CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION
The purposes of this empirical investigation is to identify the rearing antecedents adopted by mothers of urban, rural and tribal areas of the state. The findings offer a number of salient features. While there are various aspects of the findings, the results can be organized in accordance with some broad dimensions. These dimensions include: the role of setting, sex of the child, interactional style differences, and mothers' attributional style.

Role of Setting

The study is focussed on the role of sub-cultural settings. The settings involve urban, rural, and tribal locations. It is considered that urban, rural and tribal settings provide different contexts for development of children's mastery orientation. The findings indicate that rural and tribal children show more helplessness compared with urban children. This finding is explainable in terms of the hardship of life in which tribal and rural children find themselves. It is observed that children in urban centres have access to much more opportunities compared with rural and tribal children. Due to rapid industrialization in India, the amount of urban wealth has increased considerably. There is a greater degree of communication, employment and relaxation facilities in the urban setting than in the rural and tribal locations.
On the contrary, the regional development has not been very even in rural and tribal pockets. The migration of people from rural and tribal locations has affected planned economy in these areas. Due to these constraints in rural and tribal areas, the children in these areas are likely to experience greater uncontrollability over their environment, than children in urban areas. This expectation has been confirmed the present result that rural and tribal children are more helpless than urban children. This finding has been supported by both the methods of operationalization (questionnaire and projective technique).

With respect to the role of setting in attributional style, it is clearly shown that rural children indicate greater internality compared with urban children while explaining bad events. It is important to point out that internal attributions for explaining bad events are insidious. It can be postulated that the use of internal factors augment helplessness of rural children. Both the measures show that rural children use greater globality compared with urban children. Both rural and tribal children report greater stability than do urban children when stability is measured by CASQ; rural children show greater globality than tribal children when globality is measured by CHQ. In general, rural children in comparison with urban children indicate greater
ratings on internality, stability and globality with respect to explaining negative events.

Taken together, it is shown that rural children show greater insidious attributions than do urban children. Although both rural and tribal children report greater helplessness in comparison with urban children greater insidious attributions are shown only with respect to rural children. Tribal children do not differ from rural and urban children with respect to insidious attributions. This may be due to the living pattern of tribals.

In the context of urban setting, a different set of factors is likely to function for inducing mastery orientation in urban children. The demand of industrial life coupled with competition oriented educational practices may play instrumental role in stimulating mastery-orientation in urban children. On the contrary, rural children do not encounter independence-oriented socialization in their homes nor do they come across resourceful educational system where the emphasis is on competence and competition. Thus, the insidious attribution of rural children appears the a likely product.

It is important to point out that the explanatory styles of internality, stability and globality are considered insidious in the context of explaining bad events. The
Individuals employing these styles for explaining bad events show helplessness deficits and depressive symptoms. However, the factors of internality, stability, and globality are health-inducing when used for explaining good events. Individuals using these styles in the context of positive events experience self-confidence, spread their happiness over a wide range of areas of their life, and prolong their self-efficacy. Since urban children have shown less insidious attributions in the context of bad events, they are expected to indicate greater internality, stability, and globality in the context of positive events. The finding of the present study has partly confirmed this expectation.

The plausible reason for a greater use of internality, stability, and globality in the context of bad events on the part of rural children has been pointed out earlier. For similar reasons urban children are expected to show more internality, stability, and globality than rural children in the context of good events. However, no such consistent picture is obtained with respect to explaining positive events. While PIH offers a contradictory picture, CASQ provides supporting evidence in terms of greater summated ratings (internality, globality, stability) of urban children as compared with rural children.
Role of Sex

The examination of sex difference reveals that girls are more helpless than boys. Although this result is supported only on the basis of CHQ scores, the finding can not be dismissed in view of the past research (Dweck & Litch, 1980). These authors (Dweck & Litch, 1980) have examined mastery-orientation and learned helplessness in school situations. They have found girls to be more helpless than boys. While investigating the cause of this sex difference, these authors have postulated the role of teachers' socialization.

According to Dweck and Litch (1980), teachers employ differential pattern of socialization while training boys vis-a-vis girls. When boys fail on a task, teachers tend to use effort-attributions. On the contrary, teachers use ability-attributions when girls fail on the task.

Although this explanation appears to have a contributary role, the socialization pattern adopted by primary caretakers such as parents may be more fundamental than teacher's role. In cross-cultural literature, there is enough evidence to point out that parents socialize boys and girls differently (Barry, Bacon & Child, 1958). Whether this differential socialization is linked with induction of helplessness in girls is an important point to be explored.
In view of greater helplessness among girls, they are expected to indicate greater insidious attribution of internality, stability and globality while explaining bad events. Although this sex difference is not found with respect to each of the dimensions, girls have shown greater stability (as measured by PIH) than boys for explaining negative events. In other words, girls view bad events as more chronic than boys. This finding is meaningful in the context of Indian socio-cultural system. In the past-century, women in India have experienced much more hardship compared with men due to certain historical factors. A continuous and prolonged exposure to such predicament might have induced a stable attributional factor of explaining bad events.

Furthermore, girls have also shown greater summated ratings of internality, stability and globality in the context of explaining bad events. This implies that they have also greater tendency to use internal and global factors for explaining bad events compared with boys. Thus girls' helplessness and insidious attributions to some extent suggest less psychological well-being as compared with boys.

This picture is further strengthened when analysing sex difference in explaining good events. It is shown
that boys employ a greater degree of internality in explaining good events. This explanatory style of internality in the context of good events is useful for mental health. On the contrary girls make less use of this style. Consequently the difference favours boys in terms of promoting well-being. This, the overall pattern of attributional styles of girls make them more vulnerable to harmful effects of uncontrollability.

Interactional Style Differences

The comparison of interactional styles adopted by mothers from urban, rural and tribal settings shows interesting features. It is indicated that urban mothers adopt each of the interactional styles to a greater extent than do tribal mothers excepting permissive and rejecting-neglecting pattern. In comparison with tribal mothers, urban mothers show greater authoritarian-rejecting, authoritarian-not rejecting, authoritative, indulgent-protective, harmonious, appeasing, and temporizing interactional pattern.

It is possible that urban mothers engage themselves with greater amount of interactions with their children as compared with the amount of interaction between tribal mothers and their children. This is likely to increase the intensity of almost each of the interactional
styles so far as urban mothers are concerned. It seems that tribal children extricate themselves from the mothers' sphere of socialization and expose themselves to socialization influences of peers and natural environment.

Not only urban mothers, but rural mothers also show greater amount of interaction with respect to authoritarian not rejecting, indulgent-protective, and temporizing styles. Urban and rural mothers do not differ from each other with respect to these patterns.

On the contrary, rural mothers (in par with tribal mothers) show lower authoritarian rejecting, harmonious and appeasing patterns than do urban mothers. Rural mothers and tribal mothers do not differ significantly with respect to these patterns. Thus rural mothers show patterns similar to tribal mothers in certain respect whereas they (rural mothers) share some common features with urban mothers. This is conceivable in view of the changing nature of rural life (in India) where pressures for future urbanization and past tradition are mutually interacting.

With respect to authoritative pattern, urban mothers surpass rural mothers who, in turn, surpass tribal mothers. Furthermore, rural mothers show greater permissive style than do urban and tribal mothers. A greater degree of
permissiveness on the part of rural mothers may be a product of the gap between their own educational attainment and the educational level of their children. Without sufficient educational background, rural mothers may find it difficult to specify and enforce certain norms of behaviour. They choose to be permissive towards their children.

The target of socialization may be an important element. The pattern of interactional styles as directed towards boys vis-a-vis girls is examined. It is shown that mothers of boys indicate greater authoritativeness and permissiveness than do mothers of girls. The reasons that prompt mothers to adopt authoritarian attitude are consisvable. It can be postulated that mothers depend on boys to a greater extent than do they depend on girls for their economic security in India. The welfare system operative in the family circle is centred on sons (boys). Consequently, parents tend to retain some control over the activities of their sons so that the chances of their career are not dampened. This tendency on the part of parents persuade them to adopt authoritative interactional styles towards boys. For similar reasons they do not treat girls as supporter of their economic well-being and they become less authoritative with girls. While the economic motives of mothers are likely to induce
authoritative interactional style for boys, social motives prompt them to adopt less permissiveness style for girls and more permissive style for boys. More specifically girls are considered susceptible to social criticisms, when girls deviate from social norms and standards. On the contrary, boys do not receive same amount of criticism, when they show deviation of similar magnitudes. Consequently parents tend to become less permissive while socializing the girl child. Thus, mothers of boys indicate greater permissiveness than do mothers of girls.

A crucial question relating to the mothers' interactional styles involves whether mothers of LH and MO children differ significantly with respect to their interaction patterns. Although the difference does not reach the levels of significance, trends in the expected direction are indicated.

Mothers of LH children tend to use neglecting rejecting interactional style to a greater extend then do mothers of MO children. Sahoo and Kar (1992) have examined the reporting of children with respect to the interactional style adopted by their parents. They have found that parents of LH children use greater rejecting neglecting style than do parents of MO children. The relationship is explainable in terms of the consequences
generated by neglecting rejecting attitudes. It is possible that mothers using neglecting rejecting pattern do not feel concerned about children's welfare. They do not take interest in children's activity. Consequently, children do not receive proper guidance and commit several mistakes. At the same time they also do not receive appreciation for any good thing they do, rather they are subjected to harsh criticisms and punishment.

This pattern of interactional style is likely to induce helplessness among children. It is also found that mothers of LH children tend to use temporizing interaction pattern. As described earlier, temporizing pattern denotes the lack of consistency. Mothers adopting temporizing style do not employ any consistent principle but they are completely dominated by the fluctuations of situations. It is obvious that such mothers prevent their children from forming appropriate connection between objects and events. Thus the tendency of mothers using neglecting-rejecting and temporizing interactional styles in the direction of inducing helplessness in their children is explainable.

Similarly mothers of MO children do not show clear-cut statistical difference from mothers of LH children. However the mothers of MO children tend to employ authoritative and permissive styles to a greater
extent than do mothers of LH children. It can be postulated that these mothers use authoritative rearing pattern in the sense they retain control over their children with respect to certain important activities of their children. But they do not put unnecessary restrictions in the areas of other activities of the children. This explains the fact that the mothers of MO children are more permissive than mothers of LH children. In other words, mothers of MO children do exercise authoritative pattern in some important activity domain of children while they use permissive pattern with respect to some less important activity domains of their children.

Mothers' Attributional Style

Finally an important issue concerns the possibility of transmission of mother's attributional style to their children. It is important to point out that the attributional style of children and their mothers have been separately measured. The analysis of mothers' attributional styles shows that mothers of boys employ greater internality and globality for explaining positive events than do mothers of girls. These mothers of boys also use a greater degree of summated ratings (internality plus stability plus globality) than mothers of girls.
As pointed out earlier boys have shown a greater degree of internality (as measured by CASQ) compared with girls in the context of explaining good events. It can be added that these styles are health-inducing in the context of explaining positive events while these styles are insidious while explaining negative events.

Since boys and their mothers have used somewhat similar attributional styles in the context of explaining positive events, this brings of the possibility of transmission of attributional style from mothers to their sons.

However, the possibility of transmission of mothers' attributional style to their children has only been hinted. A more careful investigation and more comprehensive examination are needed to clarify the range of such transmission.

Major Implications

A number of implications are suggested by the present study which are important from theoretical as well as applied point of view. Theoretically the result explicates factors that could be studied more systematically in a framework of cause and effect relationship. In applied terms, specific feedbacks can be communicated for child management programmes in family, school, community, and peer group settings.
The findings have clearly shown that children's helplessness is related to specific patterns of explanatory styles. Helplessness is augmented when individuals explain negative (bad) events in terms of internal, stable, and global factors. On the contrary, internal, stable and global factors of explaining positive (good) events reduce helplessness. Thus, it is implied that children should be exposed to training situations where they learn to use external, unstable and specific attributions for dealing with negative events.

Since helpless children indicate a greater degree of insidious attributions in terms of internality, stability and globality for negative events, these children should be given training for changing their explanatory styles. They should be exposed to counselling session so that they change from internal to external, stable to unstable, and global to specific style of explaining bad events. The parents, teachers and other caretakers need to take notice of steps that change the maladaptive explanatory style to appropriate attributional styles. Similarly, these helpless children need to be encouraged to develop internal, stable and global styles for explaining positive events.

The results of the present findings have also shown that girls are more helpless and they use more insidious
attribution than do boys. Consequently, there is a greater need of attributional training for girls. In contemporary society, several steps are being taken to reduce the gaps between boys and girls with respect to various opportunities. However, an important step in this context involves narrowing the gap with respect to their orientation towards success. Since helplessness and internal, stable and global factors for explaining negative events are indicative of mal-adoptive orientation, girls need to be offered counselling and training for changing their orientation and explanatory styles.

Similar implications can be suggested with respect to rural and tribal children. The rural and tribal children demonstrate a greater degree of helplessness and insidious attributions. It is important to retain these children in terms of developing attributional styles indicative of mastery-orientations. It is observed that these children are exposed to greater headship and difficult living condition compared with urban children. Consequently, they may be more vulnerable to developing insidious attributions compared with urban children. Hence, greater effort is needed to change the explanatory style of these rural and tribal children.

The other implication of the study concerns the role of interactional style. Although no clear cut pattern
is shown to be linked with children's helplessness, the tendency of mothers of helpless children in using rejecting-neglecting and temporizing style offers a helpful signal. It is suggested that mothers should not show rejecting attitude towards their children. They need to recognize whatever worth the children possess and extend recognition for that. The small and token achievement of the child should not be dismissed. Rather, by recognizing small bits of achievements of their children, mothers can lead the children towards greater achievements.

Similarly, mothers ought to show concern for their children. They must refrain from showing negligence towards the child. In addition to the findings of the present investigation, studies of achievement motivation have also shown that mothers of achieving children express their love and care openly. Accordingly it is suggested that mothers need to indicate care and concerns instead of negligence.

Further-more, mothers need to discard temporizing interactional style. As discussed earlier, temporizing interactional style does not represent any consistent pattern of child rearing. Mothers adopting temporizing style demonstrate inconsistency in their approach. Since there is a tendency on the part of these mothers to induce
helplessness in children, it is implied that this inappropriate form of rearing should be given up. Mothers need to develop more appropriate forms of interactional styles.

On the other hand, mothers of MO children have indicated both authoritative and permissive styles to a greater extent than do mothers of LH children. It suggests that mothers of competent children become authoritative in the sense that they exercise control in certain important domains of their children's life. These mothers are also more permissive in form of extending greater freedom in less vital areas of children functions.

This implication leads to the recommendation that mothers can selectively retain control over some activities of the children while they allow freedom in other areas of children's activity. In short, mothers can blend both authoritative and permissive styles with a view to stimulating competence in their children.

Finally, the implication makes an indirect suggestion for using appropriate attribution training. There is some support in this study that mothers transmit their attributional style to their children. Of course, mothers may not be aware of this possibility. Accordingly, mothers need to use attribution training that is appropriate for
children's growth and competence. As open discussion on the part of mothers favouring internal, stable and global factors for explaining bad events may induce such attributions in children. Consequently, mothers need to stress external, unstable and specific factors in the context of bad events and internal, stable and global factors in the context of good events while dealing with their children.

Thus the provision of reattribution training geared for certain specific target groups is a major implication suggested. In addition, training of mothers in the direction of attenuating rejecting-neglecting and temprizing patterns and strengthening a blend of authoritative and permissive style is a significant applied contribution.

Directions for Future Research

The study is addressed to an important area of social concern. It has examined child rearing antecedents of children's helplessness. However, the categorization of children into MO and LH group is based on test performance of children. Care has been taken to use standardized measures of children's helplessness. Yet, the possibility of some problems associated with paper and pencil measure can not be ruled out.
It has been generally observed that paper and pencil test do have the problem of social desirability, more specifically people in collectivistic societies have tendencies to respond in a socially conforming ways. Indian socio-cultural system represents a collectivistic mode of living. Consequently, respondents are susceptible to social desirability bias. Furthermore, paper and pencil tests present the problems of reactivity and response set.

With a view to attenuating social desirability effects, the present investigation has used a projective technique along with self-report measure. It is expected that social desirability is reduced to the minimum with the help of projective inventory approach.

While the combination of self-report and projective inventory represents an improved method of operationalization in the context of Indian socio-cultural system, the use of observers' ratings may be adopted as multimethod techniques. Although the parental rating of their children's helplessness may have some biasing elements, these ratings may be taken in conjunction with teachers' and peers' ratings. In otherwords the use of multiraters to operationalize children's helplessness may be adopted in future research.
Apart from raters, the use of performance measure may also be considered in future. The past research has shown that children's "giving-up" responses may be considered equivalent to children's helplessness. Thus, the behavioural measure along with cognitive scales is likely to bring further refinement in the process of operationalization. Since the classification of mothers is dependent on an effective categorization of children, the multi-method technique to classify children into MO and LH group appears to be a challenging task for the future.

In addition an important consideration concerns the tests and materials for specific subset of populations such as tribal participants. Although great care has been taken to ensure free and natural responses of tribal participants, it has been observed that they are not familiar with our test environment. The whole business of test taking appears alien to them.

In view of this complexity, it is desirable to consider some text materials that are suited to their socio-cultural milieu. Puhan and Sahoo (1991) had stressed the indigenization of psychological studies in general and Sahoo (1993) has emphasised the indigenization of psychological measurement in particular. It is important that future researchers develop some text materials indigenous for rural and tribal settings.
Finally, it is important to point out that the present study has examined the role of interactional style in relation to children's helplessness. However, the study is based on mothers' reporting of interactional style. It is possible that mothers may lack in accuracy of perceiving an interactional style. In other words, there may be a gap between what they perceive and what rearing strategy they actually adopt.

With a view to cross-validating interactional style actually adopted by mothers, it is important to examine the perception of children with respect to their mothers' interactional styles. The perception of children would not only help to cross-examine mothers' reporting, the data would be useful in finding out whether children's perception of interactional style does have any bearing on the growth of competence. Thus, the examination of rearing styles from more than one perspectives is likely to provide much more useful information than has been provided by mothers' data.

In conclusion, it is contended that mothers' interactional styles do not exhaust all channels of pertinent socialization. Yet, scientific investigation of the rearing antecedents adopted by mothers is sure to suggest hunches and hypotheses regarding the role of other social
agents. The study of the role of social agents in this context is an essential competent of competence-building programmes.