Self concept has been a subject of research in sociology, political science and social psychology for a long time. Such research studies have taken two broad conceptual lines namely (i) Psychological and (ii) Sociological.

Psychological studies of self concept have focused on self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-image, and other such self related phenomena. Such studies are interested more in consequences of self-concept in relation to behaviour. The focus here is on internal cause of behaviour where motivation is one of the main issues. Attention has been focused, in this respect, on self-efficacy motive, self-esteem motive and authenticity/consistency motive. Psychologists have viewed self-concept as 'internal' cause of behaviour (Ross, 1977).

Sociological studies on the other hand, focused on antecedents of self-concepts, such as cultural and social structural variables. The focus here is on causes which lie outside the person in the wider cultural and social world. Historically, self-concept has been a central theme in classical sociological studies of symbolic inter-actionism (Mead, 1934/1964; Baldwin, 1986).
The Concept of Self-Concept

Self-concept is generally defined as the totality of individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object (Rosenberg, 1979). Turner defined it as 'typically himself conception'. It is vague but vitally felt ideas of 'what I am like in my best motivation', 'what I am striving towards', 'what I can achieve or what I can do when the situation provides the necessary incentives' (1968:98).

Epstein (1973) suggests that self-concept can best be viewed as a theory that a person held about himself as experiencing and functioning being in interaction with the world.

Self-esteem refers to individual's overall self-evaluation. Researchers have identified several aspects of such self-evaluation. For example, Smith (1978) has focused on sense of competence and self-worth and Gecas (1979) has identified sense of power and sense of worth as important aspects of self-evaluation.

Several research studies have been conducted in India on "Who Am I" and personal efficacy. Pareek & Rao have defined personal efficacy as general sense of adequacy in a person. It influences individual's general orientation and style of life (1978:88). "Who Am I" has been used as a source of information on individual's efficacy and motivation. Personal efficacy, here, has been defined to include individual's goals, locus of control, resources, initiative and sense of responsibility. In this form
efficacy has been used as a training tool for boosting personal effectiveness in individuals' chosen field of work (McClelland and Winter, 1969; Mehta, 1976).

Some Dimensions of Self-Concept

The concept of system responsiveness has been long discussed in sociological and political science literature, particularly in the context of political activism. For instance, Gamson (1968) has distinguished between competence, i.e., ability to influence political system from trust i.e., perception that political institutions and authorities do what they are supposed to do. Lane (1962) has suggested two components of political efficacy i.e., image of the self and the image of the democratic government. Such sociological and political studies make distinction between self and environment components of efficacy. Such concepts are important for social change.

Sociologists have long been interested in study of cultural and social antecedents of self-concept particularly of self-efficacy. Such studies have been influenced by Marx's classical theory of alienation. The central theme in Marx's view of human nature was self creation through efficacious action in the context of work or 'praxis'. Self-efficacy and self-creation are frustrated or inhibited because of disjuncture between self and action resulting in sense of alienation (Marx, 1848/1963; Marx, 1974). Several research reviews, for example, Seeman (1975) have identified
sense of powerlessness, i.e., opposite of efficacy as central theme in studies of alienation.

Sociological traditions of symbolic interactionism have viewed individual primarily as an actor in the environment. As discussed in Baldwin (1986), Mead (1934) conceived the individual as an actor in shaping and creating his/her world as well as being created by it. Such studies have greatly influenced later thinking on self-concept and self-efficacy. The individual is viewed as an active agent in interaction with his/her environment. There is a process of reciprocal influence in which environment shapes values, attitudes, and behaviours and in turn the individual acts and shapes the environment.

Structural symbolic interactionism attaches great importance to the concept of role and identity of individuals. Identity has been one of the central themes in sociological literature on self-concept, where it has been conceptualised as an internalised role. For example, Gordon (1976:405) has elaborated this concept and said "the value aspect of role connects persons to culture, normative aspects of role provides motivation to conduct and connect structure to social action and the sense making or interpretative aspect of role determines cognition, attitudes, predispositions and memories.

Pareek and Rao (1978) and Pareek (1987) have studied these concepts in the context of Indian conditions and
discussed the importance of role efficacy in management of social and work organisation. Individual roles and role efficacy provide motivation for involvement and/or alienation in work organisations, thereby contributing to overall functioning and productivity of work organisations.

Self-Concept and Human Experience at Work

Several studies have sought to understand the importance of self-concept to human experience and behaviour in different contexts. For example, Kanter (1977) has analysed psychological consequences of power-experiencing opportunity at the work place. Kohn and his associates (1969, 1983) have done extensive work on the consequences of occupational conditions and the related experience for individuals' self values and intellectual flexibility. In this respect, research reviews, for example Gecas (1989) and Bowles & Gintis (1976) have traced back to Marx's perspective on human nature and production and organisational conditions for negative psychological consequences like self-estrangement, sense of powerlessness, and alienation. Work and conditions of work have therefore attracted wide attention in studies of self-concept, involvement, motivation and alienation.

II

Self-Concept and Motivation

Self concept is a powerful source of human motivation. As discussed above, generally three motives are associated with self-concepts namely, self-efficacy motive, self-esteem
motive and consistency/authenticity motive. A large number of studies have been conducted on these motives. These have also been utilised in several important concepts and theories of motivation.

Motivational Significance of Self-Concept

Self-concept, as a major motivation of human behaviour, has drawn wide attention of researchers in several social science disciplines. One of the most important consequences of lack of efficacy or sense of powerlessness, for example, is the feeling of alienation and estrangement. If the locus of control is perceived to be outside the individual, for example in the boss, the machine, the bureaucracy or political leaders, the individual then does not act on his own, he feels uninvolved and withdrawn. In such cases, the individual exists in conditions of alienation. On the contrary, a person having a sense of efficacy tends to act on his/her own. He takes on an actor role. Such relationship between efficacy and behaviour of action has been studied in various contexts and situations.

Self-Efficacy Motive and Behaviour

Self-efficacy is the most important aspect of self-concept. This is grounded in the notion of human agency i.e. the person as the origin and cause of behaviour. The concept of human agency has further led to several important concepts of motivation such as effectance motivation (White, 1959); personal causation (d'Charms, 1968) intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975); internal locus of control (Rotter, 1968). In
such conceptualisation of motivation, self is conceived as an originating agent. Summarising such conceptualisation, Turner has observed "behaviour thought to reveal the true self are also ones whose causes are perceived as residing in the person rather than the situation" (1976:991).

Self As An Actor

Various historically important concepts of motivation, such as those mentioned above, have viewed the self as an actor. They advocate an active, creative and agentive view of the self. Such a view was enunciated historically by Mead in his studies of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934 in Baldwin, 1986). Mead's pioneering work was carried further by later researchers of motivation. Among such later studies, the concept of competence or effectance motivation (White, 1959) has been the most influential formulation which has stimulated a large number of studies. Similarly important and influential is the concept of power motive, enunciated by McClelland (1975).

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Motivational significance of belief regarding self-efficacy has also been studied in the context of self-fulfilling prophecy (Bandura, 1981). This concept has been studied in India in the context of motivation in education, industry, social development etc. some of which are discussed below. A person's belief that he/she could achieve certain goals, motivates him/her to try towards fulfilling such
goals. An experimental training programme designed to promote personal efficacy and feelings of self-esteem in teachers and school children resulted in enhancement of their motivation and actor tendency and also scholastic performance. The prophecy raised in teachers as well as the children's expectation was thus self-fulfilled (Mehta, 1969, 1976).

Sense of Political Efficacy

The citizen's feeling that: he is competent to follow the functioning of government and politics; that not only voting is important but there are other means of influencing the government as well; that he/she is interested in politics as well as in elections show his/her sense of perceived personal effectiveness, designated as sense of political efficacy (Mehta, 1977). This reflects the citizen's feeling about himself in relation to the obtaining political environment. He/she tends to define his/her role, as perceived in the political system, either as competent or incompetent, capable of influencing the government or incapable and powerful and influential or influential and powerless. Such feelings therefore indicate individual's subjectively perceived competence (Almond and Verba, 1963). Whether or not he is actually or objectively competent and capable, is not the focus here but the reflection of this objective situation in his thoughts and feelings.

Political efficacy and personal efficacy are highly interrelated as these are grounded in the thoughts and
feelings of the same person. As Milbrath (1965) pointed out several years ago, persons who feel more effective in their day to day tasks and challenges are more likely to participate in politics. They tend to take greater interest in political and civic matters and also tend to get involved more in such activities than those who do not feel efficacious in their day to day life. More the people feel that they can influence public matters, more politically interested they are. The conviction that things can be affected give people the energy to care for political matters including voting. Such interest in political affairs has affects on variety of other behaviours such as participation and discussion, exposure to election campaign, and political activism. Such persons tend to actively campaign for their choice etc during elections (Mehta, 1976a, 1977; Sheth, 1978).

Efficacy and Alienation at Work and in Education

Denial of adequate opportunity at the work place for workers to satisfying their self-efficacy, as mentioned above, shows adverse affects on their psychological well-being. Blauner provided empirical findings to show how nature of work and control of work tend to affect the workers' self-efficacy. He said that "social personality of auto workers is expressed in a characteristic attitude of cynicism towards authority and institutional system" (1964:178). In printing industry - being a craft industry - he found workers showing high degree of personal control over
their work. They also showed high internalised standards of work, high degree of self-esteem and sense of self-worth and readiness to participate in social and political institutions of the community. Blauner concluded that the nature of man's work affects his social character and personality and that an industrial environment tends to breed a distinct social type (1964:VIII & 166).

Kaounhasur (1965) found 40% of this sample of auto workers to have symptoms of mental health problems. There was a significant relationship between mental health and job satisfaction. Feelings of helplessness, withdrawal, alienation, and pessimism were widespread among the auto workers. Some 50% of the assembly line workers felt that they had no influence on the future course of their lives. In an interesting study, Pareek and Rao found the significance of teachers' classroom behaviour on the mental health and self-efficacy of children. Teachers' dominative classroom influence showed negative effects while their indirect and integrative influence enhanced children's efficacy (Pareek and Rao, 1971). As reported above, Mehta (1976) found similar positive psychological development in children under indirect and integrative classroom teachers and negative development among workers under dominative work situation (Mehta, 1976a).

Interesting findings regarding occupation, conditions of work and workers' self-efficacy have been reported in
series of studies by Kohn and his associates (1969, 1976, 1983). Such studies have found that, greater the freedom experienced on the job and more complex and challenging the work, more likely that, the worker value individual freedom and self-direction, showing greater intellectual flexibility and greater self-efficacy. Kohn (1976) found occupational self-direction a composite measure of supervision, routinisation and complexity of work, to be related to powerlessness and hierarchical status in the company. These occupational self-direction opportunities showed significant correlations with workers self-confidence and fatalism (Kohn & Schooler, 1973, 1978). Such studies showed a reciprocal relationship between work-conditions and psychological variables. However, "in all cases, job affects the man more, than man affects the job" (Kohn & Schooler, 1973:114).

Self Esteem Motive

The motivation to maintain a positive conception of oneself has been a pervasive, even universal, phenomenon (Rokeach, 1979). The most dramatic use of this concept was found in the cognitive dissonance theory. Originally the perceived incongruity between two cognitive elements was conceived as a source of motivation of behaviour for reducing dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Later, studies have replaced this concept with one in which self-esteem motivates the dissonance reducing action. It has been argued that cognitive dissonance is motivationally significant only when self-concept is involved (Arson, 1968).
Effects of Psychological and Behavioural Phenomenon

Self-esteem has been used as an independent variable in several research studies showing its effects on wide ranging psychological and behavioural phenomenon (Crandall, 1973). Rosenberg (1981) and several research reviews have revealed self-esteem as an important factor in interpersonal attraction, moral behaviour, educational orientation, and various aspects of personality and mental health. As mentioned above, children's self-esteem stimulated by the teachers' integrative classroom behaviour, promoted positive mental health and psychological development among them (Pareek and Rao, 1971; Mehta, 1976).

Authenticity/Consistency Motive

Individuals are motivated to behave in accordance with the values and norms implied in their identities to which they become committed (Foote, 1951). More recently, Stryker and Serper (1982) have argued that higher the salience of identity, greater is its motivational significance. This is found to operate in role identities such as 'professor', 'doctor', 'teacher', 'mother', 'son' etc. Greater the commitment of persons to such professional or social identities, greater is their effort to adhere to the values and norms associated with such identities. For instance, a doctor committed to his/her identity as doctor, tries to behave in accordance with the professional values and norms attached to this identity. Such a role commitment motivates people to act authentically and in consistence with values.
and norms implied in such identities.

Sense of authenticity implies an assessment of the meaning and significance of what one is and does (Gecas & Mortimer, 1984). Rosenberg's (1981) concept of 'mattering', i.e., the feeling that 'we are important' to others and that 'we matter' probably motivate people to seek out a situation and activities within which they may feel authentic, which is in accordance with one's beliefs about self. It is therefore also described as consistency motive. Individuals are motivated to act in accordance with values and norms implied by identities as mentioned above. If, on the other hand, people think that, their beliefs are meaningless and worse, that, they themselves are meaningless, such feelings may create a sense of hopelessness resulting in serious implications for individual and social functioning.

Motives Inter-Related

The three motives i.e., self-efficacy, self-esteem and authenticity are usually interrelated in experience. Persons with high sense of efficacy may also show high self-esteem and authenticity. These motives therefore seem to work in unison with each other. Conditions of alienation, i.e., when persons have low sense of efficacy, may weaken self-esteem and authenticity. It prevents learning of values and norms of role identity and may create crisis of identity as well as authenticity. When individuals at workplace feel that their work matters, that they are also
important, that they are also heard and can make contribution to decision making, that they have the required influence and autonomy at work, they develop authentic role identities which in turn motivate their work and performance. Similarly, when the 'poor' perceive that they also 'matter', that they can also influence, that they are also important in causing things to happen and in obtaining the expected outcome, they are motivated to get actively involved in socio-political activities and movements.

III

Social Learning of Self-Concept and Motivation

Cognition and Motivation

Researchers have distinguished between efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. Bandura (1977, 1982) has proposed a paradigm of behaviour as motivated by efficacy and outcome expectations. A person may estimate that a given behaviour will lead to certain outcome and that he also believes he can successfully perform the behaviour required to produce the outcome. Such expectations are also applicable to social situations where individuals perceive themselves as efficacious and at the same time consider conditions of life and their level of living as unfavourable and unsatisfactory. Such a combination may motivate protest behaviour and socio-political activism. On the other hand, efficacious persons who are satisfied with conditions of their life and work may be active within the system and strengthen it.
Cognition about selves and about the system therefore play an important role in motivating human behaviour. Here in lies the importance of social awareness and consciousness about the surrounding environment. Expectations are built on such beliefs and values. In this respect, cognition becomes an important factor in self-concept and in motivation.

Social Learning and Role Identities

Parental interest and support for the child is an important intervening variable in their learning of roles, values and beliefs. One of the important consistent findings in family research on self-esteem formulation is positive relationship between parental efficacy and child self-esteem (Hales, 1980). Some Indian studies have also found positive relationship between parental support home stimulation and child's tendency to try and master a situation (Murlidharan & Topo, 1970; Murlidharan, 1970).

Selingman's (1975) concept of 'learned helplessness' is a significant contribution in this regard. It refers to a chronic sense of inefficacy resulting from the learning that one's action has no affect on one's environment (Abrahamson et al. 1978). Learned helplessness is likely to occur when individual attributes his inefficacy to personal failure rather than to universal conditions. Such studies indicate the importance of self-efficacy for psychological well-being, as well as for active involvement of people in public affairs and social and work situations. When a person feels that
whatever he may do, things will continue to be as they are, he learns to feel helpless and withdrawn.

Such feelings of powerlessness are somewhat weakened by literacy and membership in organisations. These interventions also stimulate political participation (Mehta, 1977; Sheth, 1978). Mass mobilisation and active involvement in worthwhile development and education also enhance sense of personal and social efficacy (Mehta, 1983, 1990). The findings of the latter study were particularly relevant for the present research as these were obtained with respect to adult education field functionaries, akin to anganwadi workers. Such enhanced sense of efficacy, as Gecas and Mortimer (1978) have observed, tends to become a fulfilling prophecy, encouraging persons to take risk, show self-confidence in undertaking new and challenging tasks. Subsequent success in such endeavours fosters and strengthens sense of personal efficacy overtime.

Thus, self-concept seems to link the individual with social structures. On the one hand, family, education, participation, nature of work and work organisation, employment etc. influence individual's self concepts, particularly self-efficacy and self-esteem. On the other, self-evaluation influences the person's psychological well being and mental health. Adverse conditions of life may adversely affect person's self concepts and create state of alienation, cynicism, helplessness and withdrawal. Challenging work, autonomy and control may help reduce
alienation and enhance their self-efficacy and actor-role, boost morale and mental health and strengthen personal effectiveness.

The obtained findings regarding self-concepts and motivation of the anganwadi workers, with analysis of their meanings and implications, are reported in the next chapter.