CHAPTER - 3

METHOD OF STUDY
Overview of Design

The study adopted a 2 (Sex) x 2 (Helpless vrs. Mastery Oriented x 2 (Rural vrs. Urban Setting) design. There were 30 participants in each of eight cells. Equal number of boys and girls were sampled both from urban and rural settings. In accordance with children's performance on measures of helplessness, boys as well as girls from urban setting were classified into helpless versus competent categories on the basis of median split.

Similar categories were also obtained for boys and girls from rural setting. Following such classification of children, their mothers in the respective categories were requested for subsequent participation in the study. These mothers were individually given a comprehensive measure of socialization in the form of structured interview. The measure included mother's expectancy relating to their children's activities, their child rearing emphases, rearing practices, and self-perception.

The comparison of mother's responses across participants' categories was undertaken to identify the role of rearing techniques.

Participants

Two hundred and forty high school students (120 from rural and 120 from urban settings) were randomly sampled from Grades 9 and 10. Equal number of boys and girls were taken from both the settings. Their age ranged from 13 to 15 years, most of them were from middle class socio-economic status. These students participated in the Phase 1 of the study.
All participants of Phase I were ranked on the basis of their helplessness scores. Mothers of 30 upper extreme scorers and mothers of 30 lower extreme scorers were selected from each category of urban boys, urban girls, rural boys, and rural girls for their participation in Phase 2. Most of these women were also from middle socio-economic status and their age ranged from 30 years to 50 years. Excepting a few, most of them had high school education and they used local language (Oriya) as their medium of education.

Measures

Children's Helplessness Questionnaire (CHQ). The children's helplessness questionnaire measures a child's cognitive expectancy that responses and outcomes are independent (see Appendix A). It contains 40 items in true-false format. These are sampled only from educational and interpersonal domains.

The test is presented in the regional language (Oriya); the test was developed on the basis of a study carried out on 401 children. The item analysis indicated a very satisfactory level of item-total correlations. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was established in a number of studies involving more than 400 subjects (Sahoo, 1985). Alpha coefficients computed in different samples of subjects ranged from .78 to .86 indicating a high internal consistency among items. Test-retest after six weeks indicated that CHQ is fairly stable overtime, \( r (98) = .84 \).

Sahoo (1985) has also demonstrated convergent validation with measures such as academic failures and obedient, shy and group-dependent
personality subscales of Cattell's (1973) High School Students' Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ). Discriminant validation has also been reported with dissimilar measures such as achievement tests, self-esteem score and assertive, enthusiastic, adventurous, and self-sufficient personality subscale of the HSPQ. The study has also indicated near zero correlation with unrelated tests such as tests of reading, comprehension, and drawing the diagrams.

Out of the total items, about half of the items are sampled from educational experience and other half are sampled from interpersonal domain. Similarly, half of the items are positively keyed and other half are negatively keyed.

Items from educational experience include statements like "sincerity brings reward", "your education helps you to be creative", "you can solve your academic problems by consulting your teachers", "your education does not bring job opportunity", "there is no use of education", etc. Items from interpersonal domain include statements like: If you behave well, others would be pleased; if you work well, you develop good relationships with your senior; strangers cannot be made friends; good manners go unappreciated by teachers.

Respondents are asked to read each of 40 statements and indicate their responses in true-false format. If children agree with a statement they indicate 'true'. If they do not agree with a statement, they indicate 'false'. Each item is subsequently scored to indicate helplessness of the child.
**Behavioural Measure of Helplessness.** A diagram copying task was employed to measure children's helplessness. The test task was adapted from Feather (1961). Feather used the original task to measure persistence in situations of achievement motivation. A similar form had been used extensively to measure the after-effects on unpredictable aversive noise (Glass & Singer, 1972) and less frequently for the effects of helplessness training (Cohen, Rothbart & Phillips, 1976; Rosenbaum & Ben-Ari, 1985).

Four sets of line diagrams printed on 8.5 x 14 cm cards are arranged in four piles in front of the subject. Each pile contains 22 cards, each card containing a line diagram. Cards are faced down, so subjects are unable to see the puzzle until they begin on that particular card. The subject's task is to trace over all of the lines of the diagram without lifting the pencil from the diagram.

In contrast to previous uses of such tasks (Cohen et al., 1976; Glass & Singer, 1972), no time limit is set for each trial or for each diagram. Subjects have a choice either to try more of the same pile, or move to the next pile of diagrams. However, once subjects proceed to another pile of cards, they cannot return to a previous pile. Subjects are told that they have 30 min to attempt all four piles. The piles are placed in such a way that subjects work on an insoluble pile (Pile A), second on a soluble pile (Pile B), third on another insoluble pile (Pile C), and finally on a soluble pile (Pile D). The number of cards attempted on each of the four piles and the amount of time spent on each one is recorded. The following instructions to the subject summarize the restrictions placed on task performance.
Naturally there are certain restrictions involved in this task. You can only work at an item at a time. If you fail on a trial, that is if you don't succeed in tracing over all the lines in the figure, you will then have the choice of continuing or going on to the next item. If you want to go on to the next item you should let me know at once. Once you have stopped working at an item you can't go back to it again. If you want to go on to the next item, you should turn the failed copy face downwards. You can then take next item from the pile and start working at it.

In fact, the performance data on the two solvable piles are considered. The number of trials on each of the solvable piles is taken as a measure of subjects' not giving up. In other words, the number of unattempted cards is indicative of subjects' "give up" responses, thus denotes their helplessness. The pre-testing on different samples shows a high correlation between 'give up' responses in pile 2 and 4. Carver and Scheier (1982) have shown that exposure to uncontrollable outcomes leads to giving up responses.

On completing the puzzles, subjects are presented with a post test questionnaire. On 5 point scale, subjects evaluate their motivation to perform well on each task, and how much helplessness they feel. Subjects are also asked to indicate causal attributions of their performance on the task (ability, effort, chance, and task difficulty). Subjects are debriefed about the actual purpose of the study after they complete the questionnaire.
It is important to note that these behavioural measures of helplessness are moderately correlated with cognitive measures of children's helplessness.

Socialization Questionnaire. The socialization questionnaire for parents has four distinct parts (see Appendix C). Part I seeks information about parents' expectancies about the child's capabilities. Parents are asked to indicate the age at which their child start activities such as seeing, hearing, babbling, identifying pictures.

In Part 2, attitudes towards different socialization emphases are measured. They are measured in three dimensions like attitudinal emphasis on autonomy and independence, perception of positive consequences of independence, and acceptibility of the helpless child. Nineteen items are presented in this part. Parents are asked to indicate their degree of agreement of five-point scale ranging from complete agreement to complete disagreement.

Part 3 asked respondents to indicate their child rearing practices based on independence, autonomy, dutifulness, etc. This part intends to map the actual child rearing practices parents adopt. Respondents are asked to indicate the frequency (on a five-point scale) with which they adopt a rearing technique.

Part 4 is focussed on parents' self-perception. It measures parental perception on dimensions of self-assurance and self-realization. The indicators of self-assurance refers to poise and confidence parents show in situations of child management. The indicator of self-realization denotes
the agreement of happiness within and outside the family. Parents are asked to indicate the frequency (on a five-point scale) with which they encounter these perceptions. Taken together, the socialization questionnaire offers a wide scope for sampling parental socialization in four important domains, such as expectancies, socialization emphases, child rearing practices, and self-perception. In addition, sociodemographic data relating to participants are also collected.

Sahoo (1986) developed and validated the questionnaire for use in the state of Orissa, India. The psychometric properties of the questionnaire are reported elsewhere (Sahoo, 1986). It is reported that the internal consistency and convergent - discriminant validity of the measure is quite satisfactory. The factor analysis of responses of 401 subjects to attitudinal items yields three factors: autonomy oriented attitudes, perception of positive consequences of independence training and acceptability of the helpless child. Similarly, factor analysis of responses pertaining to rearing practices yielded four factors: achievement oriented rearing, dependency oriented rearing, responsibility training and leniency to punishment. Furthermore, the analysis of parental self perception indicated two factors: self assurance and self realization (Sahoo, 1986). Subsequent application of the questionnaire has attempted analysis across these dimensions.

The questionnaire offers a broad scope for sampling parental socialization in important domains. It is to ascertain whether parents of helpless children adopt socialization practices different from those of competent children.
Procedure

The study has adopted an extreme group design. One hundred and twenty children (60 boys and 60 girls) from urban high schools in coastal cities of Orissa and same number of children (60 boys and 60 girls) from rural high school in rural districts of Orissa were randomly sampled. Most of children were in Grades 9 and 10.

At the very outset, permission was taken from the school authorities. After initial contacts were made, rapport was established with the students concerned. Subsequently, participants were individually given the Children's Helplessness Questionnaire. One week after they took the CHQ, participants were individually asked to perform the Diagram Copying Test (DCT). Finally, they were given post-test questionnaire (see Appendix B). It was stressed that objective of the study was research interest. After the subjects individually indicated that they had understood the instructions, they were asked to respond to items. It was also indicated to each of the participants that the tests were not designed to measure their ability; rather the tests were meant to examine their perceptions of situations.

The procedure was repeated for 240 school students participating in the study from both the settings. For the CHQ measure, each item was scored; a total CHQ score was computed by summing across items. Then the number of "give up" responses in the Diagram Copying Test were separately recorded for piles 2 and 4. Composite score was found by summing across $Z$-scores of a child across three separate scores. Then the children were ranked on their helplessness scores. Then 30 upper extreme
and 30 lower extreme were identified separately in the categories of boys and girls from urban and rural settings separately.

The mothers of their 30 lower extreme scorers and mothers of 30 upper extreme scorers were selected for each subgroups of rural boys, rural girls, urban boys, and urban girls for next phase of the study. They were individually contacted at their residences. Then they were explained and the socialization questionnaire was given to them. In the presence of the investigator they responded to items of the questions seeking information. Then the questionnaires were collected and scoring was done following a scoring key.

The method of data collection adopted was structured interview method. The responses of participants were recorded by the investigator on questionnaire. Each item of the questionnaire was evaluated according to a scoring key. Responses of mothers of high helplessness children and mothers of low helplessness children in each of four subgroups were compared on several dimensions of socialization. The dimensions included expectancy, socialization emphases, child rearing practices, and their self-perception.

While interviewing mothers, care was taken to maintain maximum possible neutrality. Each participating mother was contacted and interviewed at her own natural habitat. In rural areas, the investigator had to tell sometimes a simple expression of a term for which the respondent expressed her inability of understanding the word. Following the interview, each participant was debriefed about the purpose of the study.