

Research Paper :

Assessment of cognitive abilities of rural children

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in randomly selected three villages of Hisar district namely Durjanpur, Singran and Dhani Kushal on randomly selected 90 children from Anganwadi and nursery schools to assess their cognitive abilities in terms of perception, classification, reasoning, language and memory and concept formation. The children were placed under low, medium and high categories on the basis of optimum scores obtained on particular parameter of cognitive abilities. Comparative cognitive assessment of children from indicated that nursery school children performed better than Anganwadi children on all parameters of cognitive abilities. Majority of Anganwadi children's performance in terms of memory and concept related aspects was of low extent, however on perception and language related parameters it was of medium extent. Majority of children from Anganwadis could classify means of transport and utility items but they performed very badly in classifying colours and size. Performance of nursery school children in terms of perception, reasoning, memory and concept related parameters was of medium extent in majority of cases, however their language abilities were of high extent in more than fifty per cent cases. .

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Children form the nucleus around which future of any nation revolves around. First five years of a man's life generally termed as preschool years are the most crucial and critically important in relation to his overall growth and development as a complete human being. Children from this age group form the major chunk of our population. Development of child is multidimensional task involving various interrelated aspects and pre school years are of paramount importance in relation to cognitive abilities development. Swiss psychologist Piaget gave sequential description of cognitive ability attainment from birth to throughout life. Psychologists over the years have given various theories of cognitive skill formation, which have been accepted or refined by modern scientists and researchers. It has emerged during various researches that environment plays a critical and decisive role in cognitive skill information. Qualitative variation in environment affects the cognitive abilities among children and they acquire cognitive abilities faster and easier in conducive and stimulating environment than non-stimulating environments. There is no denying fact that parents being the primary agents of child development exert enormous influence on cognitive development. In addition to home, Anganwadis and nursery schools also act as the major environment for cognitive ability development among pre school children. Comparative cognitive assessment of children from Anganwadi and nursery school can be helpful in identifying qualitative

difference in environment of these two settings and suggest appropriate intervention and strategic measures for improvement. Considering all these facts, the present investigation was formulated to explore cognitive abilities of Anganwadi and nursery child.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in randomly selected three villages of Hisar district namely, Durjanpur, Singran and Dhani Khusal. As the study required sample of pre-school children, therefore purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting locale of the study *i.e.* selection of Anganwadis and nursery schools, however sampled children were randomly selected from the listed children of Anganwadis and nursery schools available in the selected villages. Due care was taken to select children who were regular in their attendance. Thirty children from each village *i.e.* 15 each from Anganwadis and nursery school attached with government schools were taken. Thus, a total 90 children *i.e.* 45 each from Anganwadi and nursery school in the age group of 4-5 year were taken to assess the cognitive abilities. Scale developed by Namita *et al.* (2000) was used to measure cognitive abilities on six parameters *i.e.* perception, classification, reasoning, language, memory and concept formation. The children were placed under low, medium and high categories on the basis of optimum scores obtained on particular parameter of cognitive abilities.