CHAPTER 1
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"The imagination of a boy is health and the mature imagination of a man is healthy, but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick sighted; hence proceeds mawkishness" Keats (1818).

Today, man is living in an achievement oriented world, characterized by the never-ending mad race for achievement. He has conquered the unconquerable and reached levels beyond the wildest dreams of our ancestors. The bottom line of this race is only success. The ever-increasing ambitions, desires, competitions and maddening tensions have increased by leaps and bounds. In such a highly competitive milieu, education is assuming an increasingly important role in society and everybody desires to climb the ladder of successful performance as high as possible. As a result of this, parents have high expectations from their children, who remain under a lot of pressure to strive, aspire and achieve more and more. This is especially affecting the adolescents who are at a major threshold of life. At each and every stage in life, the academic record speaks for the individual. Whether it is for admission to a course, or entrance in a job, or scholarship or for further studies, good academic results remain to be a very important recommendation.

The importance of good results increases manifold for the adolescents who at the +1 stage, start thinking seriously as to how they have to carve out their niche. There are four universal concomitants of changes that occur during this stage. The first is heightened emotionality, the intensity of which depends on the rate at which the physical and psychological changes are taking place. Second, the rapid changes accompanying sexual maturing which makes the young adolescent unsure of himself. Third, changes in his body, his interests and the role the social group now expects him to play, create new problems for him. Fourth, as the adolescent’s interests and behaviour patterns change, so do his values. An adolescent’s mind falls prey to a lot of intriguing issues-academic, personal, psychological and intellectual.
Education in the present times has been merely reduced to storing of information, facts and figures, bits of knowledge and possession of qualifications on paper through passing various examinations. It is a mechanical process leaving very little scope for character development. As a result of this, parents of adolescent children especially remain under acute stress as these adolescents have yet to prove their mettle.

Achievement of knowledge about self and the world, retention of it and retrieval of the same at appropriate time and place, is of primary concern for achieving anything in life. Achievement in various walks of life in general and academic achievement in particular are the corner stones for successful living in today's competitive society. Educational excellence contributes significantly to the academic success and professional placement of an individual. It is an index of scholastic performance and academic brilliance.

Achievement of the child is the main focus of attention of parents, teachers, heads of institutions and society. Right from the first day when the child enters school and throughout his school, college and university life, parents, teachers and others are more concerned about his academic achievement. Need for achievement is very strong in every child. This need can only be satisfied when the scholastic goals set for him are within his reach. In our achievement oriented society, success is highly instrumental in gathering esteem and respect, while failure leads to loss of esteem. Sound development in academic side can well be matched with pillars on which the entire future structure of the person stands. Achievement signifies accomplishment or gain or performance carried out successfully by an individual or group on the completion of a task. According to Hawes and Hawes (1982), achievement means successful accomplishment in particular subject, areas or courses, usually by reasons of skill, hard-work and interest. It denotes the degree of mastery acquired in an activity and refers to all the behavioural changes which take place in the individual as a result of learning experiences of various kinds. Academic achievement is an important factor which affects all-round personality of the adolescents.

Academic achievement is one part of the wider term, educational growth. It includes knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subjects that are usually evaluated by test scores or marks assigned by teachers or both, (Good, 1959). The term
‘academic achievement’ is made of two words- academic and achievement. The word “academic” has been derived from “academy” which means the school where special instructions are imparted. The word “academic” thereby means any activity or action that is scholastic in nature. The word “achievement” means the proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge. Achievement may be the overall change in behaviour or attitude of a person after a long process of learning. Achievement is synonymous with accomplishment or proficiency of individual in a given skill or body of knowledge. It is the status or level of person’s skill, the range and depth of his knowledge or his proficiency in a designated area of learning or behaviour.

Stephens (1958) writes “Academic achievement is the unique responsibility of educational institutions established by the society to promote wholesome scholastic development of the child.”

Trow (1960) defines academic achievement as the attained ability or degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in age or grade units based on norms defined from a wide sampling on pupil’s performance. Ebel (1969) says “Educational investigators have devoted the largest amount of attention, next only to intelligence, to the exploration of academic achievement.”

Academic achievement is a dependent variable resulting from the dynamic interaction of at least three major groups of variables i.e. socio-economic variables, educational variables and pupil variables. Biological and health variables also have strong influence on academic achievement of a child says Ameerjan (1981).

Pandey (1973) refers to academic achievement as the quality and quantity of learning in a subject or a group of subjects assessed by examination marks. According to Wikipedia (2006), academic achievement is something you do or achieve at school, college or university in class, in a laboratory, library, or fieldwork. It does not include sport or music.

Traditionally, we refer to a student as being a high, low or average achiever, on the basis of his performance in the achievement tests or grades that the student receives from his teacher. There are two levels of academic achievement namely high achievement accounting for academic success and low achievement accounting for failure. When the academic performance of the child is above the expected level, it is
called high achievement (an academic success). When the academic performance is below the expected level, it is considered as low achievement (an academic failure). Academic achievement to a great extent helps in predicting the future of the child. It leads him to make better adjustments and success in school subjects because good academic achievement helps in setting higher goals for children. When an individual becomes a high academic achiever, it helps in building up self-confidence, self-respect and self-realization.

One of the most important developmental tasks for adolescent is the quest for “identity” as recognized by Erickson (1968). In this context doing satisfactorily at school becomes very important and there is a strong relation between school achievement and self-image. Though IQ is considered to be the most important predictor of scholastic performance (Satler, 1992), personal variables like habits, curiosity, creativity (Nandita and Tanim, 2004) too have deep effect on academic achievement of adolescents.

Academic achievement plays an important role in learning and development. Achievement encompasses student ability, development and performance, it is multi-dimensional; it is intricately related to human growth and cognitive, emotional, social and physical development; it reflects the whole child; it is not related to single instance, but occurs across time and level, through a student’s life in school and on into post-secondary years and working life (Steinberger, 1993). Thus, Achievement refers to knowledge and skills gained from experience, an achieved level of expertise or performance in a specific domain.

The three main psychological perspectives each of which is applicable to adolescent achievement are Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1979), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) and the Expectancy Value Theory (Wigifield and Eccles, 1992). Attribution theory explains that continued efforts for achievement in an arena depends on the actor’s perception of the causes of success or failure in the previous attempt to achieve in that arena. Self-efficacy theory explains that the arenas which are chosen for achievement, what effort that will be expanded, that willingness to persist toward a goal have all been shown to be influenced by the actor’s beliefs that he or she can effectively do the tasks that lead to desired outcomes. Expectancy theory explains that it is a belief
that different factors, sometimes value related and sometimes expectancy related will be prominent in each domain.

In another perspective, more emphasis is on the role of the social environment in academic achievement (Adler, 1985). This social environment includes family environment and classroom environment of adolescents. The development of the adolescent is affected by environments in which adolescents themselves do not participate (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) as, the parental world of work and parental networks of contacts influence the life of adolescent through differences in household wealth and social capital respectively. Moreover, specific contents shape the behaviour of most participants and create a climate in which various forms of achievement are hindered or encouraged (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The boundary of the school is not fixed at playground fence. What happens at home affects adolescents’ efforts and achievement at school and what happens at school may change the relations between adolescents and parents.

Factors which influence academic achievement can be studied under the following headings:

1. **Individual Factors**
   A. Cognitive Factors – These include intelligence, creativity, problem-solving ability, aptitude and aspiration level.
   B. Non-Cognitive Factors – These include study habits, learning styles and self-concept of the learner.

2. **Environmental Factors**
   The nature of child’s development is greatly influenced by the environmental conditions in which he is brought up. These factors are of two kinds:
   A. Home Environment – This includes socio-economic status of family, family relationship, parental aspirations, social expectations, sibling rivalry, parental encouragement, emotional climate etc.
   B. School Environment – This includes facilities of classroom, library, laboratory, teacher’s personality, methods of teaching, interaction among students, peer group influence etc.
The area of academic achievement has aroused the curiosity of modern educators, psychologists, teachers, parents and many others. The reason for deeper interest in measurement of educational attainment could be due to:

1. The scores obtained from achievement are index of one's mental health ability and these scores form the basis for awards of prizes, degrees, scholarships etc.
2. These scores are utilized by schools, colleges and universities for deciding policies regarding failure and promotion to the next higher class.
3. Such scores are indicative of one's success in the field of science and technology.
4. Scores obtained on such tests are predictive of job selection.

Different studies carried out on academic achievement have used different criteria such as grade point average (GPA), teacher's ratings, standardized achievement test scores and examination marks. Morrow (1970) discourages use of standardized achievement test scores as the measure of observed achievement and instead recommends the use of grade point average. Accordingly, the measure of criterion to be employed in studies of like nature should have a direct and stable bearing on one's personal and vocational bearing.

A complete and clear picture of academic achievement still seems to be eluding the researchers. Attempts have been made over the past years to classify the work done in this field. Due credit goes to Dave (1963) for doing pioneering work in this direction. 17 researches were reviewed in this field which were carried out at M.Ed. and Ph.D. levels. A systematic effort was also made in the area of academic achievement in the different educational research surveys edited by Buch (1974, 1979 and 1986). In the first survey (1974) the trend report in the area of correlates of academic achievement was developed by Dave. This was based on 44 studies, 33 of which were Ph.D students and 11 projects. The trend report in the second survey (1979) was developed by Dave and Anand with an addition of 38 studies, 30 being doctoral studies and 8 research projects. The trend report which was developed by Anand and Padma in the third survey (1986) took into consideration an additional 65 studies out of which 50 were doctoral studies and the rest projects. Padma in the fourth survey (1988) took into
consideration 96 new studies out of which 88 were doctoral studies and the rest projects and the fifth survey (1992) took into consideration more than 50 new doctoral studies.

Thus, academic achievement is the core of educational growth. It makes the student more confident and self-reliant in the field of education. Higher achievement in academics facilitates in forming a higher self-concept.

SELF-CONCEPT

According to Glanz and Walston (1958), what a person does or how he behaves is determined by his self-concept. Self-concept is taken to refer to the store of self attributes of a person. The "self" is one of the oldest phenomena. Baldwin (1889) claims that St. Augustine (354-430) was among the first to investigate the self. The pioneers of theory of "self" are Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934). Cooley (1902) defined self as that which is designated in common speech by pronouns of the first person singular, "I", "me", "mine" and "myself".

The "self" is an abstraction that an individual develops about the attributes, capacities, objects and activities, which he possesses and pursues. This concept is formed in due course of time by the same process of abstraction employed in other areas of experience. This basis for the abstraction is the individual's observation of his behaviour and the way the other individuals respond to his attitudes, appearance and performance. Cohen (1962) describes the self, as the object a person regards himself to be and is thus, selectively weighed according to the individual's abstraction of the common feature of his personal experience. Although the idea of self is open to change and alteration, it appears to be relatively resistant to such changes.

Hawk (1966) and Emmerich (1968) viewed that the center of gravity of personality pattern is the individual's concept of himself as a person as related to the world in which he lives. Epstein (1973) asserts that self is central to understanding individual behaviour.

Self-concept is not hereditary, rather it develops in a person as a result of life-long processes and develops continuously in a social setting. Others do not teach him, but a child acquires it as a by-product of various learning experiences. Gale (1969) states that man creates his world from experiences around him. The development of self
is a social product. According to him, self-awareness does not happen all at once, but it is dynamic and an on-going developmental process that begins during infancy and early childhood and continues until death. Sherif (1968) points out that the earliest manifestation of self hood starts with the bodily states like hunger or sleep, acceptance and punishment by persons etc. which are responsible for formulation of self-system. Building of self-concept is a slow process, which grows out of the reactions of parents and others to the child’s early behaviour. It undergoes changes during the course of his life and is bound to be affected by the success with which he adjusts himself to the problems of adult life.

The concept of self is not restricted to attitudes and adjustment but is equally important in the area of academic learning. Lewis and Adank (1975) found positive inter-relationships among the measures of intelligence, achievement and self-concept.

In Rogers view (1947), the self is the central ingredient in human personality and personal adjustment. Rogers described the self as a social product developing out of interpersonal relationships and striving for consistency. He maintained that there is a basic human need for positive regard both from others and from oneself. He also believed that in every person there is a tendency towards self-actualization and development so long as this is permitted and encouraged by an inviting environment. (Purkey and Schmidt 1987).

Self-concept is the mental and conceptual understanding and persistent regard that human beings hold for their own existence. A person’s self-concept may be viewed as a store of self-perceptions. It consists of answers to such questions as Who am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses? Self-concept refers to the experience of one’s being. It is an organized cognitive structure comprised of a set of attitudes, beliefs and values that cuts across all the facets of experience and action, organizing and tying together the variety of specific habits, abilities, outlooks, ideas and feelings that a persons displays.

This self-concept is thought as one of the most crucial components of personality as it encompasses his own notions of abilities, emotional tendencies, socio-economic status, intelligence and mental health. Self-content is a central theme around which revolves a large number of major aspects of persons’ thoughts and feelings,
strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his views of what he is, what he has been, what he might become and his attitudes pertaining to his worth (Jersild, 1960).

Purkey (1998) says that self-concept is the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learnt beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence.

Self-concept is a value that an individual places on his or her own characteristics, qualities, abilities and actions (Woolfolk, 2001). The term self-concept refers to the ordered set of attitudes and perceptions that an individual holds about him or herself (Wolffe, 2000; Woolfolk, 2001 and Tuttel and Tuttel, 2004).

Hall and Lindzey (1957) point out two different meanings of self-concept. The first denotes the person’s attitudes, feelings, perceptions and evaluations of himself. The second meaning involves a group of psychological processes which govern behaviour and adjustment of the person. An individual’s self-concept includes the following:

1. Perceptual self-concept – the way in which the person sees himself and the idea or impression he makes on others.
2. Conceptual self-concept – a person’s idea of his own distinctive characteristics, abilities and limitations.

**Dimensions of Self-Concept**

The following are the dimensions of self-concept:

1. The Basic Self-Concept – This is the individual’s perception of his abilities and status. This is the individual’s concept of the kind of person he thinks he is. It is influenced by his physical self, personal appearance, dress, grooming, values, beliefs and aspirations.

2. The Transitory Perception of Self – The individual’s self-image may at one time be compulsive, compensatory and unrealistic and at other times insightful and practical. Many individuals do not recognize their transitory nature. They are optimistic or pessimistic, elated or depressed, satisfied or dissatisfied. They are
sometimes able to switch from one extreme to the other. Since there is some tendency of the individual to reflect more on his problems than accomplishments, the transitory perception of self is largely in good light.

3. The Social Self – “To see yourself as others see you” may or may not be valid. When in an optimistic mood, the adolescent perceives that others see him in good light. When depressed, he perceives that others do not like him. More positive views on the part of others may enhance his perception of his social self.

4. The Ideal Self – The concept of the ideal self, the kind of person he hopes to be, involves relating levels of aspiration to levels of ability. It also involves opportunities for self-realization.

According to Hershey and Lugo (1970) by the time of adolescence, the person’s self-concept is almost fully developed. Frequently the ideas that one has about himself are based on what others think he is or should be. From these experiences with others, the person develops what is frequently referred to as an ideal self. It is this ideal self which is challenged during adolescence as the individual tends to become more independent and autonomous at this stage.

Self-concept is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It is the confidence in the efficacy of our mind, in our ability to think, to learn, to make appropriate choices and to respond effectively to change.

The concept of one’s self is moulded by reward and punishment, praise and blame and by the feelings of accomplishment. During pre-adolescence, both parents and peers influence the self-concept. This situation changes gradually until the young person’s self-evaluation is determined more by what his agemates think of him. Later other organizations discover that the self must be determined. Individually, he has to learn the hard way that achieving identity is a long and arduous process. He learns that such identity comes through thinking, feeling and decision-making. It thrives on social interaction and in the end, the question, “Who am I” remains?

Self-concept is learned. No one is born with a self-concept. It gradually emerges in the early months of life and is shaped and reshaped through repeated perceived
experiences. Self-concept is also organized. It has a generally stable quality that is characterized by orderliness and harmony. Self-concept is dynamic too. It’s development is a continuous process. There is constant assimilation of new ideas and expulsion of old ideas throughout life.

Franken (1994) states that “there is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept, is perhaps, the basis for all motivated behaviour. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves, and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behaviour.” We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others (Brigham, 1986).

The recent view of self-concept as summarized by Markus and Wurf (1987) is a multifaceted phenomenon as a set or collection of images, schemes, conceptions, prototypes, theories, goals or tasks.

Guindon (2001) says that there are two kinds of self-concept; global self-concept which is defined as an overall estimate of general self worth i.e. level of self-acceptance or respect of oneself. Selective self-concept is an evaluation of specific trait or quality that is weighed and combined into an overall evaluation of oneself.

After more than a decade of relative neglect, self-concept is enjoying renewed popularity and attention by both researchers and practitioners. There is growing awareness that of all the perceptions we experience in the course of living, none has more profound significance than the perceptions we hold regarding our own personal existence, our concept of who we are and how we fit into the world. Self-concept may be high or low, mental health has a very major determining role in it which ultimately determines the academic achievement.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health has a complex and comprehensive connotation. It does not refer to any one aspect of mental life or to any one dimension of human personality. It encompasses all aspects of the individual’s adjustment with himself and others. If his adjustment is characterized by appropriate persona, social, intellectual, emotional and
philosophical orientations, the individual is deemed to have good mental health. Mental Health is a state of continuous well being, an attribute of a mature human personality and a social value to be guarded and maintained through purposeful living (Whitehead, 1929).

World Health Organization (1984) has defined mental health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of diseases and infirmity.”

Encyclopedia of Britannica (1968) says, “Mental Health in the broader sense, suggests degree of happiness and satisfaction under conditions that warrant such a state of mind and a capacity for making satisfactory personal and social relationships.”

Mental Health means the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one’s daily living. It means the ability to face and accept the realities of life. (Bhatia, 1982). It has been seen that a mentally healthy person is one who has a “wholesome” balanced personality free from inconsistencies, emotional and nervous discords and conflicts (Waltin, 1935).

Jahoda (1958) writes that any definition of mental health would need to include the following six characteristics.

1. How the individual perceives himself.
2. The achievement of self-realization by becoming what one has the potential of becoming.
3. Integration of personality including purpose and meaning in life, tolerance for self and ability to recover from setbacks.
4. A realistic perception of the world around him.
5. Self-autonomy, the ability to be a part of society and still maintain individuality.
6. Ability to take life as it comes and master it.

Mental health, according to Kumar (1991), is an index which shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet the environmental demands – social, emotional or physical. However, when he finds himself trapped in a situation and he does not have matching coping strategies to deal with it effectively, he gets himself mentally strained. Mental health is basically a state of mind which is characterized by emotional well-being wherein the mind is relatively free from anxiety and disabling...
symptoms. It is a continuous and dynamic process where a living being is striving to achieve a balance between internal demands and the requirements of a changing environment.

Bhan and Dutt (1978) have given the following criteria of sound mental health:

1. Adequate feeling of personal worth.
2. Adequate understanding of others
3. Adequate emotional maturity.
4. Adequate orientation and goals.
5. Adequate creativity.

For a person to have sound mental health, it is very essential that he has positive feelings of personal worth. He should be emotionally balanced, free from unnecessary frustrations, tensions and negativities. It is not merely a condition of mind as often supposed but of the whole personality. Mentally healthy persons remain in contact with reality and are able to deal with stresses and frustrations. They also act independently of outside influences and show genuine concern for other people.

A “sound mind in sound body” has been recognized as an ideal state by the Indian sages and seers. In their views, mental health is the balanced development of the individual’s personality and emotional attitudes which enable him to live harmoniously with his/her fellow men/women.

Mental Health has mainly two aspects:

- **Individual aspect**: It refers to individual’s internal adjustment. It means when he is free from internal conflicts or tensions or inconsistencies and is skilful enough to be able to adapt to new situations.

- **Social aspect**: Internal adjustment is done in social set-up. Society has certain value system, customs, traditions by which it governs itself and promotes the general welfare of it’s members. It is within this social framework that the internal adjustment has to be built up and higher success can be achieved.

Davis (1987) states that answers given nowadays to the question “what are the characteristics of a mentally healthy person?” are likely to refer to such signs as the capacity to co-operate with others and sustain a close, loving relation and the ability to
make a sensitive, critical appraisal of oneself and the world and to cope with the everyday problems of living.

One is said to be mentally healthy if he/she maintains the following signs:

• Should not get easily upset.
• Should be free from internal conflicts and be well-adjusted.
• Should understand the feelings of others.
• Should have good self-control, not dominated by fear, anger, worries etc.
• Should face a problem confidently.
• Should solve the problem intelligently.

A mentally healthy person should be understood as a dynamic and conscientious individual who is found to be reasonably rational in the choice of means for realization of his pious ends.

In this context, Kasl (1973) has provided four different criteria to judge the mental health.

• Functional Effectiveness
• Well-being
• Mastery and competence and
• Psychiatric Symptoms.

Mental health represents a variety of human aspirations: rehabilitation of the mentally disturbed, prevention of mental disorder, reduction of tension in a stressful world and attainment of a state of well being, in which the individual functions at a level consistent with his/her mental potential. It is a condition of the individual relative to the conditions and socio-environmental context of that person.

Development of good mental health is to be carried from early childhood like the development of physical health. If this foundation remains weak, it can have serious repercussions later. Adolescence is the time period when the level of achievement is at it’s peak. It is crucial that the mental health of adolescents be maintained as this is a major determinant of academic achievement. The following measures may be found fruitful for the maintenance of their mental health: good physical health, proper emotional development, proper social relationship and acceptance, behaviour of teachers, proper level of aspiration, checking unhealthy competitions, avoiding the use
of defence mechanisms, appropriate home and proper sex, religious and moral education, need of proper guidance services, enrichment of curriculum and efficient methods of teaching.

The World Book Encyclopaedia (1994) writes that physical health and mental health are closely connected. Mental health plays an important role in both the ways, the way people behave and the way they feel. Emotionally healthy people accept themselves as they are with all their weaknesses as well as their strengths. They remain in contact with reality and are able to deal with stress and frustration.

Thus, mental health is a relatively enduring state of being in which an individual is reasonable to self, as reflected in his/her zest for living and feeling of self-realization. It also implies a large degree of adjustment to the social environment, as indicated by the satisfaction derived from interpersonal relationship, as well as achievement. Mental health is a state of successful performance of mental functions, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with others, the ability to adapt and to cope with adversity specific to the individual’s culture. One way to think about mental health is by looking at how effectively and successfully a person functions. Feeling capable and competent, being able to handle normal levels of stress, maintaining satisfying relationships and leading an independent life and being able to “bounce back” or recover from difficult situation are all signs of good mental health.

The neglect of mental health results in serious consequences. The students who are passing the high school stage face a dilemma regarding their future career and aspire to be high academic achievers. But they find utmost difficulty in coping with all the stresses and strains. It is extremely essential to provide them with congenial home environment and make planned efforts to promote their positive mental health as good mental health has a lot to do with high academic achievement.

HOME ENVIRONMENT

Since times immemorial, our Indian culture has emphasized on the influence of “Vamsa”, a Sanskrit word which means “home” in which a child is born and brought up. Home is the most important place where he gets his first dose of love and care through playful learning activities. It provides warm and psychological nourishment of
growth and development along with the basic feelings of security, acceptance and affection. Home is a place where one is received as a member of the family where one belongs. It provides a sense of identity and a place of orientation in our world. Being at home is related to both physical and psychological well-being of an individual.

The word “Home” connotes warmth, safety and emotional dependence. It expresses the idea of a fixed place and residence shared by a number of persons.

According to Webster’s New Encyclopedia Dictionary (1989), “Home is the abiding place of the affection, especially domestic formed by a family living together.” It is where we belong. Being at home is related to both physical and psychological well-being.

Environment refers to the circumstances or conditions that surround one. The totality of conditions and circumstances affect the growth and development of a child. Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships and these relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development-intellectual, social, emotional, physical, behavioural and moral. The dictionary meaning of the word “environment” is a surrounding external condition, influencing development or growth of people, animals or plants, living or working.

A person’s environment consists of the sum total of stimulation which he receives from his conception till his death. It is an aggregate of all those external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of an organism.

Environment can be classified as physical, social and cultural. Physical environment refers to the external conditions that affect life and development on the earth. Social and cultural environment of home contribute significantly in the development of personality. The child comes in contact with his parents and other members of family. The mother of a child is considered to be the first teacher to shape his behaviour. All this comprises “Home Environment.”

In the views of Mishra (2003), “Home Environment or parent-child rearing practices consist of characteristics of permissiveness, willingness to devote time to the child, parental guidance, parental aspiration for achievement, provision for child’s intellectual needs, effective reward, instrumental companionship, physical punishment, neglect, deprivation of privileges, protectiveness, power achievement, demands,
indulgence, conformity, independence-dependence, emotional and verbal responsibility, involvement with the child, physical and temporal environment, avoidance of restrictions and punishment, provision of appropriate play materials etc.”

According to Hurlock (1974), “Favourable home conditions include empathy, communication, respect for opinions of others, togetherness, independence and a gentle way of expressing disagreements. Unfavourable home climate includes friction, favouritism, feelings of inadequacy, poor adjustment and lack of emotional warmth.” Home is a microcosm where children can experience their effectiveness and power to make difference through problem solving, service and co-operation. It is the first agency through which he gets education in sociability.

Home Environment refers to the climate prevailing at home and varies from family to family, culture to culture and society to society. Home environment can be defined as the aggregate of all those physical and psychological conditions that determine the growth and development of child. It includes the infra-structural facilities and characteristics available at home as family size, attitude of parents, discipline patterns, relations with parents, provision of separate room etc.

All men are born alike with respect to their biological needs and physical environment. The differences arise in the child due to social and cultural environment in which the needs are fulfilled. Lewin (1995) has reported that unsatisfactory home environment is causative of children’s psychological disorders.

Nagaraja (1997) has found that parent-child relationship affects the emotional development of children.

Home Environment is of great importance right from infancy till the attainment of maturity. A child is basically an uncut diamond and by cutting and polishing, family will bring forth it’s luster and brilliance. The activities of the child are confined to his family in early years of his childhood. Family is a cradle in which the child is nursed and brought up. It is the combination of all values and is the first social environment where all physical, mental, cultural, social and emotional development of an individual takes place.
Types of Home Environment

Basically three types of home environment are revealed in the Indian family:

**Authoritarian, Dominant and Over-Protective**

In this home environment, the parents dominate and direct the child on all fronts. The parents decide all issues of the child's life. They make personal criticism, assume all responsibilities, initiate all activities, define goals, impose them on child and maintain wide social distance from children. In families with such an environment, discipline assumes a predominant and pervasive role.

**Democratic, Permissive and Accepting**

In this home environment, parents are more permissive, more understanding of the child's needs and capabilities, more lenient and less punitive. The family members share close relationships with children and encourage group initiative. Here, parents give time, thought and effort instead of material things.

**Laissez Fair cum Submission to the child**

This type of home environment is in contrast to the authoritarian set-up. The parents operate as observers in the family, make no attempt to regulate or orient his/her ideas. They allow complete freedom to the child, no clear goals are established and no restrictions are imposed.

It has been observed that dominating mothers tend to foster higher achievement in their children. Even parents of high achievers of elementary, high school and college stage tend to show more interest and understanding.

The environment created at home either accelerates or retards the development of the child and the achievement level of the child. It has been observed that the emotional bondage and the intimacy between parents and their children at home give a sense of security to the children and help in the development of positive behaviour. This pattern of parental treatment helps the child in such a way that the child may not feel disheartened at the time of difficulty. Whenever the parents encourage their children at home, it has a lasting effect on their way of thinking and doing.

Even great philosophers like Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi attached great value to home in fulfilling the needs of the child-economic, social, religious or education. Things learnt at home become a part and parcel of child's life and remain...
effective and permanent throughout his life. Hence, home environment plays a very important role in shaping the child's behaviour.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Today's world is a highly competitive world. Quality of performance has become the mantra of modern times. Parents desire that their children climb the ladder of performance to as high a level as possible. The desire for attaining the high levels of achievement puts a lot of pressure on families, teachers in general and the students in particular. The secondary school students who are the adolescents right at the threshold of adulthood are under lot of stress. Psychological researches conducted over the years have unquestionably revealed that adolescence is the most crucial period of one's life. Typically, it is a period of idealism and romanticism. It is a time of dreaming about the future when they aspire to reach the goals to fulfil their own and their parents' expectations. Decisions taken by the adolescents pave the way for future decisions in the world of work.

In the present times, it appears as if the whole system of education revolves around academic achievement. It is considered to be the best criterion for selection and job placement. The importance of scholastic or academic achievement has raised several questions in the minds of adolescents. They have to venture out in the realistic world and make their presence felt for which they have to be high achievers academically. The researcher wants to study the forces, pressures and complex expectations within which the students operate to achieve academically.

The behaviour and decisions taken by the adolescents are directly related to their self-concept. Self-concept is in fact a way to know what an individual thinks about himself. Competencies developed in adolescents enhance their feelings of self-concept. Adolescents behave according to their self-concept, the more adequate the self-concept, the greater the success in life.

Each individual has various urges, impulses, motives, tendencies, interests, attitudes etc. some of which are inborn and some are acquired. When these urges are allowed to function harmoniously in co-ordination with each other and get full expression, the personality becomes “wholesome” which is very essential for healthy
mental life. It becomes essential to understand the dynamics of mental health, more so in adolescents who are to assume their adult responsibilities.

A healthy and congenial climate at home makes the adolescent relaxed, cooperative, happy, motivated to study and disciplined in behaviour. On the other hand, an unhealthy climate at home makes the adolescent tense, nervous, irritable, disinterested in studies and mentally upset. Parental encouragement at home is related to positive self-concept, academic achievement and psychological well-being of the adolescents.

Academic achievement is considered to be a passport to success. Too much stress is being laid on achieving excellence in academics for which a conducive home environment is very important. If an individual has a positive self-concept, it leads to good mental health contributing to high academic achievement.

The study is undertaken to explore the basic questions: What factors promote academic achievement in students? How far do different factors contribute towards academic achievement? The investigator has chosen the secondary school students for this study because these adolescents have the most impressionable minds and are under great strain and stress. It is being increasingly felt that the young generation is facing the great advances in education, increased crises of status and rapidly changing culture. Their minds are not mature enough to view things in the right perspective and so they tend to overreact at times. In such situations their self-perceptions keep changing. Inappropriate development of self-concept, mental health and improper home environment may be associated with dysfunctions of personal psychological adjustment. This may result in disappointments, conflicts and failure.

The purpose of this study is to make a thorough analysis of academic achievement in relation to self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students. The efforts of the present investigation can go a long way towards eliminating the confusion and solving the practical problems which the educationists, teachers, parents, guidance workers and psychologists are facing.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN RELATION TO SELF-CONCEPT, MENTAL HEALTH AND HOME ENVIRONMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement is the degree and level of success and proficiency attained in the academic field. In the present study, it refers to the scores obtained in the annual examination of Std. X.

Self-Concept

Self-Concept is the attitude towards self. It is an organized configuration of perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual views as a part of various characteristics of himself. It is the individual’s way of looking at himself and signifies his ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

Mental Health

Mental Health refers to the perceptions, feelings and behaviour that determine a person’s overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. A mentally healthy person is firm in his intentions and is least disturbed by strains and stresses of day to day life.

Home Environment

Home Environment is the aggregate of all those psychological conditions that determine the growth and development of the child. It is the protected relationship between parents and children in an accepted social setting and includes components which constitute the home like permissiveness, parental achievements, companionship etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been conducted keeping in view the following objectives:

1. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

2. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept and components of self-concept of secondary school students.

3. To study the correlation of academic achievement with mental health and components of mental health of secondary school students.
4. To study the correlation of academic achievement with the components of home environment of secondary school students.

5. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment in male and female secondary school students.

6. To study the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas.

7. To study the effect of self-concept on academic achievement of secondary school students.

8. To study the effect of mental health on academic achievement of secondary school students.

9. To study the effect of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.

10. To study the effect of location of school (urban or rural) on academic achievement of secondary school students

11. To predict the academic achievement from components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students

2. There is no correlation of academic achievement with self-concept and components of self-concept of secondary school students.

3. There is no correlation of academic achievement with mental health and components of mental health of secondary school students.

4. There is no correlation of academic achievement with components of home environment of secondary school students.

5. There is no difference in the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment in male and female secondary school students.
6. There is no difference in the correlation of academic achievement with self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students studying in urban and rural areas.
7. There is no effect of self-concept on academic achievement of secondary school students.
8. There is no effect of mental health on academic achievement of secondary school students.
9. There is no effect of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.
10. There is no effect of location of school (urban or rural) on academic achievement of secondary school students.
11. There is no significant predictor of academic achievement among the components of self-concept, mental health and home environment of secondary school students.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
1. The study was delimited to students of +1 class only
2. The study was further limited to 600 students studying in urban and rural areas of Amritsar district only.
3. The study was delimited to the use of following tools only:
   i. Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) (Saraswat 1999)
   ii. Hindi Version of Mental Health Battery (MHB) (Singh and Gupta 2000)
   iii. Home Environment Inventory (HEI) (Mishra 2003)
   iv. Tenth Class Final Examination Scores of students.