PERSONALITY AND INTEREST PATTERNS OF PROGRESSIVE- 
-REGRESSIVE AND STABLE ACHIEVERS

1. INTRODUCTION :

Man's interest to know what he will be in future and how he can lead his life successfully and happily has engaged him in all his activities and in all human endeavours over the ages. Any indication, prediction and direction in this regard has its voyage from the stage of part speculation in the past to the present stage of precise estimation of modern times by applications of structural models of experimentation using appropriate tools and techniques of scientific procedure and statistical principles of decision making. Herein lies the importance of education.

The purpose of education is to develop a child as a fully functioning individual. It is also true that education in a democracy should help all children towards the full development of their talents and latent potential. The main function of the school is to help students to make better use of their intellectual resources to learn profitably. Some children with high intellectual ability do not reflect good achievement in their subjects. The primary aim of educational efforts is to help boys and girls achieve the highest degree of individual development which they are capable of. It is, of course, no denying the fact that educational achievement has a high positive correlation with intellect and creative faculty of persons.
Education is the mirror and agent of change. The present day education system seems to be a manifestation of an achievement race which is found to have winners and losers in it. These winners and losers may be termed as high and low (or progressive and regressive) achievers respectively. The academic achievement and underachievement have been the object of intensive interest to all concerned.

Although the Indian education scene since independence has been characterised by massive quantitative expansion at all levels, the standard of achievements of our students is not at all encouraging which is reflected in the percentage of failures and low scores in public examinations. The distressing phenomenon of poor achievement and failure among able students has been causing serious concern to educationists, psychologists, teachers, parents and researchers for several decades now. The problem of poor academic standard and the increasing number of poor achievers has become a source of great anxiety to all. It is the responsibility of everyone concerned with education to prevent wastage, stagnation and failure and ensure proper achievement levels on the part of the students. The destiny of the country is being shaped in her class-room. This is no more rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. Education moulds people according to their interests and abilities and channelises them into streams of training in developing their interests and potentialities to fulfil the demands of occupational roles.
Observations, experimental or otherwise, that are measurable, can lead one to assess and ascertain human trait, related to this pattern of behaviour, both covert and overt, the ways that guide and lead to project what an individual will be in future; for instance, personality of a man can project himself in his future courses and recourses in action. As we all know, every individual has a personality of his own, which is definitely different from that of others. All of us, however, belong to different types and patterns of personality having respective characteristic traits and temperaments, and so on and so forth.

On the other hand, interests are powerful sources of motivation. They determine our patterns of life as well as our success and happiness. In education, the quality and effectiveness of our procedures and programmes, efforts and achievements, goals and outcomes are determined largely by the interests of the pupils. What young people will attend to, how they will behave and think, what they will strive to learn depends upon what preferences and inclinations they have, what mindsets they have developed, and what ambitions, goals and values they cherish.

Innumerable studies, both formal and informal, have so far been conducted to assess personality. It may be of interest, however, to study and also to relate the kind of interest or the order of preferences for different kinds of interests with different types of personality. For example, introverts are found to be less interested in crowded situation than the extrovert, or say, people of higher
general ability are found to prefer studying a thing in detail, to
study it in broad outlines. A differential personality profile which
may perhaps show relatively preferential sequence of interest leading
to achievement types and patterns, has been a hunch to the present
investigator to undertake this study.

ACHIEVEMENT

1.1 Meaning of Achievement

The term achievement applies to a specified level of proficiency
in academic work in general or in a specific skill in any activity.
It is performance or accomplishment in any area of human activity. Ever
since Thorndike published his monograph entitled "The Concept of over
and under achievement" in 1963, a distinction is being widely
recognised between these concepts on the one hand and such other
categories as academic success and failure or high and low academic
achievement, on the other, the latter concepts involving an
arbitrarily accepted basis of academic success and the former being
defined in terms of a divergence between the actual academic
performance and the academic performance as predicted on some
scientifically determined basis.

Achievement occupies a central position in the scale of values in
force in educational world and hence it is pertinent to seek
systematic and up to date information on the significant correlates
of pupil achievement. The importance of scholastic or academic achievement
has raised several important questions for educational researchers. What factors promote achievement in students? How far do the different factors contribute towards academic achievement? Many factors have been hypothesized and researched upon and researchers have come out with varied results, at times complementing and very often contradicting each other.

Academic achievement is a complex behaviour (Bhatnagar, 1967). Numerous studies on the correlates of academic achievement reported number of individual characteristics making enormous differences in knowledge and performance as reflected in examination results. The factors affecting achievement may be (i) temperamental or personality factors and (ii) environmental like home or school environment, parental influence, curriculum of instruction etc. Though intelligence has been accepted as the most influential and important factor contributing to attainment of scholastic success, Bhatnagar (1967) and Mohan (1972) point out that even the most refined intelligence and aptitude tests do not explain more than 50% of the total variance in achievement of individuals.

1.1.2 Correlates of Achievement

Many factors are responsible for achievement. These include training, experience, past achievements, flexibility, independence, risk-taking and motivation. Obstacles to achievement may come from the environment, but more often they come from personal factors, such as unrealistic levels of aspiration (Wernimont, 1966).
Keeping the complexity of the problem of analysing achievement at any stage of life in mind, age being a very important determinant, attempts have been made to find out the relationship of personality and interest to academic achievement, if any, in our study.

In an achievement-oriented culture like our own, a person is judged by what his achievements are, how they compare with those of others, and how early in life he is able to attain them. Success in mastering the developmental tasks set by the social group brings the person happiness, social recognition, and success with new tasks which are dependent on the foundations laid earlier. The person whose achievements in highly valued areas are superior in quantity and quality is favourably judged by the social group. (Havighurst, 1963). The closer group expectations and personal aspirations are to a person's capacities, the greater the likelihood that his achievements are regarded as successful both by him and by the group.

Aspirations are only the beginning of a chain of activities that lead to successful or unsuccessful achievement. Success must be won by the person's own efforts, though help and guidance from others often make the achievement of a goal easier or even possible. Nor is ability alone enough to achieve success. The person must use his ability in the right way and at the right time.

A number of elements contribute to the complex process that leads to successful achievement—the "achievement syndrome". Apart from training under the guidance of an experienced person to know how
to make the best possible use of the abilities, an individual must have the experience which comes with age and opportunities (Crandall, 1963 and Rosen B C, 1961). First-born children, it has been found, have higher achievement drives than later-borns owing to the greater involvement, encouragement and urging of their Parents. They also have more parental guidance and help, and because of the close parent-child relationship they have greater possibility, in part at least, of their great achievements (Bartlett and Smith, 1966, Chittenden, Foan, zwell and J R Smith, 1968; Rubin, 1968).

Past achievements and the amount of satisfaction associated with them help to form the person's attitude towards achievement in different areas. Studies show that attitudes towards work, for example, are strongly influenced by past achievements and by how well these achievements meet the person's needs. (Chambers, 1964; Crisera, 1966; Friedlander, 1965 and Kuplan, 1963).

Unquestionably, the central element in the achievement syndrome is motivation. The person not only desires success, but he must be willing to sacrifice time, effort and immediate pleasures to achieve higher goals and greater success in future. In explaining the difference between those most successful and those least successful Oden (1966) pointed out that people differ in their attitudes depending on the prevailing patterns of the culture and their individual philosophies of life. The correlates of success are not possessed exclusively by a particular group of overachievers, for
there are no factors favourable to achievement that are not also found among others, albeit the underachievers, but the magic combination is lacking.

Motivation to achieve, whether academically, socially, or vocationally, is stronger among firstborns, among those from small families, among those from mother-dominated homes, homes with democratic control, and homes where good parent-child relationship prevails (Adams, 1967; Bowerman and Elder, 1964; Mukherjee 1968; and Stacey, 1965). Studies show that the greatest motivation comes from a work which gives the person a feeling of achievement, responsibility, growth, advancement, earned recognition and enjoyment from the work itself. The reason motivation plays such a positive role in achievement is that every step to success requires greater effort to improve performance or maintain standard of achievement in succession (Myers, 1964 and Wernimont, 1966).

It is now a well-established fact that intelligence is the single most important factor accounting for variation in academic achievement, that is, it plays a major role in causing difference among individuals with regard to academic achievement. It does not, however, necessarily follow that intelligence and achievement are identical, that one can be predicted perfectly and completely from the other. Perfect prediction fails either because of inadequacies of the tools employed in measuring the variables or because there are other factors, though not quite as important as intelligence, which might be contributing to the lack of perfect prediction.
1.2 INTEREST

1.2.1 Interest Defined:

An interest can be defined as an attitude or valence toward an activity. From this definition, it is clear that an interest is a motivational variable. The doctrine of interest is fundamental in modern educational philosophy since it carries, with it the entire educative process throughout life. The educative possibility of interest was rightly pointed out by Rousseau in one of his statements: "Present interest is the grand motive power, the only one which leads with certainty to great results." John Dewey characterised interest as the inner stimulation of effort: both belong normally and properly together as the inner and outer aspects of one normal ongoing activity.

Interest is first active, projective or propulsive. To be interested in any matter is to be actively concerned with it. Mere feeling regarding a subject may be static or inert, but interest is dynamic. It is objective. Interest does not end simply in itself, as bare feelings may, but it is embodied in an object of regard. Interest is personal; it signifies a direct concern; a recognition of something at stake, something whose outcome is important for the individual. It has its emotional as well as active and objective sides. An interest is primarily a form of self-expressive activity—that is of growth that comes through acting upon nascent tendencies.
Interests are very varied; every impulse and habit that generates a purpose having sufficient force to move a person to strive for its realisation becomes an interest. But in spite of this diversity, interests are one in principle. They all mark an identification in action, and hence in desire, effort and thought, of self with objects; with, namely, the objects in which the activity terminates (ends) and with the objects by which it is carried forward to its end (means). Interest in the emotional sense of the word, is the evidence of the way in which the self is engaged, occupied, taken up with, concerned in, absorbed by, carried away by, this objective subject matter. If we can discover a child's urgent needs and powers, and if we can supply an environment of materials, appliances and resources--physical, social and intellectual--to direct their adequate operation, the purpose of educative interest will serve. The problem of educators, teachers, parents, the State, is to provide the environment that induces educative or developing activities, and where these are found the one thing needful in education is secured.

Knowledge of interest is important for both the learner and the educator. As Prof. Kilpatrick points out, "To seek interest on the part of the learner is to respect the learner as a person and at the same time to utilise the biological dynamics in the learning process. To the educator, it has a different significance. The real question thus becomes how to utilise the doctrine of natural interest which is certainly present as a kind of spring to perpetual motion in all, so that it may prove constructively educative. We wish to know how to harness the child's interest to his own good". Thus, to utilise
interest in education seems psychologically essential alike to democracy and to the good life. Interest is thus naturally linked up with the learning process and maturation. A careful study of interests would give us a true conception of the grandeur of man's life. The more good things we are interested in, the more ardently we live. (Bacon).

1.2.2 Interest and Achievement:

Interest is the sole guarantee of attention; if we can secure interest in a given set of facts or ideas, we may be perfect sure that the pupil will direct energies towards mastering them; if we can secure interest in certain moral train or line of conduct, we are equally safe in assuming that the child's activities are responding in that direction; if we have not secured interest, we have no safeguard as to what will be done in any given case. As a matter of fact, the doctrine of discipline, so essential for achievement, has not succeeded. It is psychologically impossible to call forth any activity without some interest. Interest involves seriousness, absorption, definiteness of purpose; it results in formation of steadiness and persistent habit in the service of worthy ends. But this effort never generates strain of dead lift. Interest means a unified activity. Interest is the main force behind motivation which is the prime mover for success or achievement. To have an interest in anything means to have a personal concern with regard to that thing; one has to that extent identified himself with it; he will find himself in pursuing it; he will ultimately achieve it. Genuine
interest is the accompaniment of the identification, through action, of the self with some object or idea for the maintenance of a self-initiated activity (intrinsic motivation). The stronger the interest one feels, the greater the effort he will put forth. Hence modern education recognises interest as the driving force for purposeful activities and thus forms the potential power for successful learning and achievement.

The child who lives in an environment which provides an opportunity for the learning of many varied interests will probably be better situated than a youngster in an environment that makes provision for only a limited range because the richer the opportunities, the more likely it is that the person will find a way in acquiring interests which are best suited to his particular gifts which will be most serviceable to him.

Though intelligence and abilities are regarded all over the world as the most important factors in the attainment of scholastic success, studies have shown that they are insufficient predictors of academic achievement. But the level of an individual's intelligence influences his interest. The intelligent student is capable of more complex activities and of pursuing complicated hobbies and interests.

When there is provision that enables each child most fully to express himself it probably also will be true that the child will be able better to bear the frustration that all children meet. He will also have more opportunity for the kind of success that a person such
as he can achieve, and he will be less at the mercy of failure. When
we take education literally and seek to educe, to draw forth in the most
constructive manner, the resources with which children are by nature
dowered, we are not simply helping them to have a good time; we are
making a fundamental investment in human welfare.

1.3 PERSONALITY

1.3.1 Personality Defined :

Personality is not easy to define. Psychologically personality is
all that a person is. It is the totality of his being, and includes
his physical, mental, emotional and temperamental make-up. His
experience, perception, memory, imagination, instincts, habits,
thoughts and sentiments constitute his personality. His tastes, style
of life, beliefs, enthusiasms and the like, colour his personality.

When we speak of a man's personality, we mean the impression he
makes on us or his "impact" upon us. His personality, in this sense,
is his unique individuality.

When we speak of a man's personality, we mean the inner
organisation of his traits and tendencies—we try to look inside the
man, as it were; and we regard his personality as a complex
organisation of psychological factors.

When we speak of a man's personality, we mean the ways in which
he deals with circumstances, his ways of reacting to persons and things, his ways of behaving. We note whether he copes with the problems and challenges of life, with the innumerable stimuli of his environment, intelligently or stupidly, confidently or hasitantly, emotionally or calmly, consistently or inconsistently; and we call these ways of acting and reacting his personality.

The chief characteristic and indication of personality is self-consciousness. It is precisely because the idea of self enters into his consciousness that a man is said to be a person or to have a personality.

Personality is dynamic and social since consciousness of self arises and grows only through interactions with other members of society. Since the growth and development of personality take place through social interaction and experience, it implies the reactions of others to our own qualities and actions.

Personality is continuous adjustment to a person's environment. This adjustment is not a passive submission to environmental conditions but a progressive modification of them to suit one's needs and purpose.

Human behaviour is better understood by reference to the end. All behaviour is purposive; it has a direction and our aims and goals direct. Thus, to understand personality we must consider what the individual's goals are and how much conscious he is of them.
Personality functions as a unified whole. In some personality patterns, a high level of integration results in all the person's acts being harmonized with his basic concept of self. In others, the integration is less complete, while in still others, the integration seems to be non-existent. In the extreme form, lack of integration results in "split personalities", the "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" structure, where there are two mutually exclusive patterns but where, within each, there is integration.

Education is the shaping of personality. (Murrel, 1968). Personality functions as a whole; it is an organisation or integration of all the powers and qualities of an individual and the aim of education is to bring in a harmonious balance between one's desires and ambitions on the one hand, and one's capacities and powers on the other. Hence, an integrated personality should be developed in accordance with a predictable pattern by making a fusion between physical and psychological self-concepts and mirror images and ideal self-concepts.

Personality may be classified into tender-minded and tough-minded. The former go by principles, are given to thinking, have an idealistic outlook and are dogmatic whereas the latter go by facts, are materialistic and inclined to be sceptical. Personality may also be extrovert, introvert or ambivert type. The introvert is too self-conscious; he is turned inward in his thinking and feeling. He is timid and cautious. He is deliberate, thinks things out and has convictions. He is slow in making decisions. He is reserved and likes
to be alone a great deal. He does not form friendship readily and keeps in the background on social occasions. The extrovert is selfcomposed; he is turned outward towards the world. He is seldom embarassed and is plucky and bold. He is impulsive and often acts without thinking. He is hearty and social, and forms friends readily. He is fond of being with people. The ambivert is a mixture of both.

The personality pattern is composed of traits that are organised and integrated into a pattern in which the concept of self is the core or centre of gravity. The pattern is founded and shaped by environmental experiences. It is possible to control environmental forces to ensure the development of a desired personality pattern or to change a pattern that is likely to lead to poor personal and social adjustments. The change in personality is the real educative effect.

1.3.2 Personality and Achievement:

Achievement leads to a sense of personal satisfaction and pride. This goes a longway toward building a favourable self-concept. It also raises self-esteem and builds self-confidence so that a person attacks new problems with the belief that he can handle them successfully.

Tasks in which a person achieves success are more satisfying,
more attractive and more challenging. He is motivated to repeat the performance by following a successful model. People like to do things in which they anticipate success; they are more interested in such activities and more willing to put effort into them and derive greater satisfaction from working hard.

Apart from personal satisfaction, achievements convince a person that his behaviour is appropriate and therefore there is no need to change. This acts as a stabilising influence on behaviour. Consequently, a successful person tends to be more relaxed and absence of stress makes it possible for him to enjoy success.

The most valuable effect of achievement is encouragement to the achiever to be more realistic about goal setting. Success shows a person what he can do, and also suggests the limitations of his capacities. Goal setting commensurate with aspirations and abilities is a characteristic behaviour of intelligent and well adjusted person.

Achievement enhances a person's self-concept by increasing his prestige in the eyes of others and adding to his social acceptance. Success at successive stages of activity puts a person in line for a leadership role and each new success adds to his prestige and this in turn adds to his self-concept.

1.4 INTEREST AND PERSONALITY

Recent reviews on relationship of personality and interest
conclusively accept interest development as essentially a part of personality development. (Darley and Hagenah in Encyclopaedia of Educational research, 1960 edition by Chester W Harris). Needs and values such as altruism, prestige and understanding appear to be the determinants of interest. A man's personality is the total picture of his organised behaviour which makes him effective; it is his social stimulus value. Factors which have been accepted as possible determinants of interests include socio-economic status, intelligence and aptitude, social role expectations, personality and experience. What a person can do well and what people expect him to do limit the activities in which his needs and values will manifest themselves in the preference which lead him. What a person needs and values and what people expect him to do limit the outlets which he will find and use for his aptitudes. What a person needs and what he can do limit his responses to social role expectations.

Personality is the sum total of an individual's behaviour in social situations where behaviour includes not only overt acts but inward feeling tone produced by the situation as interpreted by the individual through introspection. It is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychological systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment. Motives direct behaviour and as energies, selectors, and directors of activity are closely related to interests and attitudes. It is almost impossible to isolate any one function from the whole pattern of inner compulsions that express themselves in overt behaviour. Unless the individual can
be led to see meaning in his activities he is likely to be uninterested and unsuccessful in his achievement which is definitely reflected in his personality as a total person. Thus, interests being the motive force for action lead to achievement which is reflected in an individual's personality as a dynamic and adjustable social behaviour throughout life span.

1.5 THE PROBLEM

But all the studies relating either personality with achievement or interest with achievement consider the latter as an end product at a certain level for which the research is designed or meant. But achievement if perceived as a continuous process always characterises itself with certain trends. Such trends can be broadly classified into four categories, viz., progressive, regressive, stable and fluctuating.

Progressive trend of achievement is that where the person concerned shows a continuous improvement in his/her performance right from the school leaving examination to the highest University examination. This upward trend is supposed not only a matter of chance but a typical characteristic of a group of people.

Regressive trend is just the reverse of progressive trend which is characterised by a consistent decline or downward trend in the examination performance.
Stable trend is one in which the person concerned maintains more or less same level of performance throughout the academic career.

Fluctuating trend, as it is obvious from the nomenclature is characterised by unsystematic improvement or decline in the examination performance. Schematically the four trends may be demonstrated in Figure 1.1 given below which shows the four trends on a fictitious diagram.

It is interesting to note that this vital aspect, i.e., the trend of educational achievement has so far totally evaded the attention of the researchers. Therefore, the present study aims to find a relationship, if there is any, between the trend of achievement on the one hand, and interest and personality on the other.