Chapter-1

Introduction
Academic achievement poses a big challenge to the educationists and psychologists everywhere. It is especially of great interest in India where population explosion and an unprecedented rush for education has led to tremendous quantitative growth of education at all stages without consistent qualitative growth.

The needs, strengths and interests of each learner are unique and determined by their socio cultural and demographic background and circumstances. The differences in the academic achievement of students may be determined by this background. In view of this fact, all the pupils who get enrolled themselves in school or college can’t be expected to achieve academic success in education in an equal measure.

Since academic achievement is influenced by a host of complex factors, including cognitive, social, emotional and environmental factors, the problem of diagnosing and forecasting achievement has since long been an area of popular interest.

**Relationship between Intelligence and Academic Achievement:** A large number of studies have been devoted to investigate the intellectual, personal and environmental factors related to academic achievement. Among them intelligence has been found to be the most important correlate of academic achievement (Thomdike, 1963). A close relationship between the intellectual and scholastic abilities, exhibited in quite frequently high correlations has been reported by various studies ( Speilberg & Katzenmeyer, 1959; Stephens, 1960; Keller Rowley, 1962; Scott, 1963; Rastogi, 1964; Rao, 1965; Bhatnagar, Sinha, Ainsworth, 1967; Dhaliwal, 1971; Mc Candless, Roberts, Sterns, 1972; Reddy, 1973; Makhija, 1973; Chatterji & Mukherjii, 1974; Srivastava, 1974; Starr & Nicholl, 1975; Ravinder, 1977; Banereti Fuchs, 1978; Crano, Messe & Rice, 1979;
Shivappa, 1980; Srivastava, 1980; Roberge & Flexer, 1981; Yule, Landsdown & Urban Owicz, 1982; Dixit, 1985; Jahan, 1985; Singh, 1988; Shabnam, 1990; Madhubala, 1990; Shah, 1990; Verma, 1995; Kaur & Lekhi, 1995). Therefore as intelligence has been conclusively shown to be the single most important predictor of academic achievement, a child’s academic achievement can be predicted on the basis of intelligence.

However it must be remembered that intelligence does not always correctly predicts the academic achievement of the child as it may be influenced to a lesser or greater extent by various other factors. Research on mental development has indicated that a child’s intelligence level does not necessarily remain constant with age (Bayley, 1940; 1949; Bradway, 1944; Sontag, Baker & Nelson, 1955; Wellman & Mc Candless, 1946). Changes in environmental conditions can depress or raise intelligence level and it is implied that these changes in intelligence may be explained by recourse to personality variables. Although the relationship is strong but Terman (1959) has suggested that there is no perfect correlation between intelligence and academic achievement. Therefore changes in level of intelligence of the child due to age and environmental conditions can result into imperfect prediction of academic achievement on the basis of intelligence alone. In the cases wherein prediction is not perfect, it is more likely to result into situations when the predicted level of academic achievement can be greater or lower than the actual achievement of the child.

To sum up we can say that though there is a highly significant relationship between intelligence and achievement but the relationship is not perfect.

**Concept of Underachievement and Overachievement:**

When the predicted level of academic achievement matches the
actual achievement of the child, the child is said to be a normal achiever.

When the actual achievement is greater than the predicted level of academic achievement, the child is said to be an overachiever and when the actual achievement of a child is lower than the predicted level of academic achievement, the child is said to be an underachiever.

To be more specific, underachievement has been defined as a negative discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, predicted on the basis of intelligence (Thorndike, 1963; Whitmore, 1980; McCall et al., 1992; Borkowski & Thorpe, 1994; Peterson & Colangelo, 1996; Rimm, 1997; Davis & Rimm, 1989), whereas overachievement has been defined as a positive discrepancy between expected and actual achievement, predicted on the basis of intelligence (Thorndike, 1963).

It has been suggested by researches that underachievement is a behavior and as such, it can change over time. It is also often seen as a problem of attitude or work habits. However, neither habits nor attitude can be modified as directly as behaviors. Thus, referring to "underachieving behaviors" pinpoints those aspects of children's lives which they are most able to alter.

Underachievement has been found to be content specific and situation specific by various researches. Content specificity can be explained by the general observation that children who do poorly in most school subjects may display a talent or interest in at least one school subject. (e.g., the child is "underachieving in math and language arts" rather than an "underachieving student"). Therefore it is better to label the behaviors than the child.

The situation specificity may be explained by the fact that children who do not succeed in school are often, successful in outside activities such as sports, social occasions, and after-school jobs. Therefore an
underachiever may underachieve in academic pursuits, but it is very much possible that he/she is having some other talents also, that may be exhibited outside the classroom. His behavior can, thus, be regarded as an academic behavior instead of regarding the child as underachiever because labeling a child as an "underachiever" disregards any positive outcomes or behaviors that child displays.

Underachievement has also been reported to be in the eyes of the beholder. For some students (and teachers and parents), as long as a passing grade is attained, there is no underachievement. After all, this group would say, "C is an average grade." To others, a grade of B+ could constitute underachievement if the student in question were expected to get an A. Recognizing the idiosyncratic nature of what constitutes success and failure is the first step towards understanding underachieving behaviors in students. (James and Sandra, 1990).

In the present school system, there is an overstress on the development of intellectual capabilities, which may restrict the realisation of the presence of other expressions, strengths and talents. The sole purpose of attainment of high intelligence does not ensure that he/she also has good emotional adjustment, social sensitivity, enhanced sportsmanship, creativity etc. On the other hand, if the child is socially and emotionally sensitive, it does not mean that he/she will also be good in studies. Therefore it can be concluded that all the aspects of personalities are different forms of expressions, which need as much weightage as intelligence itself.

However, intelligence is comparatively highly valued by the society whereas if the child shows prominence in other fields, but with lower intelligence; he/she may not be as much valued. These kinds of flawed perceptions prevailing in the society may result in lower self-esteem of the
child and may also promote prejudiced attitude of others towards the child. Freedom from these prejudices and ill-grounded ideas may lead to a more sympathetic and positive approach towards understanding behavior of underachievers. This sympathetic approach in turn helps in improving the achievement of underachievers. Therefore a change of perception (in the positive direction) is one of the necessary steps towards improving underachieving behavior of the child by focusing on his/her talents.

Apart from cognitive factors there are noncognitive factors also, which are found to be operating in the field of academic achievement. These noncognitive factors may be related to adjustment, motivations, perceptions, attitude, vocational interest etc. Among these, personality has been found to be an important factor determining overachievement and underachievement. Need-achievement (n-Ach) is another important factor accounting for discrepancies.

**Personality as a Factor of Achievement:**

**Personality:** Personality is a pattern of deeply embedded and broadly exhibited cognitive, affective, and overt behavioral traits that persist over a significant period of time. These traits emerge from a complicated matrix of biological predispositions and experiential learning that occurs in a social context. Lying at the core of personality are two processes: (1) how the person interacts with the demand of the environment, and (2) how the individual relates to self. To Millon (1969) the essential characteristics of a person with a normal or healthy personality are autonomy, inadaptability, emotional stability and self-actualization. To Allport (1937) "personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical traits that determine his unique adjustments to his environment"(Asendorpf et. al., 2006).
Various researches have reported that self-concept of the child influences underachievement. Children who learn to see themselves in terms of failure eventually begin to place self-imposed limits of what is possible. Any academic successes are written off as "flukes," while low grades serve to reinforce negative self-perceptions. This self-deprecating attitude often results in comments such as "Why should I even try? I'm just going to fail anyway.", or "Even if I do succeed, people will say it's because I cheated." The end product is a low self-concept, with students perceiving themselves as weak in academics. Under this assumption, their initiative to change or to accept a challenge is limited.

Underachievers were reported to have poor self-concept by Reis & McCoach (2000), Supplee (1990) and Whitmore (1980). In addition to self-concept other personal characteristics such as low self-motivation, low self-regulation, or low self-efficacy, have been found to influence underachievement (Whitmore, 1980; Reis & McCoach, 2000; Seigle, 2000 and McCoach & Siegle, 2001). Duckworth and Seligman (2005) reported the failure to exercise self-discipline to be the major reason for students' underachievement. Many researchers have focused on the relationship between achievement motivation and under-achievement, suggesting that under-achievers demonstrate various motivational problems (Lau & Chan, 2001; Ken, 2003). Underachievers were reported to display negative attitudes toward school (Bruns, 1992; Clark, 1988; Diaz, 1998; Ford, 1996, 2001; Frankel, 1965; Mandel & Marcus, 1988; McCall, Evahn, & Kratzer, 1992; Rimm, 1995).

There are conflicting reports regarding the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. Byrne (1984); Marsh & Yeung (1997) have proposed that this relationship can be reciprocal. To explain the process of interaction of the child to his environment in the development of
self and the belief the child may have towards himself/herself, two theories have been proposed: Dweck's theory and symbolic interactionist theory.

The self is structured and the behaviour is guided by the self-conceptions the children have. Sometimes these self-conceptions or beliefs, children have about themselves may represent the risk and likelihood of underachievement. It has been demonstrated empirically by Dweck (2007) that students who hold an entity theory of intelligence are less likely to attempt challenging tasks and are at risk for academic underachievement. "Entity" theory views their intelligence as an unchangeable internal characteristic.

How the child relates to his/her environment has been shown by Mead, (1934) Cooley (1902) and James (1963). They proposed symbolic interactionist view of self, stating that when feedback taken from the environment is perceived as accurate, it becomes part of self concept. And if that part is viewed as central then the changes in self-concept will affect the individual's self-esteem. Therefore we can say that relevance of environment to the self and beliefs about the self are important in the development of underachieving behavior.

It has been shown by comparative studies conducted in India that underachievers are having certain personality characteristics which are relatively different from those of overachievers. Researches have indicated underachievers to be more reserved (Dhaliwal, 1971), more emotionally unstable (Suri, 1974; Dhaliwal, 1971; Bhat, 1971; Saxena, 1972; Puri, 1987; Giudice, 1991 and Willard-Holt, 1998), more expedient (Suri, 1974), more socially group dependent (Saxena, 1972) and more uncontrolled, having more anxious insecurity (Dhaliwal, 1971; Suri, 1974; Sharma, 1981) than overachievers.

It has been shown by researches that there is a difference in the
incidence of underachievement between boys and girls. This difference has also been reported with respect to lower class and middle class students. Boys are more likely to become underachievers than girls (Whitmore, 1980; Stockard & Wood, 1984; Butlor-Por, 1987; McCall et al., 1992; Lau & Chan, 1997). The sex differences in underachievement appear for middle class and working class students, but often are smaller for working class students (Stockard & Wood, 1984). The reason behind this difference has been suggested to be a significant decline in academic self-concept of girls (Jackson, 2003) whereas no such changes have been observed in boys. Boys on the other hand were reported to have greater anxiety and more adjustment problems than girls (Shanmugasundaram, 1983).

Researches have demonstrated that the phenomenon of underachievement can be altered and reversed by applying some interventions (Peters, Granger-Loidl, and Supplee, 2000; Rimm, 2003; Mendaglio & Pyryt, 2002; Karolyi, Ford, & Hardner, 2000; Pyryt, 2001; Schneider, 2004). The interventions which have been attempted demand focus on factors related to family and school, work habits, study skills, as well as personality factors such as self-concept, anxiety, avoidance of responsibility, oppositional behavior etc. One of the successful interventions which has been attempted to reverse underachievement was tried by Peters, Granger-Loidl, and Supplee (2000). This involved parents' focus on work habits and study skills. Other intervention, by Rimm (2003) used trifocal model focusing on student, parents and the school to reverse underachievement. Mendaglio and Pyryt (2002) applied intervention strategies by exploring the relationship between self-concept and underachievement, whereas Karolyi, Ford, & Hardner (2000) and Pyryt (2001) applied approaches that were sensitive to each individual's profile of abilities and supporting individuals to effectively cope with perfectionist tendencies, respectively. Similarly Schneider (2004) has given
recommendations to deal with the problems of avoidance of responsibility, anxiety, and search for identity, conduct disorder, oppositional behavior and discrimination, which he has termed as key issues of underachievement.

Strategies that have been applied by Whitmore (1980) proved to be effective in working with underachieving behaviors in students. These strategies are supportive, intrinsic and remedial strategies. Supportive strategies involve designing curriculum activities based on the needs and interests of the children; and allowing students to bypass assignments on subjects in which they have previously shown competency. Intrinsic strategies involve encouragement of positive attitudes. In classrooms of this type, teachers encourage attempts, not just successes; they value student input in creating classroom rules and responsibilities; and they allow students to evaluate their own work before receiving a grade from the teacher. Remedial strategies focus specific strengths and weaknesses as well as social, emotional and intellectual needs. Students are given chances to excel in their areas of strength and interest while opportunities are provided in specific areas of learning deficiencies. This remediation is done in a safe environment in which mistakes are considered a part of learning for everyone, including the teacher.

Busch & Nuttall (1995), Dowdall & Colangelo (1982), Gallagher (1991), Lupart & Pyryt (1996), Silverman (1991) and Reis & McCoach(2000) have highlighted the importance of addressing the problem of underachievement, in view of the fact that this problem may mask more serious physical, cognitive, or emotional issues such as learning disabilities, attention deficits, emotional disturbances, psychological disorders, or other health impairments. In such cases, the treatment of academic underachievement should be secondary to the treatment of the primary disorder.
It has been shown by researches that the presence of talents and giftedness of underachievers may be stressful for them. For example Grobman (2006) reported on the basis of treatment of a group of exceptionally gifted students, that each phase of gifted development was accompanied by particular anxieties and conflicts. In adolescence they developed a powerful vision of, a sense of destiny and a charismatic personality. Their inability to resolve conflicts about these gifted traits led to their most dramatic forms of underachievement and destructive behaviour. Their most troublesome conflicts and anxieties arose not from fears of ostracism, fears of failure, or lost opportunities, but from fear that giftedness had distorted and twisted them as human beings. Because these deeper conflicts were largely out of their awareness; they could not deal with these conflicts effectively. Instead they resorted to primitive psychological methods of denial, avoidance, provocative behaviour and projection of blame onto others. After psychotherapy, this group of children was able to express and experience the emotions, they previously had to deny or repress. This also shows that in case of gifted underachievement, the positive aspects of personality (which are most probably their strengths rather than their weaknesses) due to the lack of proper development of other aspects of personality, are not going to be beneficial to them. Instead they become a hindrance to the development of proper self-concept. Therefore it can be pointed out that denial and blaming others may suggest the presence of underachieving behaviour in the children and may be suggestive of more serious problems the children may face.

The studies on underachievement, mentioned above demonstrate personality as the determinant of underachievement.

To sum up we can say that there are certain personality characteristics which may result into underachievement of the children. The
personality of underachievers and overachievers is different. There is a difference in the incidence of underachievement between boys and girls.

Underachievement of school going children is a loss of valuable human resources for the nation, as well as unrealized fulfillment for the individual, therefore the need arises to address the problem of underachievement. Interventions, which have been applied, suggest understanding and dealing with the personality characteristics of underachievers as one of the factors that induce underachievement.

**Need- achievement as a Factor of Achievement:**

**Need- achievement (n-Ach):** n-Ach is defined as “a psychological response to certain economic or social conditions” (Atkinson 1957, 1964) and as “the generalized tendency to strive for success and choose goal oriented, success/failure activities”. It is developed early in life (Slavin, 2006). It is one of the important non-cognitive factors, responsible for discrepancies between expected and actual achievement.

Motivation can be defined in a number of ways. Generally, it is defined as a driving force that initiates and directs behavior. In other words, motivation is a kind of internal energy which drives a person to do something in order to achieve something. Motivation is based on three specific aspects: the arousal of behavior, the direction of behavior, and persistence of behavior. While arousal of behavior is concerned with what activates human behavior, direction of behavior is concerned with what directs behavior towards a specific goal. Persistence of behavior is concerned with how the behavior is sustained.

Based on these three specific aspects motivation is divided into different types such as achievement motivation (n-Ach), affiliation
motivation, competence motivation, power motivation, and attitude motivation (Richard Romando, 2007).

Two important concepts in motivation theory are those of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation of activity for its own sake and extrinsic motivation to engage in an activity as a means to an end (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). It is important to differentiate between motivation and orientation; as a student may be oriented but not motivated towards a particular goal. However, it is motivation that reflects the power to attain that goal (Gardner, 1985).

n-Ach, as stated above, is a type of motivation that requires delay of gratification and the concept of time, particularly regarding the future. A popular explanation of why people show the energy characteristics of high n-Ach is that they have somehow been subordinated or discriminated against. Subordination directly arouses n–Ach in the members of minority groups according to Hagen's “Law of Group Subordination”. Therefore if a child belongs to subordinated group he/she is likely to have aroused n-Ach but if the child belongs to a well to do family, he/she is likely to have a low level of n-Ach. This low level of n-Ach may lead him/her to be an underachiever.

As stated above n-ach is psychological response to certain economic and social conditions. These conditions are different for different children, suggesting a variation in the psychological response of the children to these conditions. The central characteristic of lower-class families, a collection of occupational, psychological, personality, health, and economic traits that interact, predicting performance in schools, on average, differs from the performance of families from higher social classes (Rothstein, 2004). The social disadvantage identified on the basis of caste, sex and area of
residence has also been reported to exert an effect on personality (Ojha & Kumari, 1999; Ojha & Singh, 2001).

These early imprints on personality of socially advantaged and disadvantaged groups can be explained by origin of motives in early childhood (McClelland, 1953), especially between the ages of five and nine years. Permissive and loving rearing attitudes of parents, their love withdrawal and induction discipline techniques and independence training accelerate n-Ach, while their restrictive, power assertive discipline technique and dependence retard n-Ach of children and adolescents (McClelland, 1961; Ojha, 1984).

In this regard it may be pointed out that socially disadvantaged parents display restrictive and unloving attitudes, practice power assertive discipline technique and train their children towards dependency while socially advantaged parents show permissive and loving attitudes, practice love-withdrawal and induction discipline techniques and encourage their children towards independence (Ojha, 1995; Ojha & Sinha, 1982).

Although little sex difference has been reported from the western studies in parental affection and warmth (Hatfield et al., 1967 and Allamn et al., 1972) but in one Indian study Sukhia (1985) has reported that both tribal and non-tribal parents show greater warmth and lower restrictiveness to their sons as compared to their daughters before two years of age. However in American and other western studies too parents have been found to show greater interaction with sons than with daughters of kindergarten age (Lewis, 1972; Minton et al., 1971; Gewirtz & Gewirtz, 1968). In addition boys receive more tangible rewards for their accomplishment than girls (Baumrind, 1971). These differential treatments to boys and girls may explain the different level of n-Ach in boys than in girls.
Curry (1961) has indicated that upper socio-economic group (SEG) contributes underachievers three times more than the number contributed by low SEG, pointing to the fact that children from upper SEG might be having lower n-Ach than those from lower SEG. Similarly Bhaduri (1971) has shown that underachievers tend to have a higher socio economic status (SES), a more congenial home background and more of leisure time activities. Strodbeck (1958) suggests that parents of upper SES do not always produce an overachieving son because they make too many suggestions, so that in the end the son finds it more adaptive to be passive and dependent. McClelland et al (1953) reports, that love and acceptance of fathers towards their sons lowers n-Ach of their sons. Rosen & D' Andrade (1959) suggests that stress on obedience and conformity by mothers also lowers n-Ach of their sons. Thus research has suggested that children from families with a higher SES would have a lower n-Ach than children from families of lower SES. Also that n-Ach of boys will be different from those of girls.

In conclusion we can say that underachievers can not be blamed because of their personality alone, it has been shown by various other researches that underachievement is not occurring due to personal factors only, and it may be the environment of home or the environment of the school which can be the causative factor associated with underachievement.

Therefore, in addition to personal factors responsible for underachievement phenomenon social factors clearly affect these positive and negative discrepancies. Family climate and type of school are important social factors accounting for such discrepancies.

**Family Climate:** Researches have indicated that parents are an efficacious force in students' development. Parents logically have the advantage-over peers, educators, counsellors and other professionals of
serving as a continual, perhaps more stable, and resource for their children over the life span (Farmer, 1985; Trusty, 1996). In studies involving students’ ratings of various persons as education and career resources (Peterson, Stivers, & Peters, 1986; Sebald, 1989), parents were consistently rated as most viable. Adequate support from parents is a critical variable in the school success of all children (Christenson, Rounds & Gorney, 1992).

Parents are supposed to exert the most immediate effect which is closest to the child, and it is termed as their “micro system” by Bronfenbrenner (1979). To Bronfenbrenner human development can not be understood without taking into account the various systems in which the development takes place. In this process of interaction between the individual and his environment, a mutual relationship develops. This mutual relationship helps us to understand how the family will access and manage the available resources.

Schneewind (1989) reports, that psychological make-up of the family determines how the family can actually utilise its available eco-context. Belsky (1984) has reported the influence of psychological well being and parental characteristics on parental functioning. Children whose parents are unconcerned about discipline do poorly on tests. A favorable home climate ordinarily results in an increase in intelligence as represented by their I.Q. scores over time and vice versa. (Hurlock, 1972; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Terman, Baker & Holzworth, 1962). According to Baldwin et al (1948) the democratic environment is most conducive to intellectual growth in all its aspects. The least stimulating sort of environments seem to be highly indulgent or the highly restrictive ones (Baker & Holzworth, 1962).

Whatever a child learns in preschool years, he most definitely learns what feelings his parents have toward him and toward life in general. And these feelings are the basis for each child’s concept of himself, the
world, and his place in the world. It seems that emotional security is an important part of self-acceptance, which is an important manifestation of the emotional climate of the family. Emotional climate of the family represents the interaction between children and the parents in the form of attitudes, feelings thoughts, and general behavior. The features of family solidarity form the chief basis of whatever security or continuity the child experiences in his later life.

Combs and Snygg (1959) subsume all human needs under the need to maintain and enhance his self. The studies of Combs and Snygg, Allport, Maslow and Fromm suggest that structures and dynamics of human personality affect the individual’s approach to the world of learning. More emotionally mature children come from democratic families (Peck, 1963) and from permissive rather than authoritarian families (Watson, 1942). Students with problems report that their parents show lower levels of supervision, support and affection, as well as higher levels of conflict, than students with no achievement problems (Casanova, 2005).

Researches on underachievement have indicated that there are various factors of family that may be associated with underachievement. These factors may be conflicts at home, over-expectations of parents, under-expectations of parents, physical or medical causes, social/class differences and expectations, poor home life, unsupportive parents, previous traumatic experience and poverty.

Alam & Lidhoo (1990) found sick home background is the first factor in pulling down the academic achievement of bright underachievers. Rothstein’s (2004) highlights the far greater impact of parents, home, and community on underachievement, together with health care and nutrition.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1996) recognized that "many problem behaviors in adolescence have common
antecedents in childhood experience. One is academic difficulty: another is
the absence of strong and sustained guidance from caring adults." Ford
(1992) points to psychological, social, and cultural factors contributing to
underachievement. Scales (1996) points to forty "Developmental Assets"
that help students develop socially, intellectually, and academically. They
are organized into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and
expectations, constructive use of time, educational commitment, values,
social competencies, and positive identity. Without access to a critical mass
of these assets, students are more likely to have social, intellectual, and
academic difficulties. Ford & Thomas (1997) categorized these factors as
socio-psychological, family-related, peer-related, and school-related. One or
all of these factors can hinder student achievement. Muir (2001) has given
three specific learning models which may contribute to underachievement;
the delivery model, behaviorism, and general intelligence.

Therefore we can safely conclude that underachievement may be
associated with the climate of the family. Parents are most important
resources as far as the education and career of their children is concerned.
Children’s intellectual growth has been found to be facilitated by the
democratic environment rather than authoritarian environment. A healthy
family climate providing sustained guidance and supervision in the
wholesome development of their children’s personality may reduce the
likelihood of academic difficulties resulting into underachievement of their
children.

**School Type:** Another important factor that may be associated with
the discrepancy between expected and actual achievement of the children is
the type of school in which the children study.

Just as the kind of home the child grows up plays a deciding role in
determining what sort of personality pattern he will develop, so does the
school or college play an important role in shaping the behavior and his concept of himself as a person both directly and indirectly.

Different kinds of schools stress the development of different values (Koteswara, 1991; Kulshreshtha, 1992). School is one of the first psychological realities for the child. It is the prevailing atmosphere at school, whether hostile or sympathetic, the rigid discipline or the atmosphere of freedom and responsibility, the fears or friendliness of teachers, the punishment which can either reduce the emotional strain for the pupils or arouse unpleasant emotions in them. An emotionally satisfied child has the capacity to make effective adjustment with himself, members of his family, and his peers in the school, society and culture. An emotionally satisfied person not merely has such attitudes and functioning but also the ability to enjoy them fully whereas an emotionally unsatisfied child may not have this capacity.

There is a general perception of difference regarding the performance, manners, behaviours, efforts, personalities, motivation and the family background of the students attending different types of schools. Here, private schools are held in high esteem, due to orderly environment, positive student teacher relationships (Eccles et al 1991), they are expected to show good performance (Majumdar, 1996; Aggarwal, 1998; Naibissan, 1997; Singh, 1995) and are able to succeed in competitive examinations compared to government schools which are supposed to be marked by indiscipline, poor infrastructure, teacher shortage, teacher negligence (in the PROBE villages) and considered to be showing lower performance than their counterparts in private schools. Private schools have been reported to be biased towards boys (NCERT 1986 and 1998; Dreze and Gazdar, 1996; Majumdar, 1997) and privileged groups (Krishnaji’s, 1996).

There are different types of private schools, namely Private Aided or
Unaided schools. Private Unaided (PUA) schools are privately owned and funded, and rely more or less, on user finance, unless they are schools which are run on philanthropic basis. Annual fee could range from Rs. 180 to Rs. 50,000 or more, thus showing that they cover the entire socio-economic spectrum. Not so long ago this used to be considered an elitist sector, catering to the upper classes and offering a very expensive brand of education (Varghese, 1993). Other research contradicts these impressions (Bashir, 1994; Kingdon 1996a), which shows that private education caters to a very broad range of economic classes, in some cases all the way to the poorest sections of society, as shown by private schools in the slums of Hyderabad (Tooley & Dixon, 1998).

Private schools are more for boys (NCERT 1986 and 1998; Majumdar’s, 1997), for upper castes (Krishnaji’s, 1996), and for urban areas than government schools. In other words, attending a private school is likely to be a mark of social privilege. Private schools are catering to a wider section of society. Because of better services and active teaching in private schools, parents even having lower income level, due to the teaching of English (Majumdar, 1996; Aggarwal, 1998; Na, bissan, 1997; Singh, 1995) prefer to send their children to these schools. There has been a growing trend of exodus from government to private schools and resultant mushrooming of private schools due to the difference in the teaching environment of private and government schools (Kindon, 1994). Therefore it may be expected that there shall be comparatively low occurrence of underachievement in private schools.

Government schools on the other hand generally have low prestige. In India, although most cities and villages have a government primary school, poor infrastructure, teacher shortage, and, even more importantly, teacher negligence is rampant. When PROBE investigators visited the government primary schools (without prior notice), 50% of the schools had
no teaching activity going on. Parents were disillusioned, cynical, hostile, and helpless about this state of affairs. Teachers were caught between the strain of coping with very dilapidated buildings, understaffing, and lack of teaching equipment and the demand posed by first generation learners who were often irregular and whose parents could not support their learning needs.

Micro studies, which have focused on education in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar also, report inadequate infrastructure and lack of teacher accountability in government schools in the face of rising demands. The main difference between private and government school is that private schools have an atmosphere of active teaching, when investigator visited the schools, students and teachers were almost always at work (In the PROBE villages).

It has been suggested by various researches that the influence of school is stronger than the social background of the students. Research at the level of classroom functioning suggest that school influences can be stronger than social background (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis & Ecob, 1988). But these influences may be only partial and limited (Mortimore, 1997). The variation in pupil’s achievement scores attributable to schools is ten percent (Thomas and Mortimore, 1996). This suggestion does not seem to be true for the students having academic difficulties and belonging to lower background of the society. This is because parents belonging to lower socio economic background may encounter difficulties in helping their children in higher grades, as higher grades present specialized demands. However, the influence of school being stronger than social background may be true for those students who have the drive to learn, although belonging to lower socio- economic background.

To sum up we can say that school is an extension of home which
facilitates adjustment of children depending upon the values it lays stress on. There is a difference in the perception of private and government schools because of the difference in the environment and services provided by these schools. Private schools cater the children belonging to upper SES and they are mark of social privilege whereas government schools cater the children of lower SES.

**Gaps in Knowledge**

In spite of several in depth studies it has not been able to decisively identify the personal predictors of underachievement. A number of studies on family climate have been undertaken in relation to academic achievement but very little attention has been paid to factors like family relationships and effect of emotionally satisfying family environment on academic over and underachievement. Similarly school, as a variable to underachievement and overachievement has also not been studied. To fill up these gaps a study of the present nature is likely to bring to light probable factors of children’s personality, need-achievement, home and school.

The proposed research hypothesis therefore is that underachievement is a phenomenon, which is determined by personal as well as social factors, where personality and n-Ach represent relatively lower side of the scale in comparative model of underachievers and overachievers.

Family is the first social field for the children which plays a moulding and deterministic role in the development of personality and motivation. Emotionally satisfying family climate will be representing overachievement rather than underachievement in comparative model.

School is another place for the realization of individuals’ potential, providing avenues for the development of all the aspects of personality.
(academic, intellectual, social, physical or spiritual), thereby furthering the aim of education. It is also theorized that different types of schools represent different sections of society inhabiting different economic, social, cultural and human capital.

It is important to clarify what we understand by these different types of human capital. Economic or financial capital represents income, assets, and various monetary instruments that together comprise a household's economic resources. Social capital shows the tangible benefits and resources that accrue to people by virtue of their inclusion in a social structure (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Cultural capital refers to knowledge of the norms, styles, conventions, and tastes that pervade specific social settings and allow individuals to navigate them in ways that increase their odds of success (Bourdieu, 1977; Swidler 1986; Macleod 1995) and human capital refers to the skills, abilities, and knowledge possessed by specific individuals (Schultz 1963; Becker 1964). The differences in these capitals account for the difference in the achievement of children, resulting into underachievement and overachievement.

The proposed investigation focuses mainly on the personal and social correlates of over-and underachievers taking into account Personality traits, Need-achievement, Family climate and School type as predictors of academic achievement.

**Rationale of the Study:** Education has been ascribed a central role in every aspect of life by Kellner (1989) and the most basic aim of education is to produce better and fully realized individuals so that they become citizens and active members of the society. Different philosophies have been developed to realize the aim of education, by a number of schools of thought. These schools of thought include the Greeks and the Romans,
Classicist, for example Cicero, Earnes Bloch (1986), Marxist such as Marx, Engels and pragmatists such as Dewey, Paulo Friere (1972, 2000). All the classical philosophers including Marx and Friere assume that education is of central importance in creating better and fully realized individuals as well as good society.

In order to realize this aim of creating better and fully realized individuals by education, there should be consistency between educational philosophy and educational practices.

The context in which the society functions produces an effect on the practices of its institutions, including educational institutions. Depending on the functioning of the society, the educational institutions may or may not be able to prioritize the basic educational aims. This may create an inconsistency between what should actually be the basic aims and policies of education, and the actual aims, objectives and practice being followed in the country.

It is a matter of concern that working class children or certain minority groups perform less well educationally on almost any measure of academic achievement compared to middle class or mainstream children. This evidence is substantial, consistently patterned, and available at all levels of educational systems. The evidence shows such inequalities are strikingly consistent over time. The lower the social class, the lower will be the attainment.

Substantial and consistently patterned evidence, which affects educational achievement, demonstrates the inequalities of wealth, income, power, prestige and opportunity in society. When these two types of evidences are taken together, the persistence of their patterning over many years has been labeled as the failure of liberal ideology (i.e., the network of beliefs which holds that education is not only a good thing in itself, but that
it will work positively for the eradication of inequalities in society). But
education has neither succeeded equally well for all classes, nor has it
removed inequalities and injustices. These two types of evidences show
that underachievement is more likely to be due to the social structures and
processes rather than genetic inheritance or individual psychology. The
victim, or failures or underachievers are not to be blamed (Critical
theorists).

In Indian context, because of the persistence of consistently
patterned social inequalities and disadvantage across various sections of
society and because of the discrepancy between educational philosophy and
educational practices, the conditions are created for the incidence of
underachievement.

In Indian society underachievement is more likely to occur in the
families belonging to lower SES, or families having higher level of conflict
and disagreement between its members, with frequent parental divorce,
parental deprivation etc. The problem of underachievement associated with
the lower classes is due to the deprivation, lack of suitably stimulating
environment and because of the fact that they are not getting proper chance
to realize their potential.

Other reasons which may be related to its occurrence may be based
in the schools. Those school related factors may be poor infrastructure,
teacher shortage, and, even more importantly, teacher negligence.

Therefore it is important to identify the environmental factors
causing underachievement so that its remedial measures could be applied.
The environment of home and the school seems to be the most influencing
variables causing underachievement of the children. Therefore there is a
need to look into those aspects of the children’s home and school which
may be contributing to their underachievement.
According to Bourdieu, schooling actually functions to legitimize and reinforce disadvantage. In Indian society, this disadvantage is assumed to be consistently patterned and the blame of underachievement is presumed to be social structures and processes rather than the genetic inheritance of these children. But research on psychological resilience and positive deviance (Zeitlin, Ghassemi, and Mansour, 1990) suggests good cognitive test performance in the presence of poverty. There are many examples, such as Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Sri Aurobindo etc., who in spite of being poor have proved themselves and made a place for themselves in this world. This led the present investigator to believe that there is something in the personality of the children which is not affected by adverse environmental conditions. Instead these adverse conditions create a burning desire in them to succeed at any cost. This characteristic seems to be the n-Ach of the individual that may be present in the children belonging to lower SES. On the other hand if the children belonging to upper SES are not having n-Ach then the presence of better facilities or favorable environment is not going to be beneficial to them.

Various researches have suggested that there are certain personality characteristics such as persistence, higher emotional stability, and controlled temperament that lead to better academic achievement. On the other hand personality characteristics which may lead to underachievement are expediency, immaturity, anxious insecurity, uncontrolled temperament. Therefore, there is a need to study the personal factors causing underachievement so that its remedial measures could be applied. It is important to understand what characteristics of personality the child is going to have and whether he is having n-Ach or not.

It has been suggested by various researches that government or public schools are not running properly because of lack of human resources or facilities. India has spent 3.9 percent of its annual Gross Domestic
Products (GDP) on education in 9th five year plan, 3.2 percent in 10th five year plan and in 11th five year plan; India proposes to spend 5 percent of its annual GDP. While comparing this percent of GDP spent on education with that of other developed countries, such as China and Denmark, India's GDP on education seems to be quite less, China's and Denmark's GDP allocation for education being 2.82 percent and 8.1 percent, respectively.

The problem of poor allocation of funds is further aggravated by lack of concrete planning and management to utilize existing funds and human resources, especially in States like Uttar Pradesh. Funds are either inappropriately utilized or teachers are not properly trained. Researches have shown that teachers' training, retraining, monitoring and evaluation are not properly conducted. The content and nature of pre-service and in-service training provided to the teachers are suggested to be irrelevant and ill-equipped.

It is also observed in our schools, especially government schools that there is a lack of proper interaction and communication between teachers and the parents.

If these drawbacks are corrected then perhaps the inconsistency between educational philosophy and educational practice can be bridged. As educational philosophy enable researchers and educators to become observers of their own practices in the light of their respective philosophies, ensuring a kind of self-check on their educational practices (Horkheimer, 1982; Eames Bloch and Walter Benjamin, Kant). Therefore use of educational philosophy would lead to the improvement of educational outcome without extraordinary expenditure.

In Indian context we need to carry out research to find out the causes associated with underachievement. India being poor country and the gross expenditure on education being low, we need to apply cost effective
strategies to make maximum utilization of available resources. Perhaps such researches can provide recommendation and correct guidance to tackle multifaceted nature of the problem of underachievement.

**Statement of the Problem:** In the light of discussion given above the present investigator has taken up the problem of studying the incidence of overachievement and underachievement in a randomly selected student population with the purpose to see the impact of personality, n-Ach and family climate on over and underachievement, and also the incidence of over and underachievement in private and government schools.

**Objective of the Study:** In specific terms, the present research proposes to;

1. To identify the personality characteristics of over and underachievers.
2. To study n-Ach of over and underachievers.
3. To investigate the family climate of over and underachievers.
4. To identify the incidence of over and underachievers in private and government schools.
5. To determine school type differences in the incidence of over and underachievement.
6. To study inter-correlations among the above mentioned personal and social variables viz. Personality, n-Ach, family climate that are presumed to determine over and under achievement.

**Hypothesis of the Study:** The present research aims to identify the personality characteristics of over and under achievers found in different types of schools (private and government schools) and different family climates, with different levels of n-Ach. Therefore the investigator decided
to formulate directional hypotheses based on review of previous researches and theoretical rationale. On the basis of previous researches in the area and theoretical rationale the following hypotheses have been formulated;

1a. There is no significant difference in personality characteristics of over and underachievers.

1b. There is no significant difference in n-Ach of over and underachievers.

1c. Family climate of over and underachievers does not differ significantly.

2a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachieving boys and overachieving boys.

2b. There is no significant difference in n-Ach of underachieving boys and overachieving boys.

2c. Family climate of underachieving boys and overachieving boys does not differ significantly.

3a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachieving girls and overachieving girls.

3b. There is no significant difference in n-Ach of underachieving girls and overachieving girls.

3c. Family climate of underachieving girls and overachieving girls does not differ significantly.

4a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachievers in private schools and overachievers in private schools.
4b. n-Ach of underachievers (in private schools) does not differ significantly from n-Ach of overachievers (in private schools).

4c. There is no significant difference in family climate of underachievers (in private schools) and overachievers (in private schools).

5a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachievers (in govt. schools) and overachievers (in govt. schools).

5b. n-Ach of underachievers (in govt. schools) and overachievers (in govt. schools) does not differ significantly.

5c. Family climate of underachievers (in govt. schools) and overachievers (in govt. schools) does not differ significantly.

6a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachieving boys (in private schools) and overachieving boys (in private schools).

6b. n-Ach of underachieving boys (in private schools) does not differ significantly from n-Ach of overachieving boys (in private schools).

6c. There is no significant difference in family climate of underachieving boys (in private schools) and overachieving boys (in private schools).

7a. There is no significant difference in personality factors of underachieving girls (in private schools) and overachieving girls (in private schools).

7b. n-Ach of underachieving girls (in private schools) does not differ significantly from n-Ach of overachieving girls (in private schools).

7c. There is no significant difference in family climate of underachieving girls (in private schools) and overachieving girls (in private schools).
private schools).

8a. Personality factors of underachieving boys (in govt. schools) and over achieving boys (in govt. schools) do not differ significantly.

8b. There is no significant difference in n-ach of underachieving boys (in govt. schools) and overachieving boys (in govt. schools).

8c. There is no significant difference in family climate of underachieving boys (in govt. schools) and overachieving boys (in govt. schools).

9a. Personality factors of underachieving girls (in govt. schools) and over achieving girls (in govt. schools) do not differ significantly.

9b. There is no significant difference in n-Ach of underachieving girls (in govt. schools) and overachieving girls (in govt. schools).

9c. There is no significant difference in family climate of underachieving girls (in govt. schools) and overachieving girls (in govt. schools).

10a. The incidence of under and overachievement of boys does not differ from that of girls.

10b. There is no difference in the incidence of under and overachievement in private and government schools.

The review of related literature is presented in the second chapter.