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# Intervention and Its Impact on Home Environment of Rural Male Infants in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh

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**ABSTRACT** The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of comprehensive intervention programme in relation to home environment of rural male infants in the age group of seven to twelve months. Out of the total sample of 60 male infants belonging to low socio economic status families, 30 each were taken as experimental and control groups. The experimental group was provided with age appropriate intervention on the aspects of home environment. The infants in both the groups were pre tested and post tested through a modified version of Bradley and Caldwell's HOME inventory. Results showed significant impact of intervention on the home environment scores of infants belonging to experimental group.

## INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the period of rapid growth and development and is said to be the golden age for the building of personality. These years are said to be of critical importance from the point of view of the whole child in the sense that the fundamental needs of the child should be amply satisfied for his/ her overall development. During formative years, the foundation of child's personality, behaviour patterns attitudes towards others and self are laid.

Home occupies the first and the most significant place for the development of the child. Inadequate home environment is likely to cripple the personality of child from the point of his/her abilities and behaviour adjustments. The nature of the environment provides the necessary sensory inputs, stimulation and experimental basis for the development of perceptual skills and cognitive skills. A study by Bradley and Caldwell (1989) revealed that measures of specific aspects of the child's home environment such as parental responsively and availability of stimulating play mat were more strongly related to child's development status than global measures of environment quality.

Dearth of resources lack of awareness, ignorance and illiteracy are prevalent in weaker sections of rural population. Proper opportunities are not available to rural children for developing their potentials to the maximum. Providing them activities through intervention programs based on preplanned activities using indigenously available and low cost materials can enhance the potentials of rural infants. Parents can play vital roles in improving their child's potentialities by correctly adopting intervention packages and making use of them. In light of the above, the present study intends to assess the importance and impact of a comprehensive intervention programme in relation to levels of home environment of rural infants.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Panchrukhi block of Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The sample consisted of 60 rural male infants of age group seven to 12 months, 30 as experimental and 30 as control group. Home environment was assessed by Home Observation for Measurement of Environment (HOME) by Caldwell and Bradley (1984) to measure the quality of stimulation and support available to children.

Intervention related to providing suitable home environment was given to mothers of infants in experimental group for six months. Intervention was provided through lectures, discussions and demonstrations to the mothers in experimental group. Testing was done prior to the period of giving intervention and after six months of providing age appropriate knowledge of home environment. Data were analysed thorough means and percentages and t-test seeing the impact of intervention

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Congenial home environment, good nutrition

**Table 1: Mean scores on home environment of infants in experimental and control groups**

| *Age (in months)* | *Pretest* | | | *Post test* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Experimental group* | *Control group* | *t- value* | *Experimental group* | *Control group* | *t- value* |
| 7-8 | 62.6(2.3) | 61.8(1.7) | 0.75 | 66.3(3.3) | 62.6 (1.1) | 2.52 * |
| 9-10 | 62.1(2.1) | 62.6(1.9) | 0.46 | 67.1(3.8) | 63.3 (1.4) | 2.78 * |
| 11-12 | 62.2(1.7) | 63.0(2.1) | 0.87 | 65.8(1.9) | 62.4 (1.9) | 3.72 ** |

(Figures in parenthesis indicate standard deviation)
(* Significant at 5 % level, ** Significant at 1 % level)

**Table 2: Description of items regarding home inventory**

| *Items of Home Inventory* | *Pretest* | | *Posttest* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Experimental group N (%)* | *Control group N (%)* | *Experimental group N (%)* | *Control group N (%)* |
| Safe play environment of child | 23 (76.7) | 27 (90) | 29 (96.7) | 29 (96.7) |
| Provision of play materials like soft toys | 10 (33.3) | 10 (33.3) | 19 (63.3) | 11 (36.7) |
| Provision of play materials like stroller or walker, kiddy car or tricycle | 9 (33.0) | 11 (36.7) | 15 (50) | 12 (40) |
| Provision of simple eye hand coordination toys like blocks | 6 (20) | 5 (16.7) | 12 (40) | 6 (20) |
| Provision of toys that challenge child to develop new skills | 22 (66.7) | 17 (56.7) | 27 (90) | 12 (40) |
| Father's active involvement in play | 24 (80) | 25 (83.3) | 30 (100) | 23 (76.7) |
| Provision of toys for mental act like drawing /crayons | 3 (10) | 2(6.7) | 9 (30) | 5 (16.7) |

and educational material are needed for development of cognitive skills. Keeping in view the importance of intervention in the early years, the present research was carried out.

It can be seen from Table1, that during pretesting, the mean scores of infants in experimental and control group were almost similar and no significant difference was observed between the groups. After post intervention evaluation the mean scores of infants of experimental group enhanced remarkably for infants. The possible explanation to this increase is that sufficient knowledge and stimulus was provided to the parents and usefulness of a good home environment was emphasized time and again. Contrary to the above, the mean values of control group during post testing did not differ much in comparison to their pre testing values. A significant difference was obtained between the mean values of experimental and control group during post testing. Barrera et al. (1986) also found that early intervention with parents was effective in modifying some aspects of home environment and parent infant interaction. The intervention provided to the mothers of experimental group of infants left behind a definitely positive impact on the home environment of infants. These findings are in conformity with that of Anupama (1998) and Shubhangna et al. (2002) who found that the quality of home environment significantly as a result of intervention provided to mothers. Benasich and Books- Gunn (1996) found the effect of maternal knowledge of child development and concepts of maternal knowledge of child rearing on the quality of home environment and on child's cognitive and behaviour outcomes. Measures of maternal knowledge were found to be significantly associated with quality of home environment

The study also revealed that about 76.7 percent (which increased to 96.7%) infants in experimental group had safe play environment. Besides, in the control group, less change was observed about this aspect. (Table 2) When intervention was imparted to the experimental group of mothers during post-testing a considerable the change was observed in the items of home environment. Thus more parents brought number of soft toys, picture completion books, drawings and crayons. Further, during post-testing an increased number of infants possessed simple eye-hand coordination toys like blocks as compared to pretesting scores A study by Caldera (1989) revealed that blocks elicit relatively high levels of aggression and solitary

play. Fathers belonging to experimental group of infants actively involved themselves in the play of their infants as compared to the less percentage of involvement of fathers during pre-testing. The importance of fathers involvement in child-care, play and other activities has been emphasized by many researchers. (Ninio and Rinott, 1988; Levy- Shiff et al., 1998 and Black et al., 1999)

## CONCLUSION

The variables of home environment have great impact on the development of infants. The intervention was imparted to the mothers with special emphasis on care giving and problem solving, importance of age- appropriate play materials, provision of stimulating home environment etc. The parents were motivated, encouraged, became more responsive and started participating in various aspects of children's activities. Thus it can be concluded that intervention had a definite impact in improving the quality of home environment of infants.

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