SUMMARY

Aspiration is the foundation on which the advancement of a country depends. Adolescence is a critical time for forming aspirations for the future, especially with regard to career aspirations (Child Development, 2004). A number of factors such as parental encouragement, peer acceptability, socio-economic status etc. may influence the formation of aspirations (Bardick, A.D. and Bernes, K.B., 2005). Parental encouragement is significantly related to adolescents’ educational aspirations (Zhou, Y. and Glick, J., 2005). Peer environment was the most important indirect effect on career aspiration (Xin Ma and Jianjun Wang, 2001). Socio-economic resources play significant role in explaining educational aspirations of adolescents (Zhou, Y. and Glick, J., 2005).

INTRODUCTION:- Adolescence is a stage, which includes mental, emotional and social as well as physical development. During this period they are faced with numerous problems like plans for the future including education and choice of vocation. The standard that a person expects to reach in a particular performance, is generally referred to by psychologists as level of aspiration.

Parents are the first contact that the adolescent has since childhood. Evidences from empirical literature also lend support for the dominance of parents in shaping adolescent’s career aspirations. They need a certain level of parental encouragement to fulfill their educational and vocational aspirations because they may feel motivated for higher academic qualifications. They want to be aware of the point of view of their parents regarding their future vocational aspirations. Parents send clear messages
regarding the value of education and their beliefs about their children’s academic potential.

The adolescents have a qualitatively different form of relationship with their peer group. During this period peer group becomes more important than their family. They want to be accepted by their peer group for a better adjustment in their school. Studies have shown that peer group was an important factor in determining educational and vocational aspirations. Most of the ideas, thoughts, beliefs etc. of the adolescents tend to be modified according to their peer group.

Socio-economic status of the family actually determines the level and quality of education that can be provided. The extent to which the adolescents can be educated as well as the kind of courses, which a family can afford to provide for the adolescents, depends on the socio-economic status. He becomes aware of the economic constraints of his family regarding the expenses related to various professional and non professional courses. With the result the adolescent may modify his educational and vocational aspirations according to his socio-economic status.

During the high school years, students make significant career decisions regarding their educational and career plans (Gushue, G.V. and Whitson, M.L., 2006). Last year in high school is an important period in adolescents’ career decision-making process (Germeijs, V. and Verschueren, 2006).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The present study is concerned with the influence of parental encouragement, peer acceptability and socio-economic status on the
development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents (12 – 15 years).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To assess the influence of parental encouragement on the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.
2. To assess the influence of peer group social acceptability on the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.
3. To assess the influence of SES on the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.
4. To assess the influence of interactive effects of parental encouragement, peer group social acceptability and SES on the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.

HYPOTHESES
1. Parental encouragement influences the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.
2. High socio-economic status adolescents have higher educational and vocational aspirations than low socio-economic status.
3. Peer group social acceptability influences the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.
4. Parental encouragement, peer group social acceptability and SES have an interactive influence on the development of educational and vocational aspirations of adolescents.

PROCEDURE:- The investigator has taken a sample of 400 adolescents of the age group 12-15 years, their parents and peer group from schools of Aligarh City. The type of sampling method used in this study is cluster and incidental sampling. TOOLS:-The tools used in the study were:
Parental Encouragement Scale (PES), Test for Social Acceptability Among Peers (TSAAP), Socio-Economic Status Scale, Educational Aspiration and Occupational Aspiration made by R.R.Sharma, S.L.Chopra, R.L.Bharadwaj, Sharma and Gupta and Grewal respectively. STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES:- The statistical technique to be used in this study is descriptive statistics such as: (i) mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation. (ii) Analysis of variance using factorial design.

FINDINGS:- The main findings of the study were: PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS (i) The mean score of girls (66.675) on parental encouragement was higher than that of boys (66.495). But this difference was not significant at the 0.05 level of confidence. (ii) The mean score of girls (24.355) on educational aspirations was higher than that of boys (23.845). But this difference was not significant at the 0.05 level of confidence. (iii) Parental encouragement received by the students was positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (iv) Parental encouragement received by the girls was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (v) Parental encouragement received by the boys was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (vi) Parental encouragement received by the students was also positively correlated to their socio-economic status and was significant. (vii) Parental encouragement received by the girls was also positively correlated to their socio-economic status but was not significant. (viii) Parental encouragement received by the boys was also positively correlated to their socio-economic status and was significant. (ix) Parental encouragement received by the students was also positively correlated to
their peer acceptability but was not significant. (x) Parental encouragement received by the girls was also positively correlated to their peer acceptability but was not significant. (xi) Parental encouragement received by the boys was also positively correlated to their peer acceptability but was not significant.

PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

(xii) The mean score of boys (54.290) on vocational aspiration was higher than that of girls (51.895). This difference was significant at the 0.05 level of confidence. (xiii) Parental encouragement received by the students was positively correlated to their vocational aspirations and it was significant. (xiv) Parental encouragement received by the girls was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations and it was also significant. (xv) Parental encouragement received by the boys was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations but was not significant.

PEER GROUP ACCEPTABILITY AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

(xvi) The mean score of girls (11.125) on peer group acceptability was higher than that of boys (11.025). But this difference was also not significant at the 0.05 level of confidence. (xvii) Peer group acceptability of the students was positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xviii) Peer group acceptability of the girls was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xix) Peer group acceptability of the boys was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant.

PEER GROUP ACCEPTABILITY AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

(xx) Peer group acceptability of the students was positively correlated to their vocational aspirations but was not significant. (xxi) Peer group
acceptability of the girls was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations but was not significant. (xxii) Peer group acceptability of the boys was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations but was not significant. (xxiii) Peer group acceptability of the students was also positively correlated to their socio- economic status and was significant. (xxiv) Peer group acceptability of the girls was also positively correlated to their socio- economic status but was not significant. (xxv) Peer group acceptability of the boys was also positively correlated to their socio-economic status and was significant.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

(xxvi) The mean score of girls (641.995) on socio- economic status was higher than that of boys (633.655). But this difference was not significant at the 0.05 level of confidence. (xxvii) Socio- economic status of the students was negatively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xxviii) Socio- economic status of the girls was also negatively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xxix) Socio- economic status of the boys was also negatively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS AND VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

(XXX) Socio- economic status of the students was positively correlated to their vocational aspirations and it was significant. (xxxi) Socio- economic status of the girls was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations and it was also significant. (xxxi) Socio- economic status of the boys was also positively correlated to their vocational aspirations but was not significant. (xxviii) Vocational aspirations of the students was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xxvii) Vocational aspirations of the girls was also positively
correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant. (xxxv) Vocational aspirations of the boys was also positively correlated to their educational aspirations but was not significant.

STUDY OF THE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS (xxxvi) When ANOVA was conducted on the entire sample of 400 students, the influence of all the three variables i.e. parental encouragement, peer group acceptability and socio-economic status was not significant, independently or in an interactive manner, on the educational aspirations. (xxxvii) When ANOVA was conducted on vocational aspirations of the entire sample of 400 students, it was found that parental encouragement and socio-economic status had significant independent influence on the vocational aspirations but there was no interactive influence. (xxxviii) The influence of peer group acceptability on vocational aspirations was not significant, independently as well as in an interactive manner.

(xxxix) In case of girls, the influence of all the three variables i.e. parental encouragement, peer group acceptability and socio-economic status was not significant, independently or in an interactive manner, on their educational aspirations. (xxxx) Parental encouragement and socio-economic status of girls had a significant independent influence on their vocational aspirations but there was no interactive influence. (xxxxi) The influence of peer group acceptability of girls on their vocational aspirations was not significant, independently as well as in an interactive manner.

(xxxxii) In case of boys, parental encouragement and socio-economic status had a significant independent influence on their educational aspirations but there was no interactive effect. (xxxxiii) Peer Acceptability did not have an independent or an interactive effect on the
educational aspirations of boys. (xxxxiv)Parental encouragement of boys had a significant independent influence on their vocational aspirations.(xxxxv)The influence of peer group acceptability of boys was not significant, independently or in an interactive manner on their vocational aspirations.(xxxxvi)Socio-economic status of boys did not have a significant independent influence on their vocational aspirations.(xxxxvii)Parental encouragement and socio-economic status of boys had an interactive influence on their vocational aspirations.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS:

The above results can be of great help to the career counselors who can guide the adolescents to plan their educational future. The counselors can help the adolescents to choose a particular stream or field of education according to his SES, educational aspirations etc. They can provide them knowledge about the various avenues of higher education open to them according to their SES e.g. if the adolescents belong to low SES there may be certain courses which his family may not be able to afford. The counselors can provide them with appropriate options and choices.

They can guide them to prepare for various competitions, acquaint them with pre-requisites of various courses (especially financial needs) etc. They can arrive at a consensus regarding the educational future of the adolescents, taking into account their educational aspirations, their SES and the extent of the parental encouragement they received. They can suggest various alternatives for their educational future.
The above results were also useful to the career counselors who assist the adolescents in planning their future. There are certain vocations (or professions), which are not preferred by their parents. As a result the parents might discourage them to pursue such careers.

Similarly, the counselors can suggest various career options according to the SES of the adolescents. The adolescents of low SES may not be able to take up certain professions due to the financial burden on their families. So accordingly, the counselors have to help them to arrive at a common ground regarding their career taking into account their own vocational aspirations, their SES as well as the extent of parental encouragement they receive.