CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Man is categorised as child, adolescent, adult and old in succession as he advances in years from birth. The state of childhood and adolescence at any given period of human history stands for the new generation which is taken as a preserve of the generations above. The new generation is affected by the manner in which it is accepted, and in turn it affects the generations preceding and following it. One may say that an adult is subjected to the influence of as many as five generations, viz., those of his grandfather, father, self, son and grandson. Since from primitive stage man has lived in family it will be but natural that parents' behaviour will to some extent determine the mode of development of the child and the youth. The notion has grown that parental behaviour and attitude overtly or covertly influence the built of children's personality pattern. The parent child relationship arising out of the former's attitude toward the latter is an important determinant of personality. This notion has found support, broadly speaking, in the observations of several social scientists such as Burlock (55), Symonds (103), Anderson (104) and Stagner (96). More precisely speaking the parent child relationship depends on the attitudes of parent and child toward each other.
The attitudes of the parents, in the words of Hurlock (56, p.499), "are influenced partly by culture values and partly by the personality patterns of the parents and their concepts of the role of parents". In our contemporary social life the views as to what should be the attitude of the parents toward the children have somewhat changed in years. At the beginning of the current century strict behaviour on the part of the parents was considered to be desirable for the welfare of the children. That stand may be roundly supported even in the writings of Freud (32) and Watson (107) who seemed to have held that too much leniency toward the child might interfere with the development of psychological maturity. The present trend is against that point of view. In recent years opinion has been expressed that the parents' outward display of affection will be beneficial to the child. Reference may be made in this connection to the writings of Harris (48), Zachry (109), Streaker (99) amongst others.

Parental influence as reflected in the child's experience is a key note of personality development. Most of the theories of personality emphasise the role of childhood experience in this context [Hall & Lindsey (45)]. It has been rightly said that the manner in which the children are taught feeding, clothing, toilet etc. has definite bearing upon mental make-up [Hutt & Gibby (57)]. Note must be taken of the fact, however, that it is not the form of these practices which is so important but the meaning which these have for the child. Different kinds of emotional
experiences attached to these practices contribute to the moulding of child's personality, and the acquisition of meaning is sequential to the parental behaviour or attitude at the time of imparting training.

The child identifies himself with his parents and he adopts the attitudes and adjustments of his parents. The parent's behaviour and attitudes are the real pivots on which is built up the personality of the child. Therefore the importance of parent-child relationship in the formation of child's personality cannot be overlooked. The characteristics and behaviour of parents toward their child may be exemplary, humble and loving, but that behaviour may not be appreciated by the child as it is. The child will interpret them according to his own idiosyncrasies, needs, desires and expectations. His psychological make-up will interpret his parents' behaviour in a new light. His interpretation of parental behaviour may not tally with the actual behaviour of his parents. Therefore modern psychologists are emphasizing on the fact that parental behaviour as perceived by the child is more important to explain the child's behaviour.

The responsibility of parents is not only limited in satisfying the physical needs of the child. But the responsibility extends also in satisfying their mental demands. Psychologists are of opinion that the manner in which these needs are satisfied by the parents is important for the personality development of the child. The child will perceive himself in that way as he is
perceived by the parents. The way in which the child interprets parents' behaviour toward him, determine to a marked degree the nature of his personality make-up. If parents love him or if he think that he is loved and accepted by his parents then a sense of self-respect develops in him. On the other hand if he considers himself to be rejected by his parents then he may develop sense of inferiority. Attitudes of parents towards their child and the child's perception of these attitudes mould the child's personality remarkably. Relationship between the child and his parents and the importance of this relationship in the personality development of the child has been discussed by different authors. Lehner & Kube (63), Shaffer & Shoben (91), Jersild (59), Garrison (36), Hurlock (55‡), Bruce (11), Donn (21), Schaeffer & Bayley (84), Finney (30), Cambell & Horrocks (13), Lowrey (68), Massen et al (75), Hartup (49).

All the studies mentioned above indicate that parents have immense influence on their child. Different authors made it clear that parents' specific behaviour, attitudes, ideas, beliefs etc. have definite bearing on the personality development of their child. Another group of psychologists who worked with parental behaviour and school achievement found positive relation between them. Their works indicate that the nature of relationship between the child and his parents determines the latter's school achievement and occupational choice. Morrow & Wilson (71), Green & Parker (41), Shaw & Datton (92).