PREFACE

In general, the deprived people perform on majority of the cognitive and intellective tasks at a lower level than their privileged counterparts. However, on the measures of competence and ability to learn, the discrepancy between the two groups is minimal. The deprived and non-deprived groups do not evince substantial differences on cognitive and behavioral measures during early years. However, the gap between the deprived and no-deprived groups increases with age. This indicates the role of non-intellective factors (such as school climate, teacher expectations, parental support etc.) in accentuating the differentials between the two groups and often leading to cumulative deficit. The motivational and personality characteristics of the deprived groups include low achievement motivation, low aspiration level, low expectation, neuroticism, insecurity, rigidity, conformity, anxiety, extroversion, alienation, low self image, past orientation, lack of future orientation, external attribution for success and internal attributions for failure, and use of dysfunctional coping strategies like escape, helplessness, hopelessness and denial. Viewed against the main stream, the deprived groups lack the qualities, dispositions, skills, and values
supposed to be necessary for success and upward mobility in the contemporary competitive world. They show low level persistence and frequently leave the field. They are not equipped with the necessary skills nor prepared to cope with the demands of society. The goals aspired by them are beyond their reach.

The picture which emerges from these differentials suggests that the deprived or disadvantaged people display less efficient functioning than their advantaged counterparts. Such differences increase with the complexity of task demands and advancing age. The explanations of deprivational effects put forward favour a difference or deficit position or a combination of the two. The difference hypothesis explains performance differences on the basis of inadequacy of measures and procedures and considers such differences as artifacts; the deficit hypothesis assumes that the deprived are deficient in their cognitive, motivational and personality characteristics. In its extreme form, it considers that the differences reflect underlying genetic differences. In its mild form it assumes that the differences reflect lack of cognitive structures or skills owing to lack of necessary environmental support. The third possibility subscribes to the view that the performance differences
involve deficit as well as difference depending upon the nature of skill and domain assessed.

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