INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I

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Home provides the first environment for the child and it is basically determinant of his attitudes towards people, things and life in general. Actually, it is the attitude of family members towards the child i.e. love, affection, being wanted, appreciated, rewarded, trusted and accepted as a person that determines how well the child will adapt outside the home.

The behaviour, attitudes and relationships children show outside the home, are markedly influenced by the type of relationships they have in the home. The relationships within the family members are important for a healthy home environment since it is only in healthy home environment that the child develops a sense of cooperation and harmonious relationships. Family is thus the most important socializing agent. The various types of relationships which different members of the family have with one another are parent child relationship, husband wife relationship, relationship with grandparents and relatives (if they are permanently staying in the family) and sibling relationship. It is through these family relationships that the child learns to conform to group standards, mores and traditions.
Parent child relationship is affected by the parental attitudes such as authoritative, democratic and permissive. Under democratic set up of the family children usually learn to be independent, take initiative, are responsible, and are emotionally healthy; whereas under authoritarian or permissive set up children become dependent, irresponsible and emotionally unhealthy. Parent child relationship is also affected by husband wife relationship. When parents have good understanding and proper adjustment with each other, it leads to emotional bond and healthy feelings in the children. It further gives rise to a feeling of emotional security in children. The children’s behaviours and attitudes are also affected by the presence of grandparents or any other relative in the home. The influence of grandparents or other relative is more pronounced when they have considerable authority over parents of the children.

Unlike any other relationship, the sibling relationship provides two people with physical and emotional contact at critical stages throughout their lives. This permanent relationship allows siblings to exert considerable influence over each other through longitudinal interactions. The frictional relationship between siblings is undoubtedly one of the major causes of deterioration in family harmony. Sibling rivalries and jealousies may be kept from overt expression by threat of punishment but they will sooner or later erupt and cause trouble. The serious aspect
of sibling friction is that it becomes a pattern of social relationships which the child is likely to carry outside the home and apply to his relationships with the peer group. Habitual quarreling, name calling, bullying and teasing will not contribute to his chances of acceptance in the peer group. When child’s relationships with his siblings are not pleasant, he has little motivation to expand his social contacts further. This leads to a sort of ostracization of the child by his peer group and thus making the matters worse. The strained sibling relationships some times make parents to interfere to put a stop to the quarrels. In the process they further aggravate the situation. They are accused of taking sides, showing favouritism, or being unfair. While conflicts and rivalry are the most common forms of sibling behaviour, female siblings show more favourable behaviour in their relationships with one another as compared to male siblings.

The presence of the handicapped child in the family affects the family relationships which further influences the personality development of the normal children. Actually all young children require more of the parent’s time, attention, love and energy than older children. The handicapped child continues to need the parents, long after he has reached the age when he should be more independent. In families where there is a handicapped child, heavy expenses are also incurred for the care of the child. These may represent medical costs or the costs of providing for
outside help when the mother leaves the home for personal or family reasons. Operations and institutionalized care add a further financial burden, which often deprives other children in the family of things they otherwise would be able to have. If not institutionalized older children are often expected to assume some responsibility for the care of a handicapped sibling. They resent this even more than the care of a normal young sibling, because the handicapped child requires more time and attention and can do little to reciprocate. Instead of showing gratitude, the handicapped child is likely to complain or to criticize the care he receives.

One of the most serious aspect of having a handicapped child in the family is that the people of society have attitudes of pity, sympathy, ridicule and scorn towards the normal siblings of the handicapped child. These normal siblings are sensitive to such types of attitudes and this affects their attitudes towards the handicapped child and family relationships negatively. Since a physically or mentally handicapped child can put such a severe strain on family relationships, many parents institutionalize the child. While this reduces many of the stresses in the family environment, it does not eliminate them. Two factors continue to militate against good family relationships - first, feelings of guilt or resentment or both on the part of the parents, and second financial
burdens which deprive other children of the family of different comforts.

The study of the effects of a handicapped brother or sister on normal siblings is emerging as a significant perspective of research and concern. Just as there are special needs of a handicapped child which have been largely attended to, there are also some special needs of the siblings of the handicapped child. Very little attention has been devoted to these special needs of such siblings. Siblings of handicapped brother or sister have a need to be recognized and respected as individuals. They should be known for their own accomplishments, their own characteristics, their own feelings and their own joys. Their lives may be altered by the added pressures and problems associated with living with a handicapped child. Living closely and intensely with a handicapped brother or sister can be both rewarding and stressful. Reports from many siblings indicate a full range of strong feelings, from burden to joy. All reports from siblings clearly demonstrate that deep emotions surround the experience of growing up with a handicapped brother or sister who has special needs. Understanding more about sibling relationships in families where one child is handicapped, is important from a theoretical as well as social policy perspective.

Various factors of personality of the normal siblings get affected by the handicapped child in the family e.g.
adjustment, self concept, alienation, altruism, aggression, anxiety, extroversion, ascendance, introversion. The present research attempts to study some personality factors namely adjustment, self concept, alienation and altruism in normal siblings of the handicapped and normal children.

Adjustment is a complex and continuous process by which a person varies his behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment. In day to day interactions with the environment, an individual has not only to adapt to physical and other internal needs but also to external demands, thus involving adjustment, adaptation and accommodation on the part of the individual. Earlier the main emphasis regarding adjustment was on changing ourselves to fit into our surroundings. Today, change in surroundings is also adapted as a way of satisfying needs. Thus adjustment is a two way process. Firstly, fitting oneself into given circumstances and secondly, changing the circumstances to fit one’s needs (Lazarus, 1976). It is dynamic and everchanging rather than static in nature. Adjustment, according to Boring (1963), "is a process by which a living organism maintains a balance between his needs and circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs."

Self concept is simply one’s mirror image, or in other words, how one values oneself. As the infant grows and learns to distinguish between himself and other people and
things, a part of his total perceptual field is gradually delineated as the "me", "I" or "self". As this self structure develops, it becomes the integrating core of personality - the reference point around which the individual’s experiences and coping patterns are organized. Whenever a problem arises, it is perceived, thought about and acted upon in relation to self, i.e. the individual comes to perceive himself as an active agent in determining his own behaviour. According to Shavelson and Bolus (1982), self concept broadly defined, "is a person’s perceptions of him or herself. These perceptions are formed through one’s experiences with one’s environments and it’s interpretation. In this evaluation by significant others plays an important role.

Alienation is one of the major characteristics of modern times. People, who do not fit into the dominant values and expectations of their social group are often labeled as "alienated". Reisman (1955) very pointedly emphasized the fact that "the modern man when not able to grip with the realities of modern impersonalized life, is often labeled as alienated." Normal siblings can also become alienated from their own family members, when they are fearful or anxious about discussing their handicapped brother or sister because the subject is not considered for conversation.

Altruism stands for "living for others". Altruism keeps a man free from worries which cause the greatest wear
and tear in our lives. An altruistic act is an end in itself. It is not gain directed. It is done voluntarily and does good. Aronfreed (1970) makes a valuable point in questioning very broad usages of the term "altruism." Many different motives may impel one individual to benefit another. Helpful behaviour may stem from social pressures or expectations that all costs incurred in giving aid will be repaid, perhaps with interest, one way or another. Presence of a handicapped sibling does have an effect on altruistic behaviour of normal siblings. Homan (1965) defines altruistic behaviour as "helping others in their goal attainment without any obvious social or material rewards to the helper."

Significance of the study

Most individuals with mental retardation, disability or chronic illness have brothers and sisters. It is important from both development and public policy perspective to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of these family contexts on normal siblings and on the sibling relationship. This research work is devoted to special sibling relationships that is, between brothers and/or sisters in which one sibling has disability. It is believed that in such family situations, sibling relationships take on new meaning and significance. Therefore brothers and sisters who have disabled sibling are in a need of special attention, understanding and support.
Normal siblings have a unique need for honest, direct and comprehensible information in order to answer questions about their handicapped brother or sister, their entire family and themselves. Some normal siblings who have handicapped brother or sister also need to share their feelings with trained counsellors to enable them to understand and accept their feelings. Whereas other normal siblings may need a mechanism to help them deal effectively with their own behaviour. Most of all, normal siblings need to be recognized for their unique contribution to the family system.

Training represents yet another broad category of needs. Many normal siblings have a strong desire to help their parents who have to take care of the handicapped child in the family. In order to serve as an effective helper, the normal sibling often needs special training. Thus normal siblings may need different services at various stages in their lives.

Normal siblings of a handicapped child is likely to be affected both negatively and positively in his/her behaviours. Research that draws a single conclusion presents too simple a solution for the resolution of such a compound issue. On the basis of what psychologists investigated in the 1990’s, perhaps the best answer is "It depends". It depends on a number of contributing factors, including parental attitudes and expectations, as well as
parental differential treatment, family size, family resources, religion, severity of the child’s disability and the pattern of interactions between the siblings. The reported research in this area is mostly from the western countries. In India this area is however largely neglected. Therefore, investigator felt the need to undertake this pioneering and challenging piece of project.

**Aims and Objectives**

Present study has the following objectives:

i) To study the adjustment, self concept, alienation and altruism in the normal siblings of handicapped children.

ii) To study the adjustment, self concept, alienation and altruism in the siblings of normal children.

iii) To study the interrelationship between adjustment, self concept, alienation and altruism in siblings of handicapped children.

iv) To compare the adjustment, self concept, alienation and altruistic behaviour of siblings of handicapped and normal children.