CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, education of mankind has been encouraged, so that the growing members of the human family may learn to adapt themselves to society, and be able to fruitfully inherit the world of their forefathers, develop it and live in it. Education therefore is a basic institution of society (Mathur, 1973).

It broadly aims at upliftment and development of the human race and contributes in the wholesome growth of the country. To realise the envisaged aims of developing harmonious functioning of the human resources, formal, informal and non-formal education has their own peculiar roles to play.

Among all the stages of formal education viz. elementary, secondary and higher education, the elementary education is treated as the most important because it is this stage where the foundation is laid down and the child acquires the basic learning competencies. The increased global attention towards Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been reflected through International declaration of Education for All (EFA), 1990 supported and promoted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which aims to meet the learning needs of all by 2015. The United Nations millennium development declaration enlisted eight international development goals in its millennium summit (2000) as:

i. to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
ii. to achieve universal primary education
iii. to promote gender equality and empower women
iv. to reduce child mortality
v. to improve maternal health
vi. to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
vii. to ensure environmental sustainability
viii. to develop a global partnership for development

The second goal of the declaration was in tune with the earlier efforts on promoting universal primary education. The world education forum in 2000 adopted the Dakar framework for action reaffirming the commitment to achieving education
for all by the year 2015 and entrusted UNESCO with the overall responsibility of coordinating international players in this work.

Though the declaration actually happened at international level in 1990 but the constructors of Indian constitution made a commitment towards elementary education in 1950. A large number of programmes and schemes have been initiated both by the union and state governments to realize the goal of universalization of elementary education. In the Article 45 of the directive principles of state policy, the makers of Indian constitution clearly stated that within a period of ten years from the inception of the constitution, the state shall endeavor to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

Keeping up with the spirit of the constitution the subsequent commissions on education and their recommendations moved towards the goal of universalizing elementary education. The recommendations of Kothari commission (1964-66), National Policy on Education (1986), revised policy and Programme of Action (1992) focused towards provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality and bridging of all gender and social disparities in access to education.

A number of centrally sponsored projects were launched in light of these recommendations like Operation Black Board (1987), District Primary Education Programme (1994), Midday Meal Programme (1995) and Education Guarantee Scheme (2000). A major breakthrough by Indian Government for the delivery of Millennium Development Goal 2 was launching of Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (2001).

The Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education act (RTE, 2009) was another significant change in National Policy in improving access to elementary education. Originally introduced as a bill, it became an Act in 2009 and at national level came into force from April 1, 2010. Under this Act free and compulsory education became a fundamental right of every child in the age range of 6-14 years.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) constituted the committee for evolution of the New Education Policy (NEP) popularly known as Subramanian Committee (2016). The report of the committee proposed an education policy, which seeks to address challenges faced by the current education system. Its recommendations for elementary education included:
• Pre-school education for children in the age group of 4-5 years should be declared as right (by amendment into RTE) and a programme for it should be implemented immediately.

• The no-detention policy should be continued till class V. For the upper primary level, the system of detention must be resumed subject to availability of remedial coaching and a minimum of two extra chances being given to student to prove his capability to be promoted to a higher class.

Amidst these rapid developments, elementary education also has not been able to escape from the quality vs. quantity debate. The fact that quantitative expansion seems to have over shadowed the quality of elementary education has been reflected in nationwide surveys like Public Report On Basic Education(PROBE, 1998), Govinda (2002) and Public Report On Basic Education (PROBE) revisited (2006).

Access to school has continued to improve in low-income countries over recent years, especially for girls, but there are still widespread problems with school quality. Overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, lack of materials for teaching and learning, acute teacher shortages and inadequate contact time are endemic (UNESCO, 2008).

Ironically, the very gains in school access have exacerbated the quality issue. The influx of children following successful enrolment drives has in many countries put added pressure on already under-resourced schools. The impoverished background of many new learners explains why just providing more school inputs can fail to show any effect (Banerjee et al., 2006).

High rate of malnutrition and ill health, low rates of parental literacy and an absence of pre-school education in combination with poorly trained teachers and under resourced schools create probable barriers to the achievement of basic competence (Chabott, 2008).

The increased attention to inflate data registers with quantity i.e. increase in numbers in terms of new schools and enrollment of new incumbents, the quality of education in view of learning outcomes of students seemed to be ignored. Research studies conducted in India both at national and state levels reflected upon the low level of learning in schools. The studies by Govinda and Varghese (1993); Shukla et al. (1994); Aikara (1997); Hasan (1995); Aggarwal (2000); Reddy(2004); Goyal
Singh (2014) and National Assessment Surveys (NAS, 2015) have also assessed learner achievement in India and have shown that achievement levels at the terminal grades of primary school are disappointingly low.

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Survey conducted every year since 2005 has yielded data on basic learning levels of children in Indian schools and has pointed out that learning levels in our schools are woefully inadequate. The data indicates that even after five years of schooling, Indian children are unable to read fluently and do basic arithmetic operations. These figures have remained relatively unchanged over time and as a result it has been said that India is in a "big stuck" (ASER, 2005 to 2016).

Poor level of achievement at primary level is a big demotivating factor resulting in repetition and drop out from the school and there is no denying of the fact that level of achievement is the most vital factor in reflecting upon quality of education. School-level academic performance leads to improvement in school level dropout rates or in other words, schools with improved performance saw decreased dropout rates (Glennie et al., 2012). Therefore assessment of gains from education can be estimated by monitoring learning achievement.

Increased focus on learning achievement in India began around 1980 with the preparation of the document called 'Minimum Level of Learning' (MLL) by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

The minimum level of learning document was further refined and operationalized in 1991. It was a step taken by the government towards improving the quality of elementary education and achieving a comparable standard of education throughout the country. In order to establish the benchmark for learning achievements in the country, the government laid down the minimum level of learning which specified the standards to be achieved by all learners in various grades of the primary stage, in each curricular areas.

The minimum levels of learning were also to be used as a guideline for classroom teaching as well as for the evaluation of achievement as an outcome of learning. As an evaluatory tool, the minimum level of learning could help the teacher (or anyone else for practical purposes) by serving as a standard, against which the progress of the child could be assessed, in terms of essential learning outcomes. The
minimum level of learning therefore had implications for guiding the evaluation of learning outcomes.

The adoption of minimum levels of learning criteria in primary education is inspired by psychological principles and assessment of learning achievement aimed at competency in basic literacy and numeracy skills, necessary for further education and preparation for life (Dave, 1996).

Though the minimum level of learning programme has been criticized by experts on various grounds but there is no denying of the fact that this programme played a major role in focusing the attention of planners and policy makers as well as administrator and practitioners all over the country on the issue of learner achievement.

It may be conveniently viewed that the need to ensure quality of formal education during the elementary stage is being focused all over the world. Many programmes by countries across the world are being initiated in mission mode to offer access to elementary education of a comparable quality. Though quality may be seen through many indicators yet in formal education, learning achievement emerges as an important indicator of quality.

1.1 Learning achievement

It is a matter of routine observation that whole process of education is directed towards enhancing student learning. Learning is a fundamental process of life. Every individual learns and through learning develops modes of behaviour by which he lives. All human activity and achievement manifest the results of learning. Whether we look at life in terms of culture, the community or the individual, we are confronted on every side by the pervasive effects of learning.

In this way the behaviour of an individual is changed through direct or indirect experiences. This change in behaviour brought about by experience is commonly known as learning. Learning is central to human behaviour and is a continuous process during the entire life span of the person. It is a process that is shaped by the context in which the individual is situated. There are various contexts in which learning takes place – either in the cognitive domain wherein knowledge is gained or in the domain of the non-cognitive wherein physical and emotional skills are acquired.
Woodworth (1945) explains that any activity can be called learning so far as it develops the individual (in any respect, good or bad) and makes his later behaviour and experiences different from what that would otherwise have been.

Gates and others (1946) define learning as the modification of behaviour through experience.

Smith (1962) explained learning as acquiring new behaviour or the strengthening or weakening of old behaviour as a consequence of experience.

Pressey et al. (1967) describes learning as an episode in which a motivated individual attempts to adapt his behaviour so as to succeed in a situation which he perceives as requiring action to attain a goal.

The primary function of education is to facilitate the wholesome development of the individual. Since personality has been defined as a set of cognitive and non-cognitive traits, learning in schools encompasses the development of the desirable cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics of personality. The scholastic (cognitive) traits refer to the intellectual skills and knowledge, while the non-scholastic (non-cognitive) area dominantly refers to the affective and psychomotor skills such as socio-personal qualities, interests, attitudes and values. It is important to remember that the affective and cognitive areas are not independent aspects of the personality. Many affective goals can be reached through cognitive learning and the development of socio-personal traits also requires a certain level of cognition (Ebel and Frisbie, 1991). The principle of inter-relation of growth and development also suggests that the intellectual, moral, social, physical, emotional aspects of personality of an individual are so intermingled that it is hard to isolate them from each other.

Research has thus established that learning achievement should refer to the acquisition of both cognitive and non-cognitive competencies which are necessary for the overall development of individual. Scholars feel that a reliable indicator of the quality of education would be the assessment as to whether pupils are learning effectively, acquiring knowledge and skills and growing socially and morally or not (Aggarwal 2000; Govinda and Varghese, 1993).

The concern of academicians and educationists to improve the teaching learning process and the system of evaluation by including both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects has led to major paradigm shift in evaluation system. The
introduction of grading system instead of numerical scores and the adoption of continuous comprehensive evaluation instead of annual system of examination shows that the system of evaluation is becoming more psychological and comprehensive (Central Board of Secondary Education-CBSE, 2009).

In the recent years the domain of educational research may be witnessed as having increasing number of spots of studies, Baseline Assessment Survey-BAS (1989), National Council of Educational Research and Training surveys (1995; 2000; 2015), East Asian Learning Achievement Survey-EALAS (2007) present a vivid picture of learning achievement nowadays. In India, however assessment of learning achievements has only recently begun. Learning can be measured along important dimensions related to the curriculum either through class room assessments-examinations, assignments etc. or through standardized achievement tests.

Thus the above discussion sums up the relevance of using the term learning achievement instead of academic achievement as it represents all facets of learning experiences obtained during the teaching learning process. But it is worth mentioning that, in all the national level surveys the term learning achievement has been delimited to cognitive aspects due to the evaluation constraint. Measuring non cognitive aspects is based on a long term observation of teachers and can be indirectly derived from student behaviour and performances in multifarious activities. Though non-cognitive aspect also seems as important as cognitive aspect but no systematic effort has been made to derive measures for its assessment (Reddy, 2004).

It may further be added that the studies conducted to assess academic achievement usually focus on the marks obtained by the students in traditional annual/semester/trimester examinations. But the studies talking about learning achievement conduct standardized test. Aggarwal (2000) has remarked that standardized tests of achievement based on predefined standards prove to be useful in assessing skills and competencies acquired by pupils.

So researchers in India who have used the term learning achievement have largely used competency based standardized achievement test, for example in mathematics, language, social studies, science etc.

Since no clear cut line of demarcation can be drawn on how levels of learning may be differentiated by using examination based on standardized tests when the
learning has occurred in the same very formal system of classroom interactions and schooling, so the term learning achievement/scholastic achievement/academic achievement are used interchangeably.

Achievement is explained as quantifiable behaviour in a series of standardised tests. Achievement test is usually developed and standardised to measure performance in school subjects. In most cases, accomplishment is sometimes used in place of achievement (Simpson and Weiner, 1989).

According to Bruce and Neville (1979) achievement in education is assessed by standardised achievement test prepared for school subjects. This means that academic achievement is measured with reference to what is attained at the completion of a course, since it is the accomplishment of long term or medium objective of education. It is significant that the test should be a standardised test to meet national norms and must be valid for over a period of time. Achievement is regarded as a task completed or attained by exertion.

Simpson and Weiner (1989) contended that achievement test intends to measure systematic education and training in school occupation towards a conventionally accepted pattern of skills or knowledge. Many subjects may be incorporated into an achievement battery for computing general school proficiency either in point score or achievement age and perhaps achievement quotient.

Achievement refers to performance on standardized tests or examinations that measures knowledge or competence in a specific subject area. So the term is sometimes used as an indication of quality of education within an education system or when comparing a group of schools (UNESCO, 2009).

Academic achievement of the pupils refers to the knowledge attained and the skills developed in the school subjects (Amin, 2011).

Academic achievement or performance is the aftermath of education, the degree to which a teacher student, or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important- procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts.
Good (1959) refers to academic achievement as the knowledge obtained or skills developed in the school subjects usually designed by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher.

Academic achievement may be defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, it includes the activities in the class as well as co-curricular activities. It includes distinction in sporting behaviour, confidence, communication skills, punctuality, arts, culture and the like which can be achieved only when an individual is self-regulated (Ganai et al., 2013).

Trow (1960) described academic achievement as the gained ability or degree of proficiency in school task, usually measured by the standardised test and conveyed in age or grade units on the basis of norms derived from an extensive sampling of performance of pupils.

Clark (1983) described academic achievement as the performance of the students in the subject they study in the school.

Kumari (2001) defined academic achievement as the sum total of information gained after completing a course of instruction (partially or fully) in a particular grade that he has obtained on an achievement test.

Sharma et al. (2011) explained academic achievement as the outcome of the training imparted to students by the teacher in school situation.

Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. School systems mostly define cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas e.g. critical thinking or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain e.g. numeracy, literacy, science and history. Hence, academic achievement may be described as a multifaceted variable that encompasses different domains of learning. Because the field of academic achievement is very wide-ranging and covers a broad variety of educational outcomes, the definition of academic achievement depends on the indicators used to measure it. Procedural and declarative knowledge are general indicators of academic achievement. Performance on a test of educational achievement, cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as various degrees and certificates in education are the curricular-based inputs
indicators of academic achievement. These criteria have one thing in common that they stand for intellectual endeavors and thus, more or less, reflect the intellectual capability of a person. Academic achievement plays an important role in the life of every person and is given due weightage in all developed societies. Academic achievement is measured by standardized assessments such as grade point average (GPA) or for selection purpose such as the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) which determines entry to higher education. Therefore, academic achievement determines eligibility for higher education based on the educational degrees attained and it influences vocational career after education. Academic achievement is not only important for an individual, but is of utmost importance for the wealth and prosperity of a nation. The apparent strong association between level of academic achievement and positive socio-economic development seems as one reason for conducting international studies on academic achievement, such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These studies provide results which generate useful information about various indicators of academic achievement at national level, which can be used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of educational system at the national level and to guide educational policy decisions. Academic achievement is the focus of research in psychology and education because of its importance for societies and individuals (Mimrot, 2016).

Hence it can be summed up that:

- The scores obtained on academic achievement test are the indicator of cognitive ability. These are used for the award of degrees, prizes or scholarships. These scores form the basis for the schools, colleges and universities for making policies regarding the failure and promotions to the higher grades.

- Academic Achievement scores indicate success of individual.

- Academic Achievement scores form the part of research for the construction of ability tests.

- Sturdy achievement on academic side can help in forming the pillars on which the entire development of personality stands.
Thus academic achievement is a synonym of learning achievement defined as a measure of knowledge, understanding of skill in a specific subject or group of subjects. It refers to achievement in a specific subject or a total score of several subjects taken together. It is concerned with quality and quantity of learning attained in a subject or a group of subjects after a period of instructions.

1.2 **Factors affecting learning achievement**

Learning achievement has become a variable of interest to all and this explains the reason why scholars have been working hard to locate the factors that are detrimental against good academic performance (Aremu and Sokan, 2002).

Schools are supposed to enhance learning of children. However, learning is a product not only of classroom activities but also of families, communities and peers. Socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors affect learning of students and thus school performance (Rothstein, 2000).

Owing to their involvement with education programmes, students learn many things-curricular and co-curricular. However, learning in academic contents is of specific interest to all involved in the process. Learning achievement of students is also an important component in the analysis of quality of education (Govinda and Varghese, 1993; UNESCO, 2000; UNICEF, 2004; UNESCO, 2005).

As an immediate output, learning achievement of pupils seems to be the most important indicator for understanding, what goes on in the classroom. Studies available internationally explored the predictors of learning achievement of the students at various levels of education. These include socio-economic background of the students and their families, and school and teacher-related factors.

Coleman et al. (1966) observed that background of students and community characteristics accounted for more variance in their learning achievement than school resources such as student–teacher ratio, per pupil expenditure and teacher characteristics.

Subsequent studies in both developed and developing countries, however, confirmed the above findings regarding strong and persistent influence of family background on educational attainment (Jencks, 1972; Miller, 1995). Studies have also established relationship between learning achievement of the students and school resources such as reduction of class size, cost of education and quality of teachers
(Hanushek, 1996; Hedges and Greenwald, 1996; Wenglinsky, 1998; Betts et al., 2000). Strong positive effects of socio-economic background of learners and some school-related factors on learning achievement of students were found in some recent studies (Powers, 2003; Dincer and Uysal, 2010).

Adeyemo (2001) opined that the main aim of the school is to work towards attaining of academic excellence by students. According to him, the school may have other ancillary objectives but thrust is always placed on the achievement of sound scholarship. All concerned with education give increased importance to academic achievement, parents also expect their wards to show excellent results in academic achievement (Osiki, 2001). Academic achievement of the pupils is influenced by a number of details like age, grade, capacity, motivation, aims, problem solving abilities and geographical conditions of the area etc. (Ballatine, 1993)

Using Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) data, a Ugandan study observed that provision of school lunch, education of head of the school, length of service and facilities in school were the significant school related factors predicting learning achievement of the students (Byamugisha, 2010). However, additional educational inputs such as receipt of help at home, provision of paid private tuition and frequent meeting of parents with teachers also significantly predicted learning achievement.

The study conducted by Kumar, 1998; Aggarwal, 2000; National Council for Educational Research and Training, 2000; Babu, 2013; National Achievement Survey, 2015 indicate low level of learning achievement. Examining the determinants of learning achievement can perhaps help locate reasons for low learning achievement and reasons for general failure of government policies in providing quality primary education.

Smerden and Means (2006) have identified the characteristics of high achieving schools. These include:

1. **Common focus:** The staff and students of high achieving schools pay attention to significant goals. The instructional approach of the school is persistent and research-based with common beliefs about teaching and learning. The use of time, tools, materials, and activities for professional development are in consonance with instruction.
2. *High expectations:* All staff members of high achieving schools, are dedicated to help all the learners achieve the set standards, all students work hard and conscientiously. Students are well prepared for the world of work when they pass out from school.

3. *Personalized:* In schools with high achievement, the school is designed to promote strong, sustained student relationships with adults and every student is assigned an adult advocate and a personal plan for progress.

4. *Respect and responsibility:* The environment of such schools is authoritative, secure, value-oriented, and study oriented. The staff acts as a role model and expects students to behave well, maintaining the decorum of the school.

5. *Time to collaborate:* These schools afford time to collaborate with parents and with other educational institutions to improve teacher training and induction.

6. *Performance based:* Such schools promote students to next grade only after they have achieved the required competency and skills. Deficiencies in performance are identified and remedied.

7. *Technology as a tool:* The teachers of such schools design creative and engaging curriculum linked to learning goals, analyse the curriculum transactional processes for results and provide best learning opportunities. The results of teaching learning process are conveyed to the stake holders.

As it is necessary to recognize the attributes of high achieving school environment, so it is also necessary to identify the potential barriers in creating good learning environment and enhancing learning achievement of students. The purpose of identifying these barriers is to inform changes that can be made to the school environment so that students can ideally gain the education necessary to become a productive member of society. School environment factors that could be potential barriers include non-availability of teaching learning material, lack of playground and sports activities, lack of sanitation and cleanliness, substandard building facilities, lack of school bonding, and a sense of being unsafe. School environment has the potential to either enhance or hinder student learning achievement as well as effect the perception of the school as having a welcoming learning environment or not.
Reddy (2004) brought into focus school characteristics, pupil characteristics and home background influences as an array of factors which have impact on learning levels of children in India.

Goyal (2007) in world bank funded research project examined the determinants of learning achievement and reported school type, gender and social group differences as the major factors affecting learning achievement of students.

Buch and Buch (1983) synthesized more than 200 studies focusing on the determinants of learning outcomes at the level of primary education. The correlates of pupils performance were categorized into three groups as (a) family characteristics (b) school characteristics and (c) individual characteristics.

Thus apart from the individual who is at the centre of teaching learning process, the two main factors which have been found to effect learning achievement are school characteristics and the home related factors.

1.3 School characteristics

School life has a perennial impact on the child. Though this is an often repeated axiom, its significance is neither recognized adequately nor translated into concrete action. Those who make decisions in relation to education are often concerned only with the form of education, not its substance. Not enough efforts and thought has been concerted upon understanding the need to create the appropriate positive climate in schools. It must be known for a fact that learning and behaviour of a child depend largely on the kind of school climate he/she lives in.

Many research studies have concluded that the achievement of students in good school climate and those with a poor school climate differ significantly (Bulach et al., 1995).

Therefore, there is a need to identify the factors that enable a healthy school climate, and create it in every school, because that is the very quintessence of a good school.

Every school has a character and a distinct identity of its own. This is the sum total of all the values and norms and the adherence to it, which have been internalized by all or most of the people associated with a school and which form a part of their psyche. When people refer to the traditions of a school, they are actually speaking
about these deeply embedded characteristics of the school. These characteristics become the school environment which describes the quality of life in the school and which is also experienced and lived by all the participants in the school. This in turn is recognized by the parents and the community that surround the school. There are obviously various components which ultimately shape the environment or ethos of a school. But all those individual factors by themselves are not as powerful as the combined effect of all the factors call as the school environment. It is, therefore, the cumulative effect that decides the environment of the school. Pupils are all markedly influenced by the school environment, in other words, it has a positive, deep and pronounced impact on the way pupils are going to spend their future lives (Gupta and Goel, 2014).

Extensive research is being conducted on school level characteristics so as to discover novel methods for developing enabling environment to improve achievement for all students. Enough research has been conducted on teaching skills, climate, socio-economic conditions, and student achievement (Rafferty, 2003).

Crosnoe et al. (2004) inferred that school sector (public or private) and class size are two main structural components of the school. Private schools are better than public schools, especially due to better funding and smaller size as compared to public schools.

The surplus funding for private schools leads to a higher academic attainment and more availability of resources such as computers, which have been shown to increase academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). Experience of teachers is another marker of academic performance of students. Learners who go to schools with a better pupil-teacher ratio tend to perform better and vice versa (Bali and Alverez, 2003).

School climate is intimately linked to the interpersonal relations between pupils and teachers. Schools play a significant role in encouraging youth development and learning essential skills for a productive, contributing, and satisfying life in a democratic society. Researches show that school attributes may affect many areas and people within schools. Consequently, research suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities in all demographic environments can increase quality of school achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behaviours (Eric et al., 2008).
Interpersonal relationship and provision of learning opportunities are two important constituting factors of school climate. Academic performance has been linked directly with school-level variables like the building and physical environment, and the sociological and psychological environment of the school (Crosnoe et al., 2004). Leadership style of the head teacher also creates varied kinds of learning environments. An affable relationship between the head teacher and learners induces an environment conducive to learning as discussions are triggered and learners are given an opportunity to express themselves. The head teacher and students work together and thus students gain useful life skills which help them to attain success in not only academics but also prepares them for a successful life in the future. In such a school atmosphere every member has a say in decision making process and students are usually disciplined and have positive academic attitudes (Kombo, 2005).

Facilities and equipments in the school, institutional climate, leadership behaviour of the principal, qualification of teachers, pupil teacher ratio, salary of teachers, quality of teacher student interactions and provision of midday meals constitute a powerful set of factors determining the learning levels of children (Reddy, 2004).

Education/qualification of teacher was reported as the most important determinant of achievement of students in academics (Govinda and Varghese 1993, Kingdon, 1998). A negative correlation was found between multigrade teaching and learning outcomes (Bashir 1994; Govinda and Varghese 1993). While Govinda and Varghese (1993) found increased pupil teacher ratio going against the interest of learners especially in backward areas, Bashir (1994) found for the state of Tamil Nadu that the pupil teacher ratio had a positive effect on maths achievement since maths could be taught with peer group teaching.

Govinda and Varghese (1993) found students in fully private aided and unaided schools in Madhya Pradesh had higher achievement levels than in government schools.

It helps to conclude that the out of the school related factors, its working environment has a significant impact on the learning achievement of the students. So studying the school environment may help to locate the reasons for poor achievement and measures to be undertaken to improve it. In the light of the above discussion it
becomes pertinent to explore this crucial variable and see how it operates to effect learning achievement.

1.3.1 School environment

School is a place where students get together, share instructions and a social infrastructure, which is fundamental to shaping their interest, aptitude and habits. Many activities in the school have an influence on the pupils. These are instrumental for personality development. The child develops cognitive competencies and acquires the knowledge and the problem-solving skills essential for participating effectively in the society (Bandura, 1997).

Environment of the school plays a vital role in the development of the personality of the students. As a student spends major part of his life at school, the school environment is greatly responsible for inculcating essential values in him and in determining his success in life. School is generally regarded as a society in its miniature form. Some believe that it is a place of learning. School is to be the reflection of the larger society outside its walls in which life can be learnt by living (Dewey, 1907).

Some others are of the view, that it is a temple where students sit together under the same roof, on the same floor or carpet or desks and learn from the same teacher irrespective of caste, colour and creed. The school should be looked at not as a place where traditional knowledge is imparted but as a place where experiments in life are carried on and where other experiments in life will be read about and told about. It is a place where the minds of the future citizens are moulded, where the habits, attitude and outlook of those who are to shape and preside over the destinies of the nation are formed (Mishra, 2009).

It is said to be the epitome of the outside. Its function is to simplify, purify and balance the activities of the society. The quality of the school is determined by the scholastic/learning achievement of the students which can only be enhanced if the school environment is congenial and productive (Singh et al., 2008).

The school environment offers an important input into the building up of an effective learning environment (EFA, Global Monitoring Report, 2005).
The physical and human resources and other quantitative and qualitative variables operating in the school together constitute to generate the socio psychological environment of the school. The psycho-social environment encompasses safety, positive interpersonal relations, recognition of needs and success of the individual and support for learning. Other factors that can affect a school environment include the economy, social, cultural and religious influences (Falconer, 2007).

School environment is a very important school resource input. The school environment, which includes the classroom, libraries, technical workshop, laboratories, quality of teachers, school management, teaching methods, peer interaction etc. are variables that effect academic achievement of students (Ajayi, 2011 and Oluchukwu, 2000).

Mgbodile (2004) has pointed out that for effective teaching and learning situation, school building and educational goals, should be viewed as being interwoven. Apart from protecting the pupils from the sun, rain, heat and cold, school building represents learning environment which has great impact on the comfort, safety and performance of the children. The physical appearance and general condition of school physical facilities are the striking basis upon which parents make initial judgment about the quality of what goes on in the school. They are often turned off by dilapidated school blocks with sinking roofs and broken walls, bushy lawns, over grown hedges, profane writings on walls, littered lawns and path ways. Finally, the school physical environment is like a mirror reflecting the image of a school and through it the public decides whether or not to associate with a particular school. It reflects how important is the role of physical infrastructure of school in making school a catchy proposition to stay in.

Oluchukwu (2000) explained that school environment is an important aspect of educational planning, he further explained that unless schools are aptly suited, buildings adequately constructed and equipment properly utilized and maintained, effective teaching and learning may not take place.

Mick (2011) opines that school environment means the extent to which school ensures students safety and student health, which may include components such as the physical plant, the intellectual environment, available physical and
mental health supports and services and the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures.

Nwangwu (1990) gave the characteristics of school environment to include school buildings, classrooms, furniture, playgrounds, sporting facilities, laboratories, libraries and equipment which aid the teachers in effective delivery of lesson.

Kanvas (2007) defines school environment as those school level variables that relate directly to the school environment, teachers, curriculum coordinators, or principals and also reflect politics created at the school, district, or community level that impact the entire school faculty, parents and students.

Carolyn (1982) describes school environment as the total environmental quality within a given school building.

Freiberg (1999) explains school environment as the quality of school that helps each individual feel personal worth, dignity and importance, while simultaneously helping create a sense of belongingness to something beyond ourselves.

Dorsey (2000) expounds school environment as involving for key relationships: the relationship of a student to him or herself; a student to his or her peers; a student to his or her parents and community; and a student to his or her school workers including teacher, administrator, and all staff.

Welsh (2000) states, that school environment is the unwritten beliefs, values and attitudes that become the style of interaction between students, teachers, and administrators. School environment sets the criterion of acceptable behaviour among all school participants and it allocates individual and institutional responsibility for school safety.

Homana et al. (2005) defines school environment as the impacts, beliefs and expectations held by members of the school group about their school as a learning environment, their associated behaviour, and symbols and institution that represent the patterned expressions of behaviour.

Dave (1965) defined school environment as the conditions, processes and psychological stimuli which affect the educational achievement of the child.
Jindal (1984) described school environment or climate may be said to comprise of all the physical, academic, social and emotional conditions prevailing in the school. It has been variously called as school climate, school atmosphere, the tone of the school, the personality of the school or the individuality of the school.

Rutter et al. (1979) observed that school environment which includes good working conditions, sensitivity to pupil needs and a good care and upkeep of buildings is associated with better attainment for student.

Tableman (2004) stated the following aspects of school environment:

- A physical environment that is welcoming and conducive to learning.
- A social environment that promotes communication and interaction.
- An affective environment that promotes a sense of belongingness and self-esteem.
- An academic achievement that promotes learning and self-fulfillment.

Thus, it can be interpreted that a school environment is the thread that connects the multitude of activities on a campus. In many respects this thread is almost invisible, yet everyone experiences its influence.

The term school environment describes the environment that affects the behaviour of teachers and students. School environment characterizes the organization of the school building and classroom level. It refers to the feel of the school and can vary from school to school within the same district. It mirrors the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more liable to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. In this role, school can help to foster the knowledge; skills and disposition that young people need to develop into politically aware and socially responsible individuals. School environment is the sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, interactions, attitudes, expectations, atmosphere, motivation and organizational structure within a school building that cause it to function and react in a particular way.

School environment encompasses the physical attributes of a school as well as level of order, satisfaction and productivity. It is the result of the dynamic interaction of staff and students as well as the input of parents and community into a tangible spirit within school building. It includes all those school level variables that relate
directly to the school environment, teachers, curriculum, and principals. And also reflect policies created at the school, districts or community level that impact the entire school faculty, parents and students. It is the sum total of all the outside forces and conditions which influence the life, nature, behaviour, maturation, growth and development of the students. Obviously, a favorable environment adds to the development of native abilities of a child. The personality of a child depends on environment.

School environment emerges as one of the most important factors for an effective school and academic success of students.

Thus the total school environment has a significant impact on the development of the child. The various aspects of school environment together interact to generate an overall good or bad environment and hence effect the performance i.e. achievement of the students. Many research tools have been developed to investigate the various dimensions which operate and cumulate to generate school environment in its different facets.

- School Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (SOCDQ) developed by Sharma (1978) is a tool which can be used for diagnosing the school climate and with little modifications it can also help in studying environment of other organizations like industry, hospitals and military organizations etc. This tool is an Indian adaptation of organizational climate description questionnaire (Halpin and Crofts 1963). There are eight dimensions in this tool like disengagement, alienation, esprit, intimacy, psycho-physical hindrance, controls, production, humanized thrust and the tool generates six types of climates like open climate, autonomous climate, familiar, controlled climate, paternal climate and closed climate. There are 64 Likert type items distributed over eight dimensions. The respondents have to indicate one out of four given options (i) rarely occurs (ii) sometimes occurs (iii) often occurs (iv) very frequently occurs. For scoring, these four categories of responses are assigned for successive integers, with 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Then the scores on these eight dimensions are calculated and school organizational climate is generated.
Sharma Adolescents’ School Satisfaction Inventory (SASSI) by Sharma (1991) measures school satisfaction of adolescents and describes it as a condition arising out of analysis of actions, deeds and judgments of teachers and administration. Whenever adolescents find some partiality or injustice, they raise their voice; they are liable to become aggressive or hostile if they doubt the fairness of the administrator. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction of adolescents stems from the following sources or the conditions surrounding these areas: (a) Students themselves (b) Teachers and teaching (c) Curriculum and text-books (d) School plant organization and administration etc. The tool consists of only 60 statements, 15 for each of the four areas enlisted above. Each item is to be responded on a three point scale. A weighted score of 3, 1 and 0 is given to Yes, No and ‘?’ respectively. Each form yields an individual score on satisfaction in each aspect of the school. These scores can be added-up to find the total satisfaction of an individual with the school.

Comprehensive School Climate Inventory by national school climate center (2002) measures the school climate for students and teachers according to five dimensions of school climate. (a) safety (b) relationships (c) teaching and learning (d) institutional environment (e) the school improvement process. The responses given by the students are then classified separately for each statement. There are 16 statements in this tool. These five dimensions are quantified by giving a score ranging for strongly disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree for 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively.

An in depth analysis of the factors influencing school environment and the seeing to the requirement of the present investigation, the school environment inventory by Misra (2012) has been used. The six major dimensions of the school environment according to this inventory are as follows:

- **Creative stimulation**
  It refers to activities of the teacher to provide condition and opportunities to stimulate creative thinking.

- **Cognitive encouragement**
  It implies behaviour of the teacher to stimulate cognitive development of students by encouragement of actions or behaviour of the students.
• **Permissiveness**

It indicates a school climate in which students are provided opportunities to express their views freely and act according to their desires with no interruption from teachers.

• **Acceptance**

It implies a count of unconditional love from the teacher, wherein the teachers understand that students have the right to express what they feel, hold unique opinions and be independent individuals. The feelings of students are accepted by the teachers in a non-threatening manner.

• **Rejection**

It refers to a school environment in which teachers do not give recognition to right of students to hold varied opinions and viewpoints, act freely and be autonomous persons.

• **Control**

It implies that the school has an autocratic atmosphere in which many regulations are imposed on students to discipline them.

Thus, the school environment consists of some essential elements like teachers, teaching learning process, opportunities for self-expression and creative thinking. It also includes the behaviour of teacher in providing opportunities for cognitive development, autonomy to students to act according to their desires with unconditional love and respect, recognition for the right to hold varied opinions and viewpoints and overall discipline in the school. Thus the environment of the school is one of the two important variables which contributes towards the success in academic and other fields, home background factors constitute the second most important variable affecting the learning achievement of the students.

### 1.4 Home background factors

Home is the first informal agency of education where the learning begins. The impact of home environment is significant on the development of the child and his future prospects. Several studies on home background have revealed its positive impact on students learning (Jagannadhan, 1985 and Shukla et al., 1994).
Mohite (1990) conceptualized home environment as a quality of human interactions from the point of view of a child. It includes those assets which foster growth and development, such as family, trust and confidence, sharing of ideas, making discussion, parental approval, parental encouragement, parental support, guidance, affections and appraisal of peer activities. It includes language stimulation, physical environment, encouragement of social maturity, variety of stimulation and disciplinary practices.

Cald (1968) enumerated six characteristics of stimulated homes namely, emotional and verbal responsibility of the mother, avoidance of restriction and punishment, organization of physical and temporal environment, maternal involvement with the child and opportunities for variety in daily stimulation.

Misra (1989) has described ten dimensions of home environment in the home environment inventory:

i. **Control:** Autocratic atmosphere in which many restrictions are imposed on children by the parents in order to discipline them.

ii. **Protectiveness:** Prevention of independent behaviour and prolongation of infantile care.

iii. **Punishment:** Physical as well as affective punishment to avoid occurrence of undesirable behaviour.

iv. **Conformity:** Direction, commands and orders of parents, which the child is expected to comply by action. It demands to work according to desire and expectations of parents.

v. **Social isolation:** Use of isolation from beloved persons except family members for negative sanctions.

vi. **Reward:** Material as well as symbolic rewards to strengthen or increase the probability of desired behaviour.

vii. **Deprivation of privileges:** Controlling behaviour of children by depriving them of their rights to seek love, respect and child care from parents.

viii. **Nurturance:** Existence of excessive unconditional physical and emotional attachment of parents with the child. Parents have a keen interest in and love for child.
ix. **Rejection:** It implies conditional love recognizing that the child has no rights as a person, no right to express his feelings, no right to uniqueness and no right to become an autonomous individual.

x. **Permissiveness:** Provision of opportunities to the child to express his views freely and act according to his desires with no interference from parents.

These dimensions clearly indicate towards the care, attitude, guidance and support perceived by the child in his home environment.

The impact of home has been studied in the form of many different yet conceptually similar variables home environments, familial support, home life, family life, family stability, family living, atmosphere of family, home condition, family environment, living space, personal space, home setting, living conditions, family atmosphere, home atmosphere, family characteristics and family culture (Knapp, 1993).

Thus researchers have not drawn any difference between home or family related variables. The concept of home and family have evolved on similar lines and numerous attempts have been made to describe the impact of the home or synonymously referred to as family on the upbringing of the child.

Family cohesion is the degree to which family members are separated from or are connected to their family. The emphasis is on togetherness or acting together as a unit. Thus family cohesion is the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another and is manifested through feelings family members have towards one another. It has been observed as being very important in developmental process of the child (Oslon et al., 1985)

Cole and Hall (1970) describe four dimensions for family climate namely family atmosphere, parental attitude, home discipline and protectiveness.

Family climate usually refers to the environment, both physical and emotional, and the state of the family whether it is good, bad, dysfunctional etc. (Knapp, 1993).

Parental attitude comprises parental communication with early adolescents with kindness and respect, spending time with them by showing their genuine interest, understanding their potential and interests, listening to the needs of adolescents, praising and encouraging their accomplishments are the important influences on the lives of early adolescents (Kumar, 2010).
Rollins and Thomas (1979) defined parental support as behaviour shown by parents towards a child which makes him feel comfortable in their presence and assures in the mind of the child that he is truly accepted and approved as a person by the parent.

The family environment is the prime most agent of socialization of the child as the life of the child is initially centered within his family. The family environment includes the situations and socio climatic conditions within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in a different setting, each family environment is unique. The environments can differ in many ways. For example, one obvious difference lies in the socio-economic level (Zastrow and Ashman, 2013).

Among the family characteristics that are relevant to the study of psychological dimensions, those related to the family environment or climate are highlighted, that is, the perception of the individual quality of relationships within the family (Teodoro et al., 2009).

Assessment of family environment is usually performed based on dimensions such as cohesion, hierarchy, support, and conflict. Cohesion is the emotional bond that connects family members, meaning the levels of affection, friendship, and intimacy shared. Hierarchy refers to the structure of power and control between individuals, which mainly reflects the greater influence of older people on family decisions. Support is the perception of the material and emotional support received from the family in face of challenges and problems (Bjornberg and Nicholson, 2007; Teodoro et al., 2009).

In totality, it can be said that children completely depend on their families especially parents for basic physical, emotional and social needs. In the process of growth and development the child picks up myriad influences from the families. The conceptual framework given above explains the role of family in its different facets.

In the present study the investigator has kept the concept and structure of the family as broad and has not particularly focused on joint or nuclear or single parent or extended families. The family will be taken as it exists for any student taken in the sample.
1.4.1 Family support

The family is the oldest, most pervasive and most powerful factor in the development of human personality-for learning how to be human rather than being an animal. In general system, the family can be perceived as a dynamic system consisting of a complex elements or components (family members) directly or indirectly related in a network, in such a way that each component (family member) is related to some other in a more or less stable way within any particular period of time. The interrelationships of the family members create a whole family that is greater than the sum of its parts (Compton and Galaway, 1979).

Turnbull and Turnbull (1997) opined that a family consists of two or more people who regard themselves as a family and who perform some functions which family typically performs. These people may or may not be related by blood or marriage and may not usually live together. In the same vein, Christenson and Sheridan (2001), described family as a network of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and a host of others who are part of close-link family relationship.

According to Azuka (2009), a family is a group consisting of parents (one or two) and their children.

Awenegheimhen (2010) sees the family as a nucleus having father, mother, and children which forms a conjugal community, established upon the covenant of the spouses. It was further that, it is the original call of social life and that it is a natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and the gift of life. Thus authority, stability and a life of relationship within the family form the foundation for freedom, security and fraternity within the society.

On their part, Bamisaye (1998) and Igbo (2003) see the family as a group consisting of biological origin of individual. It is from the family that the person gets introduced into the world (Onoguere and Osa-Edo, 2008).

Family as a group of people linked by blood or marriage, cooperating economically and sharing the responsibility of the upbringing of their offspring. Part of the functions of the family in the society is the transmission of the norms, values, and the culture of the society to the young, thereby ensuring the future of the society (Kanu, 2006).
Hanson and Lynch (1992) define family as any unit including individuals who are related by blood or marriage as well as those who have made a commitment to share their lives.

Census Bureau (2000) explains a family as it includes a homeowner and one or more individuals living in the same home who are related to the homeowner by birth, marriage or adoption. All people in a home who are related to the homeowner are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain individuals not related to the homeowner, but those individuals are not considered as part of the family of the homeowner in census tabulations. For the purpose of tabulations during census, a household can contain only one family.

Weigel (2008) defines the concept of family as one with which almost every individual can identify. It has different interpretations from different people, for some, it means their family of origin, a clan, a blood relative; the family that someone has biologically created; and for others, it means the individuals with which someone has developed lasting bonds of intimacy through adoption, foster care, or other relationships. The family is a basic social unit of all cultures. It has represented the most significant institution for nurturing, caring and socializing children. While some people still cling to the traditional definition of a family meaning two or more persons living together related by blood, marriage, or adoption other people in different societies recognize that a sizable number of families do not fit this definition.

In other words family is a basic unit of society. Family maintains the continuity of society by providing new individuals in each generation by passing new members not only their physical life but also the knowledge, customs, traditions, intellectual, emotional and spiritual endowments. A family can be existent for a sometime, like just a few weeks, referred to as a temporary family, or it can be forever that is, a permanent family. One becomes a part of a family by birth, adoption, marriage, or from a need for mutual support. Family members, nurture, protect, and influence each other. Families are cultures themselves, have different values and ways of realizing dreams and are dynamic. Every family has some values and strengths that come from individual members and from the whole family as a unit. Our families create neighborhoods, communities, states and nations. The family is the basic institution through which the children learn who they are and where they fit into the society. It is from the base of the family that children explore and envision the
possibilities for their future life patterns. Family is the oldest and the most important informal active agency of education. It is the foundation of all social organizations. Family is the original social institution from which all other institutions have developed. Family is a group of interacting personalities, each of which has a definite role and status. The group is well knit together and has a personality of their own. Love, cooperation, sympathy and friendship are basis of family. Family provides training, nurturing and care for young children.

Families are big, small, extended, nuclear, multi-generational, with one parent, two parents, and grandparents. When parents and the families of their children stay under one roof it is called an extended family. This type of joint family generally includes many generations in the family. It is a general observation that extended family groups sharing a single household enjoy certain benefits, such as more sense of security and belongingness due to sharing of resources from a wider pool of members during a crisis, and more role models to help inculcate desired behaviour and cultural values. Specifically, in working-class communities, older children tend to set up their own households in the vicinity of their parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. These extended family members get together in times of joys and sorrows and offer emotional and financial support to each other (Browne, 2011).

In the light of the aforesaid discussion, a comprehensive variable which represents the support extended to the child from home emerges out, that is family support. Family support is the support extended by parents, siblings, grandparents, maternal and paternal uncle and aunts and other significant members of the family. It is thus a broader term as compared to support extended by parents alone. Education becomes a shared venture, characterized by mutual respect and trust in which the importance and influence of each member of the family is recognized. Although children and each family member benefit individually, their partnership enhances the entire system of achievement of children.

Thus, family support is a comprehensive term and it significantly affects the upbringing of child, his education and achievement. The type of school (public, private or government) in which the child will study is selected by his family, the economic status of the family largely determines the quality of school he will be sent to. Assistance from the family in completing class assignments, homework,
punctuality, participation in co-curricular activities etc. is a deciding factor of the levels of performance shown by the child in the school. Family support can be separated into components such as economic, human and social support. Economic support refers to the financial and infrastructural support given by families. Human support refers to creating necessary supportive learning environment by providing one to one assistance and emotional strength for their children and social support.

Thus family support is influenced by many factors discussed above. Support provided by family effects various aspects of the life of the student. For promoting a comprehensive and continual approach to family involvement, it is necessary to understand how the factors interact and work together. It is not sufficient to focus support efforts on one of the components and neglect the others. Historically various attempts have been made to measure the quantum of support extended by the family:

- The Parental Encouragement Scale (PES) by Sharma (1988) has been constructed to measure the extent of encouragement which a child receives from his parents. It also aims to categorize the students according to the extent of parental encouragement being received. It has been designed for the student population at a higher secondary stage. The final form of the Parental Encouragement Scale (PES) contains 40 items with three response alternatives. Higher scores indicate higher parental encouragement and lower scores describe low parental encouragement.

- Home Environment Inventory developed and validated by Misra (1989) is an instrument designed to measure the psychosocial climate of home as perceived by children. It provides a measure of the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home. Home environment inventory has 100 items distributed into ten dimensions of home environment. The ten dimensions of home environment inventory include control, protective punishment, conformity, social isolation, reward, deprivation of privileges, nurturance, rejection and permissiveness. Each dimension has ten items belonging to it. The instruments requires pupils to tell the frequency with which a particular parent–child interaction behaviour has been observed by them in their homes i.e. he/she is requested to rate parental behaviour on five point scale.
• Family Climate Scale by Shah (1990) measures interpersonal relationship between the parents and the child. It includes parent's attitude towards the child as perceived by him in the 10 dimensions of family climate scale (FCS). The test includes 90 items related to 10 dimensions of family climate scale. The dimensions are restrictiveness vs. freedom, indulgence vs. avoidance, partiality vs. fairness, attention vs. negligence, acceptance vs. rejection, warmth vs. cold relations, trust vs. distrust, dominance vs. submissiveness, expectation vs. hopelessness and open communication vs. controlled communication. There are 3 response alternatives always, sometimes and never. The positive total scores speak of the ‘Favourable Family Climate’ whereas negative total scores indicate ‘Unfavourable Family Climate’ of the child.

• Children’s Perception of Parenting Scale by Pyari and Kalra (2005) measures perception of children about the parenting styles and patterns of their parents in their own way. The test contains 44 items spread across 6 dimensions namely, democratic, autocratic, accepting, rejecting, over protecting and over demanding. Responses are taken on five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The test generates dimension wise results which are interpreted as children’s perception of six parenting styles.

• Parental Support Scale (PSS) by Nandwana and Asawa (2006). Parental Support Scale measures parents support rendered towards their adolescent child, prepared on Likert Technique. It is a scale with three dimensions i.e. parental interest, parental behaviour and resource provisions. It has 37 statements, out of these 37 statements 28 are favourably worded and 9 are non-favourably worded. Each statements is set against a 3 point scale of ‘always’, ‘sometimes’ and ‘never’, weighted score ‘3’, ‘2’ and ‘1’ are given for the favourably worded items and scoring is reversed for the non-favourably worded items.

• Family Environment Scale by Bhatia and Chadha (2012) is based on the Family Environment scale by Moos (1974). This scale consists of three main dimensions, namely, relationship dimensions, personal growth dimensions and system maintenance dimensions. Each dimension is further divided into subscales spread across 69 items. The response is on five point ranging from
A deeper probe into the conceptual framework of the related variables brings out some broader dimensions of help and services rendered by the family; these are guidance, acceptance, rejection, health and physical support, moral and attitudinal support. A tool to measure family support based on these dimensions was developed by the investigator and used for the present research work.

1.4.2 Role of family support in raising learning achievement

There are many ways that family can contribute to support their child’s learning and academic success. The characteristics of support given by family that raise learning achievement are described by (Lee, 1999).

1. Realistic, high parent expectations for school performance of children are associated with positive academic performance

Research shows that: (a) verbal expectations of parents for continued achievement and urging children to work hard in school are related to student achievement (Clark, 1988); (b) expectations of parents from children to read and to learn math, and their expectations for verbal responses from their children are associated with better academic performance (Hess and Halloway, 1984); (c) parental knowledge of current school work of their children and school activities affects ability of parents to set realistic expectations for performance of children (Kellaghan et al., 1993); (d) expectations of parents of youth for post-secondary education are associated positively with academic performance (Clark, 1983); and (e) expectations of parents for deferral of immediate gratification to achieve long range goals are correlated with more successful school outcomes (Walberg, 1984).

2. Children who come from home environments that support learning and provide structure tend to get higher grades and perform better on achievement tests

Parents encourage academic and intellectual pursuits by structuring time for homework completion of children, encouraging verbal conversations, modeling reading and learning, encouraging children to read at home, and limiting television viewing so the child can participate in other educational-related activities.
(Christenson et al., 1982). Barton and Coley (1992) reported that student absenteeism, variety of reading materials at home, and amount of television watching – factors over which parents have some control – explain nearly 90% of the difference in performance between high- and low-achievers. Also, Clark (1990) found that high-achieving students in grades K-12 in an urban setting spent approximately 20 hours a week engaged in constructive learning activities outside of school.

3. **A positive parent-child relationship is related to academic success.**

The likelihood that the child will initiate and persist in challenging intellectual tasks is increased by positive affective relationship between parents and children (Estrada et al., 1987) and be socially competent (Bretherton, 1985). Clark (1983) conducted an intensive study of ten African-American students from poor homes, half of whom were successful academically and half of whom were not. The researchers discovered that parents of high-achieving students had distinct styles of interacting with their children. They created emotionally supportive home environments and provide reassurance when the youngsters encountered failure.

4. **Authoritative parenting is positively associated with student achievement.**

Parents who set clear standards, enforcing rules, encouraging discussion, negotiation and independence (authoritative parenting) are more likely to have children with positive academic outcomes (Baumrind, 1966; Patterson et al., 1992). In addition, children who described their parents as warm, democratic and firm are more likely to develop positive attitudes and beliefs about achievements, and therefore, are more likely to perform better in school than their peers (Steinberg et al., 1989).

5. **Academic gains are the greatest when there is consistency between home and school**

Parent involvement in home learning activities that support school instruction (like reading, encouraging reading, setting aside time and a place for homework) is significantly correlated with academic outcomes for students (Thorkildsen and Stein, 1998). Title I students whose parents regularly attended school-based parent training and information workshops made significantly greater achievement gains in reading and math than children of non-involved parents (Shaverand and Walls, 1998). Research also indicates that parents who are involved in home learning activities have positive communication with school and have a positive attitude towards school
enhance academic achievement of their children (Hannon, 1987). The consensus or continuity between home and school about the goal of education is a critical factor for academic success of children (Hess and Halloway, 1984). Hansen (1986) found that continuity in rules, expectations, and interaction styles resulted in academic achievement gains. Researchers concluded that the relationship between home and school and/or the degree to which students receive a consistent message about their school performance and progress may be the more important target for intervention (Christenson et al., 1982).

6. **Achievement gains are most significant and long-lasting when parent involvement begins at an early age.**

The most efficient time to set a child on a positive path is at young age (Finn, 1998). In addition, the opportunity for parents to stay intensively involved in school diminishes as students become increasingly independent and as peers come to have greater influence (Epstein, 1984).

Families which are characterized with a high number of children and have rowdiness at home do not create convenience for learning. They also create in the upbringing of children some identified problems such as feeding, poor clothing, insufficient funds, and lack of proper attention for children, disciplinary problems and malnutrition which impact negatively on academic performance of children (Ella et al., 2015).

1.5 **School and Family Coordination**

The society is plagued by a lot of social vices that have found their ways into the school system. These vices which have manifested into different disciplinary problems in schools, range from truancy, examination malpractice, cultism, moral decadence, armed robbery, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and so on. These problems have become so alarming that, school authorities alone can no longer tackle them. It has therefore become paramount to involve all the stakeholders in the education system (Ojiemhenkele and Iwuagwu, 2014).

The old and aged long statement of fact, ‘charity begins at home’ is true as one reflects on the opinion of Moore (1996), which posited that a young child, given reasonable freedom and guidance, develops better outside the classroom than within. However, this is particularly true of the first eight years or so of such a child. A closer
look at the moral, spiritual, and academic decadence in our society today is a result of the negligence of parental responsibilities and duties at home for their children. Some parents prefer to shift the duty of raising their children to classroom teachers. Thus, no matter how expensive the school may be, either in structure and operational modes, there is no better person to train your child like you (Izibili, 2010).

Dodd and Konzal (2003) opined that often times, schools seem to be “islands” separated from the families they serve and the society in which their students live. This shouldn’t be so because families, school and society play interconnected roles in the crucial mission of educating children. At all times, they should find ways to work together as educational partners.

Education means much more than providing students with academic knowledge and skills. It includes making the students put into effective use the acquired knowledge and skills in the larger society. So, for students to be effective citizens, both school and family should provide the necessary environment for the successful education of the child. The development of the child intellectually, morally, and socially should not be left purely in the hands of the teachers. The school alone, cannot help children to develop all the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be productive citizens of the society. Therefore, a synergy needs to be created between school and family that will help children succeed in school and their future (Ojiemhenkele and Iwuagwu, 2014).

Another factor emerging out of the family and social life of an individual is the level of socio economic deprivation which is a strong determinant of academic achievement of an individual. Social disadvantage, poverty and social class are responsible for unequal childhood opportunities and low educational achievement (Singh, 1980).

1.6 Socio-economically deprived groups

It’s no secret that the Indian society is highly stratified on the basis of caste hierarchy, religious affiliation, linguistic diversity and regional loyalty. The caste factor has the strongest historical roots. Traditionally, Hindu society is divided into thousands of castes, which reflect socioeconomic, educational and cultural disparities. Caste based social division has recently acquired very strong political dimensions. Three of the major socioeconomic categories are defined by caste combinations:
Forward Castes (FCs), Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST), and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). Though the Indian government has been making continuous efforts since independence to bridge the socioeconomic gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have remained socially, economically and culturally deprived because of their specific occupational and geographical conditions. Education has been recognized as a powerful tool for upward social mobility, which can help to build an inclusive society by reducing socioeconomic disparities. Several attempts have been made to empower weaker sections of the society, including: provision of constitutional safeguards, scholarships and “free-ships” (fees are waived and free books, stationery and midday meals are provided) reservation of seats in government jobs and educational institutions and special coaching classes to prepare students for competitive tests. The sufficiency of the efforts of government in bridging the gap created by the castes, economic background, regional background and school types preferred by the parents for their education of child have been very often taken up by the researchers to study their effects on academic achievement of child. Available data indicate that even after 60 years of affirmative action, participation of the lower castes in higher education still does not match their share in the total population (Yadav and Chahal, 2017).

The scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are the most backward section of Indian society. The main distinguished characteristics of this downtrodden segment of the population are their low literacy and low education achievement, economic backwardness, rural orientation and social retardation (Hanumantha and Grover 1979).

Deshpande (2001) presents some suggestive evidence that scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are on average more deprived than other castes in terms of both human and physical capital outcomes. More rigorous studies, with controls for potential confounding variables, have also confirmed the correlation of caste with lower income, poor health and lower education outcomes (Kijima, 2006).

Verma (1985) reported that mean achievement of the scheduled caste students was lower than that of the other caste. Ojha (1984) found that Hindu and Muslim did not differ significantly on achievement, among Hindu students of forward and backward castes, no significant difference in achievement was found, where as scheduled caste students differed both from forward and backward castes. Caste
rendered significant effect on achievement motivation. Forward and scheduled caste students have higher achievement motivation while other backward and nomadic tribe students had below average achievement motivation. However, impacts of economic background of family are found not to be significant. Further it was also seen that caste, gender and economic background of family does not jointly affect achievement motivation of college students.

Poverty and exploitation, displacement and forced migration in search of livelihood and economic betterment are some of the consequences that arise out of forces of polarised class formation, expansion of informal economy but the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are disproportionately affected by these processes. Socio-cultural practices of exclusion and discrimination continue to define the existence of the poor scheduled castes. Scheduled tribes are increasingly sucked into the swirl of rural and urban inequality and exploitation. Several studies have affirmed that educational inequality (of access and achievement) has multiple bases in the contemporary structures of caste, class, gender and ethnicity evolving in interaction with political economy. They show that caste-class relations and values of cultural oppression are crucial to denial of education. There is a lack of basic material condition including situations of acute poverty. It has been quite emphatically established that a sizeable section of the population is too poor to avail education which is far from free and entails unaffordable costs (Tilak, 1996, 2000).

The phenomenon of labouring children exists and so do situations of hunger, under and malnourishment and ill health among low caste/class and tribes. Dominant cultural capital, knowledge, skills of schools are lacking among the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. Their own cultural capital is deemed valueless. Thus, class along with caste and other forms of minority ethnicity are today a fundamental category of social exclusion. For the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes ethnicity and class are reproduced in a variety of ways in relation to school. Traditional systems have undergone tremendous change and assumed complex forms deriving out of the ascendance of capitalist economies and labour markets and of systems of political patronage which thrive in the name of democracy (NCERT, 2005).

Existing schooling conditions for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe range from non-provision and under provision to the provision of the most inferior facilities, even at the basic primary level. Pre-primary education for them is even more minimal.
The spread of schooling is a politico-economic process and disparities in educational access have been the direct consequence of a massively uneven diffusion of schooling. Moreover, the spread and organisation of the Indian education system clearly reflects the caste-class-tribe-gender stratification of society and its hierarchical ideology. The schooling system is organised in a pyramidal hierarchy in terms of quality and social composition (Velaskar, 1992).

Urban elite schools rank at the top and rural schools especially those located in scheduled caste and scheduled tribe habitations rank at the bottom in terms of quality. Low caste and tribal children are disproportionately located in the worst schools. The effective result has been continued educational deprivation and exclusion (NCERT, 2005).

The scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and minorities and other economically weaker sections are categorised as socially disadvantaged groups when placed on the continuum of socio-economic development. Many research studies have reported that scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students tend to show low performance as compare to other social groups (Shukla et al., 1994). Goyal (2007) has also reported that other backward class and General category children out perform scheduled caste and scheduled tribe children in both grades IV and V.

1.7 Emergence of the problem

Education is a key force behind economic and social success for individuals, employers and nations. Recognising this indisputable and irreplaceable role of education, the governments world over have multiplied their efforts to provide educational opportunities to their citizens. This unprecedented expansion has been witnessed by developing nations like India as well. There has been increasing awareness and range of government interventions in India to improve educational opportunities especially in universalizing elementary education, thus access to elementary education has continued to improve over the recent years.

But India is a country of diversity in caste, creed, religion, cultural belief, language etc. In order to cater to diverse needs of population incessant efforts through constitutional provisions and government policies have been made, still there is a large chunk of people who are socially and economically weak and form the socio-economically deprived group of the society.
Scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and other backward classes as mentioned earlier belong to socio-economically deprived groups. The deprivation is identified through social class position including education, occupation, residence, income and socio economic status. In Indian context uncountable number of people are living in depriving conditions, are poor and underprivileged.

Education has always been a sheet anchor of any programme for the upliftment of these socio economically deprived groups viz scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward class and minorities. Scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class are considered the most disadvantaged among the entire Indian population. As a result of oppression and servitude these classes of people have a background of illiteracy, ignorance and poverty, which is the major reason that children of this section of society do not perform well when it comes to achievement in school education.

The statistics of various research studies (Reddy, 2004; Aggarwal, 2000; Shukla et al., 1994) portray a dismal situation regarding the learning achievement scores of these groups. However causes behind such low achievement have not been identified perhaps because the factors like home, school and pupil characteristics affecting learning achievement have not been investigated precisely for scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class students especially at the elementary stage. These students being the weaker section of the society confront with economic deprivation, lack of enriching and stimulating environment at home which may irreparably limit their learning skills. Further, educational and occupational status of parents of these children may restrict their active initiation to glamorize education as a valued experience. Additionally education deficits that scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class children bring with them to the classroom may be multiplied with various factors operated at school levels.

A number of research studies (Aikara, 1997, Hasan, 1995 and Goyal, 2007) have indicated low levels of achievement of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students as compare to the general category. Socio cultural practices of exclusion and discrimination remain a depressing feature of the educational scenario of these children. Coming from deprived, poor and illiterate families they do not have access
to quality schools and quality teachers. Thus they have been caught in the vicious
circle of continuous educational underdevelopment.

Subsequent attempts by the government have though improved the enrollment
and retention of these groups of students to some extent, but their learning
achievement is an area of serious concern to educationists and policy makers.
Increased use of criterion based tests has shown depressed levels of learning among
these students in many cognitive competencies.

Though the related literature brings to the forefront low levels of learning
achievement of these socio-economically deprived groups but there is dearth of
studies which have specially tried to investigate the major factors affecting learning
achievement viz learner characteristics, home and school characteristics of scheduled
caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class students.

So the present research work was focused on the learning achievement of
economically weak scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class
students at elementary stage as this is perhaps the most crucial stage when the child
acquires the basic learning competencies which decide his success in higher stages of
education and his skillful living in relation to school environment and family support.

Understanding the reasons for low learning achievement can perhaps help to
rectify all or some of the causes and help these students to break the intergenerational
cycle of disadvantage and significantly improve their economic and social situations.

The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that it attempted to focus on the
state of Punjab because Punjab, the land of five rivers, though historically fairs well in
agriculture but not so well when it comes to education. The overall literacy level in
Punjab is approximate 75.84% (Census 2011). The sex ratio is much skewed in
Punjab with 895 females per 1000 males. The literacy levels of females (62.52%) are
also much lower to that of males (80.44%). This variation is visible across the districts
as well, with some districts having high literacy levels while others portray a very
dark reality. Hoshiarpur district tops the chart with 84.59% literacy rate whereas
Mansa district is at the bottom with 61.83% literacy rate.

As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey in 2013, in the
state of Punjab 32.80% of students in standard third could not read a standard one
level text and 32.20% of students in standard fifth could not read standard second level text. The situation worsens if private school students are not included in the data.

The Government of Punjab has made several attempts to increase literacy rates and levels of learning achievement in Punjab. Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, Parhho Punjab Programme (2008-09) are some serious attempts taken in this direction. But the truth remains that despite enrolment ratios have increased in government schools of Punjab still learning achievement of students especially the weaker sections tend to be low.

The nationwide surveys by national council of educational research and training (NCERT) and other such similar projects to study levels of learning achievement for states of India have somehow tended to ignore the state of Punjab. Going through the research work done at individual levels also, one finds a meagre amount of research done on learning achievement at elementary stage for the state of Punjab.

The investigator could locate just two studies by Kaur (2007) and Kaur (2010) carried out on schools of district Barnala and Sangrur respectively. Moreover no study could be located which was specifically done to assess the learning achievement of socio economically deprived group of elementary school students in Punjab. So through the present study the investigator tried to obtain a more representative sample for Punjab by including the three most literate and the three least literate districts of Punjab and tried to present a comprehensive picture of learning achievement levels of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward class of elementary school students in relation to school environment and family support.

1.8 Statement of the problem

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT AS CORRELATES OF LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

1.9 Operational definitions of terms

Learning Achievement: The term Learning Achievement for the present study connotes performance of eighth grade elementary school students on competency based achievement tests in Language, Mathematics and social studies developed by the investigator.
Family support: Family support is the support extended by parents, siblings, grandparents and significant others present in the family. Family support connotes family interest, attitude, engagement and motivation being provided to children in their learning process. It has been measured by tool developed by the investigator.

School Environment: It refers to the psycho-social climate of schools as perceived by the pupils. In the present study it is represented by six dimensions of school environment: creative stimulation, cognitive encouragement, permissiveness, acceptance, rejection and control measured by School Environment Inventory by Misra (2012).

Socio-Economically Deprived Students: Those students who suffer disadvantage stemming from low socio-economic status, relative deprivation, poverty, membership of an ethnic minority, gender, physical disability. In the present research work socio-economically deprived students refer to those students who belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and the annual income of their families is one lakh or less than one lakh.

Elementary School: A school having classes from grade I to VIII is referred to as elementary school according to the prevailing two tier system of education in Punjab.

1.10 Objectives

1. To explore the levels of learning achievement of socio-economically deprived group of elementary school students.

2. To study the relationship between school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

2(a) To study the relationship between creative stimulation dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

2(b) To study the relationship between cognitive encouragement dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school student.

2(c) To study the relationship between permissiveness dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.
2(d) To study the relationship between acceptance dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

2(e) To study the relationship between rejection dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

2(f) To study the relationship between control dimension of school environment and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

3. To study the relationship between family support and learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

4. To study the relationship of learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students across gender.

5. To study the interaction between school environment, family support learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

5(a) To study the interaction between creative stimulation dimension of school environment and family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

5(b) To study the interaction between cognitive encouragement dimension of school environment and family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

5(c) To study the interaction between permissiveness dimension of school environment, family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

5(d) To study the interaction between acceptance dimension of school environment and family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

5(e) To study the interaction between rejection dimension school environment, family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.
To study the interaction between control dimension of school environment, family support on learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

To study the interaction between school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6a. To study the interaction between creative stimulation dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6b. To study the interaction between cognitive encouragement dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6c. To study the interaction between permissiveness dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6d. To study the interaction between acceptance dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6e. To study the interaction between rejection dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

6f To study the interaction between control dimension of school environment and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

7. To study the interaction between family support and gender with respect to learning achievement of socio-economically deprived elementary school students.

1.11 Delimitations

- The study was delimited to only six districts, three from the five most literate districts of Punjab, namely Hoshiarpur, Ajitgarh, Ludhiana and three from the five least literate districts of Punjab, namely, Sangrur, Muktsar and Mansa.
- The sample was drawn from only government schools of these districts.
- Only eighth grade socio-economically deprived elementary school students were selected for the present study.

1.12 Organisation of the chapters of the study

The present study has been planned out and organised into five chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction part of the variables under study, whereby the investigator explains the definitions and characteristics of the variables. The second chapter presents the review of related literature explored, the third chapter presents the method and procedure employed in the present study and the development of the tools required for the study. The fourth chapter deals with analysis, interpretation of the data and sequential presentation of all the results. The fifth chapter summarises the entire study and brings forth the conclusions, implications and suggestions for further research. Bibliography and appendices have been given at the end.