Underachievement continues to be a concern for teachers, planners and administrators throughout most states in India. Most students have the desire to be successful in school; yet many do not know how (Heacox, 1991). Moreover, among children, many fail to reach the academic level of which they are capable and quite often their school performance is constantly lower than that of their ability peers (Terman and Oden, 1947; Burt, 1962; Pringle, 1970; Whitemore, 1980; Gallagher, 1985). Underachievement appears to be a common phenomenon in the India’s educational system. In spite of an increased focus on education, a large proportion of people in many countries are still being denied its full benefits. In developing countries it is essential that all its resources are fully utilized because a large number of pupils suffer from poor achievement. It is the responsibility of every country to take the necessary steps to ensure their students maximize their academic potential.

Many empirical studies based on scientific investigation have shown that pupils of superior intelligence can be underachievers, while some people with average intelligence achieve more than what is expected of them. In the achievement
related areas, need for achievement and study habits have been found to be the significant variables, which contributes to better performances in people. McClelland et.al, 1953: have found significant correlation between academic performance and need achievement; Jain (1967), has found that bright achievers were characterized by better study habits and higher achievement motivation than dull achievers; Shivappa (1980) has found that study habits and educational aspiration are the positive correlates of academic achievement; Singh (1984), has found that high achieving adolescents had significantly better study habits than middle and low achievers; Kapoor (1987) has found that high achievers had better study habits as compared to the average and the low achievers; Davanesan and Paul (1990), have found that there is a significant and positive relationship between the achievement-motivation and scholastic achievement of higher secondary students; Harikrishnan, (1992), has found that academic achievement is positively related with achievement-motivation and socio-economic status of students; Alam (2006) has find out that positive relationship exists between achievement motivation and academic achievement of Muslims and non-Muslim children. Sarwar et al (2009) showed that students who have better scores on study-orientation tend to have better academic achievement.

Research shows that school counselling intervention has a substantial impact on students’ educational and personal
development. Classroom guidance along with individual and small-group counselling, may contribute directly to student success in the classroom and beyond. There may be significant value in further experimental studies testing the effect of counselling intervention on underachievers. In the light of previous studies conducted on counselling, the investigator sought to identify underachievers and their problems, assist them through counselling and analyze the effect of counselling on their scholastic achievement.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 which President George W. Bush signed into law on January 8, 2002, clearly demonstrated a strong national commitment to improving the academic success of all children (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). NCLB legislation is forcing school systems across the nation to focus on student outcomes. This focus on accountability and outcomes puts pressure on administrators, teachers, and school counsellors alike. All of these professionals are responsible for making the changes that are mandated within the NCLB and need to be involved in the process of increasing student achievement, reducing the achievement gap, improving school attendance and graduation rates, and ensuring adequate levels of safety within school systems. Although the specific term “underachievement” was not used in the NCLB, the law is clearly aimed at all students...
who do not succeed, whether it is because they can’t or because they won’t. It is the responsibility of every country to take the necessary steps to ensure their students maximize their academic potential.

Guidance plays a vital role in removing the educational, personal, social, mental, and emotional problems of the students. Kochhar (2000) considers guidance necessary to help students with specific problems like lack of relationship between ability and achievement, deficiency in school subjects, faulty study habits, defective methods of learning and poor motivation. The purpose of guidance and counselling services for school children are to improve academic achievement, increase conflict resolution skills, decrease dropouts and foster positive attitudes toward school, learning, and study (Braddock, 2001).

With regard to the necessity of guidance services, they prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices (Gibson, 2008; Kauchak, 2011). Sinha, (1970) observed, “measures like counselling and a programme of student personnel service are urgently required if the rate of failure and consequent wastage of manpower is to be reduced”. Bhatnagar, (1992) in a survey of educational research, points out under research gaps and priorities, that the effect of guidance and counseling should be studied on special groups of children such as slow learners, underachievers, the mentally
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challenged, and the mentally gifted. Mullis & Otwell (1997), ascertained that counselling decreases classroom disturbances. Counseling services support teachers in the classroom and enable teachers to provide quality instructions designed to assist students in achieving high standards. School counselors through collaborative efforts can implement both systematic and programmatic changes in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out of school (Standard, 2003). Heyden (2011), while discussing the aim of Guidance and Counseling services, opines that their purposes are similar to the purposes of education in general—to assist students in fulfilling their basic psychological needs, understanding themselves and accepting others, developing associations with peers. Realizing successful achievement, and providing opportunities to gain independence.

This study is an effort to help underachieving students in government schools, including the students of less educated or illiterate families. The study aims to determine if counselling can improve the level of achievement of these students. The investigator made a counselling intervention with underachievers to improve their need-achievement, study habits and academic achievement, as these are the significant correlates of achievement. This study may encourage administrators to consider having school counselor for the assistance of students, especially underachieving students.
Abstract

The specific research proposed by the investigator is to determine:

THE EFFECT OF COUNSELLING ON THE NEED-ACHIEVEMENT, STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF UNDERACHIEVERS.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

i) Identify the underachievers.
ii) Help underachievers raise their need-achievement through counselling.
iii) Help underachievers improve their study habits through counselling.
iv) Help underachievers raise their academic achievement through counselling.

HYPOTHESES

1. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test factor-wise need-achievement scores of the experimental group.
2. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test composite need-achievement scores of the experimental group.
3. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test factor-wise study habit scores of the experimental group.
4. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test *composite* study habit scores of the experimental group.

5. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test *subject-wise* academic achievement scores of the experimental group.

6. There will be a significant improvement in the post-test *composite* academic achievement scores of the experimental group.

**SAMPLE**

Students studying in the 9th class within the age range of 14 to 15 years old from the government high and higher secondary schools for girls of educational zones Rainawari and Gulab Bagh of district Srinagar, in Kashmir India, were asked to partake in this study (N = 310). A mental measurement test—Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), Non-Verbal, was administered to the subjects in different groups. The mean of two annual examination results (7th & 8th class) was considered as the criterion for academic achievement. The students whose achievement scores were 10 percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores were considered as underachievers. On this basis a total number of 129 students were defined as underachievers. Nine students were dropped because of their often absence from school. Thus the investigator was left with 120 students as the final sample.
**PRE-TEST**

The investigator, in consultation with the concerned teachers, administered a test of academic achievement to students in both the experimental and control groups for the subjects: Mathematics, General English, General Science, Social Science and Urdu. The investigator administered the tests of need-achievement and study habits to both the experimental and control groups. No information about the grouping of the students was conveyed to the teachers. The scores gained by each student were recorded for need-achievement, study habits and academic achievement.

**TOOLS**

1. Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), for the measurement of intelligence.
2. Urdu Adaptation of B.N. Mukherjee’s Incomplete Sentences Blank, Khan (1992), for the measurement of need-achievement.
3. Study Habit Inventory Khan (1999), for the measurement of study habits.

**TREATMENT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP**

Counselling means to advance an individual’s personal development. Many who counsel agree that the fundamental goal of counselling is to effect change in behaviour which in turn permits the recipient (counsellee) to live a more productive
and self-satisfying life. In a school situation counselling focuses upon the individual problems and needs of students and helps them learn what is needed to solve these problems. It is the responsibility of the counsellor to obtain an adequate understanding of the individual's problems and accordingly select the appropriate method and techniques to use during counselling. The investigator started with a directive approach William-Son’s (1939), and when the situation demanded, a non-directive approach was used, Roger’s (1989). Throughout this research an attempt was made to adjust the techniques used to the requirements of situation and the student. The investigator approached this process with the attitude that it is the responsibility of the client to determine their own way of life and choose their own goals. The students were provided a permissive, accepting atmosphere where they were encouraged to feel free to discuss their problems and feelings with the investigator. Techniques such as reassurance, giving information and testing were employed in order to deal with those students who had the most difficulty in school. Their issues included: low personal satisfaction in education, an unfavourable attitude towards learning, low initiative and low self confidence. They were encouraged to form a better time table which allowed them to study while also sparing time for play and helping their parents with their day to day chores. The counselling technique utilized for these students was not merely
The main aim was to help these students determine their own direction and develop the ability to deal with their own issues independently. Those students who came from a low socio-economic background (which was acting as a glass ceiling to their achievement) were narrated inspirational stories of famous successful people with similar low socio-economic backgrounds. This process helped in increasing the need-achievement of those students. Another technique to increase the need-achievement of these students was to make them aware of their academic potential, and their ability to achieve excellence.

The counselling process focused on three elements:

a. **Existing Behaviour:** The behavior which is causing the subject to underachieve.

b. **Change in Behaviour:** A change in this underachieving behavior through counselling.

c. **Terminal Behaviour:** Increased academic achievement in consonance with the cognitive ability after counselling; including greater need-achievement and improved study habits.

**TIME BUDGET**

In order to improve the outcome, budgeting of counselling time was done by the investigator in conjunction with the students.
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i) Total number of counselling sessions for each subject  
   20

ii) Average time for each session  
    60 minutes

iii) Gap between counselling sessions  
   06 days

POST-TEST

After the counselling process was completed the investigator conducted need-achievement and study habit tests to the experimental and control groups, to determine the effect of counselling on their need-achievement and study habits. The tests used to assess need-achievement and study habits were the same tests that were employed at the pre-test stage. The investigator (in consultation with the teachers concerned) administered an academic achievement test of course content taught during the counselling sessions in order to measure the student’s improvement in academic achievement.

MAJOR FINDINGS

➢ For academic achievement a certain amount of intelligence or scholastic aptitude is necessary, along with certain favourable non-intellectual variables.
➢ In the achievement related areas, need-achievement and study habits are the most important factors, which contribute to the academic achievement of a person beyond their intellectual ability.
Abstract

- The post counselling test scores showed a significant improvement in the need-achievement of underachievers (experimental group).
- The post counselling test scores showed a significant improvement in the study habits of underachievers (experimental group).
- The post counselling test scores showed a significant improvement in the academic achievement of underachievers (experimental group).
- School counseling interventions have a substantial impact on students’ educational and personal development.
- Individual and small-group counselling, classroom guidance contribute directly to students’ success in the classroom and beyond.