CHAPTER I

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The present study entitled "Aspirations of adolescents as related to socio-economic status, intelligence, and sex" is an exploratory study pertaining to aspirations of adolescents vis-a-vis S.E.S., intelligence and sex in the social set up of Chandigarh and surrounding areas. An attempt has been made to examine how far aspirations of adolescents are related to different variables such as S.E.S., intelligence and sex.
It is now being realized that the psychological damage caused by unrealistically high or unrealistically low levels of aspiration is tremendous. Hence a strong scientific interest in studying them has developed. This interest concentrates upon finding out how the different variables affect the aspirations, why they vary from individual to individual, at what age? They become explicit and what effect they have on individual's behaviour. Only when such knowledge is available it will be possible to give such directions to the individual's aspirations which may lead him to a healthy adjustment in his social and cultural environment.

This investigation specifically highlights the personal, educational, social and occupational aspirations of adolescents. The study includes 750 adolescents studying in different schools of Chandigarh selected at random to get a representative sample of a typical society of the North-western part of India.

In order to get a vivid picture of the aspirations of adolescents it is very necessary to understand what the term 'adolescence' signifies and also what the term 'aspirations' denotes. This is highly necessary because it is this period of a person's life, which has been chosen for the present study.

**ADOLESCENCE:**

Adolescence is the spring of life. It is a period when
an individual is neither a child nor an adult. It represents a period of growth and change in nearly all aspects of the child's physical, mental, social and emotional life. It is a time of new experiences, new responsibilities and new relationships with adults as well as peers.

Broadly speaking, adolescence extends from sexual maturity to the age when independence from adult authority is legally assured, American society recognises the individual as mature at the age of 21 years and give him at this age the right to vote and to be responsible for his own behaviour. We may therefore, regard the age of 21 as the legal age of maturity and the end of adolescence. Marking off the beginning of the adolescence is more difficult because the age of sexual maturing varies so greatly. For the average American girl of today, the sexual maturing comes during the thirteenth year, and for boys, during the fourteenth year. Within the sex groups, however, marked individual differences may be found. This means on an average, adolescence extends from 13 to 21 years for girls, and for boys from 14 to 21. Thus girls have a year longer to be adolescents and a year less to be children.

Hurlock (1955) divides the period or adolescence as follows:
(1) Pre-adolescence  10-12  
(2) Early adolescence  13-16  
(3) Late adolescence  17-21  

Encyclopedia of Psychology says, "Adolescence extends roughly from 13 years of age till 21 for girls and from 15 till 21 for boys".

Dr. Ram Shakal Pandey (1963) states that in India this period comes earlier than in Western countries owing to climatic reasons. Generally in our country adolescence begins from 12th or 13th year in the boys and a bit earlier in girls. In boys the age of adolescence may run thus:

I. Early adolescence  ...  from 11 to 12½ or 13 years of age.
II. Middle adolescence  ...  from 13 to 18 years of age.
III. Late adolescence  ...  from 18 to 21 years of age.

There may be exceptions in this division of adolescent years but most of the deviates there from would be, perhaps, abnormal ones.

ASPIRATIONS:

Typically adolescence is a time of idealism and romanticism. It is a time of dreaming about the future when
the adolescent aspires to reach the moon and confidently
expects to do so. He has fanciful ideas about his future
especially about marrying a person with whom he will live
happily ever after and having a glamorous job which will
provide him with money he needs for getting the status
symbols he regards as essential to happiness. Having these
status symbols he believes, will automatically open the doors
which upto now have been closed to him.

In everyday usage "ambition" and 'aspiration' are
synonymous and are used interchangeably. The definition of
ambition as given in the standard dictionary means an eagerness
for honour, superiority, power or attainment. It suggests a
"personal uplifting". Aspiration means longing for what is
above one, with advancement as its end; the subtle distinction
lies in the emphasis on" what is above one". At the back of
all motivation for achievement is the desir for something better.
"What is above one" is not just honour, superiority, power
or attainment.

Aspiration means the goal the individual sets for
himself in a task which has intense personal significance for
him or in which his ego is involved. Because of this ego
involvement, success leads to increased self esteem while failure brings embarrassment, remorse and a feeling of inadequacy.

Generally aspirations are categorised as 'immediate aspirations' and 'remote aspirations'. Immediate aspirations are the goals the individual sets before himself for the immediate future, such as, goals for passing an examination he is scheduled to take tomorrow or of winning a tennis tournament he is just entering. Remote aspirations are goals set for the future. The more immediate the goal is the more realistic it is likely to be.

Remote goals may start up as separate and distinct aspirations. Sooner or later they usually fit themselves into the individual's life span. By adolescence, there is a great pressure to formulate remote goals, and combine them into a hierarchy which will give the adolescent a path to follow to the pinnacle of the hierarchy. Even immediate aspirations serve as stepping stones, for instance, the adolescent who wants to be a doctor has to achieve many intermediate goals like passing different examinations to reach this remote goal. Level of aspiration is the standard a person expects and hopes to reach in a given performance. Because he has not yet
reached this goal, his level of aspiration is discrepancy between his achieved and his stated goals. The distance between his achieved and stated goals may be realistic in the sense that he has a good chance of success. On the other hand distance may be so great that his chances of reaching his stated goals are slim; therefore, his level of aspiration is unrealistic. In the views of Hoppe (1930) level of aspiration represents a person's expectations, goals, claims or his future achievement in a given task.

Adolescence is a time when great number of young people make choices that will have an important bearing on the rest of their lives. Many young people have to make decisions for the future before they have had much experience on which to build such decisions or to know what they might mean. Adolescent is not however, unique in this respect. At all stages of life from childhood to old age, people have opportunities to venture, to take risks, and to make choice without having the background of experience to predict what the outcome will be. However, as a person moves from young adulthood into middle age it becomes more difficult for him to change a decision, to reverse himself, and alter the course of his life. In many areas of life there is less freedom for him to make a new start.
Actually, individuals probably have more freedom for changing the pattern of their lives as they grow older than they avail themselves of. But the fact remains that it becomes harder for a person as he becomes older to change his mind after he has made a choice; decisions become a little more important and choices become a little more binding.

METHODS OF STUDYING THE LEVELS OF ASPIRATIONS:

Because of the difficulties involved in direct methods, indirect methods have been used to get clues about adolescent's levels of aspiration. According to Hurlock, "following techniques have proved to be most fruitful:

(a) Studies of Wishes:- Studies of wishes give clues about the adolescent's immediate as well as remote aspirations.

(b) Studies of Ideals:- If his ideal is an athletic hero, it suggests that the adolescent aspires to be a successful athlete.

(c) Studies of Resolutions:- When a person resolves to change, it suggests that he is dissatisfied with himself. If for example he resolves to improve, we get some idea of his aspirations.
(d) Laboratory Experiments: Laboratory experiments of level of aspirations must, through necessity, be focussed on a study of immediate aspirations.

In the present study out of all these methods the first one (i.e. studies of wishes) has been found most suitable. As different kinds of wishes can be effectively studied only through this method.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study is undertaken for studying the aspirations of adolescents as related to intelligence, S.E.S and sex. Studies on aspirations of adolescents are available in the western culture (The details are given in Chapter II). However, very few studies have been done on adolescents' aspirations in other cultures. Particularly in Indian context hardly a few studies are available. Since it is presumed that the cultural differences may have an impact on the aspirations of the adolescents. The present study has been undertaken to make a comprehensive study of the Indian adolescent's aspirations.

The some studies conducted in India on adolescent period have measured the effect of motivation on the level of aspirations. The present study has been designed to know the
aspirations of adolescents in different socio-economic groups and to see the effect of intelligence and sex on the aspirations.

In the past, encouragement of realistic levels of aspirations on the part of children and adolescents was a part of child training given to parents and teachers. While young people were not discouraged from being ambitious; they were encouraged to face facts realistically and set goals that were possible to achieve. The purpose of this was not to thwart the young person's achievements but to safeguard him against failure and the accompanying disappointment, frustration and feeling of inadequacy.

Today the tide has turned, unrealistic levels of aspirations are encouraged rather than discouraged. The adolescents who claims he will make a million before he is 40 is not told that he is "too big for his britches". Instead, he is commended for his ambition and is promised any aid his parents can give him to achieve this goal.

Beginning with F. Hoppe's initial studies (1930) a fruitful and growing amount of experimental work chiefly that of K. Lewin and his associates (1944) has been devoted to
this area. As laboratory experiments must be focused on the study of immediate aspirations it is never possible to predict with complete accuracy the individual's performance outside the laboratory. A laboratory experiment does not give any clue to his characteristic pattern of aspiring.

The logical way to find out the adolescent's aspirations is personal enquiry. The present study is based on the pattern adopted in famous studies by Douvan and Adelson (1966) and Cobb (1954). This study is expected to throw light on the aspirations of adolescents in a different cultural environment. Here in it will depart from other studies that have been conducted so far.

Chandigarh being metropolitan area, people of different communities and races from different states are its residents. There is a mixed population. Adolescents in this city while studying in schools and colleges, come into close contact with each other and are affected by the mutual interaction of their personalities. In the present investigation, adolescents from different socio-economic groups, different cultural backgrounds, differently brought up, form the subject of a unique study. Chandigarh consists of urban area, rural
area and slum colonies. Hence samples from all the S.E.S.
groups and cultural groups are available here.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The present study was undertaken to investigate the
relationship between aspiration of adolescents with their level
of socio-economic status, level of intelligence and sex.

The exact problem selected for investigation was:
"Aspirations of Adolescents as Related to Socio-
economic status, Intelligence and Sex".

EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS USED IN THE STATEMENT:

The operational definitions of some of the terms used
in the statement of the problem are given below:

ADOLESCENT:

For the present study, the period of middle adolescense
has been chosen. Children in the age group of 13 to 16 years of
age who have crossed their childhood but have not attained full
youth are selected randomly from different schools of Chandigarh.

ASPIRATIONS:

'Aspirations' means the goal that an individual desires
or hopes to reach in a specified field of activity. Out of
multifarious activities, a few are chosen which affect the life
of an individual most, i.e. educational aspirations, personal aspirations, social aspirations, and occupational aspirations

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS:

To obtain the level indicative of both the social and economic achievement of a family, study is conducted under the following grouping:

1. Higher S.E.S. group
2. Average S.E.S. group
3. Lower S.E.S. group

In the present study S.E.S. is measured through a socio-economic status scale.

INTELLIGENCE:

In the present study general mental ability is treated as intelligence. It is measured through an intelligence test on mental ability. Analysis is made on the following group basis.

1. Above Average intelligence group.
2. Average intelligence group.
3. Below Average intelligence group.

SEX:

Division of sex is on the basis of male and female. Comparison of aspirations of male and female in higher, average and lower groupings in S.E.S., above average, average
and below average groupings in intelligence is made in the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Objectives of the proposed study are:

1. To study the relationship between socio-economic status and aspirations.

2. To know the relationship between intelligence and aspirations.

3. To know the difference in aspirations on the basis of sex differences.

4. To know the difference in trend in the aspirations of various groups of adolescents.

5. To know the difference in aspirations on the basis of rural v/s urban adolescents.

SUBSIDIARY OBJECTIVE:

To offer suggestions to teachers, parents and administrators on the basis of findings so that they may be able to guide the adolescents for their future role in society.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

Many researchers in the east and west have investigated the aspirations of adolescents. Relationships expressed in those
studies have helped in the judicious selection of the Hypothesis for the present study. Some of the important researches in this area has shown the following relationships between different variables. Studies by Robert. B, (1968) and Gilbert (1973) have reported that Educational aspirations are related to the variable of intelligence. Byrn (1939) Canters (1956), Muthayya (1962), Joshi (1963), Mathew (1966) Pal (1968), Harnnet (1969), Wayman Trans Webster (1973), Thakural (1977) and Chadha (1979) have reported positive significant inter-correlations between intelligence and occupational aspirations.


On the basis of the relationships expressed in the earlier studies the following research Hypothesis were planned.
RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS:

S.E.S. and intelligence of urban male adolescents have close relationship with their aspirations.

Aspirations of urban female adolescents are significantly related to the S.E.S. and intelligence.

S.E.S. and intelligence of rural male adolescents are significantly linked with their aspirations.

S.E.S. and intelligence greatly contributes in the formation of aspirations of rural female adolescents.

In order to remove the bias the following null Hypotheses were formulated:

S.E.S. does not contribute significantly towards aspirations of adolescents.

Intelligence does not significantly affect the aspirations of adolescents.

Sex does not affect the aspirations of adolescents significantly.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study is conducted on 750 male and female adolescents in the Union Territory of Chandigarh and its
surrounding area (U.T.). All these adolescents are taken from different schools of these areas, who are in the age group of 13 to 16 years.

The limitations of this investigation are as follows:

1. In the present study only three are independent variables. These are socio-economic status, intelligence and sex chosen for their effect on the aspirations of adolescents is investigated.

2. Only four types of aspirations i.e. Educational, Personal, Social and Occupational aspirations are taken in this study.

3. The present study is done single handed by the investigator with limited resources.

4. Aspiration scale and other tools and techniques are used in the study with their own limitations.

5. Descriptive method is used in the study.

6. The results of the study are based purely on the responses given by the male and female adolescents of various schools.

7. Another limitation on the study is the unfortunate non-cooperation of school personnels.