

Research Note :

Mental development of pre-schoolers: A comparative study

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation was carried out in Hisar City of Haryana State to assess the intellectual abilities of rural and urban pre-schoolers. Experimental material comprised of 150 pre-schoolers selected from three locations, slum (50), rural (50) and urban (50) areas during the age of 2-4 years. From slum and rural areas, anganwadis and homes were visited and from urban area the data were collected from pre-school Lab. of College of Home Science, C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar. Stanford Binet Intelligence scale was used to assess the mental abilities of pre-schoolers. Results indicated that the children from urban areas surpassed children from slums and rural areas in intellectual activities and boys from the three locations exceeded the girls in the mental abilities

Key words : Mental development, Pre-schoolers, Intellectual ability

Stanford Binet (1960) defined intelligence as the ability of an individual to direct his behaviour towards a goal to make adaptation in his goal-oriented behaviour when necessary, to know when he has reached the goal.

Intellectual development of the child is affected by various factors including enriched ecological system that helps in advancing the overall development of child. Piaget (1968) considered individual as active biological organism, he learns consistently through interaction with their environment because according to him the cognitive is a continuous process of unfolding. Child developing within a complex system of relationship is affected by multiple level of surrounding environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). In view of this, the present study was undertaken with the following objectives to assess the intellectual abilities of slums, rural and urban children.

Table 1 shows comparison of intelligence among children of three locations, namely slums, rural and urban and there exhibited great variations in number of low achiever and high achiever in the three locations such as slums, rural and urban. The maximum number of children getting low scores (42) were from slums followed by 38 from rural areas and where as very few (11) from urban/

areas. This may cause frustration and aggression due lack of facilities and ignorance of busy and working parents. Huesmaan *et al.* (1987) found that aggression in childhood interferes with the development of intellectual abilities. With regard to high achiever, maximum number of children (26) were from urban followed by rural (13) and then slums (11). The results were supported by Yeats *et al.* (1983), who studied that environment, culture and social group including parental behaviour, their interaction with child play a great role in the intellectual development of the child.

Table 2 indicates that there was significant difference in intelligence among boys and girls in three locations, namely slums, rural and urban. Results showed that significantly higher (3.23**) IQ of boys (103.0±10.3) slums areas was better for their counterparts (101.0±9.13) where as in rural areas boys exceeded girls with higher mean (111.12±13.5) and difference was significant as indicated through significant z values 2.39**. Score of intelligence scale for boys (126.17±12.32) was significantly higher (5.53**) than that of the score of urban

Table 1 : Mental ability of children in different areas (N=150)

Sr. No.	Mental abilities	Slum (50)	Rural (50)	Urban (50)
1.	Low	42	38	11
2.	Medium	5	6	13
3.	High	3	6	26

Table 2 : Gender Difference in mental abilities

Sr. No.	Areas	Boys		Girls		Z-test
		Mean scores	S.D.	Mean scores	S.D.	
1.	Slum	103.0	10.3	101.0	9.13	3.23**
2.	Rural	111.12	13.5	109.56	12.03	4.65**
3.	Urban	126.17	12.32	121.35	13.11	5.53**

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively