CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Education being the sub system of society plays a key role in moulding, shaping, reforming and reconstructing it from time to time. One of the major features of contemporary educational thinking has been a growing concern about the development of effective personality and efficiency of teaching learning outcomes that can be assessed in terms of students’ achievement. The academic achievement of students is considered to be very significant determinant of their success in later life.

1.1. Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is related to the acquisition of principles and generalizations and the capacity to perform efficiently certain manipulations, objectives, symbols and ideas. The assessment of academic achievement has been largely confined to the evaluation in terms of information, knowledge and understanding. It is the competence of students shown in school subjects for which they have taken instruction. The test scores or grades assigned to the students on the basis of their performance in the achievement test determine the status of pupils in the classroom (Singh et al., 2007).

In a classroom students are involved in developing and reconstructing knowledge through experience, motivation, cooperation, explorating talk and teacher’s intervention (Driver, 1989). Students need opportunities to construct knowledge by solving real problems through asking and refining questions, designing and conducting investigations, gathering, analyzing and interpreting information and data, drawing conclusions and reported findings (Blumenfield, 1993). At each stage in the school, some measures of achievement are used as a determinant of the student’s status and as a basis for decision about the further opportunities for learning to be provided in subsequent stages. In the present context of education, achievement in academic subjects is the main concern of the teachers, students and parents. Achievement is regarded as the end product of all educational endeavours (Balasubramanayan, 1997). It is considered as the sole criteria to evaluate the successful accomplishment of performance in a particular subject, area and course, usually visualized through skills, hard work and interest, typically summarized in various types of grades, marks, scores or descriptive commentary (Hawes et al., 1982). In other words, it refers to the pupils’ knowledge attained and skills developed in the school subjects and assessed by the authorities with the help of achievement tests in the form of examination (Bajwa et al., 1994). Moreover, there are many higher and professional institutions which follow the criteria to admit the students on the basis of marks acquired by them in their examination (Uniyal,
Although certain students excel in examination, understand easily and quickly while others remain as they are, even though the teaching is the same for all in the class. The degree of variation with regard to achievement and excellence found among pupils is really a problem (Krishnan, 1993). As Rao (1964) includes life goals, aspirations, study habits, emotional factors, personal and social adjustment as the main factors that affect students’ academic performance.

Achievement in academic subjects is important as it helps the students to understand the hierarchy based on it i.e. higher the achievement, more are the openings for the students and they can go for better streams and better jobs in all fields like science and technology, medicine, management, literature, education etc. As higher achievement is of paramount importance for progress and promotion in any field, students with higher level of achievement can have a better chance to get jobs of higher level and the type of work that is given to them provides still better chance in their respective field. So, the need for measuring academic achievement is due to differences within the individual from time to time known as behaviour oscillation i.e. academic achievement of the same individual differs from time to time, from one class to another and from one educational level to another. Although, there are individual differences, individuals of the same age group, of the same grade, usually differ in their potential abilities and academic proficiency.

The world is becoming more and more competitive, and the quality of performance has become the key factor for school and personal program. Parents wish that their children climb the ladder of performance as high as possible. This desire for a high level of achievement shapes their attitude towards the educational system. In the present system, the concept of providing education is changed from only enhancing the achievement in subjects to harmonious development of learner, now parents want that their kids get admission in that school which has facilities like smart classrooms, smart boards, computer based learning and hi-tech language laboratories. Stephen (1958) pointed that academic achievement is the unique responsibility of educational institution established by the society to promote the development of learners. The development of the learners is possible only if proper individual attention is given to them for enhancing the knowledge attained or skills developed in school subjects usually reflected by test scores or marks assigned by the teachers or by both (Good, 1973).

Thus, there are various aspects of the concept of academic achievement which have a great bearing on the personality of students. From an early age, a sense of achievement is a source of good feeling and self esteem and failure as a source of disgrace and self reproach. It
is concerned with the quantity and quality of learning in a subject or group of subjects, assessed by examination marks (Pandey, 1998). It is the status or level of a person’s skills, the range and depth of his knowledge or his proficiency in a designated area of learning or behaviour (Horrock, 1969).

In fact, it appears that the whole system of education revolves around the academic achievement of students. Thus a lot of time and effort by the schools is used for helping students to achieve better in their scholastic endeavours.

1.1.1. Factors affecting Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon. There are many factors which affect academic achievement viz. intelligence, personality, motivation, school environment, heredity, home environment, learning, experiences at school, interests, aptitudes, family background, socio economic status of the parents and many more other factors influenced the academic achievement. Sinha (1970) reported that hard work, intelligence, memory, good health, availability of books, methods of study, financial security and interest in social and practical work affect the academic scores. Dave (1975) reviewed that intelligence, physical health, socio economic status of the family, gender, caste, distance of school from home and leisure time activities affect academic achievement. Bruce et al. (1977) studied the factors affecting the academic performance of Indian students and found that main factors are self-concept, achievement motivation, anti-Indian discrimination, culture conflict, and family instability; achievement motivation and culture conflict are the most important correlates of academic achievement among urban students. Balasubramanium (1993) reported that medium of instruction and locality of residence influenced level of achievement. Guha et al. (1995) observed that mother’s education had positive effect on academic achievement. Laxmi (1997) reported that children belonging to more educated parents were academically more motivated, whereas Haseen (1999) found that social class, parent-child interaction and dependency behaviour had significant effect on academic achievement. Dangwal (2000) noted that obstacle dominance affected negatively and ego defense positively related to academic achievement. Avinashilingan et al. (2005) reported that classroom factors followed by environmental and developmental factor played a major role in affecting the students’ academic performance. The students’ inner urge, competency of teacher, absence of physical distracters, like mindedness and colleagues’ contact make students more competent to succeed in life.

However, most of the above given factors have been considered and studied for research under the classification of subjective and objective factors. Subjective factors are
related to the individual himself while influencing one’s achievement as intelligence, learning ability, self efficacy, learning style, study habits, creativity, level of aspiration, self concept, locus of control etc. whereas objective factors are related to the environment of the individual as socio economic status, educational system, family environment, evaluation system, value system, teachers’ efficiency, school situation and environment. Aggarwal et al. (1998) reported that main factors affecting academic achievement are affective factors viz. cognitive style, motivation, anxiety, study habits, level of aspiration, stress, value, perseverance, self efficacy, emotional maturity, attitude, adjustment, interest, need and curiosity; cognitive factors viz. ability, intelligence, creativity, problem solving, reasoning ability and learning rate; school related factors viz. type of school, school climate, teacher’s personality, home work, alienation, teachers’ expectation and attitude, training strategies, teachers’ experience, medium of instruction, teachers’ behaviour and competency and class room environment; home related factors viz. family size, birth order, socio economic status of family, gender bias, parental involvement, parental support, deprivation, child rearing practices, working networking parents, parental aptitude and expectations.

1.2. Cognitive Style

The phrase ‘Cognitive Style’ consists of two words cognitive and style. The word cognitive owes its origin to the Latin word ‘cognocere’ which means “to apprehend”. Cognition is a generic term used to designate all processes involved in knowing (Hilgard et al., 1986). It is the process by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used (Neisser, 1967). Main stages in the process of cognition are sensing, attending, perceiving, comprehending, understanding and remembering (Parameswaran et al., 2003). The habitual pattern or preferred way of doing something (thinking, learning and teaching) that are consistent over long periods of time is the ‘style’ of the individual (Kazadin, 2000).

Cognitive styles are the characteristic, self consistent modes of functioning which individuals shows in their perceptual and intellectual activities. It means that the characteristic way in which an individual goes about taking information from the world is referred as cognitive style. It is a characteristic and systematic procedure within the psychophysical functioning of an individual that helps him to grasp or hold certain signals, power from environment and to arrive at a desired end with the help of his innate potentialities, perceptions and his intellectual abilities like knowledge, understanding, comprehension, application, analysis and synthesis etc. So, it refers to the modes an individual employs in perceiving, organizing and labelling various aspects of the environment (Schilling, 1981).
Kagan et al. (1970) conceived cognitive style as stable individual preferences in mode of perceptual organization and conceptualization by external environment whereas Shuell (1981) pointed that cognitive style refers to the preferred ways that different individuals have for processing and organizing and for responding to environmental stimuli. It is a process through which the individual receives information from the environment, transforms and uses that information to respond to the environment in his own characteristic way (Goldstein et al., 1978). They are related to mental behaviours, habitually applied by an individual to problem solving and generally to the way that information is obtained, sorted and utilized.

Every individual prefers his own ways for organizing all that s/he sees, remembers and think about. Consistent individual differences in the ways of organizing and processing information and experience are termed as cognitive style. In other words, it is not the intellectual task or situation alone that determines the form of perception of thought, but also the stable properties of the personality. It is an inbuilt plan or program to select specific type of data for processing or to perform specific mental operations on the basis of gathered information (Leff et al., 1978).

It has been observed that certain individuals tend to respond very quickly to most situations (impulsive cognitive style), others are more reflective and slower to respond (reflective cognitive style), even though both types of individuals are equally knowledgeable about the task. Cognitive styles suggest that individuals respond to the same task in different ways but these variables don’t reflect level of intelligence patterns of general abilities (Ohnmacht et al., 1971) but they may affect personality development and how individual’s learn and apply information (Bransford et al., 2000). Witkins et al. (1971) emphasized that cognitive style comprises of intellectual and perceptual abilities and the effect of cognitive style can be accented or mitigated by many outside factors such as classroom setting, social experiences and vocational choices (Brumby, 1982).

Cognitive style dictates the cues that the individual will use, but not necessarily the level in which his intelligence functions (Kogan et al., 1991). Although intellectual ability refers to the content of cognition or the question of ‘what’ (what kind of information is being processed, with what operation and what to find); cognitive style bears on the question of ‘how’ (the manner in which behaviour occurs) while the concept of ability implies the measurement of capacities in terms of maximum or peak performance; cognitive style implies the measurement of operation in terms of typical performance (in terms of thinking, remembering or problem solving). The intellectual abilities are generally regarded as being unipolar whereas cognitive styles are bipolar. Having more of an ability is usually considered beneficial while having a particular cognitive style denotes a tendency
to behave in a certain manner. Cognitive style is described as a personality dimension which influences attitude, values and social interaction (Witkin et al., 1954). Each of the individual cognitive dimension has correlated with certain intelligent tasks and the ability to learn and perform in school (Witkin et al., 1954). It can therefore be said that cognitive psychology studies man’s thinking, memory, language development, perception, imagery and other mental processes. The human mind does not accept information from its environment in exactly the same form and style in which it is conveyed. The conveyed information is compared with the information already stored in the mind (Kogan et al., 1991). The information is then analyzed, enlarged upon, given new form and finally, it is subjected to interaction and then used or stored according to the needs of the time. According to cognitive psychologists whatever is conveyed through the stimulus in the environment is the input, the cognitive functioning of the human mind is the process and the result is the output or product (Hilgard et al., 1986). It is therefore the consistent individual differences that mediate between environmental input and the organism output. Even though the knowledge acquired by the student’s through different teaching methods depend upon their cognitive style (Grieve et al., 1971).

1.2.1. Characteristics of Cognitive Styles

The essential characteristics of cognitive styles in general have been given by Witkin et al. (1976). According to them, cognitive styles are concerned with the form rather than content of cognitive delivery.

- These refer to individual differences on the way how to perceive, think, solve problems, learn and relate to others.

- They are pervasive dimensions that cut across the boundaries traditionally used in compartmentalizing the human psyche and so help to restore the psyche to its proper status as a holistic entity.

- They are stable over time, it is not that they are unchangeable; some may be rather easily altered. Thus stability makes stylistic dimensions particularly useful in long range of time (Bauman, 1951; Witkin et al., 1954; Witkin et al., 1967).

- With regard to value judgment, cognitive styles are bipolar and range from one extreme to the opposite extreme where each end of the dimension has different implications for cognitive functioning. Each pole thus has adaptive value under specified circumstances and may be judged positively in relation to the circumstances.

- Persons of same cognitive style use similar modes of communication and do better at reading, which facilitates understanding with positive consequences.

1.2.2. Types of Cognitive Styles
Various types of cognitive styles have been identified by researchers. Many cognitive styles have been inferred from perceptual characteristics, whereas some have the cognitive characteristic. The cognitive as well as the perceptual styles have been subjected to research and their exploration has also been influenced by psychoanalytic theory which is thought to have a cognitive approach to behavior. Messick (1976) enlist various types of cognitive styles as field articulation (Messick et al., 1963; Wachtel, 1968; Mos et al., 1974), conceptualizing styles, breadth of categorization (Pettigrew, 1958; Fillenbaum, 1959; Bruner et al., 1961; Messick et al., 1965), compartmentalization (Messick et al., 1965), conceptual articulation (Bieri et al., 1966; Schorder et al., 1967), conceptual integration or integrative complexity, conceptual differentiation (Gardner, 1953; Gardner et al., 1965; Glixman, 1965; Gardner et al., 1968), cognitive complexity vs simplicity (Kelly, 1955; Harvey et al., 1961; Scott, 1962; Allard et al., 1963; Wyer, 1964; Tripodi et al., 1964; Vannoy, 1965; Messick et al., 1965; Bieri et al., 1966; Schrader et al., 1967), levelling vs sharpening (Holzman et al., 1954; Gardner et al., 1959; Holzman et al., 1959; Israeli, 1966), reflection vs impulsivity (Kagan et al., 1964; Kagan et al., 1970), risk taking vs cautiousness (Kogan et al., 1967), tolerance vs intolerance of unrealistic experience (Gardner et al., 1959; Klein et al., 1974), constricted vs flexible control (Klein, 1954; Gardner et al., 1959; Santostefano et al., 1964; Jensen et al., 1966), strong vs automatization (Broverman, 1960a, 1960b; Broverman et al., 1976), conceptual vs perceptual motor dominance (Broverman, 1960a, 1960b), sensory modality preferences, converging vs diverging (Getzel et al., 1962; Hudson, 1968), cognitive complexity vs. cognitive simplicity (Kelly, 1955), deep elaborative vs shallow reiterative (Schmeek, 1983), global vs. analytical (Kirby, 1988), need for cognition (Tanaka et al., 1987), objective vs. non objective (Leithwood et al., 1982), organizer vs. non organizer (Atman, 1988), right vs left brained (Torrance et al., 1988), simultaneous vs successive (Das, 1988) verbalizer vs imager (Riding et al., 1976), holist vs serialist (Pask, 1972). Among these various types of cognitive styles, one category has maximum been focused by the researchers i.e. field-independence (FI)/ field-dependence (FD) which is given by Witkin et al. (1954). That is why this category of cognitive style need to be discussed in detail.

Field-independence (FI) vs Field-dependence (FD): It refers to consistent mode of approaching the environment in analytical, as opposed to global terms. It denotes a tendency to articulate figures as discrete from their backgrounds and a facility in differentiating objects from embedding context, as opposed to a counter-tendency to experience events globally in an undifferentiated fashion. The field independent pole includes competence in analytical functioning combined with an impersonal orientation. The field dependent pole reflects
correspondingly less competence in analytical functioning combined with greater social orientation and social skills (Witkin et al., 1954; Witkin et al., 1962; Witkin et al., 1973)

The people at field independent pole have developed cognitive restructuring abilities whereas field dependent people have developed interpersonal competencies. Many studies report that field dependent individuals are more likely to provide evidence of impulsive behaviour than field independent individuals (Podell et al., 1959; Swan, 1974; Best, 1975). The field independent people are prone to use isolation, intellectualization and projection as their characteristic defenses and shows superiority in attending person and remembering verbal messages that are more social in content (Eagle et al., 1966; Eagle et al., 1969; Goldberg et al., 1972) whereas the field dependent people are more likely to use repression and denial as their characteristic defenses. The field dependent people remember the stressful situation more often than the field independent people who are more likely to forget the stressful situation. Field dependent and field independent persons differ in the strategies they employ for learning the materials. The field independent subjects tend to make greater use of mediators whereas the field dependent subjects cannot or do not impose the structure on materials. Korchin (1982) reported that field independent/field dependent individuals have a greater aptitude for cognitive restructuring and they are often described as cold, manipulating and distant. The field dependent persons are especially prone to be guided by the position attributed to an authority figure or peer group (Bell, 1964; Deever, 1967), they literally spend more time looking at the faces of those with whom they are interacting (Konstadt et al., 1965; Nevill, 1971; Ruble et al., 1972). Garger et al. (1987) emphasized upon the learning style of field independent are that they perceives concept analytically, makes specific concept distinctions, learns social material only as an intentional task, interested in new concepts for their own sake, has self defined goals and reinforcement and less affected by criticism whereas field dependent can perceive concept globally, makes broad general distinctions among concepts, learns best material from own experience, requires externally defined goals and reinforcements and more affected by criticism. The composition of various cognitive styles leads to the formation of cognitive map. An individual’s cognitive map represents his unique cognitive make up, including area of strength and weakness and emphasized the multiplicity of ways in which people may be different from each other.

Theories of cognitive styles were developed as a result of early studies conducted by Witkin et al. (1954, 1962). These studies resulted in theories that generally assumed a single dimension of cognitive style with two extremes. The two extremes were described in general terms by Keen (1973), Mikenney et al. (1974) and Botkin (1974) as systematic style and
intuitive style. These two styles however did not reflect the entire spectrum of people’s
behaviour with regard to thinking, learning and especially problem solving and decision
making. Therefore, a multidimensional model intended to reflect the entire spectrum was
postulated (Martin, 1983). This model consisted of two continuums with five sub types of
cognitive style viz. systematic, intuitive, integrated, undifferentiated and split cognitive style.
Systematic style is associated with logical, rational behaviour that uses a step by step
sequential approach to thinking, learning, problem solving and decision making. The
individual, whose style is intuitive, uses an unpredictable ordering of analytical steps when
solving a problem, relies on experience patterns characterized by unverbalized areas or
hunches and explores and abandons alternatives quickly. A person with an integrated style is
able to change styles quickly and easily, such style changes seem to be unconscious and take
place in a matter of seconds. A person with undifferentiated style appears not to distinguish
or differentiate between two style extremes i.e. systematic and intuitive, and therefore
appears not to display a style. An individual with split style shows fairly equal degrees of
systematic and intuitive specialization and using only one style at a time based on nature of
their tasks

1.3. Personality

Personality is an explicit construct which is invoked to explain behavioural
consistency within a person and behavioural distinctiveness between persons (Webster,
2002). Personality is the inner experience that is reflected in the characteristics of individual’s
mind (Thomas, 1985). The key goal of the individual is to understand the needs and conflicts
residing in his own unconscious behaviour and to integrate this understanding into conscious
behaviour.

Personality usually refers to the distinctive patterns of behaviour including thoughts
and emotions that characterize each individual’s adaptation to the situations of life (Mischel,
1976). It is an individual’s enduring persistent response patterns across a variety of situations
which are comprised of relatively stable patterns of action often referred to as traits,
dispositional tendencies, motivations, attitudes and beliefs which are combined into a more or
less integrated self structure (Harre et al., 1983) and that determine those commonalities and
differences in the psychological behaviour (thoughts, feelings and actions) of people that
have continuity in time and that may or may not be easily understood in terms of the social
and biological pressures of the immediate situation alone (Maddi, 1976).

Personality is a dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical
system that determine his unique adjustment to the environment (Allport, 1948). It is
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continuously changing due to interaction with environment as it involves the integration of physical, intellectual, emotional, social and character make up of an individual, which is expressed in terms of behaviour, attitude, conduct, movements, temperaments and traits. It is the sum total of all the biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, appetites and instincts of an individual and the dispositions and tendencies acquired by experience (Prince, 1989). In this way, the term personality signifies something deeper than mere appearance or conduct, it involves behaviour activities, movements and everything else concerning the individual inward and outward behaviour. It helps to differentiate people or the stability in a person’s behaviour across different situations as personality deals with individual’s behaviour.

Thus the unique quality of behaviour of an individual constitutes shape to his personality that is feelings, values, reactions, prejudices, attitudes, perception etc. which act as the basis of one's behaviour. It is more or less stable an enduring organization of a person’s character, temperament, intellect and physique, which determine his unique adjustment to the environment (Eysenck, 1971). Thus the personality of an individual plays a very important role in the process of decision making and adjustment. Success in life depends more often on qualities of character, personality and temperamental traits of an individual than on intellectual attainment, general intelligence or even specific abilities (Garcha, 2005).

The different conditions of infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth and old age play an important role in modifying the personality from time to time. In different stages of development of personality, different changes are visible in particular traits of the individual. In some stages changes are faster and more comprehensive and in other stages the change is comparatively less. The period of 6-18 years is particularly a significant phase of life for building wholesome personality of an individual as a growing organism. It includes pubertal phase which further leads to various developmental changes in an individual’s personality.

1.3.1. Approaches of Personality

Personality is a highly complex field of psychological enquiry open to many different interpretations, since it is assumed to reflect the very essence of individual’s personal manner of living. During the scientific era of psychology, personality has been defined as aesthetic, pyknic, athletic, dysplastic type (Kretschmer, 1925); normal, hysteroid, cycloid, schizoid and epileptoid types (Roasanoff, 1927); cerebrotonic, somatotonel and viscerotonic types (Sheldon, 1942), in term of psychological traits or telenomic trends (Allport, 1937; Cattell, 1971), in terms of consistent complex of self regarding attitude or ego structures (Sherif et al., 1947; Lucky, 1956; Combs et al., 1959), in terms of dynamic complex of psychological
needs, motor perceptual systems and characteristics models of conflict resolution (Lewin, 1936; Murray, 1953; Freud, 1973).

While explaining about personality, Freud (1938) emphasised the structure of human mind by dividing it into three layers as conscious, subconscious and unconscious. According to Freud, the ideas, thoughts and images that one is aware of any moment of our mental life are said to lie within the upper layer of our mind i.e. conscious mind. Just beneath the conscious layer, lies the subconscious mind. So in the middle layer, there lie all experiences or knowledge which have been gained or learned by an individual through various types of experiences or training. Below the subconscious mind lies the unconscious, the most important part of our mind. It contains all the repressed wishes, desires, feeling, drives and motives many of which may relate to sex and aggression. Freud further invented three more constituents of personality as Id, ego and super ego. If there is balance between Id and super ego, then there will be a balanced personality and if there is no proper balance between Id and super ego then there will be maladjusted personality. He believed that personality development is the organization and expression of basic sexual energy (libido) which comes through oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stage. Dollard et al. (1950) describe the development of personality in context of reflexes and innate hierarchies of responses and a set of primary drives for strengthening habits which are formed by stimulus response connection through learning.

Jung (1959) developed the concept of collective unconsciousness in terms of four basic mental functions (processes) as sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling which involves an individual’s orientation towards self and the environment through the use of perception and judgment. Jung believe that in order to make individuals function well, they must have a way to perceive a stimulus i.e. perception through sensing or intuition and to make an adequate response to that perception (i.e. making a decision or judgment through thinking or feeling) whereas Maslow (1970) believes that the personality of human being depend upon the style of striving towards the ultimate goal of self realization, the goal to seek self realization can usually come through knowledge, the appreciation of beauty, playfulness, self-sufficiency, insight into the truth or other constructive and creative expression. Rogers (1997) stressed the importance of an organism and self for determining the process of his growth, development and appropriate adjustment to the environment. The organism is an individual’s entire frame of reference i.e. experiences both conscious and unconscious whereas the concept of self differs from person to person as they are based purely on one’s own personal experiences.
1.3.2. Personality Traits

Personality traits are distinguishing qualities or characteristics of a person. Traits are readiness to think or act in a similar fashion in response to a variety of different stimuli or situations. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, personality traits are prominent aspects that are exhibited in a wide range of personal and social contexts. Woodworth (1965) defines a personality trait as some particular quality of behaviour such as cheerfulness, self reliance which characterises the individuals in a wide range of his activities and is fairly consistent over a period of time.

Personality traits are developed as a result of interaction between heredity and environment. They never exist in two persons in exactly the same way because of the unique heterogeneous organization of personality. Tupes et al. (1961) noted that personality of the child is directly influenced by different experiences and various attitudes of the parents’ personalities. Whether the child will be of strong will, jolly, of constructive attitude or irritable, melancholy or insipid, all depends on the experience gained before his school going age. Sternberg (1997) found that responses shown by the infants after their birth are a result of environment and not of heredity.

According to each stage of development, there are certain traits which are admired and others condemned. A thing that is admired during childhood, may be disliked during adolescence. Duncan (1997) has described the desired personality traits for children as to participate in healthy physical activities; good health, sufficient strength and regular sleep; respecting one’s companions; avoiding unnecessary criticism and respecting feelings of others; having natural relations with the persons of opposite sex; continuing to take part in co-operative activities. Whereas Richardson (1980) emphasized the traits of personality as the ability to understand others correctly and to appreciate their work; gave proper importance to the feelings of others; be careful about the facilities of others; show good manners; normal emotional maturity; adjust oneself according to changed circumstances.

Murray (1953) has conceived personality as consisting of an integrated aggregate of ‘needs’ and perceptional ‘presses’. Needs are defined as what the subject requires to reduce striving behaviour. A press or an object or person is defined as what it can do ‘to’ or ‘for’ an individual’s personality i.e. the power it has to affect the well being of an individual. Needs and presses are functionally related. The behaviour resolution of a particular complex of need press is called a ‘thema’ in Murray’s theory. A thema is the dynamic structure of an event i.e. the general nature of the environment and the individual response. According to this theory, an individual can infer the general nature of one’s needs and perceived presses by analyzing a
large variety of his thematic tendencies.

Allport (1948) supported the biophysical concept of personality organization and believes that traits are dynamic and flexible dispositions resulting at least in part, from the integration of specific habits, expressing characteristic modes of adaptation of one's surroundings. He distinguishes three types of traits namely cardinal traits which are so dominating in one’s personal disposition that they colour every aspect of one’s behaviour and attributes; central traits are the few characteristic tendencies which can be ordinarily used to describe a person as honest, kind, submissive; secondary traits appear in small range of situations and are not considered strong enough to be regarded as integral part of one’s personality. Allport (1948) also emphasized another important concept of discrete and discontinuous nature of the development of personality. The past cannot decide the functions of the present, only those aspects of the past which are relevant to the present or for planning the future are thus recollected and utilized by the individual in his behaviour manifestation.

Cattell (1962) defined trait as structure of the personality inferred from behaviour in different situations. He distinguishes four types of traits as common traits which are widely distributed in general population like honesty, aggression, cooperation; unique traits which are unique to a person; surface traits that are recognized by manifestation of behaviour like curiosity, dependability, tactfulness; source traits are the underlying structures or sources that determine behaviour such as dominance, emotionality etc. The sixteen basic traits according to Cattell are A (reserved/outgoing), B (less intelligent/more intelligent), C (affected by feelings/emotionally stable), E (submissive/dominant), F (serious/happy go lucky), G (expedient/conscientious), H (timid/venturesome), I (Tough minded/Tender minded), L (trusting/suspicious), M (practical/imaginative), N (forthright/shrewd), O (self assured/apprehensive), Q1 (conservative/experimenting), Q2 (group dependent/self sufficient), Q3 (uncontrolled/controlled) and Q4 (relaxed/tense).

Eysenck (1971) conceptualises personality in term of three orthogonal higher order factors viz. introversion-extroversion, neuroticism (emotional instability-emotional stability) and psychoticism. These three basic dimensions refer to definite personality types i.e. introvert- extrovert, neurotic and psychotic. However, the term ‘type’ as applied by Eysenck stands clearly for a dimension along a scale with the low end and a high end for putting people at various points between the two extremes. While the high end on the first dimension specifies introversion-extroversion that includes highly extrovert recognized as sociable, outgoing, impulsive, optimistic and jolly people and the lower end typifies the highly extrovert recognized as quiet, introspective, reserved, reflective, disciplined and well ordered
people. The second dimension involves emotional instability (at lower end) who are moody, touchy, anxious or restless and emotional stability at higher end include those who are stable, calm, carefree, cool tempered and dependable. The people high on psychotocism dimension tend to be solitary, insensitive, egocentric, impersonal, impulsive and opposed to accepted social norms while those scoring low are more empathic, less adventurous and bold. The model is a hierarchical one with specific responses at the bottom and definite personality type at the top.

McCrae et al. (2003) put forward big five personality factors such as neuroticism (emotional stability), extraversion (introversion), openness to experience (closeness to experiences), agreeableness (disagreeableness), and conscientiousness (lack of conscientiousness). Each supertrait is measured by 6 facets (or subordinate traits). For neuroticism are anxiety, anger, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness and vulnerability; for extroversion are warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking and positive emotion; for openness to experience are fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas and values; for agreeableness are trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty and tendermindedness; for conscientiousness are competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self discipline and deliberation.

1.4. Adjustment

Adjustment is a harmonious relationship with the environment in which most individual’s needs are satisfied in socially acceptable ways resulting from passive conformity to vigorous action (Veena et al., 2003). It is a condition or state of mind and behaviour in which one feels that one’s needs have been, or will be, gratified. The satisfaction of these needs, however, must lie within the framework and requirements of one’s culture and society. As long as this happens, the individual remains adjusted; failing this, he may drift towards maladjustment and mental illness.

Adjustment is the adaptation to different areas as per the demands of the reality, which means the necessity for the organism to govern and would itself in response to the conditions and also to manipulate the surrounding conditions to meet the needs of survival. It includes the possibility of inconsistencies and conflicts which constitute some of the major problems of adjustment that individual has to face. A well adjusted individual can meet his needs with the resources available in his environment (Broota et al., 1992).

Adjustment is the interaction between a person and his environment (Arkoff, 1968). How one adjusts to a particular situation depends upon one’s personal characteristics and the circumstances of the situation. It is a continual process in which a person varies his behaviour
to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment (Gates et al., 1970). In other words, both personal and environmental factors work side by side in adjustment. An individual is adjusted if he is adjusted to himself and to his environment and maintains a balance between his needs and circumstances that influence the satisfaction of needs (Shaffer, 1961).

An individual’s adjustment is adequate, wholesome or healthful to the extent that he has established harmonious relationship between himself and the conditions, situations and persons who comprise his physical and social environment (Crow et al., 1956). A person with adjustment difficulties is often a nuisance in the family and society. An adjusted learner is one who attacks problem directly, accepts and tolerates normal amount of frustration, acts rationally, makes sincere efforts to reach his goal, enjoy company of others, remain cheerful, energetic and possesses an optimistic view of life and things around him. So it is the establishment of a satisfactory relationship, as representing harmony, conformance, adaptation or the like (Webster, 1951). For making the distinction between adjusted and maladjusted behaviour, White (1956) emphasized that adjustment implies a constant interaction between the person and his environment, each making demands on others; sometimes it is accomplished when the person yields and accepts conditions which are beyond his power to change and sometimes it is achieved when the environment yields to the person’s constructive activities. In most cases adjustment is a compromise between these two extremes and maladjustment is a failure to achieve a satisfactory compromise. The important components of adjusted behaviour according to Crow (1974) are the possession of a wholesome outlook of life, a realistic perception of life, emotional and social maturity and a good balance between inner and outer forces that activate human behaviour. A failure to achieve these is likely to be conducive to maladjustment which may lead to a variety of emotional disorder as sadness, hopelessness, lack of enjoyment, nervousness, thoughts of suicide, anxiety, worry, troubled sleeping, feeling overwhelmed and behavioural symptoms as fighting, reckless driving, avoiding family or friends and poor school performance.

1.4.1. Areas of Adjustment

Home Adjustment: As home is the basic unit of society, its importance in an individual life is fairly obvious. According to Stover (1974), a person’s home is his castle. The function of the family is to love, to nurture and to support its members (Lystad, 1974). The well adjusted family is not one without problems, it is one which is able to deal successfully with its problems.

Health Adjustment: As health is the broadest aspect and essential for a well balanced
personality, it depends to a large degree on energy, ideals and happiness. People in poor health are often difficult in surplus energy lacking in self control and pessimistically oriented towards life. Physical changes in adolescents have often been observed which produces stresses and strains and these stresses often disrupt the normal health adjustment of individuals (Bell, 1939).

Social adjustment: It is determined by how adequately the individual plays the social role that is expected from him and personal satisfaction he derives from playing this role (Hussain, 1998). It is needed at every age, and influenced by social maturity of the person. Maturity in social relationships mean establishment of good relations with family, neighbours, playmates, classmates, teachers and other members of the society. A socially mature person behaves in accordance with social norms, customs and traditions and possess social qualities as patience, kindness, sympathy, cooperation, courtesy, cheerfulness, respect for others’ opinion, self confidence and self control.

Emotional adjustment: This deals with how intensely you experience and express emotions both positive and negative. Experiencing emotions and sorting them out, experiencing joy, love, pleasure and sharing it with concerned person is healthy. Similarly allowing others to express their emotions, helping to sort them out (when their experiences are distressing) involves adjustment with emotional experiences The emotional development of well adjusted individual depends upon maturation and learning (Wolf, 1992). Krishna et al. (1979) found that emotionally disturbed group was more neurotic, anxious, insecure and poorly adjusted in home, health, social and emotional areas.

Joshi et al. (1964) in their research study covering school and college students and gave 11 areas of an individual’s adjustment viz. health and physical development; finance, living conditions and employment; social and recreational activities; courtship, sex and marriage; social psychological relations; personal psychological relations; moral and religious; home and family; future-vocational and educational; adjustment to school and college work; curriculum and teaching.

Adequate adjustment is achieved by a person who has a healthy self concept (Gupta, 2001). In evaluating the adjustment of an individual one must consider all the habits and attitudes which are used to satisfy an organism’s social and personal needs. Rajput (1985) asserts that poor achievers seem to have no desire to succeed at home, school and community and they are often in a state of tension and anxiety which interferes with their learning. Children who make poor adjustment are victims of parental rejection, sibling rivalry, culture of parents,
undue emphasis on achievement, over indulgence inconsistency, economic strain and poor health conditions (Rajamanickam et al., 1993). A well-adjusted person is one who have awareness of his own strengths and limitations, respecting himself and others, have adequate level of aspiration, satisfy his basic needs, absence of a critical or fault-finding attitude, flexibility in behaviour, capacity to deal with adverse circumstances, feel satisfied with surroundings, always plan, think and act pragmatically

The methods employed for keeping and restoring harmony between the individual and his environment may be described as direct or indirect. Direct methods are used by the individual intentionally at a quite rational and conscious level. These may include one’s efforts to increase the number of triats, improve efforts or adopt compromises by resetting the goal or level of aspiration etc. Indirect methods of achieving adjustment are used at the unconscious level. Their aim is to provide temporary adjustment to the individual by protecting him against the psychological dangers. Various types of mental or defence mechanism like compensation, rationalization, projection, identification, repression, regression, withdrawal, sympathism etc. are indirect methods which provide temporary relief from the psychological tension, conflict and stresses and make one able to seek adjustment for the time being.

1.5. Adolescence

The period of adolescence is related to storm, stress and age of revolt. It is the most critical stage with distinct phase of rapid physical, psychological and social behavioural changes and emotional disturbances, and where occupational, educational and personal contexts develop. During this period, expectations of the individual drastically undergo modification. Thus the programs for adolescents should focus on the development of academic and career guidance and provision of economic and social constructive activities. Mohan (2000) opines that adolescence is probably the most turbulent, challenging, stressful and uncertain of all phases in life, both for themselves as well as for their parents, teachers and health professionals.

World Health Organization (1997) has defined adolescence as being between the ages of 10-19 years. The National Council of Educational Research and Training defines adolescence as the period of physical, psychological and social maturity from childhood to adulthood, the period extending from puberty to the attainment of full reproductive maturity. They don’t want to be dependent on their parents, but they are unable to take part in the interdependent system of adulthood. They rebel against childhood dependence, but before
they reach interdependence they crave independence and tend to be rebellious.

The age of the student during senior secondary level is of adolescence, which is the transition period between childhood and adulthood. This is a period of heightened sensibility for rapid learning and of critical acquisition, which determines the future life. They have many questions surfacing their mind about themselves i.e. self, sexuality, self work, independence, choice of courses and career, role in family, social relations, religious activities, political ideology and participation in political activities etc. They search for answers to all these questions with certainty. Erickson (1968) believes that adolescents want to work out their identity in four major areas viz. career, morality and religion, political ideology and social roles including sex role. It is believed that adolescents suffer severe conflicts in major areas of life such as education, occupation and home. In these areas, they need to establish their real identity, their actual being. However, important environmental changes do not necessarily cause crises in all adolescents. It is their status and role in the family, school, among peer groups; their achievement, aspiration, conflicts, choice of career and intensification of sexual feelings and heterosexual relations which cause stress and identity crises in adolescents. Therefore, helping adolescents in achieving their stable identity should be an important responsibility of the parents, teachers and school management authority.

Adolescence is a stage of ‘redefining the self’ by adolescent, to explore, establish and achieve one’s identity, to make judicious choices for courses of study, to choose proper career and make efforts to enter it; to form, establish and maintain generous, long lasting and sincere interpersonal relations; to recognize and realize their potentialities and prepare themselves to enter adulthood with strong footing.