CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Psychology is not just the study of mental weakness and illness, it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best within ourselves. This study is based on positive psychology theory by Seligman and Csikszentmihaly (2008) which states that happiness promotes success across various arenas of human functioning. According to Erez and Isen (2002), inducing positive emotional states in people facilitates flexible, effective problem solving, decision making and evaluation of events. According to positive psychology, it is more important to focus on developing positive characteristics rather than on avoiding or diminishing negative ones such as depression after they have occurred.

1.1 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY:

Positive psychology is a science of positive aspects of human life, such as happiness, wellbeing and flourishing. The term ‘flourishing’ has now become synonymous with the positive psychology movement. Gable and Haidt (2005) explain that positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions. It is that branch of psychology which creates change in the focus of psychology to building positive qualities. Positive Psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing, and an applied approach to optimal functioning. It has also been defined as the study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals, communities and organisations to thrive (Gable & Haidt, 2005, Sheldon & King, 2001). This particular approach focuses on human potentials. In the present era, much emphasis is on the positive resources of human being. Human being can excel at any point in life and live a happy healthy life by emphasizing and enhancing these positive resources or capacities. Even now prevention researchers are focusing on human strengths in mental health disorders because these strengths can act as buffers against mental illness.
1.2 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT AMONG COLLEGE ENTRANTS:

Students in higher educational institutions are viewed as leaders of tomorrow. They have academic success as their major goal. For this goal to be achieved, it requires dedication, sacrifices, self-discipline, motivation and cordial relationship between students and lecturers. Students at this level are saddled with a lot of responsibilities and challenges (Imonikebe, 2009) which may sometimes result in stress. Good mental health is highly essential for them to be able to succeed in their academic pursuit. As academic demands increase and new social relations are established, students become uncertain of their abilities to meet these demands (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001). Difficulties in handling the ensuing stressor often lead to decreased academic performance, increased psychological distress, and negative attitudes toward learning (Dwyer & Cummings, 2001; Salami, 2006). All these invariably pose challenges to the much sought quality in education.

In the transitional period from school to college i.e. as students enter college, they face different challenges in their life. Aside from their academic requirements, they also have different responsibilities brought about by their different life roles. Young adults experience many changes in all aspects of their lives (Schulenberg, Bryant, & O’Malley, 2004). College life is an important stage in young adults’ life since they are about to experience career exploration in preparation for their graduating year.

Transition from school to college is a significant milestone in life of students. It is the beginning of a new life full of excitement, challenges and adjustment in every domain, whether academics or social life. It enriches pupils for a healthy and competent lifestyle. The college experience encourages young people to enhance knowledge, broaden their perspective, think creatively and innovatively, establish and understand the aspects of one's personality, achieve personal growth and establish personal identity (Giovazolias, Karademas, & Kalantzi-Azizi, 2008). On the other hand, university experience is laden with novel, practical, academic as well as social, emotional and psychological difficulties (Leontopoulou, 2006). Some
of the typical problems which students confront are difficulties in coping with new-found independence, developing new social and romantic relationships as well as separation anxiety that may be experienced by being away from one's family, problems with living accommodation, peer pressure and parental expectations, financial worries, health care concerns and coping with the demands of academic work (Halamandaris & Power, 1997). Individuals differ in ways that they deal with these challenges and hence some may show healthy growth while others may face adverse effects of this transition.

1.3 SELF-EFFICACY:

One particular construct that has received considerable interest in the domain of college student adjustment has been self-efficacy or peoples judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. (Bandura, 1986). Research has suggested that self-efficacy is important to not only the academic and social adjustment of students but to their overall wellness and personal adjustment as well (e.g., DeWitz & Walsh, 2002; Gore, 2006; Solberg & Villareal, 1997). Self-efficacy has been found to be related to academic achievement, behaviours and attitudes (Faulkner & Reeves, 2009; Hagger, Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 2001; Yalcinalp, 2005; Schwarzer & Fuchs, 2009; Salami, 2004; Salami & Ogundokun, 2009). It is expected that self-efficacy will be related to students’ behaviours and attitudes.

Self-efficacy is one of the vital concepts in Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory. According to this theory, human’s behaviour is not controlled by external and environmental factors; however, cognitive processes have a determining role in the behaviour (Pajares, F. 2002). Self-efficacy is based on five cognitive processes – symbolizing, forethought, observation, self-regulation and self-reflection. Symbolizing is related to creating a mental image or model in mind. Forethought includes planning on the levels of goals and consequences. Observation links to learn from looking at others behaviour. In self regulation person sets his own goals and standards and later on access his position in relation to his own set standards. Self reflecting processing involves reflection of a person’s own past actions and
their success and failures. According to Bandura's theory, people with high self-efficacy—that is, those who believe they can perform well—are more likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided.

Self-efficacy refers to a person’s belief in his/her ability to organise and execute a required course of action to achieve a desired result (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), Self-Efficacy beliefs constitute the key factor of human agency. Self-efficacy determines an individual’s resiliency to adversity and his/her vulnerability to stress and depression (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino & Pastorelli, 2003). General self-efficacy aims at a broad and stable sense of personal competence to deal effectively with a variety of stressful situations (Adeyemo, 2008; Schwarzer, 1994).

Bandura (1997) conceptualized Self-Efficacy as varying along three dimensions: level, strength, and generality. Level refers to the degree of difficulty of the behaviours or tasks that an individual feels capable of performing. Strength refers to the confidence a person has in his or her performance estimates.Weak Self-Efficacy expectations are easily modified by disconfirming experiences, while strong Self-Efficacy percepts are robust, promoting persistence in the face of obstacles. Generality of Self-Efficacy concerns the range of situations in which an individual considers him or herself to be efficacious (Lent and Hackett, 1987).

In recent years the study of self-efficacy has received increasing attention in the educational field, not only from the teachers’ point of view, but also from the perspective of students. Research suggests that student self-efficacy is an antecedent of motivation and also the future performance of students (Bores-Rangel, Church, Szendre, & Reeves, 1990; Elias, & Loomis, 2004; Pintrich & Schunk, 1995; Muton, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). This finding is congruent with the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986, 1997, 2001), which postulates that the beliefs that people have about themselves are key elements in the exercise of control and personal agency, and in which individuals are viewed both as products and producers of their own environments (Pajares, 1996).
Self-efficacy is defined as “People’s judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy means one’s belief in his ability to complete tasks in specific situations. It influences emotional, behavioural, and thought patterns in different human levels. Self-efficacy or belief-related ability is one of the most powerful characteristics associated with an individual’s motivation, health, flexibility, and capabilities to face difficulties of life (Bandura, 2001). A person with high self-efficacy is less concerned with failures and he is stronger in confronting difficulties (Lee, L., Arthur, A., & Avis, M. 2008). It is important for young youths to have increased belief in their capacity to control one’s environment or self-efficacy since this would pave the way for carrying out task with confidence and belief in oneself which would tend to lead to improved psychological wellbeing.

1.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:

Psychological well-being is the subjective term that has different meanings for different people. Psychological well-being can be defined as – “it is person’s evaluative reaction to his or her life either in terms of life satisfaction or effective balance or to extent to which the psychological well-being resides within the experience of the individual”(Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). It is person’s evaluative reaction to his or her life, either in terms of life satisfaction (Cognitive evaluations) or affective balance or the extent to which the level of positive affect outweighs the level of negative affect in someone’s life (Andrews & Withey,1976; Campbell et al., 1976; Diener, 1984). Psychological well-being is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, and satisfaction with life’s experiences. It may be maintained in adverse circumstances and conversely may be lost in favourable situation. Psychological well-being involves perceived thriving in the face of existing challenges of life, such as pursuing meaningful goals, growing and developing as a person, and establishing quality ties to others (Ryff 1989; Ryff and Keyes 1995; Ryff and Singer 2008). Psychological well-being means a general sense of emotional health as evidenced by high self-esteem and positive relationships with others, and a lack of anxiety, depression, and deviant behavior. As summarised by
(Huppert, 2009), “Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively.”

The field of wellbeing has witnessed the formation of two relatively distinct, yet overlapping, perspectives and paradigms for empirical inquiry into well-being that revolve around two distinct philosophies. The first of these can be broadly labeled hedonism (Kahneman et al 1999) and reflects the view that wellbeing consists of pleasure or happiness. The hedonic view equates well-being with happiness and often is marked as the balance between positive and negative affect (Ryan and Deci, 2001). The second view, both as ancient and as current as the hedonic view, is that well-being consists of more than just happiness. It lies rather in the actualization of human potentials. This view has been called eudaimonism (Waterman 1993), conveying the belief that well-being consists of fulfilling or realizing one’s daimon or true nature. The eudemonic perspective assesses how people are living in relation to their true selves (Waterman, 1993). The two traditions—hedonism and eudaimonism—are founded on distinct views of human nature and of what constitutes a good society. Accordingly, they ask different questions concerning how developmental and social processes relate to well-being, and they implicitly or explicitly prescribe different approaches to the enterprise of living. Psychological well-being is usually conceptualised as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (the eudaimonic perspective) (Deci & Ryan 2008). For more than twenty years, the study of psychological well-being has been guided by two primary conceptions of positive functioning, one concept is traceable to Bradburn’s (1969) seminal work which differentiated between positive and negative affect and defined happiness as the balance between these two. The second conception includes life satisfaction as the key indicator of well-being.

1.5 MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:

The model proposed by Bradburn and Caplovitz (1969) distinguished between positive and negative affect and defined happiness as the balance between
the two. Bradburn’s (1969) classic research on psychological wellbeing marked a move away from the diagnosis of psychiatric cases to the study of psychological reactions of ordinary people in their daily lives. His discussion stemmed from his interest in how individuals coped with the daily difficulties that they faced. Bradburn highlighted how psychological wellbeing (which he also referred to as happiness) was the variable that stands out as being of primary importance. A person’s position on the dimensions of psychological well-being is seen as a resultant of the individual’s position on two independent dimensions – one of positive affect and other of negative affect. The model specifies that an individual will be high in psychological well-being in the degree to which he has an excess of positive over negative affect and will be low in well-being in the degree to which negative affect predominates over positive. This model is similar to older pleasure–pain perspective that view an individual’s happiness or well-being in terms of the degree to which pleasure predominates over pain in his life experiences. This model stems from an empirical base. It was found that two dimensions were independent of one another. An individual’s score on negative affect dimension can be predicted from any of his score on the positive affect dimension and vice versa. These two magnitude were related to the overall ratings of well-being. According to this model, two dimensions were correlated with different variables. It was found that variables which related to the presence or absence of positive affect had no relationship to the presence or absence of the negative affect. In the same manner, the variables which were related to the presence or absence of negative affect had a similar lack of association to positive affect. There is a series of forces whose presence is related to the presence of positive affect but whose forces merely result in a lowering or absence of positive affect rather than any change in negative affect. Similar forces are available for negative affect. An individual’s overall sense of well-being is dependent on the relative balance of these two sets of forces. The best predictor of overall self-rating was the discrepancy between the two scores: the greater the excess of positive over negative affect, the higher the overall rating of psychological well-being. The important point is that cycle of positive affect goes on independently than that of the cycle of negative affect. Negative affect appears to be
related primarily to the variables that have been dealt with by traditional ‘mental illness’ approaches such as trauma, adjustment problems, anxiety, etc. Positive affect appears to be related to a series of factors concerning the degree to which an individual is involved in the environment around him such as social interaction, closeness to family members and friends, life experiences, etc. We can expect that factors affecting both positive and negative experiences are continually changing and that one’s sense of well-being at any particular time is an average of the relative strength of positive and negative affect over the recent past. So the concentration on both the factors related to positive and negative affects help in understanding the basic phenomenon of psychological well-being. His model specified that an individual will be high in psychological well-being in the degree to which he has an excess of positive over negative affect and will be low in well-being in the degree to which negative affect predominates over positive (Bradburn, 1969).

1.6 MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING:

Carol Ryff (1989) proposed a multidimensional model of psychological well-being. This model explains six psychological dimensions of challenged thriving. It measure six theoretically motivated constructs of psychological well-being: autonomy – independence and self-determination; environmental mastery – the ability to manage one’s life; personal growth – being open to new experiences; positive relations with others – having satisfying high quality relationships; purpose in life – believing that one’s life is meaningful; and self-acceptance – a positive attitude towards oneself and one’s past life.

They are briefly summarized below (detailed descriptions of the characteristics and how they were derived are available in Ryff, 1989) –

**Self-acceptance:** The most recurrent criterion of well-being evident in the previous perspectives is the individual’s sense of self-acceptance. This is defined as a central feature of mental health as well as a characteristic of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity. Life span theories also emphasize acceptance of self and of one’s past life. Thus, holding positive attitudes toward oneself emerges as a
central characteristic of positive psychological functioning. It means to possess a positive attitude toward the self; acknowledges and accepts multiple aspects of self, including good and bad qualities; feels positive about past life. Low scorer of it feels dissatisfied with self; is disappointed with what has occurred with past life; is troubled about certain personal qualities; wishes to be different than what he or she is.

**Positive relations with others:** Many of the preceding theories emphasize the importance of warm, trusting interpersonal relations. The ability to love is viewed as a central component of mental health. Self-actualizers are described as having strong feelings of empathy and affection for all human beings and as being capable of greater love, deeper friendship, and more complete identification with others. Warm relating to others is posed as a criterion of maturity. It means having warm, satisfying, trusting relationships with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy; understands give and take of human relationships. Low score of it indicates to have few close, trusting relationships with others; finds it difficult to be warm, open, and concerned about others; is isolated and frustrated in interpersonal relationships; not willing to make compromises to sustain important ties with others. Thus, the importance of positive relations with others is repeatedly stressed in these conceptions of psychological wellbeing.

**Autonomy:** There is considerable emphasis in the prior literature on such qualities as self-determination, independence, and the regulation of behaviour from within. Self-actualizers, for example, are described as showing autonomous functioning and resistance to enculturation. The fully functioning person is also described as having an internal locus of evaluation, whereby one does not look to others for approval, but evaluates oneself by personal standards. It means self-determining and independent; able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways; regulates behaviour from within; evaluates self by personal standards. Low level of it could lead to concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others; relies on
judgments of others to make important decisions; conforms to social pressures to think and act in certain ways.

**Environmental mastery:** The individual's ability to choose or create environments suitable to his or her psychic conditions is denned as a characteristic of mental health. Maturity is seen to require participation in a significant sphere of activity outside of self. Life span development is also described as requiring the ability to manipulate and control complex environments. These theories emphasize one's ability to advance in the world and change it creatively through physical or mental activities. These combined perspectives suggest that active participation in and mastery of the environment are important ingredients of an integrated framework of positive psychological functioning. It means having a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment; controls complex array of external activities; makes effective use of surrounding opportunities; able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values. Low score of it indicates difficulty managing everyday affairs; feels unable to change or improve surrounding context; is unaware of surrounding opportunities; lacks sense of control over external world.

**Purpose in life:** Mental health is denned to include beliefs that give one the feeling there is purpose in and meaning to life. The definition of maturity also emphasizes a clear comprehension of life's purpose, a sense of directedness, and intentionality. The life span developmental theories refer to a variety of changing purposes or goals in life, such as being productive and creative or achieving emotional integration in later life. Thus, one who functions positively has goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, all of which contribute to the feeling that life is meaningful. It defines goals in life and a sense of directedness; feels there is meaning to present and past life; holds beliefs that give life purpose; has aims and objectives for living. Low score of it can lead to lacks a sense of meaning in life; has few goals or aims, lacks sense of direction; does not see purpose of past life; has no outlook or beliefs that give life meaning.
**Personal growth:** Optimal psychological functioning requires not only that one achieve the prior characteristics, but also that one continue to develop one's potential, to grow and expand as a person. The need to actualize oneself and realize one's potentialities is central to the clinical perspectives on personal growth. Such an individual is continually developing, rather than achieving a fixed state wherein all problems are solved. Life span theories also give explicit emphasis to continued growth and the confronting of new challenges or tasks at different periods of life. It means having a feeling of continued development; sees self as growing and expanding; is open to new experiences; has sense of realizing his or her potential; sees improvement in self and behaviour over time; is changing in ways that reflect more self knowledge and effectiveness. Low score indicates a sense of personal stagnation; lacks sense of improvement or expansion over time; feels bored and uninterested with life; feels unable to develop new attitudes or behaviours.

### 1.7 STUDY HABIT:

Study habits are usually defined as student’s ability to manage time and other resources to complete an academic task successfully. Study habits are, “learned patterns of studying that may occur with or without conscious awareness or deliberate efforts” (Flippo & Caverly, 2000). ‘Study habit’ is the amount and kind of studying routines which the student has used during a regular period of study in a conducive environment. Crede & Kuneel (2008) defined study habit as study routines, including, but not restricted to, frequency of studying sessions, review of material, self testing and rehearsal of learned material and studying in a conducive environment. Study habits are commonly referred to as regular patterns in approaching study tasks. These patterns are made up of a combination of one or more individual tactics or techniques such as note taking (Wade, Trathen & Schraw 1990). When these techniques are used deliberately in particular study situations, they are called study strategies. A study strategy and in turn study habit, is a direct sequence of activities applied by the learner to a set of information rather than a single random event (Kail & bisanz, 1982). Study habits typically denotes degree to which students engages in regular acts of studying that are characterized by
appropriate studying retains (review or material) occurring in an environment that is conducive to studying.

Study habits refer to the activities carried out by learners during the learning process of improving learning. Study habits are intended to elicit and guide one's cognitive processes during learning. Azikiwe (1998) describes study habits as “the adopted way and manner a student plans his private reading, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject”. According to her, “good study habits are good asset to learners because habits helps students to attain mastery in areas of specialization and ensuing excellent performance, while the opposite becomes constraint to learning & achievement leading to failure”. Study skills and study habits have been distinctly differentiated in the recent years. Bliss & Mueller (1987) were among the first to note that the difference lies in distinguishing between potential and actual behaviour. This distinction is elaborated as:-

Study skills: Study skills are usually steps or procedures such as highlighting, outlining, note-taking, summarizing etc. that may be taught through explicit instruction (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002). Study skills are the specific techniques that make up the study plan.

Study habits/behaviours: A study behaviour by contrast constitutes the overall approach itself, representing the student’s concept of how to accomplish learning goals and the specific actions taken (Jones, Slate, Perez & Marini, 1996). A good example might be, a student first deciding to study every night and then employing a combination of mnemonics for memorizing key terms, skimming text material to ascertain organizational patterns and jotting down answers to possible exam questions (Woolfolk, 2004); an optimum strategic combination of skills and violations. The elements of study habits include, for examples study time planning, frequency of studying, duration of studying and choice and application of appropriate study skills.
Study Habit is considered as one of the important psychological factors that influence the achievement level of an individual in learning. It is the habitual practice one uses to help them study and learn. Good study habits can help students achieve and/or maintain good grades. Good study habit is considered as one of the predominant factors affecting the achievement of the students. It is necessary to determine such study habits among students to understand and guide them better so that they can become mature citizens and are able to face the challenges of life.

The goal of this study is an attempt to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being; and determine whether both has an influence on study habits among the first year college students of Guwahati. Although number of related research have been done or are ongoing around the world, little is known about the youth of Guwahati which is the premier city of North-East India in South-East Asia. It is important to mention that the present research was carried out in an unexplored area in Indian context.

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

Research has suggested that human being can excel at any point in life and live a healthy life by emphasizing and enhancing positive resources or capacities. Positive elements may play important role too among students. Students are viewed as leaders of tomorrow. They have academic success as their major goal. They need good mental health to be able to succeed in their academic pursuit. In this study, an attempt is being made to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being (positive elements); and determine whether both has an influence on study habits among the college entrants with respect to gender; general and professional course; and working and non-working status of mothers. The study is confined only to the first year college students (college entrants) as the transition from school to college is a significant milestone in life of students. As students enter college, they face different challenges in their life. Aside from their academic requirements, they also have different responsibilities brought about by their different life roles. Researchers have identified gender differences in a variety of fields such as mental health, cognitive abilities and personality. So an attempt has
been made to examine whether there exists any difference between male and female students. The study also endeavours to find out if there exist any difference between general course students and professional course students. Again in the present scenario women employment rate has increased very rapidly over the last several years. Today women from all corners have started working in various organizations and the entry of women in the workforce has brought changes in the structure and function of families. Every member of the family occupies a vital position in the interaction map of the child but among them the role of mother is important and varied. Mother plays important role in the personality development of the children by shaping their intellectual and social behaviour. Therefore, effort has also been made to study whether there exists any difference in the results among students having working or non-working mothers.

1.9 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Thus, the present research has been undertaken to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between self-efficacy, psychological well-being and study habits?
2. Can study habit be predicted from self-efficacy and psychological well-being?
3. Do self-efficacy, psychological well-being and study habit differ with gender, type of course and working or non-working status of mothers?

1.10 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

To investigate into these research questions, the main aim of the present study was envisaged to find out the relationship between the Self-efficacy, Psychological Well-being and Study Habits of first year college students with respect to (i) Gender (ii) General and professional course and (iii) Working and non-working status of mothers.
In the present study the following objectives have been formulated for verification:

- To find out the level of Self-efficacy, Psychological wellbeing and Study Habits of male and female first year college students.
- To find out the level of Self-efficacy, Psychological wellbeing and Study Habits of first year college students based on general and professional course.
- To find out the level of Self-efficacy, Psychological wellbeing and Study Habits of first year college students based on the working and non-working status of mothers.
- To find out the level of Self-efficacy, Psychological wellbeing and Study Habits of first year college students when course, gender and working status of mother interact.
- To find out whether there is any relationship between Self-efficacy, Psychological wellbeing and Study Habits of first year college students.
- To find out the contribution of Self-efficacy and Psychological wellbeing in predicting study habits among the first year college students.

1.11 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

The following hypotheses in the null form were proposed for the present research.

- There will be no difference in self-efficacy level of male and female first year college students.
- There will be no difference in psychological wellbeing level of male and female first year college students.
- There will be no difference in study habits of male and female first year college students.
- There will be no difference in self-efficacy level of first year college students based on general and professional course.
• There will be no difference in psychological wellbeing level of first year college students based on general and professional course.

• There will be no difference in study habits of first year college students based on general and professional course.

• There will be no difference in self-efficacy level of first year college students based on working and non-working status of mothers.

• There will be no difference in psychological wellbeing level of first year college students based on working and non-working status of mothers.

• There will be no difference in study habits of first year college students based on working and non-working status of mothers.

• There will be no difference in the groups of first year college students when course and working status of mother interact.

• There will be no difference in the groups of first year college students when course and gender interact.

• There will be no difference in the groups of first year college students when gender and working status of mother interact.

• There will be no difference in the groups of first year college students when course, gender and working status of mother interact.

• There will be no relationship between self efficacy, psychological wellbeing and study habits of first year college students.