CHAPTER VI

Summary of the Study, Conclusions and Suggestions

6.1. The Study in Retrospect
6.1.1. Variables for the study
6.1.2. Hypotheses
6.1.3. Objectives
6.1.4. Methodology
6.2. Major findings
   (1-4)
6.3. Conclusions and Suggestions
6.4. Suggestions for further research
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 The Study in Retrospect

The present study has been designed to identify a certain number of familial and social factors associated with underachievement. The details of the study are presented below.

6.1.1 Variables for the Study

The following eighteen variables were treated in the study:

(i) Family Environment          (ii) Family Relations
(iii) Family Acceptance         (iv) Training for Independence (within family)
(v) Freedom for Action          (vi) Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)
   (within family)             (vii) Parental Attitude towards Academic Work
   (viii) Father's Educational level
   (ix) Father's Occupational level
   (xi) Mother's Educational level
   (xii) Sex
   (xiii) Age                   (xiv) Residence
   (xv) Caste                   (xvi) Family Size
   (xvii) Pre-Primary Education (xviii) School Category
6.1.2 Hypotheses

The study tested the following three hypotheses:

A. Within an unselected group of Secondary School Pupils, for each of the eleven familial and social variables under study

1. the mean score of normal achievers will be significantly different from the mean score of underachievers

2. the mean score of overachievers will be significantly different from the mean score of underachievers

3. the mean score of overachievers will be significantly different from the mean score of normal achievers.

B. Within three equated groups drawn from the three achievement levels (groups equated by controlling three variables viz., sex, age and rural-urban residence), each of the eleven familial and social variables will discriminate significantly between

(i) Normal achievers and underachievers
(ii) Overachievers and underachievers
(iii) Overachievers and normal achievers
C. There will be significant difference in the proportion of underachievement or in any of the other related achievement levels, if two contrasted groups are formed on the basis of certain socio-personal variables, viz., sex, age, residence, caste, family size, pre-primary education and school category.

6.1.3 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To classify the general sample of secondary school children of Kerala into the three achievement levels, viz., over, normal and underachievers.

2. To identify the familial and social variables under study which discriminate between the unselected groups of
   (a) Normal and underachievers
   (b) Over and underachievers
   (c) Over and normalachievers
3. To identify the familial and social variables under study which discriminate between the equated groups of
   (a) Normal and underachievers
   (b) Over and underachievers
   (c) Over and normalachievers

4. To find out if there is a significant difference in the proportion of underachievement or any of the other related achievement levels, if two contrasted groups are formed on the basis of certain socio-personal variables.

6.1.4 Methodology

The present study has been conducted on a final sample of 680 secondary school children. The tools used for collecting data for the study are Intelligence Tests (Verbal and Non-verbal), Generalised Achievement Test, Family Integration Inventory, Scale of Parental Attitude towards Academic Work and a General Data Sheet. The sample was classified into three achievement levels (underachievers, normalachievers and overachievers), using the regression equation technique suggested by Farquhar (1963) between Intelligence and Achievement Scores. Separate regression equations were developed for Verbal and Non-verbal Intelligence.
The data collected were analysed by computing appropriate statistical indices such as Mean, S.D., Percentages, Correlation (r) and the Critical ratios. Comparisons were made with the unselected as well as the equated groups of under, normal and overachievers (The groups were equated by controlling variables like, sex, age and rural-urban residence). Comparisons of sub-samples based on the socio-personal variables under study were also made. The following are the major statistical techniques employed in the study:

(i) Two-tailed test of significance for difference between means of large independent samples.

(ii) Two-tailed test of significance for difference between means of large dependent samples (equated groups).

(iii) Two-tailed test of significance for difference between proportions (large independent samples).

6.2 Major findings

The important findings that have emerged from the study are summarised and classified under suitable heads as presented below:
6.2.1 Findings related to the Comparison of Under, Normal and Overachievers: Unselected groups

1. Comparison of the mean scores of normal and underachievers (unselected groups) showed that the mean scores of normal achievers are significantly greater than the mean scores of underachievers with respect to the eleven familial and social factors.

2. The mean scores of overachievers (unselected group) are greater than that of their underachieving counterparts with respect to the eleven familial and social factors.

3. The mean scores of overachievers (unselected group) are greater than that of their normal achieving counterparts with respect to the eleven familial and social factors.

6.2.2 Findings related to the Comparison of Under, Normal and Overachievers: Equated groups

1. Comparison of the mean scores of the equated groups of normal achievers and underachievers revealed that there is significant difference between the two achievement levels with regard to six of the familial and social variables, the difference being in favour of
the normalachievers. The variables significant are:

1. Family Acceptance
2. Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)
3. Parental Attitude towards Academic Work
4. Family Environment
5. Training for Independence (within family)

2. The mean scores of overachievers (equated groups) are significantly greater than the mean scores of underachievers for nine of the familial and social variables, which are given below.

1. Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)
2. Family Acceptance
3. Family Environment
4. Family Relations
5. Training for Independence (within family)
6. Parental Attitude towards Academic Work
7. Freedom for Action (within family)
8. Father's Income level
9. Father's Educational level

3. The mean scores of overachievers are found to be significantly greater than the mean scores of normalachievers for seven familial and social variables, the variables significant being the following:

1. Family Environment
2. Family Relations
3. Family Acceptance
4. Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)
5. Father's Educational level.
6. Training for Independence (within family)
7. Father's Income level
6.2.3 Findings related to the Consolidation of the two Comparisons made with respect to the unselected and equated groups

Comparison of the results obtained with respect to the unselected and equated groups revealed that five of the variables under study were 'most effective', four of the variables were 'somewhat effective' and two of the variables were 'least effective', the details being as shown below:

a. Variables 'most effective'

1. Family Environment
2. Family Acceptance
3. Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)
4. Training for Independence (within family)
5. Father's Educational level

b. Variables 'somewhat effective'

1. Family Relations
2. Parental Attitude towards Academic Work
3. Father's Income level
4. Freedom for Action (within family)

c. Variables 'least effective'

1. Father's Occupational level
2. Mother's Educational level
6.2.4 Findings related to the Comparison of the Sub-samples Using the test of Significance for difference between proportions

(i) Comparison of the sex groups showed that
   
   (a) The proportion of underachieving boys is greater than the proportion of underachieving girls.
   
   (b) No sex difference is seen among the normalachievers.
   
   (c) The proportion of overachieving girls is significantly greater than the proportion of overachieving boys.
   
(ii) Comparison of the High and Low Age groups revealed that
   
   (a) The proportion of underachievers among the high age group is greater than that of the low age group.
   
   (b) No significant difference is noted between the two age groups of normal-achievers.
   
   (c) The proportion of overachievers in the low age group is significantly greater than the proportion of overachievers in the high age group.
(iii) The Rural and Urban groups on Comparison revealed that

(a) The proportion of underachieving rural subjects is greater than that of the underachieving urban groups.

(b) No significant difference is noted between the proportions of the two groups among normalachievers.

(c) Proportion of overachievers of urban group is greater than that of the overachievers of rural group.

(iv) Comparison of the 'Forward' and 'Backward' caste groups showed that

(a) The proportion of underachievers is comparatively greater in the Backward caste group.

(b) The proportion of normalachievers is higher in the Forward caste group.

(c) No significant difference is seen between the proportions of overachievers in the two groups.
(v) No significant difference is noted when the 'large' and 'small' family size groups were compared, in all the three achievement levels.

(vi) No significant difference is seen in any of the three achievement levels, when the two groups based on 'pre-primary education' were compared.

(vii) Comparison of the 'Private-Government' groups showed that
(a) No significant difference is noted between the proportions of the two underachieving groups.

(b) Proportion of Government school subjects is greater than the Private school subjects among normalachievers.

(c) Proportion of overachieving private school students is greater than that of the Government school students.
6.3 Conclusions and Suggestions

The major conclusions that are arrived at in the present study are the following:

(i) The study found that the incidence of underachievement among secondary school children in Kerala is 16.76 per cent, which is not a negligible one.

(ii) The incidence of underachievement is found to be higher among boys, 'rural' subjects 'high age' group, and 'backward caste' subjects, when compared to their counterparts.

(iii) Familial and social factors like 'Family Environment', 'Family Acceptance', 'Mutual Trust and Approval (within family)', 'Training for Independence (within family)' and 'Father's Educational level' have emerged as the 'most effective' causal factors for underachievement.

The findings obtained from the study highlight the influence of family on the child's scholastic performance, thereby supporting the earlier findings of researchers in psychology and education. It is also implied that the basic patterns of adult personality are laid in infancy and the early family experiences are of prime importance in fostering or hindering the
development of the child's personality. The following suggestions are made on the basis of the above conclusions.

1. Effective steps may be taken to make the curricular and co-curricular programmes in schools more meaningful and relevant, so as to minimise underachievement among secondary school children, particularly the specific groups such as boys, rural subjects high age group and backward caste subjects where the incidence of underachievement was found to be high.

2. Pre-service and in-service training programmes for teachers should give more emphasis in equipping the teachers to identify the common problems of children and the ways and means of handling such children and thereby minimising underachievement. It is imperative that the teacher should establish friendly, tension free and permissive interaction among children, accepting each pupil with all his strength and weakness, in order to make him feel that he is understood and accepted by the teacher.

3. Proper steps should be taken for organising effective guidance and counselling programme in all the schools of Kerala. Counselling as a guidance technique can be effective in understanding the
problems of underachievers and help them in improving their academic achievement. It may, therefore, be recommended that there should be a fulltime school counsellor, if not at least a part-time school counsellor, with a well organised ongoing guidance programme in as many schools as possible to help the underachievers. The counsellor should have the competency needed to serve as a co-ordinator, in conducting in-service education programmes for staff personnel, with special emphasis on helping teachers to identify the underachievers and adopting proper strategies for maintaining wholesome teacher-pupil relationship.

4. Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) should be formed in every school and it should be made 'functional' in the true sense of the term. Seminars and Conferences can be arranged periodically by the PTA involving maximum number of parents and teachers for fruitful discussions. An adequate programme for parental education should be organised keeping in view the conclusions that are arrived at in the present study. Establishing frequent contacts with parents of underachievers would be helpful in minimising personal and social problems experienced by such children.
5. Initiative for involving the different volunteer organizations and philanthropic agencies like the Sastra Sahithya Parishad, the Lions Club and the Rotary Club should be taken by the school so as to improve the general tone of the school. Pamphlets and magazines containing articles on family life education, child psychology and similar topics can be brought out with the help of these agencies.

6. Non-formal Education Programmes can be organized for the benefit of the illiterate parents, so as to make them functionally literate, which would go a long way in improving their life style in general, and the education of their children in particular.

The suggestions made above are totally relevant to and consistent with the major objectives of the National Policy on Education. In our national perception, education ought to prepare the younger generation for a life of enlightenment, productivity, enrichment and co-operation with others in the society for the task of building a prosperous, self-reliant, united and modern national community. To attain this - to meet our developing need, and to respond to our challenging aspirations - each and every child should be understood and treated accordingly.
It is in this context that the role of the family in the development of the growing child attains special significance.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

The present study helps to identify areas (related to this investigation) which need deeper exploration. The following suggestions are made for further research.

(i) Studies may be conducted to see the effect of family determinants on the scholastic performance of the child keeping in view the following variables:
   a. Different types of family structure
   b. Birth order
   c. Family values
   d. Working mothers and non-working mothers.

(ii) Studies may be taken up to explore the conditions in the home, school and community which create an alien world for certain high ability students.

(iii) Studies may be taken up to find answers to the following questions:
   Is 'academic underachievement' a phenomenon associated only with school?
What happens to underachievers after they leave school?

Do they continue to manifest their underachieving behaviour in their vocational and community living?

(iv) Attempts may be made to study the value systems of both the underachiever and his parents.