



CHAPTER-I

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The issue of academic achievement has always been a fundamental topic of interest to psychological and educational researchers. It is also one of the main concerns among educators as well as parents. Academic achievement is indeed important for successful development of young people (Redd, Cochran, Heir, & Moore, 2002) in this fast changing and challenging twenty-first century. Numerous researches have shown that adolescents who do well in school have better opportunities for a broader range of academic specialization, and have better prospects for their planned post- secondary education as well as aspired career. Hence, school academic success is considered a good predictor of both concurrent and future well-being of a person (Eccles, Templeton, Barber, & Stone, 2003). As a matter of fact, Sternberg (2002) emphasizes that obtaining good academic achievement becomes more pertinent during adolescence as this developmental phase prepares them for specialized academic courses and eventually the world of work (Parson, 1909). It is therefore, the period of adolescence that functions as the important time of preparation for tertiary education and eventually the role of adulthood.

The notion of increased importance of good academic achievement during adolescence is also supported by Piaget's (1971) Cognitive Development Theory. This theory postulates that one of the conceptual skills established during the adolescence stage, is the ability to hypothesize about logical sequence of events that might occur. For example, adolescents are able to predict college and occupational options that might be opened for them, depending on how well they perform in school.

Academically excellent adolescents have a higher likelihood to successfully complete their secondary school education (Redd et al., 2002).

Studies on educational adjustment, achievement, and attainment in adolescence revealed that adolescents who achieve higher levels of academic achievement during adolescence are found to be more likely to complete college than their peers with lower levels of academic achievement (Redd, Brook, & Mc Gravey, 2001). In other words, adolescents who do well in school are more likely to make good transition into adulthood and to achieve occupational and economic success. Thus, it is important to note that academic achievement and subsequent plans and decisions, of any sort, made especially during adolescence, are believed to have important implications on an individual's later endeavour, and hence, influence future success, field of career, job prestige, earnings, life style, identity, economic functioning and subsequently psycho-social development (Eccles et al., 2001; Steinberg, 2001; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). In our society, academic achievement is considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentialities and capacities. Hence academic achievement occupies a very important place in education as well as in learning process (Nuthana, 2007).

Human life which is the best creation of God has, got two aspects: the biological and sociological or cultural. While the former is maintained and transmitted by food and reproduction, the latter is preserved and transmitted by education. It is again through education that he promotes his intelligence and adds his knowledge with which he can move the world for good and for evil according to his wishes. Education in fact, is one of the major "life processes" of the human being. Education is indispensable to normal living, without education the individual would be unqualified for group life (Safaya & Shaida, 1963). Scholastic achievement may be determined by various factors like intelligence, creativity, study habits and attitude towards school, different aspects of their personality, socio-economic status etc. The achievement in a child is caused,

promoted and affected by various variable, like variables arising out of the person or self, variable arising out of the teaching set-up, variable arising out of home, variable arising out of subject of study, and so on. Each one of them is actually a cluster of variables which individually or an interaction with others have their influence on achievement (Sharma, 2008).

Some earlier studies have shown that the best academic achievement predictors are intelligence and attitudinal factors (Berdie, 1955; Lavin, 1965; Rosen Garten, 1965). Never the less, these factors explained only 20% of the variance in academic achievement. According to Struthers, Menec, Schonwetter, and Perry (1996)'s study, there is a relationship between creativity and student's performance and creativity explained about 6% variance in academic achievement. Study habits have also been associated with academic achievement, independently of scholastic aptitude. Given a similar scholastic aptitude, students with better strategies and better study habits tend to show higher academic achievement. Study habits contribute almost 10% of variance in academic achievement (On & Watkins, 1994).

Academic achievement is a multi-dimensional construct in which there are several intervening variables, which have been studied for the last 60 years under several approaches. It is found from the above mentioned studies that intelligence, creativity, study habits and achievement motivation contributes around 40% of the variance in academic achievement. The rest 50%-60% of variance could be explained by attitudinal factors through family environment, self-efficacy, self-esteem, interest, emotional intelligence etc.

Academic achievement is the outcome of complex interaction between individual aptitude, skills, motivational disposition and environmental influence (Arbona, 2000). Works investigating the correlates and predictors of academic achievement of adolescents have focused on several variables such as

geographical location (e.g., Young, 1996), gender and their race (e.g., Redd et al., 2001), family and parent involvement (e.g., Steirberg, Lamborn, Donbush, & Darling, 1992) and socio-economic status (e.g., Trusty, Robinson, Plata, & Ng, 2000).

Theoretical and research literatures have as well as paid special interest on other factors related to individual differences such as self concept (e.g., Rothen berg, 1997) and educational planning (e.g., Mau, 1995) as a function of academic achievement. Other variables that have also been investigated and cited in many studies of adolescent are personality traits (e.g., Holland, 1997; Spokane, 1985), motivation (e.g., Redd et al., 2001) and career related variable such as career maturity (e.g., Luzzo, 1993; Wu, 2009), career self-efficacy (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and career interest (e.g., Tracey, 2002). These studies have shown mixed findings, with some supportive of the relationships of the variable and academic achievement of adolescents.

Today's, modern society expects everyone to be a high achiever. The key criterion to judge one's true potentialities and capabilities is perhaps scholastic/academic achievement. In view of paramount significance of the family in shaping of children's personality development, numerous researchers made attempts to study the several factors of the family ecology in relation to the child's development. The family exercises most formative influence upon the child's later development (Sharma, 2008).

The family environment is the psychological atmosphere of the family, varies markedly from family to family. Some families have good environment, some a poor and other a changeable climate. Even within the family, the climate may vary from time to time for any one individual, it is certain to vary for children of the family. The kinds of family in which children grow up affect their

development, attitude and behavior by determining the kind of relationship they have with the different family members (Thapa, 2005).

Family is the first and most important socializing agency, which integrates and regulates the adolescent's behaviour as he/she strives to satisfy his/her basic needs. The family provides the environment for building the personality of the individual with its warm interpersonal relationship contributing to their feeling of security and belongingness. Family life is the first school for emotional learning. It is in the backdrop where the child learns to deal with his/her emotions and handle his/her problems in a socially acceptable manner (Arati & Prabha, 2004).

Academic achievement has become an index of a child's future. Research studies have proved that a good, supportive environment in home, school and neighborhood could enhance a child's scholastic achievement. It has been shown by various studies that most of the children who are successful/great achievers and well adjusted come from family where sustaining whole some relationships exist (Daulta, 2008).

The family is primary social system for children. Rollins and Thomas (1997) found that high parental control were associated with high achievement. Similarly, Schickndanz (1995) also reported that children of passive parents were found to perform poorly in academics. Valez in Ryan (2005) reported that academic performance is positively related to having parents who enforce rules at home.

According to Hammer (2003) the home environment is as important as what goes on in the school. Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education, how parents deal with young children, how much TV children are allowed to watch and how often students change schools. Parental influence has been identified as an important factor affecting students'

achievement. Results indicate that parent education and encouragement are strongly related to improved students achievement (Wang, Wildman, & Calhoun, 1996).

The family environment shapes the sets of factors that form the child's future. Thus, a cohesive family can affect adult's coping skills and functioning. It also influences children's cognitive and emotional development, self confidence, and well-being (Moos & Moos, 1994). Conflict in the family or parent adolescent relationship results in problems in youth development (Rubenstein & Feldman, 1993). Moreover, the negative emotions exchanged between adolescents and their parents can themselves result in problem for youth (Compass, Howell, Phares, & William, 1989).

The attitudinal factors also develop in the family. Parents are important for their children's emotional development not only because they are attachment figures but also because of their cognitive and expertise who instruct their offspring on the use of emotions, labels, appraisals, expressions and regulation strategies (Von Salisch, 2001).

Another set of attitudinal factors could be having a bearing through self-efficacy, self- esteem and emotional intelligence. Bandura (1977, 1986, and 1997) defines self-efficacy as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance." In other words, self-efficacy is 'a belief that one has' what it takes to successful perform a behavior in a situation- specific context (Young & Kline, 1995). Efficacy expectations are said to influence initiating behavior, and the degree of persistence applied in over winning difficulties encountered in the pursuit of accomplishing a task or tasks (Bandura, 1997).

The positive links between self- efficacy and performance are widely reported and much research has carried out in a range of different settings

(Pajares, 1996; Wultero & Pintrich, 1998) although a number of conditions appear to influence the effect size. Previous studies have revealed self-efficacy to be related to a large number of individual outcomes including academic performance (Bourfard-Bouchard, 1989). Studies give clear description that there is an association between self-efficacy and academic achievement (Carrol, Houghton, Wood, Unsworth, Hattie, Gordon, & Bower, 2009).

A study by Bandura and Jourden (1991) revealed that self-efficacy enhances student's academic performance because it influences the setting of personal goals, self-reflection and the utilization of analytical strategies. Wealth of findings indicates that self-efficacy correlates with achievement outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Schunk, 1995). Writing self-efficacy correlates positively with students' goals for achievement, satisfaction with potential grades and actual achievement (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Student's self-efficacy was found to be better predictor of achievement in particular subject than general belief of self-efficacy (Sharma, 2008).

There is a general agreement that there is a close relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Covington (1989) reported that as the level of self-esteem increases, so do achievement scores; as self-esteem decreases, achievement scores decline. Furthermore, he concluded that self-esteem can be modified through direct instruction and that such instruction can lead to achievement gains. Specifically students' perceived efficacy to achieve, combined with personal goal setting, has been found to have a major impact on academic achievement.

Holly (1987) supported the idea that self-esteem was more likely the result than cause of academic achievement. He did acknowledge that certain level of self-esteem is required in order for a student to achieve academic success and that self-esteem and achievement go hand in hand. Very recently

Carranza, You, Chhuon, and Hudley (2009) in their study on school children revealed that there is direct association between self-esteem and student's achievement. In their study El Anzi and Feieih (2005) on Kuwaiti students found that there is significant relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem.

The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement has received much attention. Research has consistently shown a positive correlation between how people value themselves and the level of their academic attainments. Those who feel confident, generally achieve more, while those who lack confidence in themselves achieve less (Lawrence, 2000).

Self-esteem is affective or emotional aspect of self and generally refers to how we feel about or how we perceive ourselves (one's self worth) (Huitt, 2004). Bandura (1997) states that one's self-efficacy is one of the best predictors of successful achievement. He also states that one's mastery experience related to success is the major influence on one's self-efficacy. As self-efficacy and self-esteem are both constructed by one's conscious reflections, it would appear that educators and parents should provide experiences that students can master rather than attempting to boost self-esteem directly through other means.

The increasing attention given to understanding the characteristics that promote high levels of academic performance and expectations among high school students has led researchers to look beyond the confines of individual thoughts and examine the psychosocial influence that affect individual performance. Thus, more outside predictors of individual performances such as parental encouragement should be studied in addition to an individual's own motivation and expectations. After all, many factors outside a student's control can influence his or her academic performances. These external predictors, jointly with individuals' own characteristics, should significantly affect a students'

performance and expectations there by demonstrating to be strong predictors of his or her academic success (Tavani, Christopher, Losh, & Susan, 2003).

Emotional intelligence has also a great impact on academic achievement of adolescents. Goleman (1995) asserted that success depends on several intelligences and on the control of emotions. According to him intelligence account for 20% of the total success and rest goes for emotional and social intelligence. Finnegan (1998) argued that schools help students to learn the abilities underlying emotional intelligence.

In a study conducted by Parker, Summerfield, Hogan and Majeski (2001; 2002) they discovered that various emotional and social competencies were strong predictors of academic success. In the same vein, Low and Nelson (2004) reported that emotional intelligence skills are key factors in academic achievement and test performance of high school and college students respectively.

In 2008, Downey, Mountstephen, Lloyd, Hansen, and Stough examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and scholastic achievement in Australian adolescents. It was found that the academic success was associated with higher levels of total emotional intelligence. In a recent study Mohamadyfar, Mordi and FN Ayaphy (2009) reported that emotional intelligence is strongly associated with academic achievement.

Thus, family environment, self-efficacy, self-esteem and emotional intelligence play a very important role in scholastic achievement aside from some established factors e.g. intelligence, creativity, motivation etc.

Keeping in view, the importance of these factors, the present endeavor aims to study and find out the role of various factors of family environment i.e. cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, intellectual-cultural orientation,

achievement orientation, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization and control along with self-efficacy, self-esteem and factors of emotional intelligence i.e. self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy and handling relationship with academic achievement. The study will focus on children with age ranging from 13-16 years among different schools of Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh i.e. government and private schools.