CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
The significance of the study of rearing antecedents in the context of children's helplessness is brought about when we review the pertinent literature. The empirical studies in the area do not exist in volumes. However, an examination of the literature relating to maternal and other socio-cultural antecedents of children's lack of competence suggests relevant direction.

The Maternal Antecedents

The maternal antecedents offer crucial information relating to the development of children's incompetence. Two important domains of such investigation includes the study of maternal role in the formation of children's early contingencies and their depressive symptoms.

Early Roots

A variety of studies looking at the effects of mother behaviour on child functioning have highlighted the role that warm, supportive, sensitive and consistent care-giving plays in subsequent healthy development (Belsky, 1980). This work has provided a basis for the expanded and differentiated study of childhood socialization. In addition, the role that the child himself or herself plays in affecting the way the parent treats him or her has begun to be studied (Chapman, 1984; Lerner & Busch-Rossangel, 1981). These new emphases have enriched researcher's appreciation
of the complexity of the relationship between parents and children.

Parent sensitive and responsive behaviour has been theoretically and empirically linked with at least two specific classes of child outcomes: attachment and beliefs about control. These basic processes have been linked to other aspects of child functioning, including exploratory behaviour, goal-directedness, cognitive performance, curiosity and problem solving. According to many theorists, one of the effects of interaction with a sensitive caregiver is an increased awareness of the effects one's actions exert on the environment; through prolonged experience, the child develops a generalized sense of the self as an effective agent (Cain & Fincham, 1986; Gunnar, 1980).

Contingency is defined as the relationship between a person's action and a desired event. When an action quickly, consistently, and discriminatively leads to an event, the event is said to be contingent on that action. Using this paradigm, Ramey and Watson (1972) investigated whether infants were able to perceive the contingency between their actions and environmental events. The responses of the 8-week old infant with contingent stimulation rose significantly across the 14 days, relative to their own base rates. Another finding, not predicted, suggests that perception of contingency has affective as well as
cognitive consequences. Mothers whose infants experienced the contingent mobiles tended to report similar infant responses to them. The babies "loved" their mobiles. They laughed, cooed and in general sent out happy social signals in response to contingency experiences. A "contingent" mother is one who responds quickly, consistently and only to target action.

In addition, Easterbrooks and Lamb (1981) state that; The contingent responsiveness of people has another major consequence for infants. From the repeated occurrence of sequences in which the infant behaviour serves as the stimulus eliciting a predictable adult response, the baby learns that its behaviour can elicit environmental consequences. What occurs next is the most important effect, that it can elicit responses and thus partially determine its own experiences.

Programmatic research has also been used by others to look at the consequences of secure attachment between mother and child (Sroufe & Waters, 1977). Maternal sensitivity defined as availability, responsiveness to signals, and reliability of emotional comfort (Sroufe, 1979) was found to relate to children's attachment (age 18 months) and play and problem solving (age 24 months). Among other behaviours, securely attached children were more enthusiastic, more persistent and more able to utilize maternal assistance (Arend, Sroute & Matas, 1978).
In later studies, these researchers looked only at the effects of attachment. They found securely attached infants (at age 15 months) were more competent with peers at age 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) (Waters et al, 1979) and were more curious and ego resilient at age 5 (Arend, Gove, & Sroufe, 1979). Ego resilience is defined as a competence construct that reflects the child's ability to respond flexibility and persistently, especially in problem-solving situations (Block & Block, 1979). Sroufe (1979) includes the concept in his definition of adoption, which refers to "children's active engagement of the environment and affecting changes in the environment to satisfy needs". The theme of active engagement is reflected in the behavioural descriptors of adoption: confidence, enthusiasm, persistence in the face of a challenge, maintaining involvement, curiosity, self-reliance.

Easterbrooks and Lamb (1981) confirm this notion when they summarize the views of several theories about the antecedents of social cognition. They state that: "there is a near unanimity regarding the assertion that it is through interaction with sensitive adults that infants develop a notion of their own effectance".

Parent attributes of all types have been hypothesized as determinants of sensitivity. "Sensitivity" as a stable personality characteristic seems to be the most typically
cited basis for sensitive behaviours. Anisworth (1979) uses four dimensions of parental personality: Sensitivity-insensitivity, accepting-rejecting, co-operative-interfering, accessible-ignoring, to assess effective parents and predict their behaviour. Esterbrooks and Lamb (1981) add to this list the traits of self-centeredness, adaptability, threshold for stimulation and persistence as differentially predictive of parents' perception, interpretation, and response to infant signals. They also indicate that factors in addition to personality may play a role in determining sensitive behaviour.

For example, Dickie and Garber (1980) established a parent program "to increase parental competence to assess, predict, elicit and contingently respond to infant behaviour". To accomplish this they trained both mothers and fathers of 4 to 12 month-old infants using lectures, discussions, and demonstrations on the topic of child development, treatment, infant variation, and the effects of parental contingency. They assessed the results of the training by observing parent-child interactions in the laboratory and home. They found that relative to untrained parents, trained parents showed more anticipation of infant needs, responding to infant cues, contingent verbal responding, and total overall contingent responding. Additionally, there were effects on the infant's behaviour.
and shifts in the participation of mothers and fathers in infant care. Overall, Dickie and Gerber (1980) conclude that the training did increase social competence.

The importance of sensitive and contingent-responsive parent behaviour to both child attachment and locus of control is reasonably well established. And the connection between attachment, internality and many aspects of effective child functioning (e.g. exploratory behaviour, problem solving, curiosity, egoresilience) also is well supported empirically. Hence, for theoretical reasons and as one resource helpful to the planning of interventions it would be useful to have more information about the antecedents of such parent behaviour.

In recent years, evidence has been reported for the critical role that contingent, sensitive, and responsive care giving plays in healthy child functioning. Researchers have found that such a constellation of caregiver behaviours contributes to secure attachment (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984, Hunter & Schaefer, 1983). According to many theorists, one of the effects of interaction with a sensitive caregiver is an increased awareness of the effects one's actions exert on the environment; through prolonged experience, the child develops a generalized sense of the self as an effective agent (Cain & Fincham, 1986; Gunnar, 1980; Easterbrooks & Lamb, 1980).
Riksen-Walraven (1978) explains these results by assuming (a) that the increased responsiveness of the participants in the program increased their infants' sense of efficacy to successfully execute these behaviours, which (b) lead to a generalized expectancy of efficacy and control, which (c) increased infant's motivation and persistence on the laboratory learning task, which (d) resulted in better performance on the task.

The participants today will be/have been elaborating this theme, attempting to articulate how adult's beliefs, to a large extent through their effects on caregiver behaviours, can have an impact on children's development. In the study, this concept was used to identify specific accomplishments for children whose development they wished to chart across time. They selected three developmental tasks of early childhood: learning to walk, learning to eat, and learning to dress oneself. Although developmental tasks are usually considered to be set up for individuals, it is also possible that within the family, the goal of ensuring that children achieve mastery emerges as a developmental task for caregivers as well (Kreppner, 1983).

Research on mother's implicit assumptions about their role in children's development (Goodnow, 1984) is consistent with the notion of parental developmental tasks. It appears that mothers hold more or less explicit expectations for the times at which their children should develop
specific competencies (Cashmore, Cotton, Goodnow & Knight, 1984) and about the extent to which their own influence is necessary for proper accomplishment (Goodnow et al, 1984). Typically, these are conceptualized as parental belief systems (Sigel, 1985).

Although mothers may in general believe that their help is necessary for children's learning in developmental tasks, it is reasoned that these beliefs might change with children's growing competencies.

Thus, mothers might not intend to help or might withhold support for child independence until a developmental task is set up, that is until the "developmentally appropriate" time is reached for them to become actively involved in the child's learning process (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

If this is the case, then mothers' beliefs should relate to their actual behaviour in interactions in the developmental tasks (e.g., Skinner, 1985). Hence, changes in both beliefs and mother-child interaction patterns can be expected to occur together, along with growing competence of the child.

Specifically, they expected that mother's estimates of children's competence in developmental tasks should influence mother's reaction to children's attempts to
master task as well as mother's reaction to task behaviours which rely on mother's caregiving, namely, dependent behaviour. In terms of development, it shows changes in mothers' supportive reactions for child independent and dependent task behaviours as a function of mother's changing perceptions of children's competence in the tasks.

Usually, children were observed after getting up in the morning or after a nap in the middle of the day. As previous diaries of the mothers had shown, these were times when interactions typically were centered around shorter lasting mealtime and self-care occasions. The interactions were videotaped and then coded by trained observers in a way that the natural flow on-going behaviour was preserved (Baltes & Kindermann, 1989; Kindermann & Skinner, 1988).

The system was differentiated in a way that simultaneously with the classification of behaviour, all behaviours were assigned to one of the three developmental tasks; behaviour not related to walking, eating, or dressing was coded as natural.

Generally there are six behaviour categories for children two of which will be of interest for the present purpose, namely dependent and independent behaviour. Child's
dependent behaviour refers to task behaviour that is basically delegated to the mother, including all behaviours in which the child passively accepts mother's provision of care without his or her own attempts, as well as asking for help, waiting for help, and refusing to carry out task-relevant behaviour alone. Child independent behaviour refers to behaviour that is conducted without the help of the mother, including any effort to try to do some parts of the task alone (regardless of success) and resistance to mother's help.

Regarding mother's behaviour, two corresponding categories will be considered, namely dependence-supportive and independence-supportive behaviour. Mother dependence-supportive behaviour refers to task-relevant behaviour involving help of the mother without encouraging the child's own engagement, compliance to bids for help, and trying to interrupt or discourage children's own attempts. Mothers' independence-supportive behaviour includes mothers' encouraging their children to try alone and refraining from direct help.

It seems to give evidence for change in mothers' beliefs about their role in their children's development as a function of children's growing competences in developmental tasks. It also shows that developmental adjustments in mothers' socializing interaction patterns
accompany mothers' changes in beliefs. Mothers' ideas about their own role in development appear to be functional, developmentally adjusted, and related to change in socializing interaction patterns.

It is known, however, that some of mothers' beliefs are not fixed across time but seem to be susceptible to developmental change and that these changes correspond to changes in patterns of interaction between mother and child.

First, as one would expect developmental and child psychologists have illuminated the nature of early development. They have described the impact of various educational experiences (and deprivations) on children, examined the influence of cultural differences in child rearing on what young children learn, and devised intervention programs to address the psychoeducational needs of young children.

Several sets of evidence have been offered to support the hypothesis that cognitive and social development are intimately interrelated, and the mother-infant interaction influences both. A mother's prompt responsiveness to her baby's signals tends to foster the development of varied and clear models of communication and thus the development of one facet of social competence. On such
study by Anisworth and Bell (1974) has presented findings pertinent to the argument that the responsiveness of a mother figure to infant signals promotes the development of social competence. These findings emerged from a short-term longitudinal study of the development of infant-mother attachment in the first year of life.

The signalling behaviour that concerned the investigators in the above mentioned analysis was crying. Each instance of crying that occurred in the course of a home visit was coded. Among the particulars coded were: the duration of the cry, whether the mother responded to it or ignored it, and if she responded to it, how long she delayed before responding. They were interested in ascertaining whether a mother's responsiveness was associated with a change in the incidence and duration of infant crying in the course of the first year.

The first step in the analysis was to examine the stability of infant crying throughout the first year and to compare it with the stability of maternal responsiveness to crying over the same period. Their findings suggested that there is no stability in infant crying until the very end of the first year, and therefore no support for the view that babies who cry more than others at the end of the first year do so because they are constitutionally irritable.
The second step was to consider the inter correlations between infant crying and maternal responsiveness. The finding shows the correlation between the number of crying episodes ignored by the mother and the frequency of infant crying episodes.

Even though crying may be appropriate at the beginning of the first year, substantially diminished crying is appropriate towards the end of the first year and later. It is evident that maternal unresponsiveness to crying does not diminish it. On the contrary, it tends to prolong this primitive form of signalling up to at least the end of the first year. If, however an infant's competence is viewed as depending on his mother's co-operativeness, one might argue that a one-year-old still must be able to signal effectively if he or she is to be deemed competent.

Although conducted in an allied setting, this particular study gives credence to the importance of contingency established early in life. The study implies that the responsiveness of mother helps to establish a contingency between infants crying and mother's behaviour. The learning of this relationship gradually generalizes to other person's behaviour and events. As a result, this helps to foster a contingency between child's behaviour and outcomes not only in the physical world but also in interpersonal domain. The child develops a sense of mastering the physical world as well as strengthening inter-personal trust.
It can be summarized by emphasizing the following three points. First, one mediator between parent beliefs and child development may be the patterns of parent-child interactions or contingencies or the way parents react to their children. Second, one organizer of both parent beliefs and contingencies in parent-child interactions may be the developmental tasks which children are working through at a given point in development. Third, it adheres to the idea that both parent-beliefs and contingencies in interactions may change over time. For instance, in particular cases, ecologies changed from nurturant to complementary to inconsistent pattern.

It has been argued that changes in 'mothers' beliefs about their own role in child development are the result of changes in their perceptions of children's competence. If this is indeed the case, then it can be concluded that not only do parent beliefs influence children's development, but also that children's development influences parent's beliefs.

Most of the research from this perspective which examines the link between contingent, sensitive, and responsive caregiver behaviour on the one hand, and perceived control on the other, has focused on the effects of social interactions on the child's functioning in general, with perceived control as but one possible aspect
(e.g. Gunnar, 1980). This same link has been posited by another group of theorists whose primary interest is the etiology of children's perceived control (Crandall & Crandall, 1983). Summarizing this view about the social antecedents of control beliefs, Gunnar states, "The child who experiences controllable stimulation during infancy is expected to approach the world with the conviction that he or she can affect the occurrence of events".

Sensitive caregiver behaviour is defined as behaviour which is not only contingent but also appropriate. Although appropriateness has been defined in different ways (Anisworth, 1979; Bakeman & Brown, 1980), the focus is on behaviour which shows both responsiveness to the child's specific signals initiation of behaviour appropriate to the child's developmental level and current state (Anisworth et al, 1978). Such sensitive caregiver behaviour, which takes into consideration the goals and intentions of the child, is thought to be the basis for the child's generalized control understanding (Connell & Skinner, 1986).

Recently, some argument has arisen as to whether contro-related beliefs should be conceptualized as being composed of two potentially independent expectancies: (a) the extent to which the child believes he or she can produce potentially effective behaviours (perceived efficacy), and (b) the extent to which the behaviours are
seen as leading to the desired outcome (perceived contingency) (Stipek & Weisz, 1982).

In sum, the purpose of this study was to examine the relations between caregiver's contingent and sensitive behaviour and child's perceived control. To do this, three precisely defined categories of caregiver interactional behaviour were assessed with children old enough to provide reliable reports of perceived control. In addition to the correlational relation between parent behaviour and child perceptions, also of interest were the sequential relations (contingencies) between mother and child behaviour over the course of interactions.

Bridging the worlds of child day care and early education is a worthy pursuit for psychology in 1980s. Some important goals for psychology are conducting research on the training of child care. Personnel, developing models of combined child care and early education for children from different groups in the population, and helping to incorporate existing part of the early childhood enterprise into a comprehensive system of family support (Caldwell, 1985).

Childhood Depression

In contrast to the vast literature on adult depression, relatively little attention has been paid to depression in children probably because some theorists doubt the
very existence of childhood depression (e.g., Burton & Lefkowitz, 1978). Recent research starting from this assumption agrees about the clustering of depressive symptoms in children and shows that these symptoms can be reliably measured (e.g., Cantwell & Carlson, 1979; Lefkowitz & Tesiny, 1980).

Similarly, Lefkowitz and Tesiny (1980) showed multiple measures of depressive symptoms in children—such as peer nomination, teacher nomination, and self-report coverage. Thus, depressive symptoms among children analogous to the depressive symptoms of adults appear to cohere and may be measured reliably and validly. The present studies extend these investigations by asking if some of the consequences and causes of childhood depressive symptoms parallel those of adult depression.

The reformulated learned helplessness hypothesis (Abramson et al., 1978) proposes that the expectation of uncontrollable bad events lead to depression when the person attributes them to internal, stable, and global causes.

According to the reformulated learned helplessness hypothesis, children with depressive symptoms should be inclined to make more internal, stable, and global attributions for bad events than their nondepressed peers. The relation between attributional style and depression was even stronger among children than it is among college students or adult inpatients.
Investigators have recently found analogous deficits in children, unselected for depression, who are made helpless with prior unsolvable problems or uncontrollable noise (Dewck & Reppuei, 1973; Smith & Seligman, 1979).

The role of parents, more specifically the role of mothers, is not confined to the transmission of positive contingencies that stimulate the child's growth of competence. The maternal antecedents may also involve certain negative postures such as depression, lowered self-esteem and maladaptive explanatory style. Although the empirical studies in these areas are not voluminous, some possibilities are indicated with respect to the transmission of mothers' depressive style to their children.

In recent years, attempts have been made to manipulate these attributional variables in laboratory settings. Hoeksema, Gurgus and Seligman (1986) conducted a study to test whether the children with a maladaptive explanatory style would exhibit more helplessness deficits than children without the maladaptive style. Their experimental design examines the causal influence of explanatory style on helplessness and obtains data on the stability of explanatory style and depressive symptoms in elementary school children.

To examine the stability of depressive symptoms and explanatory style, children's level of depression and explanatory style patterns were measured 3 months,
10 months and 12 months after an initial assessment of these variables. Three hundred eight children in third, fourth and fifth grades of two elementary schools participated in this study. Their age ranged from 8 to 11 years. Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire (CASQ) and Life Event Questionnaire (IEQ) were administered to the children five times with a three month interval between each test session.

The questionnaires were read out to groups of approximately 30 children at a time, while the children read along and answered each question. All administrations took place in a room in the children's school during school time. At administration, the teachers of the children in the study were given a Student Behaviour Checklist (SBC) to fill out for each child. The children's scores on the California Achievement Test (CAT) were obtained from school records.

The results of this study indicated that maladaptive explanatory style was associated with higher concurrent levels of depression and higher levels of depression at subsequent testing periods. Depression also appeared to influence subsequent explanatory style. Explanatory style scores were significantly correlated with concurrent depression scores at each testing period. The more often children chose internal, stable and global explanations
for bad events and external, unstable and specific explanations for good events, the more likely they were to have a high score on the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI). Within the second, third, fourth and fifth testing periods, explanatory styles for both good events and bad events significantly correlated with CDI scores although bad events were always more highly correlated with CDI than was good events.

Across all testing periods, children who made more internal, stable, and global explanations for bad events and external, unstable, and specific explanations for good events developed or maintained a higher level of depression than did children without this maladaptive explanatory style. The co-relation between earlier depression and later explanatory style were also significant indicating that depression predicts later explanatory style.

It is also found out that explanatory style significantly correlated with concurrent teacher ratings of helpless behaviours and mastery behaviours. The children's explanatory styles for negative events taken 3 months before the teacher ratings, significantly predicted their ratings of helpless behaviours and mastery behaviours.

These results indicate that explanatory style not only predicts self report of helplessness, but it also
predicts teachers' observational indications of helplessness. Helpless behaviours in the classroom, poorer school achievements, and depressive symptoms were significantly correlated with one another.

On the whole it can be concluded that in case of children depressive symptoms and explanatory styles are correlated with each other, which are found to be quite stable over the year and the maladaptive explanatory style is an independent risk factor for future depression.

Seligman et.al., (1984) found evidence for the intergenerational transmission of explanatory style in a study that looked at the correlation between explanatory style of children and their parents. The way mothers and children explained negative events was significantly correlated, although there was no reliable relationship between explanatory style of fathers and their children.

Recently depression in children has also been examined in school situations. Children who attribute social rejection to their lack of ability more likely to show disrupted goal-directed behaviour following social failure, whereas children who tend to view rejection as due to more modifiable factors do not show such disruption. There is a growing body of research on sociometric status which shows that children with differing levels of social acceptance have different attributions and goals.
For the research study it is necessary to differentiate children's sociometric status groups in homes. On the basis of the research carried out in this area, it is possible to categories children into four sociometric status. These four groups are popular, rejected, neglected and controversial children.

Popular children are viewed as cooperative leaders and do not tend to engage in disruptive or aggressive behaviours.

Rejected children have been found to spend time in pre-social interactions and are viewed as aggressive and disruptive.

Neglected children are those who tend to be viewed as shy, uninvolved and inoffensive.

Controversial children have been viewed as co-operative and as leaders but also as disruptive and aggressive.

From the various research findings parallels between depression and the characteristics of sociometric status groups are noted.

It is argued that children who are rejected, and especially neglected by peers are likely to manifest learned helplessness in social situations. Rejected children differ from popular children in their attributions for success, displaying a similar attributional style to that manifested
by learned helpless children for academic success. Popular children are not depressive in that they tend to make controllable attributions and attribute social outcomes to luck less often than the other groups.

In addition this studies reanalysis of Dweck and Goetz's (1980) study on depression in social situations provides data to support this viewpoint as: (a) rejected and neglected children resembled depressive children in regard to both attributions and behaviour following social rejection and (b) neglected children showed greater behavioural deterioration following rejection than rejected children.

Various social agents are responsible for a child to be depressed and it is a process which starts from the very early period of life. Another influential source of development concerns the role of school, as a socialising agent. The childrens' experiences of solving problems are greatly influenced by the school environment and the intellectual orientation shaped at an early stage.

Dweck and her colleagues (e.g., Dweck & Licht, 1980) have demonstrated that elementary school instructors accompany corrections, suggestions, and criticisms of students with attributions (e.g., "Robert, you're not trying hard enough at those long division problems"). The attributions made by instructors tend to be the ones that children
themselves later employ (Dweck & Reppucci, 1973), suggesting that attributional styles can be transmitted as a whole. This important research should be extended from the classroom to other domains in which socialization occurs.

Specifically, children who possess an attributional (explanatory) style that habitually leads them to view the causes of bad events as stable in time, global in effect, and internal to themselves will be, once they encounter bad events, especially vulnerable to a defined cluster of helplessness deficits. The cluster consists of (a) lowered response initiation (passivity), (b) cognitive deficits (c) sadness, (d) lowered self-esteem, and (e) lowered assertiveness and competiveness.

Attributional style and depressive symptoms among children correlated strongly with each other. Furthermore, attributional style for bad events predicted subsequent depressive symptoms, with initial level of depression held constant. Finally, children's style for bad events and their depressive symptoms converged with the corresponding scores of their mothers, but not with those of their fathers.

Dweck and Licht (1980) have shown that school children can be "helpless" in the face of failure and, further, that attributions play an important role in the development and maintenance of this helplessness. Poor school achievement in children has been viewed as a potential sign of depression
(Brumback & Staton, 1983). A few recent studies indicate that even low levels of negative affect can impair performance on cognitive tasks (Kaslow, Rehm, & Siegel, 1984). Perhaps the difference between depressive and nondepressives resides not just in the content of their attributions, but also in their sheer number (Dweck & Licht, 1980; Kuhd, 1981).

Nolen-Hoeksema (1986) found that there are four possibilities through which children's depressive behaviour take place. These are the role of adult feedback, intergenerational transmission, first major trauma and when solution do not work. There is a fair amount of evidence to suggest that due to the role of adult feedback, depression takes place in case of elementary boys and girls. But sex differences remain at the time of producing depressive symptoms.

A mother's attributional style for bad events and depressive symptoms correlated with her child's corresponding attributional style and her child's depressive symptoms. The child may learn attributional style (or depressive symptoms) from its mother, and then the depressions of mother and child may maintain each other, particularly when each possesses the insidious attributional style. If so, the currently popular individual therapies used with the depressives might be supplemented with family therapy, as has been done with other disorders in which family interaction is causal. More generally, the present
result suggests that the depressed child is apt to be found in a family in which the mother is also depressed, and a depressed mother may well have a depressed child at home.

That fathers' depression and attributional style were not related to those of their wives or children may be due to the fact that mothers probably spend a good deal more time with the children than do fathers. In addition, Brown and Harris (1978) have argued that lack of social support is important in the development of depression, and so perhaps the support for the women and children in the sample was the family, while for the men, it was work or peer based.

The mechanism by which mothers and children converge on attributional style and depressive symptoms are a matter of speculation. Thus, the reason children and mothers have similar styles may be common experiences or common lore, but imitation is also likely.

Peterson and Seligman (1984) state that the reality of a mother's death represents a stable, global and possibly internally caused loss for a young child that may set the pattern for which future losses or major difficulties are interpreted.

From the study of Dweck and Licht (1980), it is seen that girls are less likely to persist following failures
and more likely to explain their failures by a lack of ability than are boys. Boys, on the other hand, tend to explain their failures by lack of effort. Dweck argues that the focus of adult feedback provided to boys and girls can explain their divergent reaction to failure. If children receive failure feedback indicating they lack ability, they will begin to explain their failures as caused by internal, stable and global factors. By this the foundation for a maladaptive explanatory style will be laid. Automatically this maladaptive explanatory style leads to depressive behaviour in various domains of life.

As discussed, the role of mother during early periods is supplemented by further maternal antecedents and other socio-cultural factors. The school and the family constitute two important sources of influences to which children are exposed.

The School and Familial Antecedent

The style of child management influences the growth of children's competence. Although a large body of research exists in the area, two pertinent domains concern the school and familial parameters influencing children's maladaptive vis-a-vis mastery-oriented behaviour.
Learned helplessness theory has also been used to explain deficit in achievement-oriented behaviours (Dweck, 1975; Dweck & Wortman, 1982). Dweck and others have found that some children tend to explain academic failure in terms of stable and global causes (e.g., stupidity) and explain success in terms of unstable, specific causes (e.g., luck). As predicted, these explanatory patterns correlate with decreased persistence, decreased initiation of tasks, lowered quality of problem-solving strategies, and lowered expectations for future success.

A large body of recent literature has examined children's beliefs about their performance in intellectual-achievement situations. Research focused on attributions for failure has indicated children's beliefs about the controllability of failure (e.g., Dweck, 1975). For example, failure attributions to stable factors, such as lack of ability, suggest that the failure is likely to continue or recur, whereas failure attributions to less stable factors, such as insufficient effort, suggest that future success remains possible (Weiner, 1972, 1974).

In marked contrast, mastery-oriented children did not make attributions for the failure. Although they acknowledge that they were making "mistakes", there was little to indicate that they considered their present state
to constitute "failure" or that they expected to remain in that state much longer.

A central issue concerns the developmental history, of the genesis of children's helplessness. While Dweck and Licht (1980) have indicated the possibility of children's experiential component in school situations as a possible mediating mechanism, a number of plausible factors remain uninvestigated. Dweck and Legget (1988), on the basis of their review of children's orientation in achievement situation, have attempted to identify cognitions underlying mastery-oriented vis-a-vis maladaptive (helpless) orientation. They have proposed a model to indicate the role of children's cognition relating to ability, effort, luck, and chance. On the basis of this model, they have suggested reattribution training programmes to alleviate children's helplessness (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Liggett, 1988).

Research amply supports the view that girls are the ones who are favoured by teachers on almost every count and are the ones who shine academically over this period. Girls consistently receive higher grades than boys (McCandless, Roberts, & Starnes, 1972), outscore boys on tests of reading achievements (Asher & Markell, 1974), receive less criticism from teachers and are perceived by teachers to be the possessors of the superior intellectual and personal virtues (Stevenson, Male, Klein, & Miller, 1968). Moreover, girls themselves believe that teachers consider them to
be smarter and harder working and that teachers like girls better (Dweck & Goetz & Strauss).

To examine whether the patterns of feedback can actually cause boys' and girls' divergent interpretations of failure, the contingencies of negative feedback observed in the classroom were programmed in an experimental situation (Dweck et al, 1978).

In this study, children worked on a task at which they succeeded on some trials and failed on others. Children in one group received negative feedback that was based sometime on intellectual aspects (neatness) just as boys receive in the classroom. Other children received negative feedback that was based exclusively on intellectual quality of performance, similar to what girls receive in the classroom. All children then performed a second task, failed on the first few trials, and received failure feedback of an unspecified basis from the same experimenter. The question was whether children would interpret that feedback differently as a function of their feedback from the evaluator.

The results showed the children, regardless of their sex, who experienced the contingencies that boys experienced in the classroom did not interpret subsequent failure feedback as indicative of their level of ability. Children of both sexes who received the pattern of feedback girls received in the classroom overwhelmingly attributed subsequent negative feedback to a lack of ability. These findings
clearly indicate that teacher's feedback practices can indeed have direct consequences for children's interpretations of their failures.

Not only are girls more debilitated by failure but they are also more likely to show generalization of these effects to new situations. Some of the recent research (Dweck, et al.) indicates that following failure girls' expectancies of success are resilient. They show less recovery in response to situational changes that should promote optimism. It also suggests that even when girls do express confidence about their failure performance, that confidence is more fragile (temporary) and may dissipate with situational changes that for boys tend to lead to heightened confidence.

One would predict that the discrepancy between the two sexes in their expectancy of academic success would be greatest at the start of a school year. When beginning a new grade or entering a new school, children confront new teachers but similar academic subjects. At that time, boy's successes in these academic subjects should be most salient to them because they have been indicative of ability; however, girls' failure should be most salient to them because they have been seen as the more valid index of their competence. In addition, as indicated a new teacher should signal to boys a new chance for success and should
prompt renewed effort; however, it should signal to girls the possible disruption of their successes.

In the field study, the course of children's expectancies for their academic performance over the school year was examined. In the laboratory analogue, changes in the task and the evaluator were programmed following failure, and recovery of expectancies was mentioned. The results from the field study showed that when children were asked to predict how well they would do on their upcoming report cards, the hypothesized pattern was obtained. Before their first report cards, boys expected to do significantly better than girls expected to do. This occurred even though the boys had received significantly lower grades than did the girls the previous year and were to do so again on their report cards in the current years.

Academic tasks certainly vary in the degree to which persistence in the face of difficulty is necessary for success. Each failure provides girls with another opportunity to conclude they lack ability. If girls then blame an intellectual ability that goes beyond the particular task at hand, the negative effects of failure may generalize to all tasks perceived to fall into the same ability area, resulting in (a) decreased persistence in the face of difficulties, (b) avoidance of the area if that option
is available, and (c) perhaps interference with the acquisition of new material in that area.

The learning experiences associated with task performance have been identified as correlates of children's motivation (Dweck, 1986). Children will not always realize when they have erred or performed in a less than adequate way. To the degree that even minor errors are made obvious to the children, girls' motivation and performance may suffer. If however, deviations from perfect performance are not likely to be noted, girls' maladaptive failure attributions would not be called forth even if errors have been made.

Boys might show impaired motivation in areas where intellectually irrelevant skills are seen as important since boys both value these skills considerably less than girls do and value them considerably less than intellectual skills (Dweck). Boys receive more negative feedback than do girls for conduct and other non-intellectual matters and tend to view teachers as somewhat biased against them (Dweck & Besh, 1976; Dweck et al., 1978). Therefore, to the extent that evaluator's feedback in an area is seen as influenced by such biases, boys may tend to view failures in that area as being beyond their control. Girls on the other hand, accurately perceived teachers as positively inclined toward them. As a result, they should not anticipate failures stemming from teachers' biases but perhaps might
even favour situations where teachers' attitudes can influence evaluations.

Regardless of one's intellectual capabilities, one is more likely to experience failure or encounter difficulties in mathematical than in verbal areas. After the fundamental verbal skills—reading, spelling, vocabulary—have been acquired, increments in difficulty tend to be gradual. Rarely is the child ever again confronted in school with a new unit for which he or she feels totally unprepared or for which a completely new set of concepts, skills, or strategies must be mastered. In learning to read, spell, or define a new word, one employs basically the same processes one has employed in the past. The new material is essentially assimilated into existing body of knowledge, and so a careful application of this knowledge should, in most cases, be sufficient to avoid failure.

In the school, with math, however, a new unit may involve totally new concepts, and the relevance of past learning in math may not be evident. Young children may even fail to realize the relationship between addition and multiplication or between multiplication and division. As a result, children may experience considerable confusion whenever they begin a new unit in math, and this confusion may, like failure, lead girls to entertain doubts about
their abilities, doubts that may not be dispelled by subsequent mastery of the unit.

As indicated earlier, failures may lead girls to consider themselves lacking in an intellectual ability that goes beyond the particular task on which they failed. In this way, a girl may transfer a failure experience from, for example, geometry to algebra by applying the general label "math" to her perceived deficit; even though the two areas may involve different skills.

In fact, one of the things that makes the study of motivation particularly intriguing is that measures of children's actual competence do not strongly predict their confidence of future attainment (Bandura & Dweck, 1985; Stipen & Hoffman, 1980; Phillips, 1984). Indeed, Bandura and Dweck found that their low-confidence children tended to have somewhat higher achievement test scores than their high-confidence group. Interestingly, the low-confidence children did not have poor opinions of their past attainment or abilities but faced the upcoming task with low expectancies of absolute and relative performance.

One might also suppose that high-achieving children would be much less likely than low achievers, when encountering an obstacle, to attribute their difficulty to a lack of ability and to show deteriorated performance.
But this supposition too is often contradicted by the evidence (e.g., Licht & Dweck, 1984; Stipek & Hoffman, 1980). Indeed, some researchers have found a negative correlation for girls between their actual ability and these maladaptive patterns (Crandall, 1969; Licht et al., 1984; Licht & Dweck, 1984).

An extensive study of sex difference in achievement cognitions and responses to failure recently completed by Licht et al. (1984) yields illustrative evidence. On the basis of their grades, Licht divided her students in A, B, C, and D students and among other measures, administered a novel concept formation task. A significant sex difference was found among the A students (and only among the A students) in their response to failure, with the A girls showing the greatest debilitation of the eight groups and the A boys being the only group to show any facilitation. In addition, Licht found a strong sex difference in task performances between A girls and A boys: The A girls much preferred tasks they knew they were good at, whereas A boys preferred ones they would have to work harder to master.

It is also interesting to note that in Leggett's (1985) study of bright junior high school students, there was a greater tendency for girls than boys to subscribe to
an "entity" theory of intelligence (smartness as a fixed trait) and for those who did to choose a performance goal that avoided challenge.

Again, it is not the case that these girls are unaware of their attainment (Licht & Dweck, 1984; Parsons, Meece, Adler & Kaezala, 1982), but knowledge of past success does not appear to arm them for confrontations with future challenges. For example, in a study by Licht and Dweck (1984) that examined the impact of initial confusion (vs. no confusion) on subsequent learning, high-achieving girls rated themselves as being bright but still showed greater debilitation than low-achieving girls.

Licht and Dweck (1984) showed, however, in an experiment conducted in classrooms, that when confusion does accompany the initial attempt to learn new material, mastery of the material is seriously impaired for these children. It may be that only in subsequent school years will these maladaptive tendencies have their impact on achievement, when children with these patterns may elect to avoid challenging courses of study, drop out of courses that pose a threat of failure, or show impairment of performance under real difficulty. Thus, experimental studies may create conditions that good students will encounter fully only in later years but that reveal underlying patterns already in place in the grade school years.
Although in the grade school years girls equal boys in mathematical achievement (and surpass them in verbal achievement), during the junior high school years, boys pull ahead and remain ahead in mathematical achievement (Donlon, Ekstrom & Lockheed, 1976). Specifically the fact that the two sexes often display different motivational patterns and the fact that the academic subject areas in question differ in major ways aside from the skills they require suggest that perhaps motivational patterns contribute to these achievement discrepancies.

Nolen-Hoeksema, Gergus, and Seligman (1986) tested the predictions of the reformulated helplessness model regarding achievement directly. Toward this end, they gave third, fourth, and fifth graders the children's Attributional Style Questionnaire (CASQ), a 48-item forced choice inventory that parents subjects with a hypothetical event and asks them to choose one of two explanations for why the event might happen to them. They compared the children's explanatory style with their scores on a standardized achievement test, the California Achievement Test (CAT; 1983) and with teachers' ratings of the children's helpless behaviours in the classroom.

Children who explained bad events in internal, stable, and global terms and good events in external, unstable, and specific items (i.e., children who had a maladaptive
explanatory style) tended to have lower achievement test scores and to show more helpless behaviour than those with an adaptive explanatory style. The findings suggest that explanatory style correlates synchronously with actual achievement and helpless behaviour in children.

Similarly, children who believe that good grades are caused by internal and controllable causes (like effort; Weinner, 1979), who believe that they can produce the responses that lead to desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977), or who believe that they possess higher on tests of intelligence and achievement and earn better grades in school than children who do not hold these beliefs (Findley & Cooper, 1983; Stipek & Weisz, 1981).

Experimental (e.g., Dweck, 1976) and field research (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema, Girdus & Seligman, 1986) indicate that when children believe that they can exert control over success in school, they perform better on cognitive tasks. And when children succeed in school, they are more likely to view school performance as a controllable outcome. The cyclicity implied by these relations suggests that children who are not doing well in school will perceive themselves as having no control over academic successes and failures and that these beliefs will subsequently generate performances that serve to confirm their beliefs (Seligman, 1973; & Skinner).
Task preference data as well suggest that a greater discrepancy between present and future tasks in mathematical versus verbal areas may render math less appealing to bright girls, but perhaps more appealing to bright boys. Bright girls, it will be recalled, tend to prefer tasks they are fairly certain they are good at and can do well on, whereas bright boys are more attached to tasks that pose some challenge to mastery (Licht et al., 1984; Leggett, 1985).

It has been shown that children's casual attributions for failure are reliable predictors of their response to obstacles in achievement situations; and that altering children's attributions results in alteration of their response to failure (Dienner & Dweck, 1978, 1980, Schunk, 1982). The study shows that children who attribute their failures to invariant or uncontrollable factors, such as insufficient ability, tend to be debilitated by failure. In contrast, children who attribute their failures to variable controllable factors, particularly insufficient effort, tend to perform at their best when confronting difficulty.

Helpless children are not only more likely to attribute their failures to uncontrollable factors than are mastery-oriented children when asked, but they are also likely to make attributions spontaneously. That is, when helpless children confront difficulty they are likely to focus their attention on the fact that they are failing as well as
on their perceived inability to overcome the failure. In contrast, when mastery-oriented children confront obstacles, they tend not to contemplate the causes of their difficulties nor for that matter, do well on the fact that they are experiencing difficulty at all. Instead, they are likely to focus their attention on strategies for solving problem (Diener & Dweck, 1978).

These disparate patterns of response to failure have important implications for children's performance in academic settings. For example, one would predict that when the acquisition of new academic material requires one to deal with difficult problems or confusing concepts, helpless children will perform more poorly than they are capable of performing, whereas the mastery-oriented may actually perform their best. In contrast, when the acquisition of new material does not require one to deal with difficult or confusing ideas, it is the helpless who might be expected to perform their best. In other words, one would predict debilitation versus possible facilitation depending on how the child's achievement orientations interact with the acquisition demands of the academic material.

Children may be of equal ability but performance differ due to some classroom socialization experiences as discussed above.
Socialization Parameters

The study of Sahoo & his associates (1991), fills an important gap in providing knowledge about the socio-cultural antecedents of learned helplessness. In view of the centrality of the mother's role in the socialization process, the study has primarily focused on mother's expectancy, their socialization emphases, child-rearing practices and self-perception. The findings are important from several standpoints. More importantly, the role of parents, neighbourhood, text books and other cultural parameters, along with contingent and noncontingent conditions, is a key issue in the investigation regarding the origin of helplessness.

**Parental Expectation.** Research indicates that mothers of girls report higher expectancies compared to boys' mothers. The domain of activity where such high expectancy is indicated included activities such as hearing, identifying mother, babbling, speaking, understanding words, sitting, walking and weaning baby from bottle to cup (Das, 1991). It is likely that mothers' higher expectancy stem from their observation of girls' "growth spurt" at an earlier age compared to boys.

A consistent pattern emerges with respect to the higher expectancy of urban mothers. It is possible that this is because urban mothers are exposed to communication
media and other social influence techniques to a greater extent than their rural and tribal counterparts. The wide exposure, in turn, is likely to shape their expectancy relating to the child's growth behaviour. Thus socialization mechanisms operative in the urban background influence the mothers' activities in setting standards of expectation. This is also found with respect to a number of caregiving activities where urban mothers show trends of higher expectancy.

It is also shown that mothers of mastery-oriented (MO) children demonstrate higher expectancy as compared to mothers of helpless children. This is consistent with the model of learned helplessness. The experience of no control is mediated by several socialization agents. It is postulated that the mothers' expectancy is related to the child's performance and his/her subsequent formation of adaptive (vis-a-vis maladaptive) orientation to an achievement situation (Dweck & Lidgett, 1973).

Research of Sia (1991) shows that fathers indicate higher expectancy in the area of children's cognitive activities, while mothers indicate greater expectancy in children's sensory-motor activities. His research also indicates significant effects of children's sex on their parental expectancy with respect to activity domains of seeing, identifying mothers and thinking. The analysis shows that parents demonstrate a higher expectancy for
boys with respect to all their activities except speaking and babbling compared to their expectation for girls.

Indian fathers are concerned with professional developmental of their children because of its possible bearing on their own economic status. The literature on coping strategy shows that males use more effacious and functional coping strategy than do female (Folkman & Lezarus, 1980). Since fathers, more likely than mothers, employ direct forms of effacious coping, it appears plausible that fathers demonstrate higher expectancy in this regard.

In view of the adaptive value of high expectancies in activity domains that help to meet the demands of industrial life, urban children are expected to indicate early development indices at the age of 12 to 15, compared to rural and tribal children. As boys are believed to be vulnerable to extraneous influences, mothers expectations about boys may show a decline as their setting changes from rural to urban locations.

The study of Sia (1991) also shows that the expectancy of mothers is mostly higher for boys than for girls. When the children are girls, fathers' expectation does not show much variation (or sometime show slow increments); whereas mother expectation declines. Consequently,
expectation of fathers and mothers converges for girls; fathers' expectation becomes higher than that of mothers'. This kind of relationship can be explained in terms of mothers' perception of economic security invested with sons. Since mothers value sons' activities and personality in terms of future economic protection, they indicate higher expectation. On the contrary, the possibility of loss of association with girls, who are to be married off weakens mothers' expectation from girls.

Parents demonstrate higher expectancy from LH children with respect to caregiving activities. It is logical to presume that parents set aside greater proportion of their time providing care to the helpless children. Because of their anxiety arising from higher investment of time they may show sort of wishfulfilment in the form of higher expectancy from helpless children with respect to caregiving activities. It is plausible that mothers' close contact with children brings to her notice the incidence of the child's failure. As children show more and more helpless, mothers are likely to gradually lower their expectation.

Attitudinal Emphasis. Parental attitude has been recognised as a central component of socialization process. The attitudes and values parents carry are explicitly or implicitly mediated to their children through
instructions, rewards, and punishment systems, and other techniques (Whiting, 1981). The nature of the baby's most frequent and prevailing affective experiences in relation to his or her mothers' care can range from feeling of anxiety and distress to feelings of security, comfort and "trust" in response to the mothers' "tenderness".

The discrepancy between attitude and behaviour could be explained in terms of the conceptual distinction between social cognition and expression. It is postulated that the growth of competence is conjectured to be a function of those two independent factors. On the one hand, the mothers' belief in the efficacy of autonomy and independence is conducive to the growth of competence. However, an unchecked flow of permissiveness may be interpreted as a lack of concern by the children; this perception would inhibit their growth.

The parents and care-takers may also be restrictive and even punitive. This rigidity of care-takers and their interference with children's freedom makes children more aware of these functions and the frustrations and gratifications associated with autonomy. The children thus become more preoccupied with freedom in relation to their growing sense of autonomy. These developmental trends, however, do not function evenly for all children, because of certain selective environmental factors
(Whiting, 1981) and specific qualities of parental interaction. There is a great variation in mother's personality make-up and in their beliefs regarding socialization.

The study of Sia (1991) shows that mothers in general indicate negativistic attitude to a greater extent than do fathers. Negativism implies traditionalism, fatalism, and rigidity. Some findings can be explainable in-terms of sex difference generally found in Indian sociocultural setting. It is a common observation in India that women lag in modernity, education, and employment opportunity: women also demonstrate greater dependence on traditionalism, fatalism, and restrictiveness. Consequently, female are more likely to emphasize negativism and traditional attitude than do males.

The analysis of interaction shows that with increasing helplessness of their children, urban mothers tend to perceive more positive consequences of independence training compared to rural mothers (Das, 1991). Her study shows that under conditions of children helplessness, urban mothers do not feel restrictive and feel more inclined to allow freedom to their children.

On the contrary, rural and tribal mothers tend to be restrictive when children show more helplessness. Without much extraneous influences in rural and tribal
areas, mothers allow independence to children who are believed to be competent to handle such autonomy and disallow independence to children who are believed to be helpless in handling situations adequately.

The observation that environment considerations may moderate the relationship between rearing beliefs and childhood development is consistent with McClelland's (1961) analysis that social and environmental structure may have a far important role than parental beliefs.

Research of Sia (1991) shows that fathers indicate higher autonomy oriented attitude compared to mothers. As expected, greater tolerance-oriented attitude is shown towards MO children than towards LM children. Furthermore, it has also been found that a greater magnitude of negativistic attitude is shown towards LM children than towards MO children.

Recently, several authors have stressed and evaluated the nature of parent-child behaviour on the basis of parental attitude (Parke, Mymel, Power & Tinsly, 1980). According to Parke (1978) parental beliefs and attitudes are regarded as filters, through which the behaviour of the infants is processed. Parental attitude play an important role in the way in which parents and children mutually regulate each other.
Hearing Practices. A number of anthropologists and psychologists working in the tradition of culture and personality have emphasized child rearing as an important factor in personality development. Even in recent years a growing body of evidence suggests the relationship between child rearing and adult personality (McClelland, 1981).

With respect to the mother's socialization emphases and actual child-rearing techniques, there is some amount of apparent contradiction. Mothers of mastery-oriented children are found to emphasize independence-oriented socialization, but they are found to adopt dependence-oriented rearing practices. Mothers of helpless children, on the contrary, are found to lack in independence-oriented socialization but they appear to adopt independence-oriented rearing practices.

Hence it is hard to specify whether the mothers of helpless children have expressed "upper extremes" of autonomy and independence in their rearing techniques. With such a possibility, the children of these mothers are likely to be helpless, whereas children of mothers adopting less autonomous rearing practices are likely to be competent. Specifically, past research in the Indian sociocultural system has shown that mild punishment given to children deepens their impression of the parents' concern about their welfare. It is plausible that mothers'
assignment of responsibility to their children offers opportunity of successful performance on the part of children. This experience of effortfulness and success fosters competence in them.

On the contrary, mothers who do not offer responsibility training to children tend to inhibit the growth of competence by restricting their children's opportunity to learn the value of effortfulness. Furthermore, the responsibility training also includes training for self-control. When children are assigned tasks such as taking care of siblings, the successful completion of the task requires an adequate management of their own emotion. Mothers who provide such opportunity tend to include self-control in their children. The management of affect has been shown to be a correlate of learned resourcefulness, a process that runs counter to helplessness (Rosenbaum & Ben-Ari, 1985).

If it were true mothers held and cared for their daughter more than their sons, or interacted with them more frequently, this might have the effect of increasing the child's orientation and proximity seeking towards the mother. Here again, the evidence does not point to differential socialization. The total amount of interaction between mother and child is similar for the two sexes, as is the amount of expressed affection and "warmth" so that neither the global reinforcement conditions nor the specifically contingent ones are such as to differentiate
the dependency behaviour of young boys and girls. The only
global difference in childrearing that might affect the
child's dependency is the more frequent physical punishment
and other negative sanctions administered to boys. These
might cause the boy to distance himself from his caretaker,
and thus to score lower on certain measures of dependency.

With respect to allowing the child's autonomy-oriented,
independent, exploratory behaviour, or on the contrary,
restricting such behaviours, again there is very little
difference in the treatment of boys and girls, although
the tendency is for the mothers of mastery-oriented children
to eliminate their children's fear and stimulate their
curiosity to a greater extent compared to the mothers of
helpless children. Similarly, urban mothers are less
dejected when their children deviate from their instructions
compared to rural and tribal mothers.

In the relatively few studies that report parental
reactions to children's clinging, proximity seeking,
separation resistance, and demands for attention, positive
and negative parental reactions seem to be about evenly
distributed in boys and girls. However, there might be
difference in more global aspects of child rearing that
would have similar effects, even if the contingencies are
less explicit.
Attribution Training: An important aspect of the present investigation concerns attributional training imparted by parents. Although parents may not explicitly train their children to develop a specific attributional training, parents' own attribution style is likely to be transmitted to their children.

It is also shown that parents stress stable factors to a greater extent for boys vis-a-vis girls when explaining negative events. As predicted parents employ more of internal, stable, and global factors for LH children compared to their use for MO children. It is important to recognise that the explanatory style associated with internality, globality and stability is closely associated with helplessness deficits.

Furthermore, parents make greater use of internal factors for boys vis-a-vis girls whereas they employ global factors to a greater extent for girls vis-a-vis boys. It is plausible that parents' attribution of their children's success is explained differently for boys and girls. It is probable that parental tendency to explain negative events in terms of internal, global, and stable dimensions is carried over to positive situations. The pertinent literature on attributional style has also indicated that explanatory style used for bad events is a better predictor of depression and helplessness deficits than is explanatory style for good events.
The study of Sia (1991) shows that fathers impart greater stable attribution for good events than do mothers when training targets are boys. When targets are girls, mothers offer more of such training compared to fathers. It can be conjectured that fathers tend to stabilise the psychological well-being of their daughters. It is important to recognise that stability prone attribution for good events reduces depression and helplessness and promotes psychological well-being.

Mother's internality-prone attribution for negative events remains invariant even if children's helplessness increases. However, her stability-prone explanation for negative events show sharp increment when children demonstrate more and more helplessness. Of course, fathers and mothers impart some amount of internality-prone attribution for negative events when targets are MO children. It is conjectured that parental depressive-prone attributions are likely to induce helplessness in their children. As with fathers, mother's role in transmitting stability prone explanation for negative events is also a probability. Taken together, examination of explanatory styles adopted by mothers and fathers indicate possibility of parent-to-child transmission, at least in part.
Self-Perception of Mothers: The development of child's self is influenced by mothers' self-concept. Without her awareness, mothers transmit their own concept to their children. However, it is recognised that these transmissions interact with other extraneous influences stemming from peers, teachers, and neighbours. But the centrality of mothers' role provides a base line reference for such interactive situations.

Finally, as expected, parents of MO children have demonstrated higher positive self-perception. They have greater self-assurance and self-realization compared to mothers of learned helplessness children. This implies that mothers, happy and confident of their roles, are better able to facilitate the growth of competence in their children. The trend of findings is also in congruence with existing literature (Sahoo & Nanda, 1987; Sahoo & Sia, 1988).

Mothers of MO children show a greater degree of self-realization and self-assurance than do mothers of LH children. The simple and close relation between parental positive affects and children's sociability and achievement heightens importance of parent-child relationship. It also strengthens the previous view that a positive self-perception fosters efficacy in training the child and handling problems arising out of child management.
Mothers who lack self-assurance might be inconsistent and wavering and thus fail to give support to a child's development of controls. A mother who was judged as having a sense of self-realization might show warmth toward her child which would help him develop trusting attitudes towards other people. A mother judged as self-assured might be overly meticulous and compulsive and in this way set standards which are unrealistic and difficult for the child to meet. There is clear evidence to suggest that the lack of self-assurance and self-realization in mothers inhibits differentiation in children.

Complaints of being tired, worn-out, tense and nervous and feeling of unable to cope with family situations or problems in every day living entered into judging a mother (Das, 1991). Predominantly complaining attitude about their children were considered evidence of a lack of self-realization in motherhood. Complaints of both material and emotional deprivation and neglect by husband provide further evidence of a lack of self-realization although it was not known whether such complaints were based on fact.

The study of Sia (1991) shows that parents of MO children indicate greater self-realization as well as assurance and poise than parents of LH children.
However, no significant effect of parental sex and child's sex on parental perception is found. Research also indicates that fathers of boys demonstrate greater self-realization compared to fathers of girls. On the contrary, mothers of girls show greater self-realization than do fathers.

Although maternal self-esteem was believed to be relatively stable evaluated disposition towards self, recent studies have indicated variations in mothers' self-esteem (Wells, 1988). It seems likely that mothers with self-assurance tend to behave in a consistent fashion across situations. This consistency may help to induce contingent behaviour in children. Similarly, mothers with high self-realization are likely to administer rewards in a consistency; they are likely to inhibit children's helplessness.

Objectives and Hypothesis

As discussed, empirical studies of children's competence have suggested some conceptual leads. However, precise studies pertaining to roots of helplessness have not been undertaken in sufficient number. The present study attempts to identify the role of child rearing antecedents in the development of children's helplessness.
It is argued that mothers adopt specific interaction patterns that facilitate or inhibit the growth of children's competence. The present study operationalizes various patterns of maternal interaction and suggests possible linkage between specific interactions and children's helplessness. It is conceivable that mother's crucial role as a primary caretaker of the child heightens the possibility of such linkage. It is also maintained that the urban, rural and tribal settings in India constitute three important aspects of cultural variation. It is likely that the patterns of child rearing practices are different in these three settings. Consequently it is expected that the development of competence is influenced by some factors linked with this cultural variation. An important objective of the present study concerns the role of these cultural settings.

Finally, the study of systematic relationship between children's orientation and rearing styles has been focused. Apart from children's helplessness, attributional styles in terms of internal, global, and stable factors are also included. More specifically, the following hypotheses are formulated for empirical examination.
1. Mothers of mastery-oriented (MO) children adopt authoritative, and harmonious interaction style to a greater extent than do mothers of learned helpless (LH) children.


3. Compared with mothers of rural and tribal children, mothers of urban children employ a greater degree of authoritative and harmonious patterns.

4. Mothers of rural and tribal children adopt authoritarian-rejecting, indulgent-protecting, and temporizing patterns to a greater extent compared with mothers of urban children.

5. LH children make greater use of internal, global and stable attributional factors for explaining bad events than do MO children.

6. MO children make a greater use of internal, global, and stable attributional factors for explaining good events than do LH children.

7. Mothers of LH children employ a greater degree of internal, global, and stable factors for explaining bad events than do mothers of MO children.