DISCUSSION
CHAPTER - V

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes discussion of results according to the hypotheses tested.

5.1 Hypothesis 1: The academic self-concept, level of stress and academic performance will vary among SC, ST and general category students.

a) Academic Self-Concept:

This hypothesis was found only partly confirmed. The general category students differed from SC on academic self-concept, but not from ST. Further SC did not differ significantly from ST students. The differences between the academic self-concept of SC and general students could be explained to some extent by using the social comparison processes. The SC students had limited interactions with general students due to the social hierarchy. General students perceived SC students as stigmatized, since they occupied the substratum of the social structure, which lowered down their self-concept. Several social psychological theories have predicted that the prejudice and discrimination against members of stigmatized groups will result in diminished self-concept and lowered self-esteem of the stigmatized and found it true. The symbolic interactionist perspective (Cooley, 1956) posited that the self-concept developed through interactions with others, and was a reflection of those others' appraisals of
oneself. This made self-concept a product of one's awareness of how others evaluated the self as well as how one adopted to other's views. The significant others whose views one incorporated into one's self-concept could be either a specific individual with whom one interacted or a 'generalized other', such as one's entire socio-cultural environment (Mead, 1934). An application of Mead's perspective here indicated that the members of stigmatized and oppressed students (SC) who knew that they were negatively regarded by others, would incorporate those negative perceptions into their self-concept and consequently would show lower self-concept (Crocker and Major, 1989).

The results were also consistent to a good extent with the researches on self-fulfilling prophecy, which predicted that social stigma will lead to lower self-concept. Perceivers holding negative stereotypes about stigmatized groups could alter their own behaviour towards members of these groups in a way that the stigmatized behaved and perceived themselves in a manner consistent with those negative stereotypes (Fazio, Effrein, and Falender, 1981). The other social psychological theories, which also made compatible predictions about the negative effects of social stigma on self-concept include theories of efficacy-based self-esteem (Gecas and Schwalbe, 1983), equity theory (Walster, Walster, and Berscheid, 1978), social exchange theory (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959), social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), and social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

The factor of birth was found relevant to the caste
prejudices by educationists which made it difficult for these people to go up in life (Kirpal, 1976). For a long time they had been forced to accept an ascribed status in society, forming an integral part of their own self-image. The forced acceptance of the ascribed status coupled with no resultant life changes lowered down their motivational levels. Many students were seen without goals beyond their academic rituals. Thus one's self-concept was highly vulnerable to social context and situational forces (Gergen, 1971 and Wood, 1989).

The finding of no difference between SC and ST and between ST and general students on academic self-concept was quite consistent with the theory of upward/downward social comparison processes. According to Taylor and Lobel (1989) when the members of a no-threat group seek affiliation and information with fortunate others (upward contact), it increased their motivation and hope and enhanced the self-concept. On the other hand, if the members of a group under threat compared themselves with the fortunate others (upward contact), there was a downward evaluation and the self-concept diminished. Thus the ST group evaluated themselves positively, while the SC group (being under threat of untouchability) evaluated themselves downwardly, when they made upward contacts with general category students. The members of SC and ST groups did not receive uniformly negative outcomes or feedback from members of the general category students. The positive acceptance of ST students related to the non-stigmatized nature of occupations and social position of STs.
The economic activities of tribals may be primitive or indigenous, but the SC's engagement in menial and ritually impure occupations for centuries has made stigmatization deep-rooted in society. In fact, even after leaving the caste occupation for many generations, an SC member continued to perceive oneself unclean and unacceptable affecting one's self-concept and behaviour adversely.

The ST students included in the present study, had already spent sufficiently long time in the town where college was located. They were out of their disadvantaged background, and they interacted positively with other students, and had incorporated some of the modes of perception and values of their peer groups. This association enabled them to perceive meaning in their life and have academic self-concept close to the general students.

The finding that SC and ST students did not differ significantly on academic self-concept was to some extent made inconsistent with the finding of significant difference between SC and the general group. It appeared that the ST students evaluated themselves close to the general students, but at the same time not in exactly similar manner. As a result they differed but not significantly from the SC. This was perhaps linked to the two way perceptions of ST student. When they compared themselves with general students they took into account their personal perceptions (self-confidence, ability to accept failure and leadership qualities as revealed in the result);
whereas when they compared themselves with SC they took into account their social perceptions. It was reported by McGuire (1976) that whatever aspect of oneself may be distinctive in relation to other people in the particular setting, that became prominent in one's thoughts about the self. This was made clearer by the researchers, who demonstrated that the social comparisons were not only social, but often even cognitively manufactured to satisfy the particular motives or goals (Taylor, Wood and Lichtman, 1983).

Some researchers suggested that as children grew into adults, they increasingly focused on comparisons in areas that they regarded as personally important (Bers and Robin, 1984) and then evaluated others in terms of the factors that they themselves valued (Markus and Smith, 1981 and Lewicki, 1983). Often, the social environment itself determined the choice of comparisons for individuals that would be used as referents in shaping their self-concept.

b) Stress

The 'F' value for the main effect of social categories on stress was significant. SC differed significantly from ST and general students on stress, but ST and general students did not differ significantly. ST students were less vulnerable to stress than SC students, suggesting that they had developed the necessary adaptive mechanisms which protected them from being affected by the debilitating effects of the variety of strains built into their daily lives. On a psychological level, the ST
students could get away by attributing their life situation to social inequality rather than to personal failings. Since they as children lived in geographically isolated areas and away from the main culture, they attributed individual failures to barriers in the social system, and this provided an important coping resource to them. They also believed in fatalism as a community which was another coping mechanism protecting them, particularly those at the lower levels of socio-economic status, from the psychological threat of social structural problems beyond their control.

ST, in general had a strong community network. They shared and exchanged goods, services, money and emotional support with relatives (Stack, 1974 and Cherlin, 1981). Their household income was supplemented by goods and services of other households which enabled them to manage the stress of daily living. Though the ST were more economically disadvantaged than SC (as results revealed), the strong adaptive mechanisms of the ST culture made them less vulnerable to the psychological stress and devaluation than SC. Further, ST were not technically part of the caste system and had a distinct and homogenous culture of their own. They had distinct social identity. On the other hand SC had been part of the social structure for centuries which deprived them of access to various resources of the society, and as a separate identity the SC saw the general students acting like a 'pressure group', who determined their way of living and behaviour pattern. They did not have control over their life. Though the
ST as a group were smaller in number, in educational institutions the SC and ST were perceived as one group. This process perhaps helped ST in seeing them larger in size than in reality (upward contact), while the position of SC remained the same.

SC students showed higher stress than ST as the stratified social system in which they lived was characterised by an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. It gave them lower self-regard and lower social status, which in itself could be a source of stress. SC perceived themselves as unequal members of the society and came into conflict with others and with themselves because of such socially erected barriers. The degree of stress was determined to a great extent by the institutionalized casteism, which shaped their life conditions at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder in the society. The negative effect of casteism was experienced by them beyond the individual discrimination. They had fewer resources available and poorer life chances. SC were psychologically more distressed than others, because they were exposed to greater number of environmental stressors and were emotionally more responsive to negative life experiences. Similar had been the findings of many other researches (Brown and Harris, 1978; Kessler, 1979, and Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend, 1984), who reported lower status people experiencing greater stress because of differential exposure and vulnerability to stressors. In a number of researches on stress it had been noted that persons' status in the stratified social system indicated their well-being.
(Hollingshead and Redlich, 1958; Gurin, Veroff and Feld, 1960 and Srole, Langner, Opler and Rennie, 1960). Some researchers had also reported lower stress among lower status group, particularly those who could rely on informal support networks in dealing with personal problems, regardless of the nature and seriousness (Neighbors et al. 1983, and Ulbrich, Warheit and Zimmerman, 1989).

The finding of significant difference between SC and general students on stress was consistent with the socio-cultural theories, which argued that the greater psychological distress experienced by lower status group was due to their greater exposure to distress provoking environmental experience (Kessler, 1979). The socio-cultural environment was the direct source of stress in a number of ways, such as the ways of determining the subjective meanings of objective events. Life situations were not inherently stressful, they were interpreted to be so. These interpretations in turn, were partly dependent on the context of one's life, to which one selectively attended. To the extent the social status shaped one's interpretations of life experiences, one's subjective feeling of stress and its impact will vary. General students had access to most resources in the society, because of their position in the social structure and thus they had less stress. Those who felt deprived as individuals were likely to feel more socially isolated and personally stressed (Runciman, 1966). A number of studies conducted in India have reported that low caste students experienced greater insecurity,
and a higher degree of anxiety and depression (Rath, 1974; Sharma, 1978; Rao, 1978; Rani, 1980; Mohanty, 1980; Singh, 1981 and Omprakash, 1993).

The finding of significant difference between SC and general students on stress was consistent with the power and dependency interpretations of social networks, explored by several network theorists (Marsden, 1983; Cook, Emerson, Gillmore, and Yamagishi, 1985; and Molm, 1986), as well as by those interested in understanding how individuals negotiated for social resources in view of the structural inequalities (Gerson and Peiss, 1985). According to the social power perspective, the power relations in society were based on gender, class and caste stratification, and these constrained the social resources and forms of networks available to those low in social hierarchy and hence the stressors to which members of particular groups were differentially exposed (Dressler, 1985). Since the notions of power and equality were rooted in social relations, the exposure to stressors and access to support were influenced by the position of the group in the hierarchy of social stratification. A number of studies investigated the impact of relative power on social relationships and psychological distress (e.g. Rosenfield, 1980; Horwitz, 1982 and Mirowsky, 1985), and found support. The economic problems of the group were structural, but required daily adjustments and accommodation as people strived to meet their family' needs. Moreover, the practices of labelling and stigmatizing the social groups acted as stressors, having adverse
consequences for social relationships and psychological ease, as reported by stress researchers in the context of labelling theory (Link, 1987 and Lennon et al., 1989).

As revealed by the present results, the dimensions of stress, like anxiety and somatization actively differentiated between SC and ST students. Similarly the lack of efficiency, anxiety and somatization differentiated between the SC and the general group of students. An interesting finding was that both the SC and ST students varied significantly from the general students on lack of efficiency factor, but not between them. Under the positive discrimination provisions a variety of governmental aids and economic incentives were given to SC and ST students' which induced in them-feelings of inefficiency, becoming overtime a part of the structure of their self-concept. This finding was consistent with the arguments of social learning theory, that the child learnt the social norms and social roles and acquired the self-concept through various rewards, punishments, modelling practices and identification etc. (Bandura, 1977).

c) Academic Performance

The 'F' value for the effect of social category on academic performance was significant. General students had significantly better academic performance than SC and ST students, but there was no significant difference between the SC and ST students. This finding was similar to the earlier findings of Miller (1968), Rath (1974), Karlekar (1975), Rani (1980), Uhashree

The parents of general category students' set higher goals for their children and communicated to them clearly that higher achievement was expected. Parents also encouraged self-reliance in their children by granting to them enough autonomy to make decisions and accept the responsibility of their success or failure, which provided them as individuals the impetus to excel and to attempt to meet standards of excellence. The educational and vocational aspirations which were a component of achievement, were also decisively shaped by complex verbal communications that occurred in the cultural setting of the home and family structure (Kahl, 1953 and Miller and Reissman, 1961), and of which SC/ST were deprived. Students of the general category inherited substantially different cultural knowledge, skills, manners, norms, styles of interaction and linguistic facility than the SC/ST students, which provided to them the means of appropriating success in school. Children were treated as main bearers of cultural values - as a bundle of abilities, knowledge and
attitudes furnished by parents (Apple, 1983; Giroux, 1983, and McLeod, 1987), general students retained the advantage over SC/ST.

The data revealed that SC students had better performance than ST, though not significantly higher. It could be due to the higher degree of competition among the members of SC group than ST for availing the benefits of higher education. SC formed a larger group in the universe than ST and were relatively proximal to the general group. On the other hand the social and physical distance of ST and the mismatch between the culture of educational institutions and what tribal life had, could be responsible for their lower performance. When the ST students arrived at a more heterogenous college, they found it a different world, as compared to what they had experienced earlier. They derived neither satisfaction nor the same measure of success. The gains made during the elementary years tended to give way to greater pressures of the college years, when the youngsters were trying to emerge as individuals and searching for an identity (Erickson, 1950).

5.2 Hypothesis 2: The academic self-concept, level of stress and academic performance will vary between arts and science students. This hypothesis was found partially validated in the present research.

a) Academic Self-Concept

It was expected that because of the different educational
orientation, the academic self-concept of students will differ between arts and science streams, but this had not been found true. The arts and science students were found to have comparable academic self-concept.

Within the framework of liberal education both arts and science students fall into the non-professional educational category. Also, in both there was overproduction of educated manpower in relation to the limited job opportunities.

At undergraduate level students opted for their electives and this might make them feel that they need not compare their abilities across subject streams. Moreover, doing well within one's course group may be seen important rather than getting into one particular subject stream and not in the other. Ruomei (1993) reported that "hot spots" were concentrated in the areas of study rather subject stream. The students prefer the disciplines which have national and international importance like economics, management, computer science etc. that have some relationship with national and international trade and finance, and thus imply a bright future in terms of good carrier, high income and several other opportunities. Another reason for comparable academic self-concepts among arts and science students might be their comparable abilities at the intermediate level. The candidates in general science education were often expected to compete along with arts students at par in many areas, as they had failed to enter into professional courses after their intermediate education.
Though arts and science students did not differ significantly on academic self-concept as such, they differed significantly on its factor of ability to accept failure, in favour of arts students. It could be due to the favourable attitude of society towards science stream. Society attached greater significance to science education, which made arts students having a subjective experience of failure, the day they enrolled in arts stream. Besides, most courses in arts stream were not utility oriented, which raised their ability to accept failure in academic and social life. Gardner et al (1960) reported that very serious, achievement oriented, realistic and independent students opted for science. In one study (Gayathri and Indiresen, 1979) differences had been reported between academic self-concept of arts and science students, because of the epistemological differences and differential orientation of the two stream.

b) Stress

The main effect of subject stream was significant on stress. Arts students had significantly more stress, anxiety, mental weakness and depression than the science students. This was probably due to the fact that for the science students the methods of evaluation were more fixed, objective and reliable, because of which a relation between self-concept and ability was clearly perceived by them. Whereas for the arts students, methods of evaluation were subjective making the students fully dependent upon the teacher's assessment of their performance. A similar
finding had been reported by Gayathri (1979). Trickett and Moos (1972) noted that more precise predictions were possible to be made about student performance when the areas of concern were very specific, which was possible in science. Arts students did not find any concrete link between their effort and outcome which put them in a constant dilemma and led to anxiety. As revealed in the present study, though arts and science students had comparable academic self-concept, the academic performance of arts students did not match their self-concept, which could be a major contributor to stress among arts students. This argument was also in line with Roger's self theory which stated that the incongruence between self-concept and outcomes evoked anxiety. The gap between expectation and achievement thus led to stress.

Academic performance in India, particularly at college level, was measured in terms of absolute scores. The student was not assessed and valued for the relative position in the class. This phenomenon, is so acute feature operated in such a manner that it pushed a student with one mark less into one category lower than the other for whole life (first division to second division). Such an evaluation process led to higher stress among arts students as their stream was not as highly scoring as science and they were handicapped in meeting their own and parental expectations.

A science student was able to judge one's relative academic position better because of one's having the opportunity to work in a the small group. Their curriculum included laboratory work
and field work in small groups which facilitated interpersonal interactions between students and teachers. High social interactions between students and teachers could buffer science students from stress. On the other hand, in arts, teachers failed to establish a close interaction with students given the large number of students in the classes. A student also failed to establish rapport with all other students in the class because of the size, and sensed alienation. As reported by Pace and Stern (1958), the academic achievement was facilitated by interaction between students and faculty. Other researchers also noted that informal interactions between students and faculty had a direct influence on student's academic performance. Student participation in academic and non-academic activities of interests and the development of peer culture could function either as facilitator or inhibitor of academic performance. The patterns of interpersonal interactions with faculty were found to have an independent and direct influence not only on students' intellectual development, but also on their academic performance (Rock, Centra and Linn, 1970 and Astin, 1971).

It was found in the present study that arts students came from somewhat lower socio-economic status families than science, which might have increased their vulnerability to stressful life events. It was found that individuals experienced painful events more intensely when they were anxious (Hill Kornetsky, Flanary, and Wilder 1952; Beecher, 1966 and Barsky and Klerman, 1983). Some studies reported higher stress among science students.
because of their enduring strains from studies (Thomas, 1988 and Avison and Turner, 1988). Science students were also found lacking humanistic knowledge and having poor social adaptability (Ruomei, 1993).

c) Academic Performance

It was found that science students had significantly better academic performance than arts students. This was undoubtedly linked to the fact that for the science students, the contents and methods of evaluations were fixed, objective and more reliable, whereas, for the arts students, methods of evaluation were subjective, contents had many meanings since these deal with human values, morality and ethics and encouraged the development of divergent views about various aspects of social reality. So the approach adopted by arts students was often narrative. The natural sciences focused on real and observable phenomena, making it scoring. Besides the science students had more interactional opportunities with teachers and more clarity which influenced their academic performance.

Mohanty and Pani (1979) reported that student-teacher classroom interaction increased the performance of students. The influence of students' friendships and peer culture experiences also had an important effect on student performance (Laven, 1965 and Wallace, 1966). Some aspects of the institutional environment, particularly the predominant attitudes and values of different student groups, peer cultures, could help in modifying the relationship between students' aptitude and college
performance, by either positively or negatively influencing the importance students attached to their academic performance (Wallace, 1966 and O'Shea, 1969). Academic performance was also influenced by students' exposure to different types of people, ideals and values (Bradshaw, 1975) their views and opinions towards curriculum (Astin, 1968), and by increased faculty pressure for competitive achievement (Centra, 1969).

5.3 Hypothesis 3: The academic self-concept, level of stress and academic performance will vary between males and females.

a) Academic Self-Concept

The 'F' value for the main effect of gender was significant on academic self-concept. It was evident from the study that the females had significantly higher academic self-concept and its factors of self-confidence and ability to accept failure. They were comparable to males on initiative, leadership qualities, and social attention which might have led to their increased self-confidence.

Sociological theory informed (Popenoe, 1988) that the validation of role models was one of the principal ways through which gender roles gained social currency. The public media—including newspapers, periodicals, radio and television have consistently served as influential sources of information role models, and reflected the social status of women in society. By the 1980s, the "strong woman" image gained prominence and "good wife and mother" image became an additional image for females.
Moreover the momentous changes that took place in societies as a whole changed the roles of females. Incidence of successful women careerists in different areas including the male oriented occupations increased the self-confidence of females (Zongjian, 1993). The increasing intellectualization of women in general as well as the modernization of society boosted women’s self-concept (Xiaotian, 1993).

The equitable sex-role socialization, equal support from parents and a decrease in the social practices of discriminating against women have gradually helped raising the confidence of women. Women as a minority group enjoyed some official protection and thus perceived the chances of getting success fairer than the males.

In addition to the legal provisions the changes in social system provided an appropriate economic basis, avenues of development and an ideological environment that helped to reduce the disparity in social status between the two genders. In a recent study the high school girls who were expected to work full-time as adults, felt that it was important to establish themselves in their future careers as soon as possible and choose a science dominant curriculum of study more often than their equally able classmates (Curry, Trew, Turner and Hunter, 1992).

As evident in this study, the females had significantly higher ability to accept failure than males. This was also due to the fact that in Indian society the responsibility of
household management was on the female. Being in close touch with
the mother, she successfully developed a greater sensitivity to
home problems, while males failed to do that.

Females perhaps did not link the educational status so
intensively with the occupational role as the males usually did.
In other words female developed academic self-concept out of
achieving higher level of education, on the other hand males took
in to account both levels and its relevance to goals.

Also probably parents' and teacher's expectations for male
students were higher and failures of males to achieve these might
have contributed to their low academic self-concept.

b) Stress

Females scored significantly higher on stress and its
factors of anxiety, mental weakness, depression and obsessive-
compulsiveness. This was probably due to the fact that the
women's pursuit of achievement and success often came into
psychological conflict with their gender identity. A woman may
wish to attain success and yet at the same time, she may wish to
be a "real woman". These two goals often put her in a social
dilemma, which meant that realistically she should not expect to
have the best of both worlds. This placed the woman in a
quandary, in which she often found it difficult to go either
forward or backward. This affected the mental health of women
seriously (Changquin, 1993).

Women were more vulnerable to the experience of depression
than their male counterparts because of the nature of their roles and work related strains. These findings were supported by Gove's role strain theory (Gove, 1972; Gove and Tudor, 1973; Pearlin, 1983), who reported that many of women's stress and strains were associated with their traditional roles. Women's lives were fraught with many more stresses and strains than men (Holmes and Masuda, 1974). The greater exposure of women to a number of enduring life strains was found to be a major factor contributing to their higher rates of depressive symptoms (Dohrenwend, 1973, Pearlin, 1975 and Gore and Mangione, 1983). Differential socialization of females and males allocation of socially valued resources, gender typing of social roles and the normative expectations were found linked to gender differences in health outcomes, both mental and physical (Waldron, 1976; Harrison, 1978, and Cleary and Mechanic, 1983). A handful of researchers revealed that men tend to have lower level of distress, because the male role was associated with greater social and economic resources than the females. When women assumed non-traditional roles (more typically male), they tended to have lower depression and psychological distress than women in more traditional female roles (Radloff, 1975; Rosenfield, 1980 and Horwitz, 1982).

The sex role socialization was such in which expressions of sadness in general, and crying in particular, were more widely tolerated in women than in men (Hochschild, 1983; Ross and Mirowsky, 1984), reflecting their mental weakness. The deviance
from the sex-appropriate emotional norms were known to be the source of stress (Zichman, 1988).

Rosenfield (1989) found that both the level of demands and the level of relative power, which were structural elements of network relationships and characterised by gender inequalities, contributed to gender differences in psychological distress. Women were more vulnerable to network losses than males (Kessler and McLeod, 1984). Even the biological arguments of constitutional frailty of female (Weissman and Klerman, 1977) and their ineffective coping (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978 and Kessler, 1979) suggested that stress could have more severe impact on women than men.

c) Academic Performance

The 'F' value for the main effects of gender was not significant on academic performance, although females had higher mean score than males. This was probably due to females reported putting in more time in their studies, had less distractions and utilized their abilities more effectively than males (Duff and Siegel, 1960). Gender was found (Sharma, 1976) of no importance in academic performance by some researchers (Mohanty, 1991), while some others found males to be better achievers than females (Aruna, 1981; Bisht, 1984 and Tripathy, 1990). Some recent trend analyses showed that gender differences among adolescents have decreased markedly over the past generation (Hyde and Linn, 1988; Jaeklin, 1989 and Feingold, 1988, 1991a).
5.4 HYPOTHESIS 4 There will be significant interaction effects of social category, subject stream and gender on academic self-concept, level of stress and academic performance.

The 'F' values for the interaction effects of social category and gender, and subject stream and gender were significant on academic self-concept and its factors of self-confidence, initiative, leadership qualities and social attention. Further the interaction effect of social category and gender was significant on the factor of ability to accept failure.

General and ST male students scored higher on academic self-concept than the SC males, but the SC females scored higher on academic self-concept than the ST and general females. This was probably due to the fact, that despite their inaccessibility to various resources of the society and social stigma, SC had been able to gain entry into higher education, (Panucci, 1978). It was also found that SC females had higher ability to accept failure than ST and general females. SC females also scored higher on academic self-concept than ST and general males. SC males scored lower on academic self-concept than ST and general females. ST females scored higher on academic self-concept than SC males, but lower than general males. Similarly ST males scored lower on academic self-concept than SC and general females. General females scored higher on academic self-concept than ST and SC male students. General male students had higher academic self-concept than ST females but lower than SC females.
Females in science had higher academic self-concept than females and males in arts. A possible explanation of this finding could be seen in the small number of females pursuing science education as against their large size pursuing arts education and also the relatively large number of males in science stream. The limited presence of females in science at graduate level got attached to it some amount of exclusivity, which probably led to an enhanced academic self-concept. The males and females in arts at college level had higher academic self-concept than the males in science. This was probably due to the fact that the society attached lot of significance to science education at the school, particularly at 12 level, since there was opportunity then for entering into the professional colleges. At this level science students considered themselves as potential engineers or medicos. Once the science students failed to enter into professional colleges and joined the general science education they suffered from diminished self-concept in general academic institutions. On the other hand arts students in the absence of such expectations suffered no such disillusionment (Manav, 1981). Science females scored higher on academic self-concept than arts males and arts females scored higher on academic self-concept than science male students.

The 'F' values for the interaction effect of social category and subject stream were significant on stress and its factors of anxiety, mental weakness and depression. SC arts students had higher stress than ST and general arts students. Similarly SC
science students had higher stress than science students of general and ST category. This could be explained by referring to the lower academic self-concept of SC Students than the general and ST students. The source could be attributed to the negative experiences arising out of their economic hardships and the social stigma unique to them (Singh, 1981 and Bhargava and Aurora, 1981). SC arts students had higher stress than ST and general science students. SC science students had lower stress than ST arts students but higher than general arts students. ST arts had higher stress than SC and general science students. ST science students had lower stress than SC and general arts students. General arts students had higher stress than ST science students, but lower than SC science students. General science students had lower stress than SC and ST arts students.

The interaction effect of subject stream and gender on somatization and obsessive compulsive revealed that males in arts differed significantly from females in science stream and females in arts from males in science. Arts females scored higher on somatization and obsessive-compulsive than science males. Arts males scored higher on somatization than science females but science females scored higher on obsessive-compulsive than arts males.

Social category and gender interacted together to influence the depression significantly. SC females exhibited higher depression than ST and general females. General males showed higher depression than ST and SC males. In the lower economic
stratum of the society, generally the females bore the burden of earning a livelihood for the family. The additional responsibility was an apparent source of depression for the SC females (Soares and Soares, 1969, Simmons et al., 1987) reported that disadvantaged females in multiple social environments experienced stress. The risks of failing to meet the parental expectations pertaining to academic achievements which was high in case of general male students was a possible reason for higher depression among them (Mishra, 1982).

The interaction effect of social category, subject stream and gender on depression and obsessive-compulsive revealed that the males and females of arts and science differ significantly across the social categories. Males of science stream belonging to SC category exhibited higher depression and obsessive compulsiveness, than SC males in arts stream. Similar results were observed for science females of general category and their counterparts in arts stream. An apparent explanation of the above finding was the continuous hardwork expected of science student in laboratory, maintenance of records and the very nature of curriculum demanding continuous attendance of lectures etc as against the liberal course work of arts stream (Thamas, 1988).

SC females in arts showed higher depression and obsessive-compulsiveness than females to science stream belonging to SC group. This was probably due to the relatively higher academic self-concept of the SC females in science who perceived a better future for them in terms of career than SC females of arts. ST
and general males in arts exhibited higher depression and obsessive-compulsiveness than their counterparts in science. The ST females in arts showed higher depression than their counterparts in science, whereas ST females in science showed higher obsessive-compulsiveness than females in arts.

The interaction effect of social category and gender on academic performance revealed that the males and females in different social categories (SC, ST and General) differed significantly. General and SC females showed higher academic performance than the ST females. General males achieved better academically than the SC and ST males. However, SC males showed better performance than ST males. This could be attributed to the difference in the intensity of competition among the various categories to gain entry into the job market even through reservations. The intensity of competition was of course highest for the general category and was lowest for the ST. There was some competition visible now among SC males. Socio-cultural background of the general category students were more favourable than any of the two other categories (SC/ST).

SC males showed higher academic performance than ST females, but lower than general females. SC females showed better academic performance than ST males, but lower than general males. ST males had lower academic performance than SC and general females. ST females had lower academic performance than SC and general males. General males had higher academic performance than SC and ST females. General females had higher academic performance than SC
and ST females. General females had higher academic performance than SC and ST males.

The interaction effect of subject stream and gender on academic performance revealed that males and females in arts and science differed significantly. Science males and females in science showed higher performance than males and females in arts.

5.5 HYPOTHESIS 5: The academic self-concept, level of stress and academic performance will relate with each other as well as with personal and social variables.

The academic self-concept was found positively related to academic performance. This supported the argument that the students' positive self-perceptions of their academic behaviours in the classroom could raise the academic performance. A positive relation between academic self-concept and academic performance had been expected in accordance with the general tenets of Cooper Smith's academic self-esteem Theory (1967), which suggested that the students with high levels of self-concept were active, exploratory and persistent, and thus they did well academically. Brookover and his associates (1964) reported that self-concept of ability was significantly and positively related to academic achievement of boys and girls. Marsh, Smith and Barnel (1984) showed that academic achievement was positively correlated with academic self-concept.

Similar results were reported by Wylie (1979), Byrne (1982), Marsh and Parker (1984), Eshel and Kurman (1990) and Boxel
and Monks (1992). Within the social categories chosen here, the academic performance of SC and ST students was positively related to academic self-concept (e.g. initiative and social attention) but not for general students. This was probably due to the fact that the parents, significant others and teachers set different standards of academic performance for the SC and ST Students (many of whom were first generation learners and came through reserved quota), and general students who entered on merit. Obviously, for the general students the standards set were higher than the SC and ST students. The general students, even though they were high achievers, could not achieve high enough academically to meet the high expectations of teachers and parents, while the SC and ST Students, who were low achievers, yet met the expectations set for them.

The stress did not show a significant correlation with academic performance. The negative direction indicated that those having high academic self-concept had low stress. For SC, general and science students stress was found to have low positive relation to academic performance indicating its links with efforts and outcomes. However, such a finding could be of some theoretical and practical utility in setting the standards of academic performance for different category of students. Stress could also act as a useful drive or motivation that spurred an individual to undertake different activities. Lynn (1971) reported that by the age of 18 to 20 years, the students developed sufficient ego and strength/confidence to use the.
anxiety as a source of energy and motivation (Endler, 1960, Spielbergere, 1966 and Stulter, 1973). There was some element of universality in the observation that academic performance caused some stress. The negative relation between stress and academic performance in the present finding was in line with drive theory of Spence and Spence (1966), which suggested that higher level of stress affect performance adversely. A number of researchers reported significant negative relations between stress and academic performance (Naidu and Thapa, 1978; Deffenbacher, 1978; Sud, 1983; Ranganathan, 1988 and Biggs, 1992). Academic self-concept and stress were found significantly and negatively related. This finding was consistent with the earlier findings of Gibby and Gibby (1967) and Westerman (1988).

Some variations were noticed in the pattern of correlations of personal and social variables with academic self-concept, stress and academic performance. The academic self-concept was positively related to socio-economic status specially with mother's education. This finding was different from findings of Marx an Winne (1975), who observed a negligible relation between academic self-concept and academic achievement of low SES students. Self-confidence and initiative of male students were positively associated with mother's education. Apparently, an educated mother could provide more cognitively stimulating and structured environment for her child because of her realistic orientation, experience and educational level. The educated parents encouraged self-reliance by granting to their children
enough autonomy to make their own decisions and accept responsibility for their success and failure (Evans and Anderson, 1973; Bersavana and Rani, 1983).

Family size was negatively related to initiative and social attention of female students, as it provided differential opportunities for role learning adjustment, interaction patterns, controlability and emotional support. In general, the large size family placed greater burden on the females. Social attention related positively to family income among arts, science, male and female students. It indicate that students coming from higher income families tended to receive higher social attention in the educational system.

Age was related to stress and lack of efficiency in all groups, except the general students. A positive correlation between age and stress had been reported by Krishna (1972), Srivastava and Sinha (1974) and Satyarthi (1979). The education of parents related negatively to stress among ST, arts and female students, implying that the higher education of parents helped in buffering the children from stress of children. Gunthey and Sinha (1983) reported that more anxious students came from low educational background. Gore, Aseltine and Colton (1992) reported the lower parental education related to greater reactivity in relationships, problems with parents, and to negative events occurring for oneself.
The academic performance was positively related to parent’s education in all groups. It implied that students who came from educated families did well in college. Girija and Bhadra (1976) noted considerable influence of environmental factors of the family like education of family members, occupation, family size and parental interaction patterns on the performance of students. Similar findings had been reported by Aruna (1981), Chatterjee and Paul (1981) and Thompson (1985). They also noted home literacy, educational ambitions and socio-economic efficiency as the best individual predictors of educational performance.

Academic performance was negatively related to institution types, implying that in nongovernment colleges the students in general had in general lower performance. This finding supported the earlier findings by Mortain (1973), Sinha (1977), Rao (1978), Veeraraghavan (1985) and Sengupta and Veeraraghavan (1985). Academic performance was negatively related to age in all groups, except the general students. Some researchers had reported negative relationship between age and achievement indicating that the older age group tended to perform poorly (Jamuar, 1963 and Gupta, 1966). Further, the large family size adversely affected the academic performance of general, science, arts and female students. Shukla (1984) also found inverse relationship between family size and academic achievement, while Watson (1965) reported no relationship between age and achievement.

5.6 HYPOTHESIS 6: Academic performance of different social groups will be differentially predicted by the factors of
academic self-concept, stress and various personal-social variables.

The academic performance of SC students could be predicted by the variables of institution types, age, social attention, father's occupation, somatization, extra qualifications, initiative and self-confidence; whereas the academic performance of ST students was predicted by the combination of mother's education, place of schooling, age, lack of efficiency, leadership qualities and institution types. This substantiated the findings of researchers (Srivstava, 1970; Rath and Mishra, 1974; Dubey, 1974; Lakshmana, 1975; and Rani, 1980, Pathak, 1981), emphasising that majority of tribal parents had no education and were too poor. Desai and Pandoor (1974) found many of them to be first generation learners Joshi (1980) observed that 85% of the ST fathers and 95% of the mothers had practically no education in schools. Indifferent and apathetic attitude of tribal parents towards education were reported by Das (1962), Shah and Thakre (1974) and Srivastava (1981). In other studies, Ameerjan (1984,1987), Bhasin (1988), and Mehta (1989) reported that tribals were culturally different, and expressed increasingly negative view of school as well as self. They saw themselves as a slow learner group. They felt that teachers and administrators did not respect them as fellow beings and had lower educational aspirations and academic achievement. The model helped in analyzing the students' achievement from the perspectives of demographic variables and school context. Rani
(1980) pointed out that SC/ST students entered into higher education in latter age than students from rest of the population which in turn adversely affected their performance.

Mohanty (1991) found parental illiteracy as a cause of disregard and disinterest in the education of their children. Several studies brought out the importance of road communications which showed that enrolment in roadside villages was much more than the interior villages. Sachidananda (1991) reported that academic performance was associated with the place of schooling for ST students. The students who got their education in towns had comparatively better environment, even if they had to travel long distance (Mohanty, 1991). The academic performance of general students was predicted by the mother's education, institution types, mother's occupation, lack of efficiency, obsessive-compulsiveness and mental weakness.

In all the three categories of students, the personal and social factors emerged as more meaningful predictors of academic performance than the socio-psychological variables. Among the personal and social variables for general students, mother's education, institution types and mother's occupation predicted their academic performance, but for SC students, the institution types, age and social attention were major contributors. For ST students mother's education, place of schooling and age were good predictors of academic performance. The non-cognitive demographic variables were found important determinants of academic performance by Vernon (1963) and Miller (1967). Some other
researchers (Chopra, 1966; Summer Skill, 1968; Brown, 1968 and Benner, 1973) also emphasised socio-economic status, motives, values and personality disposition in the academic performance.

The academic performance of arts students could be predicted by the mother's education, institution types, lack of efficiency, family income, place of schooling and age. On the other hand, the mother's education, institution types, social attention, somatization, type of family and obsessive-compulsive factors predicted the academic performance of science students. These results suggested some primacy of social factors over the psychological factors in contributing to academic performance. The academic performance of male students was predicted by mother's education, institution types and social attention, while female students' academic performance was predicted by mother's education, age, institution types, family income and initiative.

To sum up, the personal and social factors had better predictability in academic performance in all groups with some factor of academic self-concept and stress. Mother's education, institution types and age were important predictors of academic performance in all groups. Educated women's self-awareness and their relationship with things around them had an important bearing on the cognitive functioning development of their children beyond adolescence. Educated women revealed a sense of initiative and confidence in their abilities and were able to set standards of excellence for their children, and encourage them.
to meet the standards. Social participation capability and self-awareness among the students increased with an increase in their mother's education. Girija and Bhadra (1976), Nandy and Singhal (1981), Aruna (1981) and Thompson (1985) reported close association between home environment and educational performance. Studies have revealed that children whose achievement, initiative and competitiveness were reinforced by their parents, were more likely to develop high levels of achievement motivation (Spence, 1983 and Woolfolk, 1990).

Some other studies indicated considerable variations in the relationship between social groups and academic achievement. These studies suggested that school settings and social characteristics were important in determining academic achievement. Heyneman and Loxley (1983) found that the pattern of correlations among types of social groups, school characteristics and school achievement varied systematically with the level of development of countries. The lower the level of development of the country, the less important the social group in the social hierarchy, the more important were the school characteristics to student's achievement. Conversely the higher the level of development, the more important the social group, the less important were the school characteristics to school achievement. Results also revealed that social attention factor of academic self-concept was important to the academic performance. This was supported by the studies that more positive teacher interactions led to better academic achievement
(Rosenthal, 1974; Cooper, 1979; Marshall and Weinstein, 1982 and Brophy, 1983).

Overall, the variations in personal and social factors remained important than the social-psychological factors, which were to a good extent shaped by the former. The analytical model used proved quite broad and meaningful in giving directions to research questions and analysis.