CHAPTER VI
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.0 Introduction:

Piaget has pioneered the study of the cognitive development in the children. The common belief is that there is no real difference between child and adult thinking. Piaget refutes that & asserts that there is qualitative difference between them. He distinguishes 4 stages in cognitive development namely sensori-motor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational stages.

The influence of family variable socio-economic status and gender on cognitive development have long been realized (Hollos 1975, Reid 1984). Changes in family structure with the constant changes in role relationship as well as more obvious changes from family situations have an important bearing on child's development. The impact of harsh training on the development of child was first recognised by Freud. Modern studies also show that a relaxed or a democratic way of bringing up a child results in greater independence in thinking and in building up the self concept of the child.

6.1 Thus the present study was taken up for the following main objectives:
1. To study the impact of family atmosphere on cognitive development.

2. To study the impact of child rearing patterns on cognitive development.

3. To study the impact of socio-economic status on cognitive development.

4. To study the impact of gender on cognitive development.

6.2 The present study was taken up to test the following hypothesis.

1. Cognitive development is influenced by family atmosphere.

2. Cognitive development is influenced by child rearing patterns.

3. Socio economic status of the family of the child affect his cognitive development.


6.3 Methodology: The total sample for this study consisted of 180 subjects between ages 6 to 12 years out of which 90 were males and 90 females. The sample was chosen in such a way that it repre
sents all three socio-economic statuses. Hence out of 180 subjects, 60 were from high socio-economic status, 60 from middle socio-economic status and 60 from low socio-economic status. Since the age range of the sample is quite wide that is 6 to 12 years, the sample was divided into 3 age-groups viz (i) 6-8 years, (ii) 8 to 10 years, (iii) 10 to 12 years. The analysis and interpretation was done separately for each age group. The tools for the study were same for all age groups.

6.4 The following tools were used for the present investigation:

(i) Cognitive tasks on Piagetian Model - There were total 6 tasks. The subjects obtained a score on each task and the total score obtained on 6 tasks gave the subject his/her individual cognitive task score.

(ii) Family climate scale by Dr. Beena Shah - This scale was employed to study the parental attitudes towards the child as perceived by the latter. This scale gives information about the family atmosphere of the subject.

(iii) Mohite Home Environment Inventory (MHEI) by Dr. Prerana Mohite - This inventory was used to observe the levels of stimulation which child is getting at home. It gives information about the way the child is brought up at home also of his physical
home environment.

(iv) Questionaire for measuring child rearing patterns prepared by investigator-This questionaire was used to measures those areas of child rearing patterns which were not covered by the previous two tools on family atmosphere and home environment.

6.5 The main findings:

I. The age group 6-8 years.
   (i) The children from higher socio-economic status performed better on cognitive tasks.

   (ii) The sex factor was not important at this stage. The girls and boys performed in a similar way on cognitive tasks.

   (iii) Family atmosphere, environment and child rearing patterns together exert an impact on child’s cognitive development.

   (iv) The democratic way of bringing up is more conducive for the cognitive development of the child.

II. Age group 8 to 10 years:

   (i) The sex and socio-economic status is not exerting any impact on cognitive development of the subjects.

   (ii) The children from better family atmosphere and better home environment got higher scores on cognitive tasks.
(iii) Those children performed better on cognitive tasks whose fathers participated more in their upbringing and interacted more with their children.

III. Age group 10 to 12 years: The main finding for this age group are:

(i) The children from higher and middle socio-economic backgrounds have better cognitive development than the children who are from low socio-economic status.

(ii) The girls performed better on cognitive tasks than the boys.

(iii) The children were from favourable family atmosphere and from the homes where parents provide higher levels of stimulation to the child have better cognitive development.

(iv) The children who had better interaction with their parents performed better on cognitive tasks.

(v) The democratic way of child rearing is better that the authoritarian or permissive way for the cognitive and intellectual development of the child.
6.6 SUGGESTIONS

From the conclusions drawn for the present study, the following suggestions are offered:

1. Since Family Atmosphere and child rearing practices together exert influence on a child's cognitive development especially between the age of 6 to 8 years, it is suggested that the parents of the children who are in this age group should take special care that the Family Atmosphere is congenial for the child. They should encourage the child to participate in mental work which should be more of concrete nature.

2. A democratic Family environment should be maintained for the adequate cognitive development of children.

3. The fathers of children who are between the ages of 10 to 12 years should take keen interest in the up-bringing and should try to have more positive interaction with them.

4. Since the children in the age group 10 to 12 years coming from higher and middle SES have better cognitive development than the children who are from lower SES, the Social Welfare and Governmental agencies should try to make amends for the disadvantaged by offering them incentives and proper guidance.

5. The parents of the children between the ages of 10 to 12 years should stimulate their children for higher cognitive
achievements and should have very close interactions with them.

Besides these some general suggestions can be offered:

1. The Schools should involve children in cognitive tasks in accordance with the age group at which they are.

2. The parents should give encouragement to the girls for cognitive development.

3. The Social agencies involve themselves in the welfare of the dis-advantaged children so that they get encouragement for developing their cognitive abilities.

6.7 Suggestions for further study:

The present study was conducted on a limited sample and in a selective region. For further study a wider sample in a bigger region is suggested.

Influence of the School climate on the cognitive development may also be studied.

Piaget's tasks formed the basis of this study. Some other cognitive tasks may also be devised for further study.