CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Educational institutions aspire to cultivate a rational thinking in students, to invoke in them the human values of dignity and progress and to inculcate the attitude of responsibility as citizens of their country. The requisite structural and functional conditions are provided to this end. The social psychological environment of schools and colleges is expected to reflect these goals and values.

Teachers are known to have immense influence on students personality and behaviour in multiple ways. They shape or curb the personality development of children at the school level by providing them the type of training they wish to provide. They are important role models at the college level, from where the students actually step out into real life situation and require lot of inner strength and commitment to be successful when confronted with life's challenging problems.

It is observed that despite the good intentions of policy makers and administrators, the role of teachers while instrumental in imparting these values to the pupils has either remained ignored or nor recognised explicitly. Gammage (1971) pointed out that - "The interaction of the teacher and children is one of the most neglected. To some extent, the type and quality of interaction determines not only the effectiveness of the learning situations but the attitudes, interests and in part even the personality of the pupils."

Some of the large scale studies such as the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) and the later analysis of these data by
Jencks et al. (1972) and others reflected attempts to minimise the contributions teachers make to student achievement since more importance was given to demographic variables, such as socio-economic status. However, later researches on teachers and teaching effects provided evidence that teachers play a central role in affecting student learning (Stallings, 1980; Murname and Phillips, 1981; Hawley and Rosenholtz, 1984; Brophy and Good, 1985).

Several researches have been conducted to identify teacher characteristics which facilitate the development of students as 'total persons'. It has been found that if teachers interact with students in a genuine manner, accept students as persons and emphatically understand them, then the likelihood is that the educational experience will be academically and personally beneficial to students (Roscoe and Peterson, 1982). Similarly, if learning situations are characterised by emotional warmth, respect, success and freedom, then what transpires in these situations will facilitate the intellectual and psychological growth of all involved. To be a truly effective teacher requires that one has considerable knowledge of one's area of study, of oneself, of others and of the dynamics of interacting in meaningful ways. What is needed most, therefore, is a sincere desire and commitment on the part of teachers to be of assistance in helping students to learn.

Hawley and Rosenholtz (1984) have described teaching as "the core technology of formal education". They added that "teachers modify curricula, intentionally or not. They keep the gates through which students must pass to gain access to the learning resources
available. Teachers allocate and manage students' time, set and communicate standards and expectations for student performance and in a multitude of ways enhance or impede what students learn."

An important question that underlies above types of researches and ought to be answered is how do teachers actually exert influence on students and on their learning outcomes. Many of the researchers using leadership theories, such as; Likert (1961), Blake and Mouton (1964), Fiedler (1967), House (1971) emphasized the task and person orientation of teachers in educational set up as sources of influence. A growing body of knowledge during 1970's emphasized the relationship between certain teaching practices and student learning. Flander's (1970) study in this respect has been very inspiring. Flander maintained that depending on the method of teaching teachers could be classified as direct teachers (who lecture in the class and give specific directions to students about their work) and indirect teachers (who put questions to students and permit a lot of student-initiated behaviours). He also found that students taught by indirect teachers learnt more than students taught by direct teachers.

Fisher et al. (1978) and Stallings (1980) found that the major intervening variable between teacher's instructional behaviour and student achievement is academic learning time or the amount of time students spend engaged in academic tasks that they can perform with relatively high rate of success. The particular teaching practices and processes that increase time available for instruction and student engagement in academic work were found
to be classroom management and organisation strategies, instructional strategies and strategies that communicate high expectations for student performance. Rosenshine (1983), and Brophy and Good (1985) identified a pattern of instructional behaviours related to higher levels of student learning. Central to this pattern of instructional behaviour is the concept of interactive teaching, which includes presentation and explanation of new material, questioning sessions and discussions, checking for student understanding and monitoring student seatwork, where the teacher activity moves from student to student providing feedback and reteaching material if necessary.

The above findings might not hold good in certain socio-cultural set ups, however. The importance of socio-cultural values for work has been highlighted in researches in the late seventies onwards. Hofstede (1980) conducted an extensive cross cultural survey on work values in forty countries. Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs collectivism and masculinity vs femininity were observed by him to be the four basic dimensions affecting employee output in different countries. Sinha (1980) analysed the Indian social context and identified four major values which can affect inter-personal interactions in an organisational setting. These are (a) lack of commitment, (b) lack of team orientation, (c) preference for personalized relationship and (d) preference for Aram (rest and relaxation).

Sinha (1980) had conceptualized a particular leadership style which would be effective for people having these work values.
He called it the nurturant task style, which has two main components: concern for task and nurturant orientation. The teacher displaying such a style should want the students to complete their assignments, for which he/she guides and directs them to work hard and maintain a high level of productivity both quantitatively and qualitatively. His/her task orientation is not of a strict disciplinarian, but a person who cares for his/her pupils, takes a personal interest in their well-being and above all is committed to their growth. Such a teacher style is ideally suited to motivate and activate the students in the Indian context.

The above observations, in fact, formed the rationale for the present study. It has been visualised to relate the nurturant task style along with two other teacher styles, that is, authoritarian and participative styles, to student outcomes, such as, intellectual commitment and college adjustment. These student behaviours are considered important because on the face value of these, intellectual commitment or and internalization of academic values may be essential in their becoming good and responsible citizens. College adjustment indicates a student's feeling of competence in manipulating and influencing his environment which may later get reflected in the individual's mental and emotional strength in handling difficult and challenging situations. Such a study may represent and test a process-process model (Barich, 1986) which relates specific process activities of teachers to process behaviours of students.

In the present study, the nurturant task style has been
visualised as an effective teacher style. It is believed that such teachers should combine the positive components of both authoritarian and participative styles and may provide ideal matches for the Indian students who are seen to combine dependency needs and middle class values. The student characteristics as well as the academic environment in which they function are assumed to interact with teacher styles and influence the student outcomes.

Among the student characteristics socio-economic status has been one of the most extensively studied by researchers. The way a family brings up its children is significantly determined by its economic position as well as the education of parents. A number of studies have reported positive relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement of students (Meade, 1981; Owen, 1981; Quraishi and Bhat, 1986). The main argument has been that the parental press for achievement is higher in the middle and higher socio-economic group of families leading to high achievement motivation and other facilitating attitudes and values related to higher education. The economic facilities provided by such families to their offsprings combine to give opportunities for academic excellence.

Academic environment of the college is another very important moderating variable known to affect the relationship between teacher influences and student outcome variables. The college environment is conceptualized not as a mere aggregate of individuals pursuing their individual goals but rather as an organised entity exhibiting shared patterns of beliefs and behaviour. In effect,
the college environment exhibits two major cultures, the official culture of the faculty and administration and the peer culture of the student body. But cultures may impose certain constraints on the students. Many of the requirements of the official culture are formalized into rules and regulations about course selection, degree requirements, class attendance and the like. Similarly, how one should speak, dress and behave towards others in the group are a few standards that emanate from the peer culture. In brief, every educational institution tends to develop a unique character or ethos in terms of its prevalent educational philosophy and standards and the kind of persons it consciously or unconsciously selects, shapes and finally produces as alumni.

A growing body of research strongly suggests that the degree of congruency or fit between the diverse student characteristics and the ability of the institution to respond adequately to those characteristics should lead to increased student satisfaction, academic achievement and personal growth (Walsh, 1978; Huebner, 1980; Lenning, Sauer and Beal, 1980). Lack of such congruency or fit is known to result in many colleges and universities losing a large number of students every year (Beal and Noel, 1980).

The analytical perspective used to understand the fit is directly related to a theoretical concept known as person-environment interaction. Lewin (1936) and Murray (1938) had been the early contributors to the theoretical foundation of such interactionism. The interactionist perspective suggests that the student and the campus shape each other. The importance of various factors
contributing to person-environment interactions in higher education becomes clearer if one assumes that all aspects of behaviour—what one knows, feels and does—may not occur in a vacuum. If an institution operates on the assumption that dissatisfied students are deficient in some way, institutional efforts may at times be aimed at helping students to adjust or accommodate to a deficient campus environment (Banning and Kaiser, 1974). Similar assumptions may be true for students who have very high expectations from their institutions.

Pace (1980) has drawn some generalizations that are helpful in an understanding of the student-institution fit. These are (1) students entering college with highly unrealistic expectations about the environment are more likely to have adjustment problems and are more likely to withdraw than are students who enter with realistic goals and expectations; (2) students who perceive their campus environment as friendly, congenial and supportive are more likely to be satisfied with the college; (3) student interaction with the scholastic press of the institution is directly related to goals for the graduate study, and; (4) when congruency or fit exists between student personality characteristics and institutional characteristics, student objectives are more likely to be achieved. Painter and Painter (1982) indicate that "the right choice will match the student with the college that fits personal abilities and personality with understandable consequences of feelings of gratification. The wrong choice will cause frustration and angry blame fixing by the student and college." The understanding of
student-institution fit, thus, requires the description of three important factors - (1) student characteristics, (2) institutional characteristics and (3) effects of interaction between the two.

A number of studies have shown that colleges as socializing agents influence the normative attitude and values of students (Rossi, 1966; Feldman and Newcomb, 1969; Astin, 1977). This is carried out not only by the institution's structural factors (e.g. organizational size, administrative policies, academic curriculum), but also through interactions with the important agents of socialization (peers, faculty, administration). Together these form the interpersonal environment for the student.

In the above context the role of teachers acquires immense importance. They do not only act as role models, but also as sources of positive influence on intellectual and personal development of students (Wilson et al., 1974, 1975; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1976; Pascarella, 1980). Much of the ferment and unrest experienced by academic institutions all over the world has been explained indeed in terms of the growing impersonalism between faculty and student cultures. As a result, the quality and quantity of student-faculty contacts, both formal and informal, needs to be examined. The personal characteristics of students, as well as, teachers are important in this context. The determinants of student-faculty contacts need to be identified. The way in which teachers interact with the students and influence them are generally termed as teaching styles synonymous to leadership styles. While interacting with the students inside the class or outside
this style of interaction may encourage or discourage the students in coming close to the faculty. An acceptable or encouraging style when identified may help the institution in training the teachers to develop such a style. The complete working of the institution may be reorganised to provide such settings and opportunities for developing teacher-student interaction groups. This may help in developing interpersonal skills, critical thinking, commitment and better adjustment among students.

The present study is proposed as an attempt to identify effective teacher styles which can improve student outcomes. It also undertakes to identify such student and institutional characteristics, which are crucial for facilitating/inhibiting faculty-student interaction processes and thereby in determining student outcomes.