Section F

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Applicability of Piaget's liquid conservation to Sri Lankan children

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Conservation is defined by Piaget as the recognition that a physical property remains untransformed despite evidence. He did the experiments on conservation of quantities and invariance of wholes and conservation of discontinuous quantities. Piaget developed his theory of cognitive development in a cultural context which is dissimilar to the Sri Lankan context. Nevertheless, the influence of Piaget's cognitive development theory is evident in early childhood education and primary education. Therefore, considering the impact of Piaget's cognitive development theory in the education of Sri Lankan children, applicability of his theories to different cultural contexts would be important. This research was done to evaluate the applicability of the conception of 'liquid conservation' to Sri Lankan children. It used instruments similar to that of Piaget to assess Sri Lankan children's ability on conservation of liquid.

Sixty children from the urban, rural and estates sectors between the ages of 4-8 years were considered as the sample of this study. All the children in these three sectors (100%) in the age range 4-5 years answered wrongly. 95% of children in the estate sector in the age range 5-6 years did not answer correctly. In the age range 6-7 years one child each in the urban sector and the estate sector answered correctly and two children in the rural sector answered correctly. In the age range 7-8 years, two, four, and three children in the urban, rural and estate sectors respectively answered correctly.

Based on the findings it can be concluded that there are no significant difference between the findings of this study and Jean Piaget's findings. Even through Jean Piaget conducted his study with a small sample size his study on liquid conservation concept is applicable in Sri Lanka.

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