CHAPTER ONE
1.1 SELF-CONCEPT

It is probable that our ancestors had thought only about their fears, their desires and about themselves but when man began to live in society; he had to face many of the physical and non-physical problems besides the problem of food, clothing and housing. These non-physical problems were related to his behaviour and adjustment in society. By and by he began to give a serious thought to non-physical and psychological self. Later with advent of written history, writers would describe this awareness of self in terms of spirit, psyche or soul. During the vedic period this term was described thoroughly.

During the middle ages the concept of soul was further developed by theologians, who stressed its immortality and superiority to the body in which it resided.

A turning point in man’s thinking about his non-physical being came in 1644 when René Descartes wrote his ‘Principle of Philosophy’. Descartes proposed that doubt was a principal tool of disciplined inquiry. He reasoned that if he doubted he was thinking, and therefore he must exist. Other philosophers of this period among them—Spinoza and Leibnitz, added their ideas about the mystery of the non-physical aspect of man. Terms such as mind, soul, psyche and self were often used interchangeably.

Self-concept is an idea that has received importance in modern psychology in the recent years but its significance has not been fully
recognized and appreciated until very recently. With the advancement of child psychology, there has been a growing realization of the importance of self-concept. Self-concept is a term which is highly complex. It has been defined differently by various scholars. It would be proper to say that much of the contemporary theorizing about self-concept derives from James (1890). He considered ego the individual's sense of identity. In addition to this global concept, he felt that self-includes spiritual, material and social aspects. Mental faculties and inclinations comprised the spiritual self. Material possessions constituted the material self. The esteem and regard that a person perceives others have for him formed the social self.

After that number of theorists began to establish and elucidate their concepts of self. Although each of these theorists introduced his own definition, but all used the term "self" to have one of three meanings:

(i) A dynamic process
(ii) A system of awareness
(iii) An interrelated process and awareness.

The first meaning incorporated the cognition process, such as perceiving, interpreting, thinking, and remembering. The second denoted the objectified form of awareness an individual gives to his feelings, evaluations, and beliefs about himself. The third gave the body of awareness in terms of its effect upon what is perceived and how this perception is interpreted. Allport (1961) maintains that self is something which we are immediately aware of, we think of it as a warm central private region of our life.
In counter distinction to James (1890) and Allport (1961), Freud (1938) pays little attention to the self-image. Rather, for him, the ego is a functional agent or executive of the personality which makes rational choice and controls action in the healthy person. The ego decides what instincts to satisfy as well as in what manner to satisfy them. It prevents the discharge of tension until the demands of the moral arm of the personality and the natural impulses of the person. To the extent that the ego is able to keep harmony between the impulses and conscience, it is an effective agent.

In contrast to Freud's (1938) conception of the ego as a system of processes, Mead's (1934) self is as an object of awareness. Mead claims that the person responds to himself with certain feelings and attitudes as others respond to him. He becomes self-conscious (aware) by the way people react to him as an object. Further, various selves can be differentiated by the specific set of responses in different social settings. Home attitudes expressed toward him create a home self; school attitudes expressed by teachers and classroom experience create a school self; and social attitudes expressed by peers and others in social settings create a social self and so on.

According to Lewin (1936) the self-concept is expressed by a life space region which determines present belief about the self.

The term "life space" is a psychological concept to be distinguished from physical space. It includes the individual's universe of personal experience as a space in which he moves. Goals, evaluations, ideas, perceptions of significant objects, future plans and events, all form a part of the life space of the person. Life space can be considered a complex internal mechanism
which produces behaviour. All the variables that determine the direction of behaviour lie in the life space of the individual. If one is to predict behaviour, one must know the life space of the person at the time the behaviour to be predicted. By the same token, if one desires to change behaviour, one must alter the valences of the subject’s life space. Lewins (1936) life space closely parallels the meaning of an objectified form of self. Koffka (1935) regards self as the core of nucleus of the ego. Change in behaviour is because of the “great ego field gestalt”.

Lundholm (1940) distinguishes between a subjective self and an objective-self. No mention of the functional, motivational, or process dynamics of the self is explicitly stated. The subjective self is mainly what a person comes to think about himself. Lundholm (1940) views the subjective self as alterable from the experiences one has in interaction with others in the pursuit of various tasks. This theory is similar to Mead’s (1934) in that the self is primarily an object of awareness.

Sherif and Contril (1947) vaguely assert that the self is an object and the ego is a process. They conceive of the ego as a constellation of attitudes that includes personal identity, values, possessions, and feelings of worth. Although they do not clearly differentiate self as object and ego as process they do imply that the ego becomes involved in a given task it will energize and direct the person’s behaviour. For instance, if self-esteem is at stake, the ego attitudes are aroused and tend to motivate the person to work harder.

Symonds (1951) incorporates the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and the social philosophy of Mead (1934) and thus sees the ego as a group of processes and the self as the manner in which the individual reacts to himself, while ego and self are distinct aspects of personality;
there is considerable interaction between them. There is favourable self-
reaction when the ego performs effectively in meeting the demands of life.
On the other hand, the ego functions more effectively when the self is
confident and held in high regard. Symonds (1951) cautions that a
person may be unaware of his true self-conceptions due to unconscious
distortions. In other words, what a person says about himself may not
necessarily agree with his unconscious self-evaluation.

Cattell (1950) considers "the self" the principal organizing influence
exerted upon man which gives stability and order to human behaviour.
He differentiates between concept of self (awareness) and sentiment of
self. The sentiment of self regard is the most important influence in man.
Cattell (1950) states that sentiments are the "major acquired dynamic
trait structures which cause their possessors to pay attention to certain
objects, or class of objects, and to feel and react in a certain way with
regard to them". Cattell (1950) also introduces the process of self-
observation. The self which a person must rationally admit to be is the
actual (real) self, and the self which a person would aspire to is the ideal
self. Cattell (1950) along with James (1890), Allport (1961) and Lewin
(1936) conceive of the self as both object and process. While James
(1890) gives self a dynamic quality of self – preservation and seeking and
Allport (1961) gives it the "propriate" functions of striving activity, Cattell
(1950) is even more explicit in terms of selective perception and
maintenance of self-esteem, and adds the dimension of inspirational self.

Where Cattell (1950) expands the self functions, Murphy (1947a)
expands objectified self, as does Mead (1934) and delimits the self-
process primarily to defensive-enhancing functions. Murphy (1947d)
presents a number of selves dynamically interconnected in the form of a
total organization. He defines "self" as the individual known to the individual. Murphy (1947) used 'self' in two contrasting senses. The self as a thing concerned and as a thing perceived. In other words self concept is one's image of himself.

Murphy (1947) attributes the defensive mechanisms to the ego processes. The major activities of the ego are to defend and/or enhance the self-concept. Wolman (1950) defines self concept as the individual's appraisal or evaluation of himself. Unlike Symonds (1951), who cautions that a person's unconscious self-evaluations may distort his self-concept, Rogers (1951) believes that discontinuity is of major significance in order to understand self-concept theory. People behave in terms of the ways in which they see themselves a conscious activity. He states "as long as the self-Gestalt is firmly organized, no contradictory material is even dimly perceived, the positive self-feelings may exist, the self may be seen as worthy and acceptable, and conscious tension is minimal. Behaviour is consistent with the organized hypotheses and concepts of the self-structure".

Chein's (1944) view of the 'self' and 'ego' appears to be in accord with the prevalent one that 'self' is what one is aware of, whereas 'ego' is a group of process. Self is not active. The motives and ideas of the ego serve the purpose of defending, extending, enhancing and preserving the self and threat to the self is sought to be countered by the ego. He feels that self is thought to be a part of the total personality of an individual. The self follows a course of continuous growth and development and gets more and more complex and is involved with the emerging of individual into adulthood.
Sarabin (1952) regards self as a cognitive structure consisting of various aspects of an individual's being. One may have conception of his body (the somatic self) of his sense organs and musculature (the receptor self). Since all these are based on experience, consequently Sarabin (1952) speaks of them as 'empirical selves' using the term 'self' and 'ego' synonymously.

Shoebin (1962) defines self as "a relatively stable organization of values that mediates and focuses behaviour", on account of which it exercises a profound influence on every day life.

Combs (1952) is the clearest representative of the self-concept theory to which we subscribe, because of the central role we accord to conscious feelings, cognitions and perceptions. He claims that "all behaviour" without exception, is completely determined by and pertinent to the phenomenal field of the behaving organism*. That is, how a person behaves is the result of how he perceives the situation and himself at the moment of this action.

According to Labenne and Green (1969), "Self-concept is the person's total appraisal of his appearance, background and origins, abilities and sources, attitudes and feelings which culminate as a directing force in behaviour".

In 'Dictionary of Education' by Good (1973), self-concept is defined as "the individual's perception of himself as a person, which includes his abilities, appearance, performance in his job and other phases of daily living".

According to 'Dictionary of Education', by Taneja (1989), "self-concept refers to the picture or image a person has of himself".
So, an individual's self-conception is his views of himself. It is derived from taking the role of others in social interaction. Self-conception is equivalent to the self if the latter is defined as the 'individual as perceived by that individual in a socially determined frame of reference. A self-conception consists, in addition –

a) A view of identity

b) Notions of one's interests and aversions (i.e. his attitudes towards objects, cognitively, effectively and evaluatively)

c) A conception of one's goals and his success in achieving them

d) A picture, sometimes quite sketchy, of the ideological (world view) frame of reference through which he views himself and other objects

e) Some kind of evaluation

Self-concept has many dimensions and might be seen as the individuals' organization of all the qualities that are relevant to his self-evaluation. Self-concept is organized in the sense that the individual perceives himself as a unit, and the qualities that he attributes to himself are fitted together into a meaningful whole. These qualities take the form of both evaluative attributes, which are usually described by the use of adjectives (handsome, ambitious and the like), and role or position labels, usually expressed by nouns (child, doctor etc.).

In recent view of self-concept as summarized by Markus and Wurf (1987) is "as a multi-faceted phenomenon, as a set or collection of images, schemes, conceptions, photo-types, theories, goals or tasks, self-concept is the picture that a person has about himself. As the child develops there is gradual awareness of himself as a person. He comes to use pronouns, 'I', 'Me', 'Myself' and 'Mine'. Before long, there is
established trend towards the emergence of the idea “What am I”? The term 'self-concept' is so widely used in the field of education today that one assumes that this term is generally understood what a person believes about himself, is partly a function of his interpretation of how others see him. Since he has no way of knowing precisely how others see him, he infers this from their behaviour toward him. Therefore, his concept of self rests in part, of what he thinks that others think of him.

**Origin of Self concept:**

Self concept is not hereditary. Rather it develops in a person as a result of his interaction with the environment. It is a life long process and develops continuously in a social setting. As a child grows and develops, he learns more and more himself. It begins from birth and goes till death.

**Dimensions of Self-concept are discussed below:**

(1) **The Basic Self-concept**

This is the individual's perception of his abilities and his status. This is the perception of the roles to be played in the outside world. This is the individual's concept of the kind of person he thinks he is. This concept is influenced by his physical self, his personal appearance, dress, and grooming; by his abilities and disposition, his values, beliefs and aspiration.

The self-concept is enhanced when there is intellectual ability to meet problems. The slow reader, for example, may face difficulty in learning, thus causing negative self-concept to operate in learning situations. Even for the person with intellectual abilities and good learning habits the self concept still has its ups and downs.
(2) The Transitory Perception of Self:

The individual's self-image may at one time be compulsive, compensatory, and unrealistic and at other time insightful and practical. The self-perception which the individual holds at any given point in time may be determined by some "inner-directed" mood or by some "other directed" influence. Many individuals do not recognize their transitory nature. They are optimistic or pessimistic, elated or depressed satisfied or dissatisfied in all-or-none sort of way. They are sometimes able to switch rapidly from one extreme to other.

(3) The Social self:

"To see yourself as others see you" may or may not be valid. At one time, when in an optimistic mood, the adolescent perceives that other people see him in good light. When depressed, he perceives that others depreciated him. When others think him stupid, or socially inapt, there is a tendency for him to amplify his feelings of insecurity: "How could anyone like me"? More positive views on the part of others may enhance his perception of his social self somewhat, but they play a lesser role when he is down.

(4) The Ideal Self:

The concept of the ideal self, the kind of person the adolescent hopes to be, involves relating levels of aspiration to levels of ability. It also involves opportunities for self-realization. When the ideal self is set at an unrealistic level, frustration is increased. When it is set below one's level of ability, motivation may become lacking. The adolescent's level of aspiration tends to go up with success and down with failure. This up-
down movement is more exaggerated than that usually found in adults. The ideal self of the adult has evolved slowly through experience. Lacking such experience, the adolescent, depends a great deal on identification with someone else as the ideal – an older brother or sister, a parent, or a teacher. Ideal person may stimulate either emulation or resentment, sometime both. The concept of one's self is molded by reward and punishment, praise and blame, and by the feelings of accomplishment that come with solving a problem. During pre-adolescence, both parents' peers influence the self concept. This situation changes gradually until the young person's self-evaluation is determined more by what his age-mates think of him. Later, cliques and other organization provide a climate of influence. Finally, the adolescent discovers that the self must be determined.

As far as measurement of self-concept is concerned, self-concept cannot be seen and it presents severe limitations in determining the stage of this factor at any given point of time. If we cannot observe it, how can it possibly be measured? Although it is true that we cannot see the self-concept, we can observe behaviour. In this instance, and when dealing with all psychological constructs, one infers the nature of the self-concept from observable behaviour over a period of time.

In general, we obtain most of our knowledge about people in this fashion. In order to obtain this information more efficiently, psychometrics have developed a variety of tests to elicit the behaviour pattern. Most of these tests require a person to give information about himself, and this may be somewhat limited. However, no one has the continuity of exposure and so continuous an opportunity to observe and evaluate his inner life and thought as the person himself. In order to
exploit an individual's likes and dislikes, interests, and attitudes, the obvious approach is to ask him about them. While the advantage of self-reports is the provision of an "inside view" based on the person's knowledge and experience about himself, there are some definite limitations. This method is weak from the standpoint of possessing external validity. Self-reports can be easily falsed unless the goodwill of the subject is obtained. Some subjects cannot give accurate evaluations of themselves because of emotional blocks or defenses. Also, results may be affected by mood fluctuations or be conditions at the time and place of the testing.

The relative status of a person's self-concept is usually determined through the use of one or more of the following techniques:

(i) Introspective self-reflections in personal family, social and school or work settings.
(ii) Consequence between descriptions of current self-concept and ideal self-concept.
(iii) Congruence between subjective self-report and action and the objective reports of clinically trained observers.
(iv) Non-introspective inferences derived from projective techniques and clinical interviews.

For an observer, the measurement of self-concept is a tricky job. Each person can have a true picture of his ownself, while its measurement by another can only be done by way of interference. Also a person may hold certain non-existing notions of himself or some unconscious attitudes of self which are not in conformity with his
conscious opinion of himself. Furthermore, a person conscious of another's assessing him, may not project his trueself.

Researchers have used varying tools and techniques in drawing true inferences of self-concept, such as observing actual behaviour, conducting interviews, and objective tests. These tools are mainly of two types:

(i) **Adjective Check List:**

Sarabin (1952) formulated a list of self-defining adjectives. To him it was better than the questionnaire method. Taking most of the words from Gough's List 284 adjective and some from Allport's List, he prepared a Personality World List of 200 adjectives which he used for studying males and females, and neurotics and non-neurotics.

(ii) **Adjective Rating Scale:**

A modification of Adjective Check List by Bills (1958) and Bills, Vance and McLean for finding out the sum of self-concept, was a Rating Scale of 49 traits. Ideal-self discrepancies were also calculated on this scale.

Ahluwalia (1986) standardized children self-concept scale which contains 80 statements. The subject has to give his response as 'yes' or 'no'. Time to complete the scale is 20 minutes.

It is the opinion of the psychologists that with the change in environment and improvement in personally, self concept also increases.
1.2 RATIONALE OF THE PROBLEM

Self concept may be associated with dysfunction of personal and psychological adjustment. Self-concept is something that can be changed. Jersild (1952) has pointed out the self-concept is composed of person's feelings, thoughts and since thoughts and feelings are dynamics, therefore, changes in the self-concept are inevitable.

Recognizing the need of boosting the self-concept of adolescents, various researches have been conducted wherein different strategies, approaches and methods have been developed and compared with traditional approaches in terms of self-concept.

However, from the review of research literature, it is observed that very few studies have been conducted in this area and that too mostly in abroad and elementary school children.

The present study is, therefore, an attempt to see the efficacy of self-concept course in terms of self-concept of adolescents.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

"Efficacy of Self Concept Boosting Plan in Terms of Self-Concept of Adolescents".

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the efficacy of Self Concept Boosting Plan (SCBP) in terms of self-concept and its dimensions.

2. To compare the mean scores of self-concept and its dimensions of students belonging to SCBP (i.e. experimental group) with those of conventional approach (i.e. control group) with the help of pre-test-post scores.
3. To compare the mean scores of self-concept of boys and girls.
4. To compare the mean scores of self-concept of students belonging
to general and reserved categories.
5. To compare the mean scores of self-concept of students with urban
and rural background.
6. To compare the mean scores of self-concept and its dimensions of
students belonging to Arts, Science and Commerce streams.
7. To compare the mean scores of adjustment of students of both the
groups (i.e. experimental as well as control) on the basis of pre-test
– post – test scores.
8. To compare the mean scores of academic achievement of students
of both the groups on the basis of pre-test and post-test.
9. To study the efficacy of SCBP in terms of reactions of the students
towards SCBP.
10. To study the trend of boosting of self-concept of students treated
through SCBP.

1.5 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is clear that self-concept plays a
major role in the life of an adolescent if it is thought of as a set of
expectations and anticipation. There may be relationship between the
adolescent's experience, adjustment, achievement, and self-concept.
Adolescent expects to do well and his performance permits him to feel
adequate and accepted. Thus experience and interactions are affecting
the self-concept of the adolescent which in turn affects his/her level of
adjustment and academic achievement.

An individual who lacks self-concept in depth looks out upon the
world through glasses which are discoloured by the quality of his own
unconscious self-image. Without self-concept and self-knowledge in depth we can have dreams, but no art, we can have no adults, but only aging children who are armed with words and paint and clay and atomic weapons, none of which is played by unconscious components of symbolic thinking.

It has been observed by psychologists that the success with which the individual adjusts to the problem of adolescence life and achieves in his career are bound to have effect on his concept of self.

Self-concept is a major and powerful factor of personality. It helps in adolescent’s personal development and understanding the reasons for his behaviour. A concept of real worth leads to humility whereas lack of a sense of worth leads to contempt for others and bragging. Although some research studies have been done in the field of self-concept in relation to certain environmental factors e.g. parents’ attitude, parents’ expectations and the nature of relationship between self-concept and variables of intelligence, creativity, problem solving ability etc. yet the present study is an attempt to reveal the effect of self-concept enhancement programme on the self-concept, adjustment and academic achievement of students.

Seeing the importance of self-concept and need of enhancing it, few researches have been conducted wherein different methods have been tested, but more or less these studies have been conducted in foreign countries and that too on college students. Self-concept which is regarded as one of the important area of personality and research is ignored in our country. An extensive research in the area of self-concept especially boosting of self-concept among adolescents has not been
attempted so far. Thus, there is an urgent need to explore this field further.

The findings of the present study will be helpful in building theoretical understating of self-concept especially in Indian settings.

The results will also be helpful to teachers, parents, and principals to improve and facilitate the school programme for building favourable self-concept among adolescents.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF RESEARCH REPORT

After having presented the introductory remarks in chapter I, chapter II is devoted to conceptual framework of the predictors, whereas chapter III to the review of related studies and hypotheses on which present study has been devoted. Chapter IV deals with the development of self-concept boosting plan and chapter V deals with the method and procedure. Chapter VI gives details of analysis of data, interpretation and discussion of results. Chapter VII deals with the summary, findings and suggestions for further research.

Bibliography and appendices are given at the end of research report.