Chapter 1
Introduction

"The childhood shows the man as the morning shows the day"

Milton

CHILDREN are the most wholesome part of the race, the sweetest and freshest from the hands of God. Being the flowers of mankind, the citizens of tomorrow, the vital human resources and being the hopes and investments for the future, they fill the world with joy and humour.

Today’s child is tomorrow’s adult. In between comes the critical, crucial and formative period in the life of an individual. The physical and mental growth is rapid during this period. As quoted by Gabriela Mistral, “we are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the fountain of life. Many of the things we need can wait, the child cannot. Right now, is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer Tomorrow. His name
This is a very tender and impressionable age and the child is most receptive and willing to be conditioned during this period.

1.1 Background of the problem

Many psychologists believe that the first six years in the life of a person are the most important period for development and is extremely important in laying the foundation for a healthy and wholesome development of the personality. "The child is the father of man" and "As the twig is bent so grows the tree" are the popular proverbs which explain and emphasise the practical importance of early childhood years. Therefore attending on the development during pre-school years is so relevant.

Each child is unique in terms of genetic potentials, sensory capacities, history of reinforcement, ability to relate to other people, energy level, temperament, interests and motivations. In the views of Sood (1987) children are born with vast potentials for development. But only a fraction of that vast potentials has been realised. To Anandalakshmy (1992) each child is gifted—gifted with inalienable right to explore the world, to seek information, to go beyond what he knows empirically into the realm of imagination. Hence finding out the inborn potentials of the pre-school children becomes the need of the day. "Happy child—Nation's pride" was the slogan for the International year of the child. The nature of psycho-social development of the children will form the basis of this happiness and security feeling.
On the eve of the 21st century, equal opportunities for the development of all children during the period of growth has been the Nation's aim. Yet, in reality, an average Indian child and the disadvantaged children especially the tribal children of today are missing their childhood because of poverty and lack of exposure. Some of them have taken on their tender shoulders the burden of helping their families. Little do the parents realise that what is missed in the years before school is difficult to be made up later on.

A society could be called a progressive one if the child is getting his due in the totality of things that is a balanced mixture of physical, social and psychological factors. The deficiency of these factors results in the hampering of proper development. This indicates the need to study the psycho-social development of pre-school children.

According to Chamber’s Dictionary (Schwarz et al., 1992) psycho-social development denotes the psychological and social aspects of development. Hence the intellectual and social development, the temperament or behavioural profile and the achievement of a child will come under the purview psycho-social development.

The growth of thought from two to six years is enormous. This development gives the mind greater flexibility. The ability to remember allows a person to perceive selectively, classify, reason and generally form more complex concepts. Reasonable learning opportunities provided during the pre-school years are crucial for the development of intelligence. Serious and prolonged deprivation of learning exposures during infancy and early childhood years result in almost permanent damage to
intellectual growth. By assessing the intellectual development one can foretell the educational outcomes and individual’s performance in the future.

Social development is the acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations. The child’s self control and his social competence all dramatically grow from two to six years. Early social experiences largely determine what sort of adult a child will become. The nature of experiences the child gets makes the child positive or negative in his or her social behaviour. A search in the pattern of social development during pre-school years will give a glimpse of how sociable, autonomous, initiative, adjustable and responsible the child is and how he is likely to be in the future.

The temperament or behavioural profile highlights the characteristics of a person’s behaviour or personality. Temperament is the raw material from which originates the individual’s behaviour. It reveals the intensity of reaction and the reaction pattern of the child. Individual differences are noticed in these two areas. From this stems out his future personality characteristics. An analysis of the temperament of pre-school children will unfold not only the similarities and differences of their present behaviour but also the quality of their future behaviour.

Achievement denotes the level of child’s performances. It gives a worthwhile feeling, add pleasure and motivate the child to experience more achievements and thus makes his life colourful. Pre-school years are richly packed with the opportunities for new and varied achievements. Each child is endowed with a lot of inborn potentials and an intense
desire to achieve more. What happens to the child’s potentials depends on the environment in which he lives. Consequently individual differences are evident in the field of achievements. Based on the LQ and the quality of environmental exposures, each child will have his own store of achievements. When the adults identify and approve these achievements the children will grow up in a way maximising his potentialities. Hence insight about the achievements of pre-school children and the individual differences in the field of achievement will be highly instructive in providing environmental situations that will help the child to become a healthy, happy and socially useful person using his inherited potentials.

In short, one more step in search of the intellectual and social development, temperament and achievement of pre-school children will unfold their psycho-social development. Moreover the present century is also noted for the equality of boys and girls in all the fields of human life. It will be interesting to find out whether such a trend is prevailing in the psycho-social development of pre-school children also.

As the U. N. General Assembly has declared, “The mankind owes to the child the best it has to give.” So to create and maintain a day of joy and peace, of playing, learning and doing, to guarantee a future shaped in harmony and co-operation, to mould leaders who are physically healthy, intellectually competent, spiritually mature, morally upright, psychologically integrated, socially acceptable and who are ever open to growth, one must work for children without considering whether they are rich or poor or urban, rural or tribal.
In India one could see the co-existence of various social, ethnic and racial groups. An unequal sharing of the fruits of development is also evident among these distinct groups. Some groups become privileged and some others become disadvantaged because of the inequality of opportunities. Tribals are one such disadvantaged group.

Tribals in India even today are a neglected and vastly discriminated lot. Perhaps there may not exist any other section of the Indian population than the tribals about whom so much ignorance, prejudices and myths exist. Even after fifty years of independence, in India with all its natural resources and best brains, a mass of people are still being treated as untouchables—away from the touch of modern technology, amenities and facilities.

Being a naturally secluded group of people from the society, the tribals fall an easy prey to the vile tactics of the non-tribals. Although many tribal welfare programme were and are being implemented by the government, many social and environmental factors still restrict their progress. Even now the tribal pre-school children from Kerala have not become a focal point for the scientific studies.

The tribals gathered in small thatched huts which are exposed to the vagaries of climate, situated next to cowsheds or hay stacks present an extremely distressing picture. The dark hutments wanting for fresh air make one feel suffocated. The tribals remain as one of the tender saplings that grow in wilderness with immense potentialities hidden in them, but which at times cannot attain full growth due to the lack of essentials for their existence.
Pandit Nehru once said “In the tribal people, I have found many qualities which I miss in the people of plains, cities and other parts of India.” So they can be considered as second to none. Nobody can keep them as museum specimens. These children are in many ways, the embodiments of Gray’s immortal lines.

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene the dark
Unfathomed caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to flush unseen and
Waste its sweetness in the desert air.”

Amidst the scandals of exploitation and distressing poverty encircling the tribal places, the Anganwadies run by the ICDS provide a happy relief and they appear like little earthen lamps throwing their light around to drive away the darkness that has enveloped these tribal areas for many years. When these little children dance or recite poems or narrate some stories taught by the Anganwadi teachers one can see the flickering of their lights within. These tribals living in the forests are lovely in their natural habitat and are innocent in their hearts.

The UN General Assembly, the National Children’s Policy and the Indian Constitution all insisted on the equality of opportunities and subsistence to children of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

As cited by Chowdhary (1990), the convention on the Rights of the child drafted on 1989 by the UN commission on Human Rights has stated that the Rights (the right to survival, the right to protection, the right to development and the right to participation) shall be extended to all children without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of child’s or his or her parent’s or local guardian’s race, nationality, colour, sex, language,
religion, political or other opinion, national, social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

The National Policy for children recognises children as Nation's Supremely important asset and declares that the nation is responsible of their nurture.

The Declaration of Independence proclaimed the 'self evident truth' that "all men are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." The country also proposes to lend a tremendous boost to pre-school education in order to achieve the optimum psycho-social development of children.

"Reaching the deprived child" was the general theme of the International Year of the Child. It includes the children of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and those of poverty groups located in the urban slums and rural areas. 'Deprived' and 'Disadvantaged' children—we owe them a better deal and a long standing debt to give opportunities to develop their full potential. There will be many really gifted ones among the deprived and disadvantaged. Failure to develop their potential will certainly be the Nation's loss. So there is an urgent need to realise their potentials.

In the words of Tagore—the great poet "Every child comes into this world with a message that God is not yet discouraged of man." So it is our duty to allow the children to come to the forefront of natural arena irrespective of their caste and locality as Jesus Christ who said "...and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the Kingdom of heaven" (St. Mathew. 19:14). Hence the need for a more
realistic approach to the socio-economic upliftment of tribal children cannot be neglected.

In the total absence of developmental studies concerning the tribal children in Kerala, an assessment of the psycho-social development of tribal pre-school children become the felt need of the day. Let these helpless, innocent buds of nature also blossom into beautiful flowers. Let the state touch upon the potentialities and abilities of each child by way of providing them with opportunities and facilities.

Each child is, to some extent like all children, to some extent like some children and to some extent like no other children. This is true for the tribal children also. So the investigator is trying to explore some of these universals, commonalities and individualities. Hence it is extremely important and quite informative to study the psycho-social development of tribal pre-school children in comparison with that of their rural and urban peers.

1.2 The present study—A preview

In spite of all the prevailing vigour, interest and enthusiasm in the field of child development, in spite of all the welfare programmes for the children below six years of age, in spite of all the attempts taken by the International, National and State organisations to ‘Reach the Deprived child’, in spite of the people’s awareness about the importance of early childhood years which form the stamp of their future personality, the tribal pre-school children in Kerala remain an untouched area of study.
So far no attempt was made to penetrate into their ‘forest personality’. Nobody even tried to find out the essence of their individuality. It is quite amazing that when the rich elite and the middle men are enjoying the fruits of modernisation these illiterate, poor and helpless little brothers and sisters have miles to go before they could enjoy the dawn of a prosperous day. So the present study is an attempt to find out the psycho-social development of tribal pre-school children in comparison with that of their rural and urban peers and to identify their position in the modern world.

1.3 Scope

The tribal study gathered momentum when the anthropologists initiated field expeditions and started writing books and articles. Since independence several studies have been conducted on the Indian Tribes. Recently Chowdhary (1989) compared the perceptual motor skills of North Indian tribal pre-school children with that of the non-tribals.

The first information about South Indian tribes was brought to light by Thurstone (1906). Apart from the few sociological studies on the Kerala tribes by Iyer (1908), Iyer (1938, 1939, 1941 and 1961), Ayyappan (1965), Ehrenfels (1952), Luiz (1962), Kattakayam (1983) and Kurian (1991), little has been done so far.

Even on the eve of 21st century, the tribal children from Kerala are a neglected lot and are very disadvantageous in all the aspects of life. Very little chances available for them and the denial of developmental exposures leave them indifferent and ignorant in many aspects. Still they
are striving to sustain their life by solving their problems by themselves and they have some records of their own attainments. It is quite interesting to know how the tribal children are moulding their personality by making use of the little opportunities availed by them.

It is a common observation that the members of the minority group exhibit different ways of behaving and have developed skills which are entirely different from those of others. Pandit Nehru once declared that the tribal people are endowed with many qualities which are missed in the people of plains. It is also accepted that there are many healthy features of tribal life which should not only be retained but developed. Arresting of those natural gifts will impair their normal development. Once the pot is burned no more it can be shaped. So the present study is an attempt in search of their inborn skills. Early detection and screening will be helpful in preventing future underachievement and failure.

Though child study movements are in momentum there is not even a single study concerning the inborn developmental potentials of the tribal pre-school children in Kerala. It is quite informative to find out the creative potentials found in these tribal folks. Thus the area leaves a large room for the new researchers to plunge into their inborn talents and to come out with more novel informations.

Moreover, there is a positive policy of assisting the tribal people to develop their natural resources and to evolve a productive life so that they can enjoy the fruits of their labour and will not be exploited by others. The tribal children have to progress in their own way utilising
their abilities and potentials. So the investigator is trying to identify the pattern of their psycho-social development so as to give them right directions and guidance.

This study can also be considered as a response to the NIDCCD proposal to study all the developmental aspects of two to six year old children from urban, rural and tribal settings on the basis of India's felt need to have a set of norms for Indian children which permit generalisation all over the country.

Above all, in a zest to do something more for the world's less fortunate children and to give them a better chance for a happy life the investigator is interested to carry out a study in the proposed area.

1.4 Aim of the study

The present investigation aims at studying the psycho-social development of tribal pre-school children in comparison with that of their rural and urban peers from Kerala. The psycho-social development in the present study is dealing with

1. Intellectual development
2. Social development
3. Temperament or Behavioural profile and
4. Achievement

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:
1.5.1 To compare the intellectual development of Tribal pre-school children with that of their rural and urban peers.

1.5.2 To study the social development of tribal pre-school children in comparison with that of rural and urban pre-school children.

1.5.3 To study the temperament or behavioural profile (Intensity of reaction and the Reaction Pattern) of tribal pre-school children and to compare it with that of their rural and urban peers.

1.5.4 To assess the achievement of Tribal pre-school children in relation to that of the rural and urban pre-school children.

1.5.5 To identify the gender difference in the development and achievement of pre-school children.

1.5.6 The study also interested to compare the development and achievements of rural and urban pre-school children.

1.6 The areas of the study—The concepts defined

1.6.1 Psycho-social development

The concepts of psycho-social development given by Zanden (1989) and Chamber's Dictionary (Schwarz et al., 1992) were considered in this investigation. In the present study the psycho-social development means the psychological and social aspects of development. The areas included under the psycho-social development in this study are

(a) Intellectual development

(b) Social development
(c) Temperament or behavioural profile and
(d) Achievement

(a) Intellectual development

Intelligence determines the level at which one learns and thinks. According to Binet and Simon (1916) it is the judgement or common sense, initiate, the ability to adapt oneself and the capacity to learn.

In this study intellectual development means the abilities of the child in carrying out sensory and perceptual tests in comprehension, reasoning, judgement, thinking and memorising as given by Binet and Simon (1916).

(b) Social development

A sociable child is one who behaves in a socially approved manner, one who plays the role which the society prescribes for him and has favourable attitudes towards people and social activities.

By considering the views given by Erikson (1963), Shamsuddin (1971), Hurlock (1972), Leeladevi (1975), Wispe (1977) Jupe et al. (1985), Craig (1989) and Milon (1990), the present study defines the social development as the ability of the child to behave sociably, to be autonomous, to show initiative, to adjust and to be responsible in the society. Five dimensions of social development identified in the above definition are the following.
(i) Sociability

As given by Romanello (1987) and Chamber's Dictionary (Schwarz et al., 1992) sociability is considered as the child's ability to make positive interactions with others.

(ii) Autonomy

It is the ability to perform activities by himself or herself, to be independent and be guided by his or her own principles (Hurlock 1981, Panda 1988 and Chamber's Dictionary (Schwarz et al., 1992).

(iii) Initiative

As given in Chamber's Dictionary (Schwarz et al. 1992), initiative is the ability to start, or to begin or to take the first step in performances or activities.

(iv) Adjustability

As Asuri and Krishnamurthy (1976) have indicated, adjustability is the ability to get along with others.
(v) **Responsibility**

It refers to the child’s ability to be trustworthy, to be in charge of his or her own actions and to take one’s full place in the society (Erikson 1963 and Jupe et al. 1985).

(c) **Temperament or behavioural profile**

The present study considered the views of Thomas et al. (1963, 1971) on temperament. They defined temperament as the characteristic tempo, energy expenditure, mood and rhythmicity, typifying the behaviour of the individual child.

The nine dimensions of temperament identified by Thomas et al. (1963) were grouped under two headings as Intensity of Reaction and Reaction Pattern by Indulekha (1977). Three dimensions which describe the child’s behaviour as ‘intense’ and ‘mild’ come under Intensity of Reaction. Six dimensions which differentiate the child’s responses as ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ patterns were included in the Reaction Pattern.

(d) **Achievement**

Based on the definitions given by Horrocks and Schoonover (1968) Crow and Crow (1968), Craig (1989) and Stella and Purushothaman (1993), the achievement is defined as the child’s ability to grasp and reproduce what (psycho-motor skills) is being taught to the child in the class. The four dimensions of the achievement test for the present study are
(i) Practical life skills

In the present study, practical life skills refers to the abilities of the child in carrying out self-help activities.

(ii) Sensory skills

Sensory skills are those abilities of the child to select correct responses to visual, auditory and tactile stimulations.

(iii) Language skills

It refers to the child's skills in reading, in writing and in recognising the letters.

(iv) Arithmetic skills

These are the abilities of the child in number recognition, in pairing the numbers and in doing addition.

1.6.2 Pre-school children

Pre-school children are the children between the ages of two and six years (Karmel and Karmel 1978, Hurlock 1981, Devadas and Jaya 1984, Clarke-Stewart and Friedman 1987, Craig 1989 and Chauhan 1996). Children between the ages of 3 and 5 years (Constable 1988) and
children between the ages of two and five years (Hendrick 1990, Kuruppuswamy 1990). Pre-school children in this particular study refers to Anganwadi attending children at the age of four years.

1.6.3 Tribal pre-school children

Children from the tribal families are called tribal children. According to Vidyarthi and Rai (1985) tribals are those who live in the forests, hills and naturally isolated regions. To Money (1984) the tribes are called ‘Adivasis’. The definitions given by Kattakayam (1983) and Dictionary of Anthropology (Taylor 1988) were also considered.

The present investigation defines tribal pre-school children as the four year old Anganwadi attending children of ‘Adivasi’ families living in the forests of Kerala.

1.6.4 Rural pre-school children

Rural pre-school children are those from the rural families. In India a place with a population below 10,000 is considered as a village or rural area (Bhushan and Sachdeva 1990).

Anganwadi attending four year old children from the families located in places with a population below 10,000 were considered as the rural pre-school children for the present study.
1.6.5 Urban pre-school children

The pre-school children from the urban families were considered as the urban pre-school children. India treats all places with a population of 10,000 as urban areas (Bhushan and Sachdeva 1990).

The present study considered Anganwadi attending four year old children from the families located in places with a population of 10,000 as urban pre-school children.

1.7 Hypotheses

The hypotheses generated for the present study are as follows.

1.7.1 There is no significant difference in the intellectual development of tribal pre-school children when compared with that of their (a) rural and (b) urban peers.

1.7.2 There is no significant gender difference in the intellectual development of pre-school children.

1.7.3 There is no significant difference in the social development of tribal pre-school children when compared with that of (a) rural and (b) urban pre-school children.

1.7.4 There is no significant gender difference in the social development of pre-school children.

1.7.5 Tribal pre-school children are not significantly different from their the (a) rural and (b) urban peers in the areas of
1. Sociability
2. Autonomy
3. Initiative
4. Adjustability and
5. Responsibility

1.7.6 Pre-school children show no significant gender differences in their
1. Sociability
2. Autonomy
3. Initiative
4. Adjustability and
5. Responsibility

1.7.7 The tribal pre-school children are not significantly different from
their (a) rural and (b) urban peers in the
1. Intensity of reaction and
2. Reaction Pattern

1.7.8 Pre-school boys and girls show no significant differences in their
1. Intensity of reaction and
2. Reaction Pattern

1.7.9 There is no significant difference in the achievement of tribal
pre-school children when compared with that of their (a) rural and
(b) urban peers.

1.7.10 There is no significant gender difference in the achievement of
pre-school children.
1.7.11 The tribal pre-school children are not significantly different from their (a) rural and (b) urban peers in the areas of

1. Practical life skills
2. Sensory skills
3. Language skills and
4. Arithmetic skills

1.7.12 Pre school children show no significant gender differences in their

1. Practical life skills
2. Sensory skills
3. Language skills and
4. Arithmetic skills

The present study thus aims to identify the intellectual, social and academic skills and the behavioural pattern of tribal pre-school children in relation to that of their rural and urban peers. This study may reveal the present status of the tribal children in Kerala and may bring about useful suggestions to improve their lot. The parents and teachers can also use these insights to enhance the psycho-social development of tribal, rural and urban pre-school children in Kerala.