Chapter - I
INTRODUCTION
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A nation becomes really rich when hidden potentials of each and every element of its human resources are developed to the fullest possible extent. This goal is realised via the avenues of formal and informal socialization. In conventional sense, education in a society refers to the formal socialization process or educational opportunities provided by the state to its citizens.

The word education is derived from to Latin words ‘e’ meaning “out of” and ‘duco’ meaning “I lead”. The educator therefore brings out the hidden qualities of educant into outside to make him a complete human being. Thus the concept of education is holistic in nature. It is not only academic achievement but also the educants’ / students’ physical, psychological, moral, social and spiritual development.

1.2. Role of Intelligence in Education:

The prime essential conditions for good educational achievement is the individual’s “general mental ability” or ‘intelligence’ which is predetermined by the number of neurons in his brain (from before birth) and ceases to mature after 18/19 years. Thus, vertical growth of intelligence is limited. But horizontally via acquiring richer and richer experiences it can be made more and more developed upto death. This is the horizontal development of intelligence.

Everyone knows that lack of intellect is the chief limiting condition of educational under-achievement. So, usually intelligent students are academically not below the average and often they may become high achieving also. But one gets perplexed when confronted by intelligent bright students with academic under-achievement. The present researcher attempts
to throw some light in this direction in the research endeavour in Indian setting so as to not only enlighten everyone concerned with welfare of the child but also planning and executing proper intervention programme to help such a child and his guardians.

Under-achievement as a construct has several definitions. It could be regarded for example as the discrepancy between actual school grades and achievement tests (Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen and Makey, 1993; McCall, Evahnand Kratzer, 1992). More often, however, under-achievement is understood and operationalized as the discrepancy between an intelligence test score and school results or achievement test scores. When the intelligence score is average or higher than average but the scholastic achievement is poor, the child becomes an under-achiever.

1.3. Reasons of Under-achievements:

Many factors are identified as contributing to the students dropping out, under-achieving and being at risk. Educators’ blame students’ lack of motivation, engagement and achievement on a long list of factors such as psychological problems, emotional problems, poor study habits, low self-esteem, withdrawal, aggression, social isolation, conflicts at home, over expectations of parents, under-achievements of parents, physical or medical causes, social / class differences and expectations, conflict with teachers, lack of academic readiness and preparation, learning disabilities, poor home life, unsupportive parents, previous traumatic experience, poverty and low self-confidence. Social reasons include living with one parent, parental divorce, parents showing no interest in their child’s education and school system and low income etc play important role in underachievement of the students of school. (Kamal and Bener, 2009).
Some of the thinking on underachievement lays blame on factors outside the school influence, such as poverty, home life and students’ academic motivation. The implication is that since schools have little control over these factors, then school have little control over improving achievement. School hold central place in the “developmental agenda” set for children and adolescents throughout the world (Rogoff 1990, Sameroff 1987). Schools play a crucial formative role in cognitive, emotional, social and moral development of children. Academic and emotional problems has often been ignored. In recent years there is growing recognition that “school can act as safety nets, protecting children from hazards which affect their learning development and psychological wellbeing ...... schools are crucial in building or undermining self esteem and a sense of competence (Kapur, 1997). Some studies pointed out that teacher qualification and student environment did not influence student’s poor performance , but teaching methods have influenced poor performance of students especially in general mathematics and higher mathematics. (Gegbe and Koroma , 2014). But it needs to be pointed out here that the holistic purpose of education for its proper fulfillment, is not only the responsibility of the school but also actually the home, the family members, especially the caregivers and earning adults have a more important role to play.

1.4. Features of under-achievers:

Under-achieving students may sometimes be mistakenly assessed as being learning disabled(McCall et al, 1992, Ross 1995). This might explain why practitioners occasionally deny the existence of under-achievement and attribute decreasing achievement entirely to a lack of intelligence. There is no appropriate method for educational psychologists to identify them. While the population of under-achievers is diverse there seems to be a consensus
nevertheless, that a lack of an optimal or accurate self-concept characterises this group (Mandel and Marcus, 1988; McCall et al 1992). It has been reported that underachievers are characterised by external locus of control which means that they lack a sense of control over factors that influence their lives and attribute success to forces outside of themselves (Nowicki and Strickland 1973; Mandel and Mercus 1988).

Underachievers may also fail to implement adequate problem-solving strategies (Muir-Broddus, 1995). This may be due to insufficient metacognitive skills (Carr, Borkowski and Maxwell 1991). It seems that underachievers lack characteristics such as alertness and being support seeking too, since these two characteristics tend to contribute to better achievement, independent of intelligence (Milgram and Palti, 1993). They are known to suffer from emotional disturbance such as lacking task persistence and reflectiveness and are often impulsive and anxious, which of course could lead to negative school attitudes (McCall et al, 1992).

1.5. Emergent Thoughts:

Proper education is the right of every child, although higher education might not be feasible for all. But, this basic requirement is far from yet to be realised in India. However, those, who are fortunate to have it, cannot realise the value of education. They are demanding systematic and scientific investigation of the potent casual factors. Actually speaking until and unless the causal factors are exposed properly, one cannot think of remediying them. Some relevant studies, no doubt had been conducted abroad. But here, especially in eastern India, there exists an almost total dearth of it. And also it is a common belief that academic underachievement is mainly due to the lack of intellectual capabilities. But, the researcher following her own observation and talks with teachers and students of her own school felt that it
is not the whole story. There are other psychological variables which seem to play nonetheless important roles in rendering an intelligent child or adolescent an underachiever in academics.

With the above paragraph in mind, the researcher decided to unravel the mystery of intelligent adolescent school student academic underachievement. Because once the causes are bared it will be possible to detect intelligent underachiever in the very beginning and render proper and adequate help to them. Therefore the objective of the present study will be:

To identify underachievers by

i. Fixing an operational criterion of underachievement and have measure of the underachievers intelligence also in the metropolis of Kolkata.

ii. Excluding male school students from the study domain.

iii. Focussing upon the subject group with an array of suitable psychological measures in order to understand the underlaying dynamics of underachievement and

iv. Try to understand the relative contribution of different caused variables to the event of underachievement in otherwise intelligent female adolescent school students from middle and lower middle sections of society.