CHAPTER II

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Research in a particular field requires an extensive study of the literature related to the subject. A critical review of the literature would provide information regarding what has been done in the same area and help gather relevant ideas and suggestions for significant investigation. Careful reading of the reviews of expert researchers would also promote greater understanding of the topic, procedures and methods and enable the investigator to frame useful hypotheses.

The present chapter deals with the reports of earlier studies related to socio-psychological and pedagogical factors affecting academic achievement in general and language development in particular.

2.1 STUDIES RELATED TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

A study of the social impact of education is essential since a number of factors determine an individual's social status and development. The most common factors in judging economic social class difference are occupation, education and income. Occupation determines the individual's social status and occupational status is closely related to education and education greatly influences the income of the family. Economic status of the learner influences the learner's academic performance both positively and negatively as it affects the basic needs of the learner such as home and school environment, financial assistance, necessary background experience and parental care, attitudes and encouragement.

An extensive study conducted by Robinson (1946) proved that maladjusted homes or poor interfamily relationships caused reading disability.
Barton (1962) in a survey found that socio-economic class was the most important determinant of success in reading in school.

Most studies indicate that pupils from upper socio-economic homes come to school with more background knowledge and experience than those from lower socio-economic homes. The past experiences that the middle class children possess help them learn the tasks in a fast manner (Henry, 1963).

Significant difference in academic achievement of students from different socioeconomic status homes has been reported (Coleman, 1966 and Ajech, 1991).

Children of low status are found to have slow rate of learning and problem solving compared to that of middle class children (Siegel et.al., 1967).

Worley and Story (1967) reported that the language facility of first-grade children from low socio-economic groups was over a year below to that of children from high socio-economic status. They also stated that though socio-economic status was not a completely accurate determinant of reading achievement, it was closely related to broadness of experience and language facility.

Deutsch (1967) studied family relationship including broken homes and reported that children, from intact homes which were more crowded performed better in scholastic achievement.

Chopra (1969) after studying the relationship between cultural deprivation and academic achievement of students reported a positive relationship between socio-economic background and achievement in English, Mathematics, and Social Sciences.

The United States commission on Civil Rights (1971) reported that ethnic background and its social relationships were also important influences on reading achievement.

Callaway, (1972) however, revealed that income of the family and occupation of the parents were not significantly related to reading achievement.
Adler (1973) stated that socio-economic status appeared to be a fairly consistent correlate of language usage.

Smith (1974) noted that impoverished environment, health defects and low self concepts were basic contributing factors to reading achievement.

Singh (1966) found that the difference in intelligence and scholastic achievement between the socially disadvantaged and advantaged groups increased with the increase in the degree of social advantage.

Coleman and Rainwater (1978) and Gilbert and Kahl (1987) grouped low-class economically poor into two categories: the upper-lower and lower-lower classes. They stated that children brought up in lower-lower class home inherited and maintained the socio cultural mores, the family structure, the unstable and disorganized home environment which hampered their language development and cognitive learning.

Socio-economic status has positive correlation with achievement, examination and anxiety. High socio-economic status students had superior performance scores. (Srivastava et.al., 1980).


Factors such as social status, economic imbalances and family climate due to social and economical deprivation significantly correlate with the learning process?

2.2 STUDIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Home background conditions and institutional factors influence learners’ academic achievement. The Summerfield Report (1968) considered family and school as the two main social environments in which a child grows and hence a study of these factors is necessary to know about the learner characteristics.
Bloom (1965) observed that culturally deprived students possessed experiences in homes which did not transmit the cultural patterns necessary for the learning characteristics of the school and the larger society.

Children reared in environmental deficits had low IQ, poor language, poor conceptual abilities, poor abilities to focus attention and low probability success in schools. (Siegel et. al., 1967).

McCloskey (1967) observed that the children of poor background did not have sufficient interaction with their parents and this resulted in cognitive deficiency. Generally, their parents do not stimulate them intellectually through conversation, field trips, books and magazines and never encourage their curiosity.

The linguistic ability of the educationally disadvantaged students is low because the environment in which they grow up offers inadequate opportunities to use language and their language is also perceived to be structurally deficient (Bloom, et. al., 1965 and Howard, et. al., 1970).

Tulkin and Kagan (1970) and Robinson (1972) observed the role of the mothers of middle-class and the working-class children and concluded that the mothers of middle-class children had verbal interactions even at an early stage, whereas the working-class mothers believed that they had to respond only when the children begin to talk.

Children of poor background are also found to have poor self concepts and self-esteem. Lack of role models at home, repeated failure in school and other competitive situations may lower their self images. They are also believed to suffer a loss of self esteem when they compare their lives and living conditions with those of middle class learners (Bowles, 1976). Fotheringham and Creal (1980) stated that the major influence on the differences in academic achievement among children was the family.
Both McCartney (1984) and Goelman (1986) found that if substitute caregivers do not provide positive verbal interactive environments they may hamper child’s language development.

Parental attitudes, educational level, encouragement and interests can contribute a supportive home environment.

Katkovsky, et. al. (1967) found that children who had warm, nurturant and accepting parents developed faith in their own ability to master their environment.

Pidgeon (1970) studied the effects of parental encouragement when he had to evaluate the mathematical achievement of children of boarding school and those of day schools. He found that it was the interest and encouragement that parents showed in their children’s progress that inspired the children.

Research has consistently proved that parental level of education continues to be a significant source of disparities in student performance. A supportive learning environment at home provided by the high level parental education would be reflected in higher educational performance by their children. The levels of educational aspirations and expectations of the disadvantaged students are low because they lack favorable cultural and environmental factors that would prepare them for high aspirations (McCloskey, 1967).

A number of studies conducted by psychologists and social scientists to find out the influence of various individual component variables of family climate on scholastic performance revealed that over restriction (Chess, 1965 and Mize, 1978), unrealistic expectations (Rosen, 1964 and Uniyal and Shah Beena, 1983), excessive guilt (Carillo, 1957), repressed hostility (Clausen and Williams, 1953), and over protection (Hatwick and Stowell, 1963) were related to poor achievement in examination.

The school environmental factors play a vital role in developing an individual’s character and in implementing effective learning process.
Robinson (1946) in her study indicated that factors such as teachers’ personalities, methods of teaching reading, school policy on promotions, teaching materials and class size influenced reading achievement. She believed that school methods were a significant causal factor in most of the cases she studied.

From a study conducted by Himmelweit and Swift (1969) to find out the effects of different schools on boys with the same home background and the effect of the same school on boys with different home backgrounds, it was observed that school was a better predictor of the boys’ attainment, attitude and subsequent career than his social background and ability.

Gage and Berliner (1975) focused the impact of class size on the teachers’ choice in instructional method.

Friedman (1976) and Hamilton (1983) reported that factors such as lack of recognition, encouragement, rewards and attention and the unfair treatment received in school greatly affected the learners’ academic performance.

California School Effectiveness Study (1977) found that factors such as staff characteristics, measures of contact between staff and students and instructional and organizational characteristics were significant determinants of pupil success in reading.

Stallings (1978) stressed the importance of variety in activities, closely monitored seatwork, structured programs and supportive feedback for higher gains in reading.

Brookover and Lezotte (1979) found that lack of emphasis on the basic reading objectives was the major difference between improving and declining schools.

Students’ attitude towards classroom climate increases students’ participation in learning and interaction (Sommer and Olson, 1980).
Environmental conditions of the institution are found to have significant correlation with factors such as planning, implementation, evaluation and discipline. (Hayon, 1987).

Lloyd and Blandford (1991) stated that inadequate learning environment could be the primary cause of students' difficulty in learning.

Yadav (2002) pointed out that poor classroom conditions, class size, lack of clear objectives for teaching English in schools, variations in syllabus and teaching methodology and poorly designed textbooks have led to many problems in language teaching and learning process.

2.3 STUDIES RELATED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Learners enter educational institutions with different social, cultural, economical, educational and emotional background. An individual is a member of the society with a unique combination of characteristics that make up his/her personality. Personality factors, interest, abilities, attitudes, aptitude and motivation of a learner would have an impact on the learning process.

Gates (1941) reported that 75 percent of the disabled readers studied by him showed personality maladjustment. He also indicated that emotional maladjustment was a significant cause of reading disability.

Robinson (1946) stated that 40.9 percent of her disabled readers had significant degree of emotional maladjustment. She found that poor parent-child relationship, unfair comparisons with others, lack of encouragement at home and negative attitudes of parents to learning may lead to failure.

Siegel (1954) found that disability in reading was frequently caused by personality maladjustments.

White (1956) considered self-concept as an integrating force and each person’s self concept was different from that of any other person.

Betts (1957) reported the significance of the concept of reading readiness at all levels.
A study conducted to evaluate learners’ language learning aptitude and verbal intelligence showed that interest in learning a language is an important factor. (Gardner, 1960).

Pimsleur et. al. (1962) reported on a large number of studies that examined the relationship between intelligence and foreign language learning. He pointed out that some of the studies indicated positive relationship between intelligence and success in a foreign language, most of the studies were skeptical of such relationship.

Several researchers (Pimsleur et. al., 1964; Smart et. al., 1970 and Bartz, 1974) stressed the importance of personality in second language learning. Pimsleur et. al. (1964) compared average achievers and underachievers in high schools and found that a successful learner possessed personality traits such as social conformity, extroversion, flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity.

Malmquist’s (1967) study of 399 Swedish children indicated that nervous traits were responsible for reading failure.

The findings of Smart et. al. (1970) however, showed that higher achievers scored lower score on social spontaneity scale than others and possessed introvertive tendencies.

Harris (1972) in a study conducted to determine the relationship between achievement and intelligence noted that the relation between intelligence and reading was low to moderate at initial level but it increased at higher level.

A review of the effects of extroversion on the learning of both children and students in higher education (Entwistle, 1972 and Eysneck, 1972) indicated that at primary and during the first stages of secondary schooling, extroverted students did slightly better than the introverted ones and at the later stages of secondary and tertiary education, introverts did better. While the correlation between extroversion and academic success in higher education varies with different institutes and different subjects.
Bartz (1974) observed that introversion, soberness and self-sufficiency were strongly correlated with oral components of communicative competence while learners with traits of imagination, placidity and low anxiety scored high on the written components.

Self-concept has a significant effect on the behavior of students both inside and outside school. Studies conducted by Padelford (1969), Cohn and Kornelly (1970) indicated a significant positive relationship between reading achievement and self-concept.

Snow (1977) indicated that four aptitudes or individual differences were found to influence achievement in education. These four are general ability, (intelligence) achievement motivation, anxiety and prior knowledge.

Smith (1979) found that the combination of word knowledge performance, math performance and socio-economic status was a significant predictor of self-concept.

Smith (1979) also revealed that learning disabled students from high SES families had lower self-concepts than those from low SES families. It is generally believed that positive self-concept enhances learning while negative self-concept impedes achievement.

Genesee and Hamayan (1980) failed to find any positive relationship between personality variables and achievement.

Anxiety influences academic achievement. Low anxious students tend to have higher scores (Smith, 1964; Singh, 1966; Bhatnagar, 1963; Dutt et. al., 1972 and Arora, 1975).

Learners with high esteem predicted higher grades compared to their prior grade average in the course than did students with low esteem (Thomas and Randall, 1979).

Attitude is one of the factors that account for variation in the level of achievement. Spolsky (1969), Gardner and Lambert (1972) stressed the importance of a friendly outlook towards the group as well as the language.
Burstall (1975) reviewed several studies and revealed that they showed a positive correlation between attitudes and achievement.

Krashen (1981) stated that self-esteem, motivation and level of anxiety were the three affective variables that influenced language acquisition. Relationship between motivation and efficiency of learning has been studied by several researchers.

Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) emphasized the need for integrative motivation.

Burstall (1975) after working with primary school children learning French concluded that achievement was primary and motivation was the consequence.


Khanna, et. al. (1990) found significant correlations between the motivational orientations of ESOL learners in U.K and the teachers' evaluation of their English Skills.

Findings of earlier studies related to psychological factors are consistent and it is evident that personality dispositions may be involved in language – learning efficiency.

2.4 STUDIES RELATED TO PEDAGOGICAL FACTORS

Teaching is a complex process and teaching methodology depends on numerous variables. Though no method satisfies all the criteria, teaching process should consider the nature of learners and their learning process. Apart from individual and institutional factors that may cause the difference in achievement, pedagogical factors may also influence the learning process.

A number of studies (Anderson, 1975; Marton and Salgo, 1976; Entwistle and Ramsden et. al., 1983 and Entwistle 1987) conducted to examine
the approaches to learning indicated qualitative differences at the level of understanding and use of more than one approach to learning.

It is necessary to evaluate students’ learning characteristics to understand each learner. Students employ different methods while doing learning tasks and problems. These aspects determine their learning style.

Rosenberg (1968) defined learning style as referring to individual characteristic pattern of behavior when confronted with a problem.

Keefe (1979) considered learning style as characteristics of cognitive, affective and physiological behavior that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact and respond to the learning environment.

Grasha and Reichman (1975) developed taxonomy of six learning styles: independent, dependent, collaborative, competitive, participative and avoidant.

The positive effects of cooperative learning on many students’ achievement, attitudes and interpersonal relationships have been demonstrated repeatedly (Asher, 1986).

It has been reported that European American gifted, average, and low-ability females, particularly those from poor backgrounds, prefer cooperative learning environments, whereas males tend to respond better to competitive and individualistic situation. (Grossman and Grossman, 1994).

Increased student motivation, highest test scores, and enhanced social skills are some of the benefits of cooperative learning (Slavin, et. al., 1984; Smith, 1987 and Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Active participatory learning has been proved to be more effective than passive learning with most students. (Gersten, 1987).

Studies have also reported that learners, irrespective of gender, tend to experience the greatest academic gain from cooperative learning (Glassman, 1988).
Cooperative learning is also proved to be an effective approach with some students with disabilities. However, all students may not prefer this style. (Grossman, 1995).

Experience and studies have proved the enormous power of collaborative learning.

Study habits refer to the methods used by the students for learning. Many studies report the students' need for understanding their own study habits in the learning process in order to achieve the maximum benefit from their efforts. (Webster, 1977; Gibbs and Northedge, 1979; Jackson et. al., 1979 and Sreenivasa Rao, 1994).

Sreenivasa Rao (1994) studied the study skills with the following dimensions: Reading and note taking skills, skills of concentration, skills of time budgeting, preparing for examination and attitude toward learning.

The importance of note taking is stressed in many studies, note taking can aid the learning process as it enables the learners to recall and review the ideas easily. (Hartley and Davies, 1978).

A study conducted to examine the use of notes (Norton, 1981) for a class test revealed positive correlations between note taking and test score.

Study habits and attitudes acquired would help learners attain academic achievement (Pumfrey and Cotter, 1981).

Ramamurti (1993) emphasized the importance of good study habits as intelligence and personality alone would not be sufficient for academic achievement.

Students differ in their beliefs about success and failure. Earlier studies conducted indicate that students with an internal locus of control achieve more in school than those who have external locus of control. (Crandall, 1965).

Many disadvantaged students have an external locus of control that has a negative impact on their academic achievement (McCloskey, 1967, and Grossman, 1995).
2.5 SUMMARY

A perusal of the research studies related to the topic of the present study has provided much relevant information regarding the social, psychological and pedagogical factors which generally have significant influence on language development and enabled the investigator to conceptualize the present study and evolve the research design.