed study was carried out for a group of disturbed and nondisturbed children using teachers (n=270 and 281 respectively) and parents (n=164 and 171 respectively) as informants. A sample of scholastically backward children (n=64) were also studied in detail along with a matched group of scholastically superior children (n=67).

Teacher and parent ratings of behaviour problems were obtained for the children in the detailed study phase. In addition, information regarding demography, developmental, schooling, temperamental and family details were obtained from parents. Wherever possible, neuroticism in the mothers was assessed through a questionnaire. The scholastically backward and superior children were administered a test to assess their visuo-motor integration and developmental level.
Reliability of the screening tool was assessed in terms of interrater and test-retest reliabilities on two independent subsamples.

The measures used in this study were:

1) School Data Sheet (compiled by the investigator).
2) Classroom Data Sheet (compiled by the investigator).
3) Children's Behaviour Questionnaire (Rutter, 1967).
6) Malhotra's Temperament Schedule (Malhotra and Malhotra, 1988).
7) Interview Schedule (compiled by the investigator).
8) Eysenck Personality Inventory (Abraham, Rao and Verghese 1977).
9) Bender Visuo-motor Gestalt Test (Bender, 1938; scoring by Koppitz, 1975).

The data were analyzed using univariate and multivariate statistics. The test-retest and interrater reliability of the screening tool was found to be high and significant. The two scales - TRF and CBCL - were factor analyzed and the following three factors (scales) were obtained separately on both: internalizing problems, externalizing problems and learning problems.
The significant findings of the study are:

1) The prevalence of psychological disturbance in the sample was 18.31% on screening, with the corrected prevalence being 19.80% based on teacher reports, and 27.17% based as parent reports in the detailed phase of the study.

2) The boys were found to have a higher prevalence of psychological disturbance than the girls when assessed by teachers both in the screening (B:G=1.55:1) and detailed phase (B:G = 1.34:1) of the study. However, when parent reports were obtained, a reversal in this trend was noticed with girls having a higher prevalence of psychological disturbance than boys (B:G = 1:1.50).

3) Antisocial/externalizing problems and learning problems were common among boys, and neurotic/internalizing problems were common among girls.

4) Problems falling under the rubric of internalizing, externalizing and learning problems were more common among the disturbed children. However, those indicating severe psychotic symptoms, obsessive and compulsive symptoms, developmental problems and severe conduct problems were almost absent among them.

5) The prevalence of scholastic backwardness was 10.23% with no significant difference in the rates for boys (10.99%) and girls (9.38%).
The disturbed children more often belonged to a lower socio-economic status, had more adverse family circumstances, and developmental and schooling problems when compared to nondisturbed children.

The disturbed children differed from the nondisturbed children on the temperament dimensions of mood, intensity, threshold, distractibility and persistence. Further, specific associations were noted between internalizing, externalizing and learning problems and the temperament dimensions.

The nondisturbed children had more assets than the disturbed children.

The scholastically backward children showed maturational lag in their visuo-motor integration and had more problems in their families and schools compared to the scholastically superior children.