CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

Education is the most crucial factor, not only to equip the new generation with knowledge so essential for earning a livelihood, but also to create among them awareness with regard to existing and newly emerging social and environmental realities, inculcating scientific temper in them, independence of mind and spirit, which are of paramount importance for them to become responsible citizens. It is through education that all aspects of human personality, namely, physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual are fully nurtured for the healthy growth of the individuals in the society and humanity at large. Therefore, every individual must get opportunities to have education right from the age he/she becomes eligible to receive education.

Elementary education and adult literacy—twin components of universal literacy—act as a powerful determinants of economic development as well as relate positively with returns of investment in social infrastructure especially improved physical quality of life, that is duly recognised established by social scientists. For the democratic order of the country it is essential that elementary education should be within the reach of every school going child. Therefore, after independence compulsory and free education for the children in the age group 6-14 was given the utmost importance. The article 45, Directive Principle of Indian Constitution had clearly stated that:
"The state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution (Jan 6, 1950) for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

This gigantic and tough task was to be fulfilled by 1960 but it is unfortunate that we have not achieved the goal of universal literacy till now. It would be worthwhile to point out that although the recommendations of various commissions and committees led to improvement in educational programmes, operating throughout the country to bring this dream into a reality. But socio-economic constraints as well as cultural barriers remain strongly hostile to achieve the cherished goal of universalization of elementary education in the country. Still, the concerted efforts to eradicate adult illiteracy, on the one hand and provide universal elementary education to the children in the age group 6-14 years, on the other have yielded encouraging success in terms universal access, universal enrolment and retention. However the issue of universal attainment in educational outcomes (i.e. quality) has been problematic area along with the issue of ensuring equality in terms of socio-demographic characteristics of young learners such as gender, location, caste factor, parental education, occupation and family income along with parental support to educability of child.

Naik (1966, 1975) in the seventies showed keen concern for qualitative improvement in elementary education by suggesting different activities namely;

i) improvement of curriculum; ii) improvement of text-books and other teaching and learning materials; iii) adoption of dynamic methods of
iv) examination reference; v) improvement in general education and training of teachers; vi) improvement of supervision; vii) encouragement to initiative and experimentation of the part of schools and teachers; and viii) involvement of students, teachers and members of the community in the programmes of qualitative improvement of elementary education through a system of institutional planning and school complexes.

The NPE-1986 and revised POA (1992), too laid down a number of initiatives for quality improvement. The establishment of DIETs—as one of the initiatives—has led to more intensive in-service training to teachers in each and every district of the country for improvement of school effectiveness and teacher effectiveness, and ultimately quality of elementary education. It is visualized that school functioning and role of teacher in teaching-learning has improved to some extent, though not up to desired level. No doubt, learning achievement of students is dependent on personal attributes, such as intellectual and non-intellectual variables including attitude, motivation, interest etc., home environment in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and socialization practices including parent-child relations and above all school conditions comprising of both human resources (i.e. teachers) and non-human resources (i.e. buildings, equipment, library and other such related facilities) as well as socio-psychological dynamics of school as perceived by teachers and students.

India is one the developing countries, which took initiative in 1991 to lay down the minimum levels of learning (MLL) to be achieved at the primary stage. The state governments have introduced MLL in most primary schools. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) adopted MLL as a major
strategy for improvement of quality of primary education. The National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) was established in 1995 for achieving universalization of elementary education (UEE) by the year 2000 AD, by mobilization human and other resources, creating effective partnerships and conducting intensive result oriented campaigns.

The scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is being launched with a central objective of mobilizing all the resources—human, financial and institutional—to provide quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010 AD. The emphasis in SSA is to promote decentralized planning with full involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life. All these concerted efforts along with a number of incentive schemes and programmes like operation blackboard, mid-day meal, free text-books have been introduced in order to the solution of the problem of non-enrolment and drop-out at primary and upper-primary stage of elementary education. The 93rd Constitutional amendment to bring education of children in the age group of 6-14 years, passed by the parliament to fundamental right from directive principles is an indication of the resolve of the government to cause of 'education for all'. It may be mentioned that—as per Economic Survey 2001-2002—the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary stage (1-V) has increased from 42.6 percent in 1950-51 to 90.90 percent in 1999-2000 and in the upper primary stage (Class VI-VIII) from 12.7 percent to 58.79 percent over the same period. The percentage of girls' enrolment to total enrolment has
increased from 24.8 percent in 1950-51 to percent in 85.18 percent in the primary stage and from 16.1 percent to 49.66 percent over the same period in the upper-primary stage. The gender differences in gross enrolment ratio have also declined appreciably, an essential aspect of universal enrolment and retention for achieving goal of elementary distribution among different population groups, including scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. However, the inter-state variations, compounded with gender and caste configuration remain areas of concern at national level.

Still the focus of the current decade having a shift from universal primary education (UPE) to universal elementary education (UEE), has brought the issue of education on socio-economic and political agenda at national level to strengthen the movement to achieve the goals of UEE—enrolment, retention and quality achievement.

Along with thrust on UEE, the efforts by National Literacy Mission (NLM) have contributed significantly to reduce adult illiteracy. The gain point in adult literacy in the previous decade has been recorded to be 13.17 percent points, the highest increase in any one decade (Economic Survey 2001-2002), being 14.87 percent for female population as compared to 11.72 percent for male population. The rural-urban gap has also shown a decline, though inter-state and inter-district variations remain a matter of concern. The notable contribution of literacy campaign has been on UEE, where parents and community are showing increased concern for children's education. The Public Report on Basic Education in India (PROBE, survey 1999) has reported
increased parental willingness of educability of children, especially girl child, and, willingness of even illiterate to send the girls for education. In case of Himachal Pradesh, the survey results depict that almost all the parents consider education to be important for both boys and girls. Further, large majority of parents find improved employment and income opportunities as the main reasons for girl child to be educated. In the light of these facts if may be pointed out that as today we are concerned with:

(i) concerted efforts to maintain and further improve the enrolment and retention of children, both at primary and upper-primary stages in the direction of universal elementary education;

(ii) concerted efforts to improve quality of education i.e. universal attainment, both at primary and upper-primary stages.

1.1 Educational Status of Himachal Pradesh: A Glimpse

Himachal Pradesh, the dream land of innocent hilly people nestled in the lap of great Himalayas, came into existence on 15th April, 1948, as Chief Commissioner's province of the Indian Union by the merger of a number of princely states. The state attained full statehood on 25th January, 1971. Presently, it is divided into 12 administrative districts covering total area of 55,673 square kms and a population 60.77 lacs, density of population per square km. being 109 and sex ratio of 970.

Himachal Pradesh has a good track record in the field of education, particularly in elementary education and education of girls. There has been a tremendous improvement in literacy status of Himachal Pradesh since attaining statehood. It is a revealing fact that the literacy rate of the state has increased
from 31.96 percent in 1971 to 77.13 percent in 2001. The proportion of literates in the state is more than all India average of 65.38 percent in 2001. The change in literacy status of the state since 1971 may be shown in Table 1.1:

**TABLE 1.1**

LITERACY RATE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH : 1971-2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>31.96</td>
<td>43.19</td>
<td>20.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>42.48</td>
<td>53.19</td>
<td>31.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>63.86</td>
<td>75.36</td>
<td>52.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>77.13</td>
<td>86.02</td>
<td>68.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) and Annual Plan (2002-2003) Planning Department, Govt. of H.P., Shimla, 2002

The literacy campaign has touched the remotest areas of the state for educating adult population, and hence creating an environment for education of children in the age-group 6-14 for universalization of elementary education and also for higher stages of school education.

The state had also made concerted effects to achieve universal elementary education. The mid-day meal is being provided to all children at primary stage. Along with the implementation of various Centre sponsored schemes, the state government has launched an ambitions programme called 'Saraswati Bal Vidya Sankalp Yojana' with the aim of providing a minimum of 3 class rooms in every primary school. Access to schooling has also been achieved by opening primary within a walkable distance of 1 to 1.5 km. The state had 3,768 primary schools and 742 middle schools in 1971, but now there are 10,633 primary schools and 1,674 middle schools as on 31st March 2001.
The number of schools and other educational institutions may be shown in the table 1.2.

**TABLE 1.2**

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH (AS ON 31ST MARCH 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>3768</td>
<td>6093</td>
<td>7548</td>
<td>7548</td>
<td>7611</td>
<td>9138</td>
<td>10484</td>
<td>10533</td>
<td>10633</td>
<td>10633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Schools</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>1474</td>
<td>1672</td>
<td>1674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr.Sec. Schools</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes one evening college.

**Source:** *Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) and Annual Plan (2002-2003)*  
*Planning Department Govt. of H.P., Shimla, 2002.*

As a result of various intervention programmes such as operation blackboard, mid-day-meal scheme, District Primary Education Programme in four educationally backward districts of the state, namely, Chamba, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti and Sirmour, strengthening of infrastructure in schools and easy access to schooling, the drop-out rates have also decreased. The drop-out rates (1-VIII) for Himachal Pradesh stand at 28.5 percent for boys and 28.1 percent for girls against all India figure of 54.4 percent for boys and 60.1 percent for girls (Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-2003). The enrolment data in elementary education (Table 1.3) provide a glimpse of the success of state efforts for the cause of education.
TABLE 1.3

ENROLMENT DATA FOR UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF ENROLMENT TO TOTAL POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-11 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>111 110 104 109 104 105 103 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>91 100 94 101 102 105 103 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 99 105 105 103 105 103 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>90 90 91 100 100 100 100 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>60 74 76 89 90 90 90 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75 82 84 95 95 95 95 95.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It may also be mentioned that enrolment ratios at primary stage are more encouraging as the children, irrespective of age level have been brought in the school for education. The scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as planned at national level is also being launched in eight districts of the state namely; Bilaspur, Hamirpur Kangra, Mandi, Solan, Shimla, Una and Kinnaur to provide quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010 AD. It may be mentioned that the remaining four districts, namely, Chamba, Kullu, Lahaul & Spiti and Sirmour have been covered under DPEP since 1996, and culmination of the programme in 2003 will bring these four districts under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for achieving the goal of universal elementary education.

Keeping in view these developments, it is worthwhile to have an increased concern for quality attainment in elementary education, as we are
confronting the problem of low quality in learning achievement in core basic areas of literacy and numeracy at primary stage not only in DPEP districts (Singh & Gautam, 1996; Koul et al., 2000), but in other districts as well (Sharma, 1996; Kumari; 1997; Kumar, 1998; Sood, 2000). It may be mentioned that levels of learning achievement at primary stage are not low only in the state of Himachal Pradesh, but in other states of the country as well (Mid-term Assessment Survey: An Appraisal of Students' Achievement, 1998). While examining the success story of primary education in Himachal Pradesh, De et al. (2002) have remarked: on the issue of quality of schooling:

Unlike other states where illiteracy is still a problem and non-enrolment still figures as a major issue. Himachal forces us to look at the type of education system which we have to put in place, i.e. what are the problems to be faced if all children do receive basic education. Everything is in place but quality has still to be achieved. This is a prerequisite for an efficient education system where children enjoy their learning and have a good learning achievement.

1.2 Learning Achievement: Conceptual Issues and Concomitants

The quality of education is usually assessed in terms of learning performance of students at all stages of education and it is the resultant of a number of personal factors and also because of learning environment, being provided to the child at school and home. Hence these concepts need a brief description to focus on the phenomenon of learning achievement and its concomitants.
1.2.1 Learning Achievement

Achievement is the end product of all educational endeavours from initial stages of school education to higher levels of education. The main concern of all educational efforts is to see the learners' achievement to be maximum or at least optimal upto desired levels of expectancy. Learning achievement is synonymous to academic achievement or scholastic achievement and is used invariably only to reflect on the levels of performance by the recipients, i.e., learners as per the prescribed course content. Academic achievement of a pupil refers to the knowledge attained and skills developed in the school subjects, generally indicated by the marks obtained in tests, may be teacher made or standardized, following psychometric principles.

Academic achievement constitutes a socially desirable, equally relevant and integral aspect of all students' lives such that all students are motivated to seek academic excellence. Academic achievement is the outcome of the training imparted to a student by the teacher in a school situation, particularly in the class which is contingent upon pupil characteristics as well. But the school conditions, being equal to all, provide an opportunity to students to excel in their learning, in a differential manner. Trow (1950) defines academic or scholastic achievement as:

"the attained ability or degree of competency in school tasks usually as measured by standardized tests and expressed in grades or units based on norms derived from a wide sampling of pupils' performance".
Good (1959) has defined academic achievement as "the knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects" usually designated by test scores or marks assigned by teachers or by both.

The concerns for excellence in academics have brought sea change in measurement of learning outcomes of students, both in terms of knowledge based testing, and assessment of humanistic attributes as a resultant of school education. The shifts in examination systems, especially use of grading instead of numerical marking and continuous assessment during teaching-learning process are in vogue. Though the question of reliability and usability remains unanswered to large extent, still the learning outcomes, measured in any form remain acceptable criteria for promotion to higher grades and for employment purposes. The introduction of psychological testing had its impact on educational assessment and led to standardization of scholastic achievement test on norm-referenced principles, may be in one subject area or more (Gronlund, 1985; Best, 1992). The usage of diagnostic testing too found a place to overcome the problem of low achievement syndrome. With the emergence of principles of educational technology, the paradigm shift in achievement testing laid foundation for criterion-referenced testing to assess levels of achievement in terms of mastery attainment. The adoption of minimum levels of learning (MLL) criteria in primary education is inspired by these psychological principles (Dave, 1997) and assessment of learning achievement aimed at competency in basic literacy and numeracy skills, necessary for further education, and preparation for life. The DPEP interventions have used
the criteria to assess achievement on these principles to determine quality of primary education. Needless to mention, the competency based achievement tests provide a criteria to determines levels of learning, but also to identify areas of difficulty to provide remediation for achieving either prescribed minimum levels or mastery of the content matter defining competencies in elementary education: in order to have a review of existing practices in school and need to improve these as well as to provide a rationale for strengthening linkages of school with community, especially home for attaining higher levels of quality in elementary education (Rao, 2000; Mythili, 2002).

Since achievement is a continuous process in teaching-learning, it is desirable to refer to term learning achievement, rather than academic performance or achievement with a purpose to assess levels of achievement during the academic session.

1.2.2 School Organizational Climate

The school is one of the most important formal agencies of education, having second most intimate influence on the child's academic performance, the first being the home; as an energy equipped with multiple opportunities that stimulates the child to explore, investigate and experiment in many news and innovative ways. Perkin (1951) refers to quality of teacher-pupil relationship in the class is the major aspect of climate. Forehand and Gilmer (1959) defined organizational climate as a set of organizational properties which may influence the behaviour of individuals in an organization.
Cornell (1955) referred to the organizational climate of a school as a delicate blending of interpretation by person in the organization of their jobs or roles in relationship to others and their interpretations of the roles of others in the organization, principally based on perceptions of teachers. Kantz and Kahn (1966) suggest that the climate on culture of an organization reflects both "the norms and values of the formal system and their reinterpretation in the informal system". Halpin (1966) states in the context of school, "personality is to the individual what organizational climate is to the organization".

Organizational climate may also be defined as patterns of social interactions that characterize an organization, and Halpin and Croft (1963) identified organizations on a continuum ranging from "open to closed" climates with six distinctive types, namely, "open, autonomous, familiar, paternal, controlled, closed". An open climate defined is one in which there is attention to both task achievement and social needs. The closed climate is one which marks a situation in which the group members obtain little satisfaction in respect to either task achievement or social needs, i.e. is an institution, where the leader is ineffective in directing the activities of the staff and, at the same time, he is not inclined to look out for their welfare.

The climate type ranging between these two extremes include autonomous (characterized by friendly, relationship among teachers and absence of leadership), familiar (conspicuously friendly relationship among teachers and of course, the head being an integral past of faculty ; and social need satisfaction of all the faculty members as a core element, controlled
(emphasis on task orientation at the cost of social need satisfaction, and human aspect of relationship missing), and paternal (head being in the position of guardian leaving little score for social need satisfaction of the teachers).

The dimensions of interaction facilities, willingness to change, student autonomy, feedback of students, instructor's contribution and task concern are also considered as major components of climate in an institution (Hall, 1970).

Sinclair (1970) used "educational environment" as synonymous to "organizational climate", by stating that the term "educational environment" refers to the conditions, forces and external stimuli that foster the development of individual characteristics in an institution. It is also referred as intellectual climate which they think incorporates the concept of academic climate (Joshi & Miran, 1971; Joshi and Chauhan, 1971).

Sharma (1971) reviewing and analyzing the definitions of organizational climate observed that organizational climate may ultimately be defined in terms of interactions that take place between organizational members as they fulfill their prescribed roles while satisfying their individual needs. Furthermore, he specifies that it is the resulting condition within the school, of social interaction among the teachers and between the teachers and the principal.

The school is the one major social institution, other than home and family, which plays a major role in moulding the ideas, habits and attitudes of the children with a view to producing well balanced personalities; physically strong, mentally alert, emotionally stable, culturally round and socially efficient personnel for the development of the nation. Children and adolescents spend
more working hours in school and as a result, "the schools and colleges have come to provide the general social environment for youth (Coleman; 1974).

Bhatnagar (1977) observes that the unique quality of environment largely depends upon specific way the pupils are treated in school and the classroom. He defined the treatment environment as the product of the interactions between the teachers and pupils in school situations.

Faculty morale is another important dimensions of school climate and it was found to be closely tied to organizational climate (Pillai, 1979; Shelat, 1979; Mehare 1979; Mehta 1979). Institutions with open climate were found to be higher on the ladder of morale as compared to other groups.

In any social schooling synonymous with education—provides opportunity to learners to prepare themselves for life by imbibing humanistic attributes. Hence school organizational climate has emerged as a focus of researchers to explore its effect on adolescent development its effect learning performance (Sharma, 1982; Gupta and Sharma, 1981; Jarial and Sharma, 1982; Mishra, 1986; Kumari et al. 1988; Khan, 1995; Panda et al. 1995; Babu and Reddy, 1996; Kumarau, 2001; Basantia and Mukhopadhyaya; 2001; Hopkins, 2002).

To sum up, organizational climate can be viewed as a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization, experienced by its members that influence their behaviour. Group norms are the powerful shapers of organizational climate through which it makes itself felt, and influences the organizational behaviour (perceptions, values, attitudes etc.) of
incumbents, both teachers and students in a varied manner, with certain conditions in the environment being more conducive for enhancing performance of the individuals – may be providers or recipients.

1.2.3. Home Environment

The family is man's oldest, most pervasive and most powerful factor in the development of human personality – for learning how to be human rather than animal. In general system, the family can be perceived as a dynamic system consisting of a complex of elements or components (family members) directly or in directly related in a network, in such a way that each component (family member) is related to some other in a more or less stable way within any particular period of time. The interrelationships of the family members create a whole (family), that is greater than the sum of its parts (Compton and Galaway, 1979). Within this context, the family is seen as a transactional system, in constant interchange, with its extended environment and developing through time (Hartman, 1979). A family brings together an intimate association among persons varying widely in age, having different abilities, performing a wide variety of functions and pursuing distinctly different goals. Yet, it is expected that these differences will be so clearly perceived and so sincerely and mutually accepted by its members that harmony in interrelationships will prevail. A difference between the healthy and disturbed family is that the former has achieved some techniques for resolving the problems incident to
intimate association, while in other the problem remain chronic to build in the absence of adequate coping behaviour.

The study of the family is based on the assumption that the human nature is learned, and that the major environment for learning from childhood to old age to be "human" is the family. Families vary widely in the quality of interpersonal relationships, and also in terms of emphasis on independence and achievement and control. There are personal and family related factors that influence the family environment. The family structure and demographic factors, such as its size and socio-economic status, and individuals' personal resources, such as self-disclosure and ego-strength, influence the family environment and subsequent adaptation of the individuals in this situation. Poor adaptation of other family members as well as other aspects of life contexts, such as stressful events and characteristics of a person's work setting are additional risk factors that may erode the quality of the family. Home Environment has been usually seen as child rearing practices in terms of:

"permissiveness, willingness to devote time to the child, parental guidance, parental aspiration for achievement, provisions for the child's intellectual companionship, prescription, physical punishment, principled discipline, neglect, deprivation of privileges, protectiveness, dependence, emotional and verbal responsivity, involvement with the child, physical and temporal environment, avoidance of restriction and punishment, provision of appropriate play materials etc". There exists a great overlapping in the kinds of behaviours, which are in association with different characteristics of home environment."
Caldwell (1968) enumerated six characteristics of stimulated home: (i) emotional and verbal responsibility of the mother, (ii) avoidance of restriction and punishment, (iii) organization of physical and temporal environment; (v) maternal involvement with child and (vi) opportunities for variety in daily stimulation.

According to Johnson and Medinnus (1969), the psychological atmosphere of home may fall into any of the four quadrants, each of which represents one of the four general combinations: 'acceptance—autonomy', 'acceptance—control', 'rejection—autonomy', and 'rejection -- control'.

They view that the psychological environment of a home usually provides normal conditions of "neither being too autonomy oriented nor control" and "neither being too acceptable or rejected". Still, the variations in parental control are contingent upon time and situation, and also gender specific to explain home environment, to have a wide range of continuum, affecting child, either favourably or favourably, in the process of maturation. Grewbow (1973) reports that the dimensions of parental behaviour, namely
'nurturance-affection', 'achievement expectations, demands and standards' explain the dynamics of family environment.

Shah (1990) mentioned ten important characteristics of family climate to be measured on a bipolar continuum i.e.:

(i) restrictiveness vs freedom, (ii) indulgence vs avoidance, (iii) Partiality vs fairness, (iv) attention vs negligence, (v) acceptance vs rejection (vi) warmth vs cold relations, (vii) trust vs distrust, (viii) dominance vs submissiveness, (ix) expectation vs hopelessness, (x) open communication vs controlled communication.

Misra (1986) conceived home environment as a measure of the quality and quantity of social, emotional and cognitive support that has been available to the child within the home. He selected ten characteristics to constitute home environment: permissiveness, conformity, nurturance, rejection, reward, punishment, protectiveness, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and control; an accumulated effect of positive and negative anecdotes to discipline the child for his/her future role.

The various features constituting home environment play an important role during childhood and adolescence as most of social influence associated with home environment. The importance of good parent-child relationship in the healthy development of individuals in later life has been well documented in literature (Rueter and Conger; 1995). Family factors are important determinants of achievement because home is the place where the child spends most of his time and where all his physical and emotional needs are met, (Burt, 1962), and also that the home is expected to be the most secure and stabilizing condition in the developments process of child (Morrison and McIntyre, 1973). Intellectual development of children has been found to be related to parental education because of their being capable of providing
stimulating physical environment, encouragement and affection which is repeatedly linked with IQ scores. (Upadhyay and Agarwal, 1988; Bradley et al. 1989; Luster and Dubow, 1992; Mehta 1994; Chakara and Kumari, 1996; Basantia and Mukhopadhyaya, 2001).

Communication in the family has also been found to be a significant factor for inter-personal relationship. Barnes and Olson (1982) arrived at two factors on a continuum of "openness vs closedness" underlying parent-adolescent communication. Open-family communication, in contrast with close-family communication, has to do with the more positive aspects of parent adolescent communication. The focus is on the freedom or free flowing exchange of information, both factual, and emotional as well as on the sense of lack of constraint and degree of understanding and satisfaction experienced in their interactions. Problem in family communication has to do with the negative aspects of communication, hesitancy to share, negative styles of interaction and selectivity and caution in what is being shared. Family cohesion assesses the degree to which family members are separated from or connected to their family. The emphasis is on togetherness or acting together as a unit (Oslon, Portner & Lavee, 1985). Thus family cohesion is the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another, and is manifested into family members' feeling towards each other. Family togetherness has been observed as being very important in child's development process and having a positive impact (Oslon et al., 1985).
Further, academic achievement and adjustment have also been reported to be contingent on the quality of the adolescent's relationship with his parents and other family members and the family's general levels of academic aspirations and achievement orientation (Nelson, 1984; Dornbusch, et al., 1987; Stevenson and Baker, 1987).

It is a well established fact that the child completely depends on parents for basic physical, emotional and social needs, especially in the first years of his life. In the process of growth and development the child picks up myriad influences from family as parents transmit their concepts to the child through their day-to-day interaction with him/her and these provide direction to the child's growth and development. The child deprived of parental affection and proper care adversely affects the emotional development of the child (Mehta, 2002).

To state conclusively, home environment has been and will remain to be one of the most influencing environmental conditions in the development of the child, not only in the educational endeavours, but also throughout the life span. Since the child grows in home environment and prepares for future life through schooling processes, both these aspects i.e. home and school are having their specific as conjoint role in shaping of the personality of child and his/her performance, being assessed as learning achievement, which in turn is a reflection on quality of environment, both at home and school.
1.3 The Problem

It is well documented fact that school inputs and family background are important determinants of learners' academic achievement (Morrison & McIntyre, 1973; Heyneman & Loxley, 1983; Fuller & Heyneman, 1989; World Bank, 1990; Verghese & Govinda, 1993; Dave, 1997). The plethora of related literature explaining underachievement, low achievement or high levels of achievement is indicative of fact that: learning outcomes, measured through different types of achievement tests — may be norm-referenced, criterion referenced or the terminal examination etc. are having an association with: (i) the personal factors of learners, i.e. intelligence, creativity, personality and attitude towards school have a positive bearing on their academic achievement; (ii) school inputs in terms of physical and academic resources such as facilities and equipment's in the schools, institutional climate and leadership behaviour of the head, qualification, training and moral of teachers etc. affect students' performance in varying degree; (iii) home environment (in terms of parental education, occupation, family income including material prosperity as well as parental attitudes towards children education, interest and encouragement for children's education and aspiration for children's careers etc).

However, it is noteworthy that the focus of research studies dealing with correlates of achievement focus on primary school children, secondary and, senior secondary school students. The efforts of the state of improve the quality of schooling programmes, teacher efficiency on the one hand, and promoting adult literacy and continuing education programmes have brought a sea change
in the educational programmes, which directly or indirectly affect children's learning performance. Moreover, it is true in case of State of Himachal Pradesh where concern for primary school education has been shown by researches in recent times (Sood, 1989; Singh & Gautam, 1996; Koul et al., 2000). However, no worthwhile attempt has been made on elementary school students, in respect of their learning achievement and various school and home related factors determining the levels of learning achievement. It may also be mentioned that the achievement tests used are either single subject based or designed by NCERT for Hindi speaking states of the country, and do not encompass all the content area, prescribed in the curriculum to measure learning achievement in literacy and numeracy. Moreover, the thrust has now specifically extended to universalization of elementary education from universalization of primary education.

Statement of the Problem

Hence it was worthwhile to look into levels of learning achievement of elementary schools students of Himachal Pradesh along with its relationship with school organizational climate and home environment in the research problem entitled:

“A Study of Learning Achievement of Elementary School Students of Himachal Pradesh in relation to School Organizational Climate and Home Environment”.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The present research endeavour is a humble beginning to explore the possible contribution of school climate and home environment to learning achievement of students at elementary stage in Himachal Pradesh. The findings of the study may prove to be of immense use for educational administrators of the state in, particular and country in general for the following manner:

- Levels of learning achievement of elementary school students in Hindi and mathematics to be taken as baseline for studying impact of ongoing intervention programmes, on the quality of elementary education;

- the impact of school climate on students' learning achievement will provide an insight to DIETs to improve content and methodology of the in-service training programmes for elementary school teachers, which will help further to facilitate enhancement learning achievement of elementary school students;

- the impact of home environment factors on students' learning achievement will provide inputs for literacy and continuing education programmes, in vogue in the state under the auspices of NLM so that parental participation in school and education be effectively enhanced and better school community partnership mechanisms evolved.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the learning achievement levels of elementary school students of Himachal Pradesh in Hindi and mathematics.

2. To study learning achievement of elementary school students Himachal Pradesh in Hindi and mathematics in terms of socio-demographic variables of gender, caste, location, parental education, parental occupation and family income.
3. To study learning achievement of elementary school students of Himachal Pradesh in Hindi and mathematics in relation to school organizational climate.

4. To study learning achievement of elementary school students of Himachal Pradesh in Hindi and mathematics in relation to home environment.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The present research study was delimited in the following manner:

1. Only two school subjects, namely, Hindi and mathematics were taken up to measure learning achievement of elementary school children, which are the core subjects in assessment of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

2. Only 6th grade students who have been in the elementary stage of education in for the initial 2-3 months stage were selected for the study.

3. The school infrastructure (i.e. physical and academic inputs) has not been taken up.

4. The school organizational climate and home environment have been measured as perceived by teachers and students respectively.

5. The analytical approach (i.e. F-test and t-test) was used to test the hypothesis formulated in the study.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

The key terms used in the study may be operationally defined as under:

1. **Learning Achievement** connotes performance of elementary school students on achievement tests in Hindi and mathematics, constructed and standarized by the researcher on the basis of performance of elementary school students i.e. 6th grade students on both the tests, taking into consideration the well established facts that elementary
school students are supposed to have competency in basic literacy and numeracy skills for their optimal performance not only in these core subjects but also in other content areas to be mastered in due course of teaching learning in school education.

2. Socio-Demographic variables: refer to static family background variables of gender, caste, location, parental (paternal and maternal) education and occupation and family income to be measured with the self developed personal data sheet by the researcher in the locale specific socio-economic context of Himachal Pradesh.

3. School Organizational Climate (school organization and functioning to be measured by measured by School Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (SOCDQ), constructed and standardized by Sharma (1978), which categorises schools into six types of organizational climate, as perceived by teachers.

- **Open climate** (an environment in which teachers obtain social needs satisfaction as well as job satisfaction and enjoy a sense of accomplishment in their job. They perceive their principal (leader) as highly considerate and democratic in behaviour and hence the group members as well as the principal feel 'all of a piece'. So the group enjoy a high degree of integration and authenticity of behaviour);

- **Autonomous climate** (an environment in which the teachers enjoy a friendly relationship and a high degree of group morale. They satisfy their social needs to a great extent and enjoy a degree of job-accomplishment);

- **Familiar climate** (a friendly behaviour of both the principal and the teachers in which teachers establish personal friendship among themselves, and socially, at least, everyone is a part of a large happy family. Social needs satisfaction is extremely high. The principal exercises leadership in an indirect manner and tries to keep
production satisfactory. His behaviour is job oriented but does not hinder the social needs satisfaction on the part of the teachers);

- **Controlled climate** (an environment which is characterized as highly task-oriented at the cost of social needs satisfaction of the teachers. Leadership acts stem from only one side, and in a dictatorial manner. Group involvement is never encouraged. The human aspect of the individual is neglected and communication is always one sided. Teachers get little job-satisfaction out of task-accomplishment);

- **Paternal climate** (a situation in which there is very little scope for the members to satisfy their social needs and derive job satisfaction. The faculty has to work in the way the principal wants. But at the same time the principal as a paternal guardian of the school faculty, does not ignore the individual interest); and

- **Closed climate** (a high degree of apathy on the part of all members of the organization. The organization is not moving. This climate lacks authenticity of behaviour. The principal constraints the emergence of leadership acts from the group members i.e. teachers. They secure neither social needs satisfaction nor job satisfaction stemming from task-accomplishment).

4. **Home Environment**: connotes the psychological environment of home as perceived by elementary school students in terms of: "parental attitude towards education; parental aspirations for child; parental encouragement to the education of child and general behaviour of parents in the family"; to be measured by Home Environment Inventory, developed by Misra (1986) having 100 items, divided into ten components:

- **Control** (autocratic atmosphere in which many restrictions are imposed on children by the parents in order to discipline them);

- **Protectiveness** (prevention of independent behaviour and prolongation of infantile care);

- **Punishment** (physical as well as affective punishment to avoid the occurrence of undesirable behaviour);
• **Conformity** (parents' directions, commands, or orders with which child is expected to comply by action, including to demands to work according to parents' desires and expectations);

• **Social Isolation** (use of isolation from beloved persons, except family members for negative sanctions);

• **Reward** (material as well as symbolic rewards to strengthen or increase the probability of desired behaviour of child in expected social conditions);

• **Deprivation of Privileges** (controlling children's behaviour by depriving them of their rights to seek love, respect and child care from parents, depending on child's behaviour);

• **Nurturance** (existence of excessive unconditional physical and emotional attachment of parents with the child, in which parents have a keen interest in the child and love for the child);

• **Rejection** (conditional love recognizing that the child has no right as a person, no right to express his feelings, no right to uniqueness and no right to become an autonomous individual, thereby meaning that parental expectations are on an authoritative principle); and

• **Permissiveness** (provisions of opportunities to child to express his views freely and act according to his desires with no interference from parents, and providing and atmosphere for the child to express in his own way).

Thus it may be summed up that total home environment refers to both positive and negative conditions which interact with each other, either favourably or unfavourably, to determine home environment to be "better" or "poor", both component wise and in totality.