UNIT 1 THE EXPERIENCE OF CHILDHOOD

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Can you recollect some of the incidents of your childhood and your thoughts and feelings as a child? Some happenings stand out in one’s memory, others are hazy and some are forgotten. This Unit aims to recapture some of the experiences and feelings of a child. There are many similarities among children, but each child’s experience of childhood is a different one. An understanding about children helps in interacting with them and is basic to organizing services and programmes for them.

Objectives

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:
• describe some experiences and characteristics common to children studying
• discuss how different socio-cultural settings influence the experience of childhood

1.2 BEING A CHILD

Mala, an active five year old girl, is served roti and potato curry for lunch. The curry has rai seeds in it. During the course of the meal she sees a rai seed, takes it out of the bowl and starts to play with it. She puts it on the table, moves it about, and says, “Look, mummy, this is a tiny ball. I wonder if the ants play with this ball!”

Three year old Manoj, to his amazement, sees that there is now an infant brother in the house with whom he has to share his parents’ love and attention. He does not like the situation very much, but he tries to accept his brother and be friendly with him. One day, when the mother was late in getting ready because of the baby, Manoj remarked vehemently, “Mummy, let’s give the baby away, then we will not be late.”

Tara is going to be four. She enjoys playing in the rain as most children do. One rainy day, she was playing outside and the members of the family were sitting together in a room. After every few minutes Tara would come laughing into the room, hug her aunt and go out again to continue her play. On being invited to sit with the rest she would protest, “No, no! I want to play outside.” This continued for quite some time.

These anecdotes reveal the feelings and playfulness characteristic of children. It is only a child who can see a ball in a rai seed or pretend that a ball of mud is a piece of cake and a tin box is a toy house. Make-believe comes easily to them and they endow objects with qualities they do not actually have, just as Mala did. In the second anecdote it is reflected the reaction of the child to the birth of a sibling which is ambivalent and may range from jealousy and dislike to joyful acceptance. The third anecdote reflects the child’s early steps towards being on her own. She is realizing that she can do things by herself and does not always need to have the protection of adults. However, while she is
learning to be independent, she needs to reassure herself of the presence of loved and trusted persons. This she does by coming inside now and then.

Views that adults have about children’s capacities may not always be right. It is often assumed that a child does not know what is happening around her and cannot make sense of events. This is not true. It is also felt that children begin to think and understand when they begin to speak. But we do know that infants understand many words before that period. Some people expect children to run errands, look after themselves and start attending school without emotional or other support from adults. On the other hand, some think that children are immature, irrational, inaccurate in their understanding of events and therefore, cannot do any task given to them. Adults sometimes wrongly believe that nothing of consequence happens during childhood.

Children have thoughts and emotions just as adults do, though they view the world in a different way and their ways of expressing feelings are also different. A newborn can sense feelings of love and affection by the way the parents hold her and look after her needs. An eight month old child is able to comprehend a scolding or an endearment even though she is not able to talk. She also understands and responds to sentences like, “Give it to me” and “No, don’t do that.” If a game of peek-a-boo is played with a 10 month old child, she participates in the game by looking for the person and anticipating her appearance. This reflects that the child is thinking. Achievements such as these may seem very simple, but you have only to observe a child who has just learnt to walk to see how gleefully she walks around the house for the pleasure of it and how she picks herself up again after falling down. Notice how she takes a few bold
steps and then looks back at the mother for reassurance. You would have observed many instances where the child is learning and developing. Do they not bring forth a picture of children as intelligent beings and of childhood as a valuable time for learning? Childhood is also a period when the child learns to form relationships with people—first with parents, then with the wider family circle and later with other adults and children. This requires considerable courage and confidence. Imagine what you would feel if you shifted to a new town and had to make friends with new people.

Children are keen to explore the world and are untiringly curious. Exploration and questioning are the ways through which children learn. It is often difficult to make a child sit still for even five minutes. They like to examine things and objects around them. A new object is thumped, squeezed, banged, licked and often dismantled in an attempt to examine it. Notice the rapt look on the child’s face as she does so! Any new event or experience brings forth a stream of “why?”, “how?” and “when?” so that the child’s questions often tax the adult’s patience.

Children are fascinated by the adult world. Their desire is to be like adults in many ways and to grow up as quickly as possible. They imitate the adults and pretend to be like them by wearing their clothes and trying to talk and act like them. Some of the games of children such as “Doctor-Doctor” and “Police-Thief” reflect their imitation of the activities of adults.

All is not fun and play in childhood, as many adults tend to think. Children also learn that many things are forbidden—they must not touch something, they must not hit other children, they must stop playing after a specific time and so on. Many of the instructions they are required to follow seem unreasonable to them. There often follows a battle of wills between the parents and children. Learning to obey a rule is sometimes painful because it prevents children from doing what they want to do. During the period of childhood they also learn the ways of eating, dressing, talking and behaving considered appropriate in their society and culture.

Children from diverse backgrounds, regions and countries are similar in many ways. Many experiences of childhood are universal and an inevitable part of growing up. However, childhood has a different meaning for every child. In the next Section you will read what makes childhood a different experience for each child.
Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) From your experiences and recollections note down an example of one of the following in the space provided below.
   a) Children’s curiosity
   b) Children’s imitation of adults

1.3 THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT OF CHILDHOOD

Normally, all children learn to speak a language during the course of growing up. A two year old in India learns to speak her own language while a child in Spain learns Spanish. One boy at the age of five begins going to a school; another of the same age in a tribal settlement helps his father in farming and milking the buffalo; yet another is adept at moving through the traffic on the roads to sell newspaper. The number of people in the family, the customs, traditions, values and beliefs of the family and community, economic status, residence in a village, a city, or a tribal settlement, whether in the hills, plains, deserts or sea coast—these are some of the factors that influence childhood experiences. Thus the society one lives in determines one’s experience of childhood. This is what is meant by the socio-cultural context of childhood.

Though we can speak broadly of the Indian culture and the values therein, the customs, beliefs and the way of life of people differ from one group to another. One cannot speak of a homogeneous or uniform Indian culture but rather of sub-cultural groups, each distinct from the other. This is because the groups differ with regard to economic level, education, occupation, region, language and religion. The child’s experiences and what she learns during this period would be different in each of these groups. You will now read about the many factors that bring about variations in children’s experiences.

1.3.1 Gender

A major factor which determines a child’s experience is whether the child is a boy or a girl. How one is brought up, the opportunities available to one and the way people interact with one are determined to a great extent by one’s gender. An obvious difference is in the clothes worn. Less visible but more far reaching in its impact is the differing attitude towards boys and girls. There is no doubt that in most parts of our country boys are given more importance than girls. The birth of a boy is an occasion for rejoicing while, in many cases, the birth of a girl reduces the parents’ tears. In many families girls may receive very little parental love, attention or care. They may get a lesser share of food, clothing and other resources compared to boys. In some families, when a girl falls ill it is treated casually but the boy’s illness gets prompt attention. Education is considered more important for boys than for girls. Parents often sell their assets to educate their sons and marry their daughters.

Different values and behaviours are inculcated in boys and girls. In most matters the code of conduct for girls is more strict. Boys are encouraged to be assertive, independent and ambitious. Girls are expected to be efficient in household tasks, obedient and respectful. Decision making ability is not encouraged in girls and they are scolded if they argue too
much, laugh openly or talk loudly. The girl is treated as if she were a temporary person in her own house and socialization is intended to prepare her for marriage.

The above discussion, however, only brings out a general trend. All girls are not neglected and unloved. How girls are treated is determined to a great extent by the attitude of the family members. A family which does not discriminate between boys and girls would treat them equally. Economic well being of the family is another factor that influences the attitude of parents towards girls and boys. The next Section discusses how social class brings about differences in the experiences of children.

1.3.2 Social Class

The social class to which a person belongs is determined by her education, occupation and family's income. People belonging to the upper social class have high incomes and live in big houses. Lower social class is associated with a marginal income, often close to poverty, low levels of education and smaller dwellings. Between the rich and the poor there are several levels of socio-economic status. The social class to which a child belongs will determine the opportunities and facilities available to her. Whether she gets enough to eat and wear, whether she receives formal education and whether she is equipped for a vocation will depend upon the family's socio-economic status. This also determines the living space and availability of facilities such as water and electricity.

Families of the Lower Social Class: A family belonging to the lower social class does not have enough money to buy all the necessities of life. Children may not get adequate food and clothes. Since resources are scarce, girls get a lesser share. Houses are usually one or two room shelters shared by the entire family. Children live in crowded quarters.
In slums and crowded dwellings the surroundings may be dirty and unhygienic which may lead to infections and diseases. Many of the needs and desires of the children in a poor family remain unfulfilled. Extreme poverty compounds these problems. In such cases, children may not get one square meal a day and lacking shelter they sleep on the roadside, railway stations etc.

In a poor family children have to shoulder responsibilities at an early age. You must have seen girls barely four or five years old assisting the mother in household tasks such as fetching water, collecting firewood, preparing meals and running errands. Boys help the father in his occupation—they guard cattle, help in the fields, accompany him in the boat and assist him in crafts such as carpentry or pottery. Besides assisting the parents in household work, many children move out of the protective shelter of the house to earn and supplement the family income. They work as domestic servants, cleaners, vendors or ragpickers. A major responsibility of the young girls is to manage the home and look after younger children when both the parents go out to work. Alternatively, the mother takes the children along with her to her place of work which may be a house, a field or a construction site. The infant lies in a makeshift cradle throughout the day with occasional interaction with the mother. When a little older she may roam around the worksite playing with whatever she can find. Since both parents are working, the time they spend with their children gets reduced.

Education obviously falls low in priority in such a set up, particularly in the case of girls. Parents on the survival level do not consider schooling a necessity. Children are either needed to assist the parents in their work or to earn money. Despite this, many children of lower social class may attend school if it is possible to do so. In this way they combine work and education.

Working in the fields—learning as well as playing

Responsibility and deprivation, which the children from lower social class have to face, may accelerate emotional maturity. In many ways the child becomes worldly wise. At a young age she learns to fend for herself. She learns to demand the right price for the fruit that she is selling. She may board a train from a remote village and come to the
Childhood for most children belonging to the lower social class is full of cares and responsibilities. However, this does not mean that they have no pleasant experiences. Amidst their work children do play. Their play materials are stones, twigs and empty boxes. They play in the streets, in the fields, near the coast with the sand and with water. Frequently there is warmth, love and nurturance from the parents. Children are valued for their contribution to the family income. However, life is harder for such a child than for one who belongs to an economically well-off family.

Families of the Middle and High Social Class: Families belonging to the middle and high social class are well-off and children do not lack the basic necessities of life. Both boys and girls get adequate amounts of food and clothing and do not generally suffer lack of health care. Most of the families can purchase play material for children from the market such as dolls, guns, puzzle sets, drawing books, colours and books. Children do not need to take part in economic activities early in life. Whether they assist in day-to-day chores depends on the family. If there is a hired help, as in the case of well-off families, children may not assist in household tasks. In a rich family the child has more luxuries. She does not need to take a bus to go to school since she will be taken by car. The child usually has more clothes, expensive play material and may get a variety of foods to eat.

Education is considered to be of primary importance and in a sense the child's sole task is to do well in school. In general, education is valued equally for boys and girls. However, there is some evidence that boys get preference in this regard. In the cities and towns there is immense pressure on the children to do well in academic work. Often rigorous tutoring of the child begins from the tender age of three in order to get her admission in a school. For most children the day is spent in going to school, doing homework and playing.

Ideally education is expected to foster independence, clarity of thought and assertiveness. With the changing values in our society these traits are being encouraged. But an ambivalence in the attitude towards girls is still apparent. While encouraging girls to pursue education, parents still expect them to be subservient. They scold the girl for being outspoken and aggressive, pointing out that these traits will not help her to adjust to her future roles.

Economic well-being makes childhood a period where the child can make use of opportunities available to her without worrying about everyday problems.

Child Labour: You have just read that some children assist the parents in the work at home or in the family's occupation or work as wage earners. When children work at home or in the family occupation, their needs are looked after and there is love from parents. There is some time for play and recreation. The work experience in the family may be rewarding and children will acquire skills which will help them to take up a vocation. Such involvement of children in economic activities is called child work, to be differentiated from child labour about which you will now read.

Some children work under unhealthy, difficult and exploitative conditions where the wages they receive are not adequate and where the jobs they do are dangerous. The drudgery of their work does not allow any time for play or schooling. The jobs which children do are usually unskilled and do not prepare them for a vocation for later life. Their work experiences thus become a hindrance to their development. In many small scale and domestic industries children are employed as labour. Some of the industries where child labour is prevalent are match manufacturing in Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu; slate pencil making in Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh; embroidery in Jammu & Kashmir; and lock industry in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Besides working as labour in industries, children are employed as domestic help, cleaners or mechanics. They work long hours at back breaking jobs for scanty wages.

Let us examine the situation of children in the lock industry of Aligarh. Children start working at the ages of six or seven in this industry. An average working day is between 12 and 14 hours. Some children work for 18 to 20 hours at a stretch. When they get tired they take a nap or have some tea. The working conditions are unhealthy with ill ventilated and overcrowded rooms. The wages are very low and the operations hazardous. Electroplating, handpresses, spray painting and polishing on buffing machines are the most dangerous jobs in the industry and 50 to 70 per cent of this
work is done by children. Electroplating, for example, requires children to dip metal in acid and alkaline solutions. The chemicals used in this are dangerous—potassium cyanide, hydrochloric and chromic acid, sodium hydroxide etc. Children work without aprons or gloves and their hands are immersed in these solutions for a major part of the day. This is very harmful for their health. Electric shocks are frequent. Within a matter of six to seven years, that is by the time the children are 13 or 14 years old, they suffer from chest diseases, skin allergy or cancer.

This specific case of the lock industry of Aligarh illustrates the extreme hardships that can be a part of childhood for some children. However, childhood is not such a harsh experience for everyone. Children usually find opportunities for play and the development of skills relevant to their own situations.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) From your reading and general observation in your family or neighbourhood, write about the following in the space provided below.

a) Reaction of parents to:

i) birth of a son

ii) birth of a daughter

b) Differences in the school attendance of boys and girls of lower social class.

c) The kind of tasks children do in the home to help the family.

2) Explain the term 'Child Labour'.

1.3.3 Religion

Religion lays down the rules, values and codes of conduct for day-to-day living. It provides guidelines for relating to people. All religions view children as tender, precious and valuable and childhood as a time for learning. The variation in children’s experiences due to religion may be because of the specific rituals of the mode of worship. Most religions have certain rituals to mark the different stages in the life of an individual. These vary from one religion to another. Among Hindus some of the rituals are: ‘namakaran’—naming the child, ‘annaprashana’—the first semi-solid food given to the child, ‘mundan’—the first shaving of the hair, ‘vidya-aarumbh’—introductions to the alphabets. Some Christian rituals are baptism and first communion. Among Muslims, saying namaz along with adults is a religious duty. However, with the changes in society there is not such a strict adherence to these rituals in many families. Signs of respect for sacred places and objects are taught early in all religions.

1.3.4 Family Structure and Interrelationships

The way in which the family members interact with the child, the number of people in the household and the relationship of the child to these people influence her experiences. In a family where there are members other than the child’s parents, the child has many people to look after her. If the mother is too busy to attend to the child and play with her, there is the grandmother, the aunt, the older children and the other members. The child forms emotional bonds with many. On the contrary, in a smaller family unit which comprises parents and their one or two children, the child’s caregivers are the parents and for a large part of the day only the mother. If the mother has nobody to help her with the housework, she leaves the child in a safe place in the house with some play material while she finishes her work. The child is by herself for this duration. If the child is around two to three years of age, the mother may involve the child in a game while doing her work. For example, while chopping vegetables, she may ask her to pass them one by one to her. Children delight in doing such things. If the mother has a hired help at home, she will have more time for the child.

In some families where both the parents are working, the child is left in a creche or in the house with a hired help or an older child. Sometimes she is taken to the place of work by the mother. Spending the day in a creche in the care of an adult, who has to look after other children also, would be a different experience altogether. When both parents are working, they have less time to spend with children. On days when they are too tired, they may not be able to give the child adequate attention. However, it is ultimately the quality of time spent together which matters more than the quantity. By quality of time is meant the nature of interaction between the caregiver and the child. A person looking after a child may spend an entire day with her but fail to take any interest in the child. She may not converse and play with her or answer her questions adequately. In other words, she may neglect the child. Adult’s responsiveness makes the child feel wanted and loved. Therefore, the amount of time spent with the child cannot, by itself, be a measure of caring. Even in a short period of time the caregiver can have a meaningful interaction with the child, fulfill her needs and give attention to her.

In some cases the father of the child may have migrated to the city, leaving the mother totally responsible for the family. Occasionally, because of desertion or widowhood the mother is the sole parent. She has, therefore, to take responsibility for earning a living as well as for child care. In such a situation the child learns to be on her own. The child may miss the parent who is absent and may feel different from others because of this. The loss of one of the parents may have negative effects on the child but the extent will depend on the presence of other family members.
1.3.5 Ecological Contexts

Ecology refers to the physical environment that a person lives in. It includes the geographical location, the vegetation, the type of animals and the natural resources. Ecology could also be defined in terms of the type of facilities available such as roads, hospitals, schools and electricity. Ecology determines the type of food eaten, clothing, occupation and the division of tasks and responsibilities between men and women.

Rural, urban and tribal areas are different in their environment. Hills, plains, deserts and coastal areas are also ecologically different from each other. The child learns those skills that will help her to survive in her own setting. A child living in a village in the hills where rearing sheep is the main occupation takes the sheep for grazing and brings them back. She also learns to shear them and prepare wool from the fleece. A child living in a village in a coastal area learns to swim, row a boat, make a bait for the fish, clean the fish and so forth. Living in a desert area the child may feed a camel and learn to find her way across the sand dunes with ease. In this Unit, the different geographical regions have been clubbed as rural, urban and tribal. There are certain aspects which characterize a rural community whether it is near the coast, in the hills or in the desert and which make it different from a tribal or an urban set up. The following discussion is based on these lines.

Living in a City (Urban Area): What would be the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of a city? A city has a large population. It is a place of contrasts. There are the rich who can afford everything and the poor who have to work hard for a living. Adjoining big and palatial houses we find slums. While a five year old of a high income group goes to a school, another child of the same age earns a living by performing as an acrobat.

There are hospitals, hotels, schools, cinemas, electronic gadgets, different modes of transport and many other facilities in the cities. Those who have the means can buy the best of everything but there are goods to suit every section of the population. How a child lives, what facilities she can make use of and how she spends her day will be determined by the social class to which she belongs and the values of her family. In a slum, for example, the living conditions are such that the child knows what is happening next door. There is plenty of interaction. The child grows up with numerous playmates.
On the other hand, people of the higher income groups with their more private and bigger dwellings can choose whether to interact with one's neighbours or not. In such a case, if the child is the only child she may not have any friends until the time she goes to school. But what all children living in a city have in common is the fast pace of life as people rush about on their own business.

Living in a Village (Rural Area): What distinguishes a village from a city is that it has a smaller population. Most of the people may know others in a small village. There are fewer facilities such as transport, hospitals, cinemas, schools or pucca roads. The pace of life is slower. The boundaries between the family and the caste group are not rigid. Consequently, the child may spend a considerable part of her day in other houses and she grows up with many playmates.

The children, by and large, follow the occupation of the parents which may be farming or a craft such as pottery or carpet weaving. They would spend a considerable portion of the day assisting the parents in their work. Again the extent to which the children assist depends on the economic situation of the family. If the family is poor, all hands are needed to work. If the family is relatively well-off, the children have time to attend school and may assist the parents on holidays. With changing values education is beginning to assume importance in the rural areas. Parents, when they can afford it, send their children to school and hope to impart at least primary education to girls.

Fewer hospitals and qualified medical persons mean more unattended illnesses. If there is no school near the village most children would be without formal education. Inadequate transportation implies that the child does not get to travel and know the world outside the village, while for a child in the city the newspapers, magazines, cinemas, television and a variety of books increase the range of information. There are differences in the type of tasks that a child from a rural area can do as compared to a child in an urban set up. A three year old child is: the city is surprised to learn that buffaloes give milk, because she had thought that milk comes from bottles in the milk booth, whereas the three year old in the village sees a buffalo being milked every day. The child in the city can speak confidently of aeroplanes, computers and cars. The child in the village may not have this information but would be able to identify a plant from its leaves and knows how plants are grown.

Despite the similarities in rural life, the picture of the villages is a varied one. Villages which are closer to the cities and those with industrial units such as factories or other production units have better equipped hospitals and schools and there is some transportation. Radios and the expanding television network has brought the outer world into the villages. People give up their family occupation and commute to the cities for better paid jobs. Education for girls assumes importance and in many cases children may be attending a school in the city. On the other hand there are remote villages as the example of Bhaiya village in Rajasthan will show. The nearest primary health centre is 60 kms away and the only hospital is 150 kms away in Jaisalmer. The nearest primary school is 50 kms away in Deora. The nearest bus stop is 20 kms away. As you can see, the contrasts in experience in the different ecological settings are many.

Living in a Tribal Settlement: There are many tribes in India, each with its distinct customs, laws, kinds of occupation and the roles and responsibilities of men and women. There is a great variety of tribal experience. Some tribes in the vicinity of cities and towns have contact with them and have been integrated into the mainstream of life. Some tribes live in near isolation from the rest of the world with minimal or no contact with people outside the tribe. These tribes are almost totally self sufficient, depending on the outside world for only a few things. In such a setting the child grows up believing that the way of life of the tribe is the only way. Let us briefly read about one such tribe.

Among the Hill Marias, one of the most isolated tribes living in the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, shifting agriculture is the means of subsistence. The entire village shifts from a site once every two or three years. The land is generally collectively owned and consequently not much importance is attached to private property. The people depend on the outside world only for salt, chilies and tobacco.
For a tribe, solidarity is of paramount importance and consequently laws, customs and norms are strictly observed. Among Hill Marias premarital sex is permitted while incest is taboo. Child marriages are totally absent. Divorce for both men and women is easy but extra marital sex gets a death penalty. Literacy levels are low and ill health is rampant due to the lack of health facilities.

However, the intervention of the state government and the voluntary agencies has exposed the Hill Marias to the outside world. This has brought about changes in their lifestyle. There is now a hospital, a school, a vocational training centre and a fair price shop. Though the tribals still visit their traditional healer, they also go to the hospital. The school, 30-40 kms away, has attracted many boys and girls and they are doing well. The villages of the tribals, which were inaccessible earlier, have been connected to the district by roads. About hundred tubewells have been sunk and solar energy is being used in some villages. There has been an attempt to change the practice of shifting agriculture to settled agriculture. Food habits have changed too.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

Answer the following questions briefly in the space provided.

1) Following are some statements. Read them carefully and write in the brackets whether they are true or false.

   a) In all religions children are regarded as tender, precious and valuable and childhood as a time for learning. 

      ( )

   b) A child who lives in a family where there are a number of caregivers forms emotional bonds with many.

      ( )

   c) The quality of time spent by the caregiver with the child is more important than the quantity of time.

      ( )

2) List three ways in which the experiences of a child living in a city are different from one who lives in a village.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

3) List three changes that have come about in the lifestyle of the Hill Marias as a result of contact with the outside world.

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

   __________________________________________________________

1.4 SUMMING UP

In this Unit you have read that children have many characteristics in common such as curiosity, desire to explore, playfulness, fantasy, imitation of adults and make-believe. Many of the childhood experiences are universal, yet each child experiences childhood in a different manner because of different socio-cultural settings. One of the factors which
influences the experience of childhood is gender. It determines the way a child is expected to talk, dress, behave as well as the values inculcated in her. Boys are given more importance than girls and this results in discrimination against girls in matters of food, clothing, education and love and attention of parents. This bias gets pronounced when resources are scarce. The social class to which the child belongs determines the facilities and opportunities available to her. For children belonging to the lower social class many basic needs and desires remain unfulfilled. Economic necessity forces the children to take to work at an early age. Children may sometimes be working under hazardous circumstances and may be out of school. Children belonging to the middle and upper social class do not lack the essentials of life and most children attend school. Religion provides values, attitudes and beliefs that outline a code of conduct for the child. The family is the nucleus of the child’s life and has a great influence on her. The type of family the child lives in and the interaction among the family members influence her development. Ecology has an impact on the type of skills and abilities the child acquires. Whether the child lives in a rural, urban or tribal area, near the coast, in the plains, in the hilly regions or desert areas determines her lifestyle to a large extent.

1.5 GLOSSARY

Adept: Skilled
Ambivalent: Having contrasting or mixed feelings about some person, object or event
Casually: Not seriously
Deprivation: Lack of something which the child must have. It could mean lack of food, clothing and other material resources, of love and affection from caregivers or of opportunities to pursue education
Drudgery: Hard and monotonous work
Exploitative Conditions: Conditions which take unfair advantage of a person
Incest: Sexual relations between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by their society to marry
Prompt: Quick, immediate
Rigorous: Very strict and exacting. In this context it means that the child is made to study for long hours and the demands made on her in terms of academic work are not in keeping with her abilities
Subservient: Subordinate, inferior
Taboo: Forbidden or disapproved
Vocation: Profession, occupation

1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) If you find it difficult to recall such anecdotes, you could observe a group of children for some time. It is very likely that their play will reflect their curiosity and imitation of adults, about which you can subsequently write.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) For answering these questions you could speak to your parents, relatives, neighbours or friends to know their feelings about these aspects. You could also answer from your own experience.

2) 'Child labour' is a term used when children work under exploitative conditions. They work under unhealthy conditions on difficult and dangerous jobs. This affects their health. They do not receive adequate wages. The nature of their work does not allow them time for play, recreation or education.
Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1) a) True  
   b) True  
   c) True

2) Any three of the following are correct:
   a) The pace of life is faster in a city.  
   b) There are more goods and facilities in a city. Fewer facilities such as hospitals, transportation and schools in the village will have an effect on the child's life.  
   c) Children living in cities and villages will differ with regard to the type of tasks they can do.  
   d) A village has a small population. The boundaries between the family and the caste group are not rigid. Consequently, the child may spend a considerable part of her day in other houses and has many playmates. In a city it is possible that a family does not interact with the neighbours and if the child is the only child, she may not have any friends.

3) Any three of the following are correct:
   a) Hill Marias have started going to the hospital.  
   b) The earlier inaccessible villages of the tribals have been connected to the district by roads.  
   c) Solar energy is being used in some villages.  
   d) The children have started going to school and there is a vocational training centre.  
   e) There is a fair price shop.  
   f) There is an attempt to change the practice of shifting agriculture to settled agriculture.  
   g) Tubewells have been sunk in some villages.