CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

The problem and importance of proper rearing of children and their education has always attracted the attention of the intellectuals, social reformers and administrators in all the societies since the very inception of human civilisation. The process and system of socialisation and education has always varied from place to place, time to time and society to society. In the process of socialisation and educational accomplishments of the children, the role of parents and family environments cannot be ignored. It is to a great extent that the role of parents and family environment sets in and mould the patterns of the socialisation and educational accomplishments of the children. In certain societies or communities education was usually confined to certain classes and women's education was a rare concept and practice in the past.

Education is one of the most important and powerful means to achieve harmonious and overall psycho-social development of human personality. The basic aim of education has always been the preservation and betterment of society. Proper education awakens and prepares the individual for creative and constructive roles in society.
It helps in developing the cognitive and intellectual skills of the individuals and also helps in shaping the social orientation of the children, their attitudes and aspirations etc., for themselves as well as for their society. Education is the key of development for all human beings particularly for women in the present era because traditionally women are considered dependent on men for life. Education both formal and informal is and has always been a powerful instrument of social change and control.

It is only through education that the women can be converted into an effective and conscious work force of the nation. The real progress of any community is possible only when all its members especially women whose education is ignored in certain sections of the society are brought under the umbrella of universal education. Women, undoubtedly, can very effectively and productively contribute in the developmental programmes of the society provided they are adequately educated. By receiving full education women become more rational and analytical in their outlook and approach and thus can compete with men in all spheres of life.

Historically women in India during the vedic period were eligible for the study of vedas and performance of sacrifices. Women usually used to make teaching as their profession. But during the later vedic period, with the coming into force of the injunctions of Lord Manu, the arbiter of Hindu Ethics, women were prevented from the access to education. The doors for education were firmly closed on women in the medieval society.

During Muslim rule (1526-1757), whole society became prejudiced against female education. Purdah system was one of the fundamental causes of decline of female education. Princesses like Razia Sultana, Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara Begum were some of the exceptions of the royal households in receiving some education according to the times.

Western education, legal system, political ideology and socio-cultural values gradually came to India with the Britishers and they began to cut at the roots of the traditional value system and ritualistic order of the Indian society.


3. Manu Smriti.


Furthermore, a progressive movement to improve women's educational opportunities began to develop from the last years of the 19th century. Some enlightened Indians such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar played important roles in the opening of girls Schools with the cordial support of government. Some more Indians like Sheikh Abdullah in Aligarh, Justice Karamat Hussain in Luknaw and others also made important contributions towards women's educational upliftment.

During the period (1921-1947), the favourable factors for the promotion of women's education were, a rise in the age of marriage, the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the phenomenal awakening among Indian womenhood, and the introduction of Provincial Autonomy in 1936. This was a period of financial stringency and political struggle. Inspite of the difficulties, women education made considerable progress.

After independence the process of westernisation and industrialisation got momentum. It was realised that education was a major instrument for leading the country to self-reliance, social justice, economic growth and modernisation in various fields of technology. Various commissions were set up and the issue of women's problems come into light.

The first Governmental Act to organise the education system was the setting up of the University Education Commission headed by Professor S. Radhakrishnan to 'suggest improvements and extensions that may be desirable to suit the requirements of the country'.

According to Indian Education Commission (1964-66), "For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes, and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of women is of greater importance than that of men."

The Resolution on the National Policy on Education in 1968, also laid emphasis on women's education. The aim was to achieve "Economic and Cultural Development of the country for nation's integration and for realising the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society". The policy perpetrate for a continuous effort of the expansion and equalization of educational opportunity, sustained effort to raise quality, emphasis on development of science and technology and cultivation of moral and social values.

Regarding girls education the policy stated, "The education of girls should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice but also because it accelerates social transformation".

The year 1975 saw more official concern towards the promotion of girl's education as the year was celebrated as International Women's Year in which some steps were taken to create awareness among women with regard to their place, importance, respect, education, freedom and rights etc.

The National Policy on Education (1986)\(^\text{10}\) stated that, "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National Education System will play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, text books, the training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators and the active involvement of educational institutions. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development."

As a consequence of educational planning, significant
importance has been extended towards women's education and
hence a number of such institutions which help in the
emancipation of women have been established throughout the
country. This has to a great extent also changed the mental
outlook of traditional people. "This process of change was
further accelerated by the introduction of new technology and scientific innovations. Industrialisation also
brought about sweeping changes into the way of life and
traditional social order in India". With the result, advancesments in educational opportunities and exposure to mass
media brought about changes in the perceptions and
aspirations among the general masses and especially among
the womenhood and are expected to be manifold in future.
But still the traditional feminine roles have an inevitable
impact on girl's personality and identity. Early in life
the girls learn the need for flexibility, adjustment and
submissiveness. Girls contribute a lot to the running of
the house. Their education is often sacrificed, while boys
are encouraged to study. Under such situations, the girls
do not get opportunities for educational interactions which
may assist them in the formation of their own independent
ideas and values.

Presently, Indian society is passing through a traditional phase and comes under the category of developing nation. Hence perceptions and aspirations of Indian youths both male and female are bound to change. The developmental activities and programmes provided greater opportunities of interaction for Indian masses, which resulted change in their outlook, perceptions, aspirations and ideas. As perceptions and aspirations are not static, they do change according to the changing socio-cultural, political and other environmental conditions to which the individuals are subjected. The members of different societies hold different perceptions and aspirations. If women are adequately educated, they would more realistically be able to formulate and develop their proper perceptions and aspirations. Situations and events are generally perceived by the individuals according to their own convictions and faiths depending on their socio-cultural environments. However, certain situations and events also to a great extent help in moulding or altering the established convictions and faiths of the individuals. The individuals hailing from any religion, caste, region and occupation hold different perceptions and aspirations, which are dynamic in nature. Keeping in view the fast changing socio-cultural environments, it is high time to restructure conventional values,
practices and systems with the help of education. Indian women are gradually becoming more aware and are emerging as active participants in all the socio-cultural activities operative in Indian society.

The following graph shows some relevant facts relating to women's education. (See next page)

The graph clearly shows that there is an increment in the trend of female education. However, there is a clear differential between the literacy rates among males and females. Female literacy rates are lagging behind male literacy rates.

Education in Kashmir: a retrospect and present:

It is a historical reality that males in general and women in particular always remain educationally backward in Kashmir because there was no adequate schooling system and provisions as were prevalent in other states of the country. In the earlier past,\textsuperscript{12} the educational institutions were in the form of Maktabas and Pathshalas which only imparted religious education. On account of restricted and lack of other educational avenues, majority of the Kashmiri people remain confined in almost a closed society by observing defined or set patterns of life.

\cite{12} Report of the Educational Re-organisation Committee, 1939, p. 10.
The arrival and role of Christian Missionaries undoubtedly introduced new directions in the outlook and approach towards life among the people of Kashmir. It was on account of their sincere and untiring efforts and services that the people of Kashmir started to realise about the importance and values of modern rational education in place of traditional, with which they were confined.

Another pioneer of modern education in Kashmir was Maharaja Pratap Singh. He introduced non-traditional education in the state in place of religious education. During his regime the system of compulsory primary education was introduced in the state. People were attracted towards education by certain incentives such as scholarships.

The role of Maharaja Hari Singh is worth mentioning here. During his reign, separate schools were introduced for girls education. A number of schools were also opened in villages and towns in addition to cities. Girls from all classes, areas and communities were admitted in these schools without any distinction.

After independence, women's education showed a great expansion. Undoubtedly, great efforts have been made by the government, intellectuals, and the administrators towards the rationalistic development of education in general and towards women's education in particular. But still, the women's educational accomplishments are lagging behind as compared to males. Data from Indian census clearly reveal that the literacy rate among males and females in Jammu and Kashmir has increased from 4.11% to 36.3% and 0.29% to 15.9% respectively from 1901 to 1981, which means that there is an upward trend, but still, women as compared to men are lagging behind in education.


As far as district Srinagar is concerned, the census reports of 1961, 1971 and 1981 reveal that 23.7%, 29.31% and 41.97% males have received education, while on the other hand 8.52%, 12.68% and 24.66% females have received education. The census report as submitted reflects that there is a
clear differential between literacy rates among males and females.


The analysis of census significantly report that women of Jammu and Kashmir are still not upto the mark and they are in need of strong and systematic educational planning and guidance which may be taken up by the government as well as by some social organisations. Systematically planned education besides playing a very decisive role in the overall development of human personality is also expected to be fundamentally instrumental in the formulation and development of human attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, aspirations etc.

**PERCEPTION:** The term perception is usually applied to the way one comes to know the world or the way one experiences the world of objects or events.
Perception is the meaningful self evaluation in terms of the given structural situation. It is attitudinal and cognitive, it is the process of imputing meaning to facts and experience of life. Hence perception is the key variable between action and situation. The term has been used to know the self-image and meaningful orientation of a person in a society. Social perception is an important element in the structural stability and continuity of the society.

Perception has been regarded as the process by which an organism receives or extracts certain information about the environment.

The study of Perception is an attempt to understand those aspects of the observations of the world of things and people that depend on the nature of the observer.

ASPIRATIONS: Aspirations actually are the goals, a person sets for himself in tasks which have intense personal significance.


According to Lewin (1944), "an individual while undertaking to perform a task builds up a goal structure, comprising a number of goals at varying levels. There may be a very high dream goal, an ideal goal, an action goal, and a low level goal, which the individual was sure of attaining even if the luck or circumstances are against him. This type of goal where a person is determined to achieve, Lewin maintained it as the 'action goal'."

Lewin further held the view that social environment plays a decisive role in determining what a person's aspirations will be. The most common factors which influence or generate aspirations are intelligence, sex, cultural traditions, competition with others, past experience, mass media and personal characteristics.

Adler emphasized that every one has a "life plan" - a purpose or goal which determines his reactions. This life plan is generally developed early in life as a result of certain relationships between the person and his physical social environment.

Elizabeth Hurlock defines aspiration as longing for and striving after something higher.

than one self or ones present status. This longing may be ennobling or uplifting or it may be unwarranted or presumptuous.

Muttayya\textsuperscript{21} believes that aspirations of children are influenced by parents particularly mothers. Educated mothers and working mothers hold a greater impact on children as compared to uneducated and non-working mothers.

Aspirations\textsuperscript{22} are divided into three categories:

**NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE ASPIRATIONS:** Negative aspirations center on the goal of avoiding failure while positive aspirations are oriented towards achieving success.

**IMMEDIATE AND REMOTE ASPIRATIONS:** From early childhood, people set goals for what they want to achieve. At first, these goals are immediate. But when the child grows and starts to plan for future setting goals, these goals are remote, which are generally less realistic and more fanciful than immediate goals.

**REALISTIC AND UNREALISTIC ASPIRATIONS:** Realistic aspirations are those aspirations where a person is justified in expecting to achieve the goals, he sets for himself while


\textsuperscript{22} Op.cit., Elizabeth, B. Hurlock.
unrealistic aspirations are those where a person lacks the potentials to achieve the goals, no matter how hard he may work or sacrifice.

Behind all aspirations, there is a fundamental need for achievement. Factors like level of poverty, economic conditions and educational background etc., to a great extent play a decisive role in the socio-psychological make up of human personality as well as in the formation and development of aspirations of the individuals.

THE PROBLEM: The present study is an humble attempt to investigate perceptions and aspirations of women students studying in two women's Colleges of Srinagar and Kashmir University. The reason why the investigator has selected the present problem for investigation is that practically little work has been done in this area of knowledge in Jammu and Kashmir. The proposed investigations are expected to throw some light on such matters as may help the educated women for proper planning in future and also avenues of academic advancements of girls by providing them adequate educational guidance and future planning for life.

Since perceptions and aspirations of the individuals are unlimited, therefore, the present study has been delimited to economic, social, political, educational and
religious perceptions and aspirations of the girls or women students enrolled in two Colleges of Srinagar and Kashmir University.

OBJECTIVES:

The present investigation has been undertaken with the following objectives:-

1. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of graduate students representing different faculties.

2. To study and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the post-graduate students hailing from different faculties.

3. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the students pursuing different professional courses of studies.

4. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from different financial backgrounds.

5. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents on the basis of their parental educational backgrounds.

6. To investigate and compare the perceptions and aspirations of the respondents hailing from different courses of students.
HYPOTHESES: The investigator intends to test the following hypotheses:

1. It is expected that some variations may exist in the perceptions and aspirations among the graduate students representing different faculties.

2. It is expected that some variations in the perceptions and aspirations among post-graduate students from different faculties may be prevalent.

3. It is expected that the students pursuing different professional courses of studies do differ in their perceptions and aspirations.

4. It is expected that the students hailing from different economic backgrounds hold different perceptions and aspirations.

5. It is expected that variations in the perceptions and aspirations are prevalent among the respondents representing different parental educational backgrounds.

6. It is expected that the students hailing from different courses of studies may show some variation between their perceptions and aspirations.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Researchers and Social Scientists specially from the disciplines of Sociology and Psychology have undoubtedly tried to explore the avenues of knowledge related to perceptions and aspirations of human beings in different areas of study from their respective viewpoints. Since perceptions and aspirations besides other factors are largely formulated and remoulded on the basis of the psychological make up of the individuals and the socio-cultural environmental conditions to which the individuals are exposed, hence their perspective approach and analysis differs markedly as far as perceptions and aspirations are concerned. Moreover, psychologists lay greater emphasis on the psychological components or traits of the individuals while Sociologists on the environmental variables.

Following are some of the studies related to perceptions and aspirations as reported:

Gould, R (1941) 23 in his study "Some Sociological Determinants of Goal Settings" conclude that Sociological factors like education, income, profession contribute

to difference in the level of aspiration. The students coming from favourable socio-economic background were realistic in setting their goals for achievement and the students coming from low socio-economic status suffer from a sense of insecurity.

Boyed, F.G. (1952) in his study, "The Level of Aspiration of White and Negro Children in Non-Segregated Elementary School" found out that environment affects the level of aspiration. The Negro Children exhibited unrealistically higher hopes and ambitions due to their basic feeling of insecurity and had educational, occupational and professional aspirations.

Ahmad, K. (1968) in his study 'Social background of women undergraduates of Delhi University' reveal that most of the undergraduates came to the college without any definite aim. He further found out that the girls coming from educated and economically well-off families were modern in their outlook and had higher aspiration for job.


Kamat, P. (1969), in her study "A Comparative Study of Achievement of Girls with their Intelligence and Socio-economic Status of their Parents" finds out that female education is more a problem of socio-religious attitudes, customs and values than anything else and that the level of school education of girls appears to be significantly related to the aspirational level of parents, their educational status, their social rank status and economic level.

Muthayya, B.C. (1971), in his study "Farmers and their Aspirations" concludes that higher the socio-economic level, the higher will be the aspirations. Furthermore, persons belonging to high socio-economic status, was more realistic than persons belonging to low socio-economic status.


---


Aspirations in an Indian Metropolitan examined the relationship of Socio-economic Status and educational aspirations of high school (S.S.C) students in Ahmedabad. The study revealed that the educational aspirations of female students were lower than those of males. However, little concern has been shown by Sociologists to examine the influence of social background, particularly sex and social class on the occupational aspirations of male and female students in higher education.

Singh, C.P., B.P. Pandey, G.S. Dubey and D.R. Yadava (1976), in their study "Educational Aspirations of Scheduled Caste Students in Eastern Uttar Pradesh" found that there was relationship between strata, time devoted to studies, economic status, level of politicisation and educational aspiration. The relationship between economic status and educational aspiration was of an inverse type. There was no relationship between sources of encouragement, fathers education and age and educational levels aspired for.

Lal Shoe Kumar (1976), \(^{30}\) in his study "Occupational Aspirations of Scheduled Castes Students" found out that most of the Scheduled caste students are drifting from their traditional occupations. Educated scheduled caste students are found following new occupations. The study also shows that a higher proportion of scheduled caste students aspires for government positions followed by high level professions to some extent, aspirations represent their need for achievement.

Mohanty, G. (1976), \(^{31}\) in his study "Sex Difference in Shifts and Rigidity in Level of Aspiration Experiment" took male as well as female students as sample. He concludes that female students were flexible in adjusting to the goals. The male students were rigid and non-responsive to success or failures. The non-responsiveness indicates unrealism in one's level of aspiration, while the female students were found to be realistic in finding the goals than males.

Swaleha, B. (1979) \(^{32}\) in her study "A study of Age and Socio-economic Differences in Level of Aspiration"

\(^{30}\) Lal, Shoe Kumar, Occupational Aspirations of Schedule Caste's Students, Social Change, Vol. 6(1&2), 1976.


found that the higher the socio-economic level, the higher will be achievement. That is children from high socio-economic status, have stronger motivation to achieve, and set the aspirations.

Sharma, R.R. (1981) investigated "Self-Concept, Level of Aspiration and Mental Health as Factors in Academic Achievement" and arrived at the following conclusions:-

1. Self concept affects academic achievement.
2. Level of aspiration and mental health does not influence academic achievement.
3. High and low achievers differ significantly on certain elements of self concept of behaviour, intellectual and school status, happiness and satisfaction, and physical appearance and attributes.
4. High and low achievers differ significantly in their level of aspiration. Level of aspiration is related with self concept.
5. Boys and girls differ significantly in their level of aspiration. A strong tendency in girls to set their level of aspiration below their achievement was found whereas, boys show an opposite trend.
6. No significant relationship between level of aspiration and family income, order of birth or vocational aspiration was found.

---

Uniyal, M.P. & Beena Shah (1981) in their study "The Level of Aspiration of Teacher Trainees of Rural and Urban Areas in relation to their Achievement" found out that the high achievers are negligent in respect to their aspiration, while the low achievers are over anxious in respect to their aspiration, one's level of aspiration is more affected by his academic achievement rather than his social belongingness.

Braccia, M.C. (1981) in his study "A Comparison of the Changes in Perceptions of ideal leader behavior, interpersonal Communication, and Work Motivation Attitudes of Students in an Educational Administration Programme who Have and Have Not Completed Administrative Internship" found out a significant increase in intern students perceptions of communication skill. Intern students also show a significantly different change in their perceptions of ideal leader behaviour with respect to the two dimensions:


initiating structure and consideration. No significant changes were found between male and female interns, less experienced and more experienced interns, elementary level and secondary level administrative interns and urban and sub-urban interns, for initiating structure, competitiveness, desirability, willingness to seek rewards and interpersonal communications.

Decoleau, Ramona (1981) in his study "Perceptions of Selected Groups Toward the Current and Ideal Role of Special Education Directors as Administrative Leaders in North Dakota Schools which have high concentration of American Indian Students" found out that there were statistically significant differences among the perceptions of all groups toward the current and the ideal role of the special education Director/Coordinator. The special education directors/coordinators, special education teachers and school administrators viewed the ideal role as well as current role in the same way.

Kuk, Linda, S. (1981) in his study "Perception of Work Climate and their Relationship to the Career


Aspiration of "Women Student Affairs Administrators" indicate that women do aspire to high level positions in higher education organizations, although they continue to perceive these positions as less attainable. In examining the existence of a relationship between Women Students affairs aspirations and their perceptions of the external work environment, the six job characteristics: variety, autonomy, identity, feedback, friendship and dealings with others were perceived to be present in the work environment. However, a difference in the perceptions of the presence of some of these factors based on aspiration was found.

Akers, Marilyn O.S., (1981) in his study "Perceptions of Selected Eighth Grade Students concerning Academic Achievement and Influence of Family Encouragement and Expectation" concludes that (i) Grade point average has no bearing on perceptions of students concerning family encouragement and expectation. High capable achievers show

stronger family expectation than highly capable unachievers show. Average ability overachiever males indicate stronger family encouragement than females of the group. Highly capable unachiever females indicate stronger family encouragement than males of the group. (2) Grade point average is not related to personal self-concept. Within the highly-capable underachiever group, females express higher self-concept than males. (3) Average ability over-achievers identify with highly capable underachievers in personal academic achievement rather than with highly capable achievers. Within the average ability over-achiever group, males feel more capable academically than females of the same group.

Uplaonkar, Ambarao T., (1983) in his study "Occupational Aspirations of College Students" finds out that the occupational aspirations of the women students were lower than those of men. This indicates that women students in higher education do not perceive any meaningful role in terms of gainful employment. This also suggests that women students are more likely to use higher education as a status symbol, as an end in itself, than as a means of gainful employment.

Prakash Nirupama and A.L. Srivastava (1991) in their study, "Perception of Schedule Castes Towards Education" found out that majority of the Scheduled caste respondents hold view that education must be provided to children at all cost inspite of certain hurdles like caste values and traditions or economic hardships. It is further observed that majority of the respondents of low as well as high occupational categories perceived education as an instrument for acquiring prestige and status in society and for their personality development. Members of scheduled caste community hold a very positive attitude towards the role of education in one's life. As far as education in the upliftment of the scheduled caste community is concerned, the respondents show a very positive response.

An analysis of the studies related to perceptions and aspirations reveal that the investigators have highlighted either on one or on the other aspect of the problem.

Some researchers on the basis of their findings hold the view that education, economic status and profession do contribute to difference in the level and nature of aspirations among the students. And some other investigators on the basis of their investigations have reported that environmental factors, aspirational level of the parents and their social status do affect the level of aspirations of the children. Furthermore, some have highlighted that boys and girls significantly differ in their level of aspiration. The level of aspiration of female students have been reported as lower than those of males. Educated males aspires for government jobs or positions. Female students are reported more feasible in adjusting to the goal and achievement, while as male students are comparatively rigid.

Some researchers have exhibited significant change in the perception of students towards ideal leader behavior and interpersonal communication. Significant difference have been found among the perceptions of selected groups in North Dakota School towards the current and ideal role
of the special education directors/coordinators.

Women aspiring for higher education and positions in educational organizations do perceive that the positions are less attainable. Some investigators have also reported that academic achievement and influence of family encouragement and expectations have no bearing on the perceptions of the students. Lastly, women are also reported to use higher education as a status symbol rather than as a means of gainful employment.