CHAPTER - III
AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

The education process that children go through is a very essential aspect of his or her life. It is a preparatory period for them to face a majority of challenges in life. They learn how to be an effective part of society. Most importantly, education prepares them for their future careers.

Education is the process of attaining basic skills such as reading, writing, speaking and computation. Thus, it can generally be termed as "learning to think". Education also prepares children to adjust with other people. As a whole, education is the process through which an individual comes to terms with himself, as well as becomes aware of his strengths and limitations. He therefore, arrives at a concept of himself (Skinner, 1959, a).

Academic achievement is a vital aspect in the education process. Academic achievement is the degree of mastery in certain areas of studies, attained in a prescribed time, and is measured either by standardized tests or by teacher made tests. From the point that children are inducted into the process of formal education, stress is laid upon them to reach nearest to their potentialities and to achieve a certain standard in education. The level of achievement that a student attains acts as a benchmark. It points towards the avenues of progress that are open for him or her.

From a student’s perspective, academic achievement symbolizes an effort to overcome academic challenges and surpassing others by attaining high standards through an optimum use of their talents and abilities. It offers students a stepwise progression from one stage of education to another.

There are many goals that the assessment of academic achievement helps accomplish. A student's current scholastic status
may be highlighted by examining his past record. Excellence or underachievement can be indicative of differences between students (e.g. gender, demographics or cultural background). It is a decisive factor in promotion to the next grade or retention in the same grade. It acts as a criterion for admission into higher education.

In an overpopulated country like India, academic achievement takes a whole new meaning. There are limited seats in prestigious schools, colleges, technical institutes, universities as well as in careers. Therefore, a major criterion for induction into these institutions and for the choicest jobs is high academic achievement. In other words, academic achievement is the pivot on which the future of the individual revolves and rests.

Apart from educational and professional benefits, academic excellence also has many psychosocial benefits. Researches in this field have found high academic achievement to be related to high self-esteem, positive affect, prosocial behaviour as well as popularity among peers (e.g., Crocker et al., 2003; Keung, 2003; Bal, 1974; Winnykamen & Aussedat, 1975). On the opposite side of the same coin, receiving poor grades and dropping out of school has directly or indirectly been associated with many problems arising either in the present or in the future. These include lack of self-worth, inaccurate perceptions about social acceptance (Novicki, 2003); cigarette smoking (Simon & Primavera, 1976; Griffin et al., 1999); drug use (Hemmingi:, Rissanan & Mattila, 1973; Lawrence & Velleman, 1974; Smith & Fogg, 1974; Guinn, 1975; alcohol abuse (Wood, Sher & McGowan, 2000; Casswell, Pledger & Hooper, 2003); and drunken driving (Riala et al., 2003).

There exists an association between intelligence and academic performance (e.g., Lunge, 1974; Lewis & Adank, 1975; McArdle & Woodcock, 1998; Parker & Benedict, 2002; Watkins et al., 2007). This association suggests that IQ has a causal influence on achievement. Therefore, a child with an above average IQ should
also attain higher grades. This equation constitutes that a child has an aptitude for success in academics. But many times it has sadly been observed that such students perform poorly in their academics. This is a source of concern and has become an area of challenge for educators and psychologist's alike (Brown & Holtzman, 1967; Naylor, 1972).

In an effort to meet this challenge, research has highlighted the fact that some students do not study in a proper way or do not study at all. They are inattentive as well as disruptive in class (Cobb, 1972; Finn, Pannozzo & Voelkl, 1995). These students also tend to procrastinate in completing their assignments (Ferrari & Sher, 2000). They do not properly prepare for tests and examinations (Dickinson & O'Connell, 1990). Such students lack discipline, diligence and perseverance (Schafer, 1975; Wood & Napthali, 1975). They also display other faulty behaviour patterns like poor concentration, bad presentation skills as well as lack of task commitment (Lee-Corbin & Denicula, 1998).

In addition to these problematic behaviours, these students also hold certain maladaptive beliefs. Such students usually do not see any purpose in scholastic activities and have a passive outlook towards academics. They lack an affiliation or attachment towards school (Reid, 1981). They disapprove of their teachers and criticize their classroom behaviour and the manner in which they teach. They perceive their teachers to be less supportive. These students believe their teachers are very bossy, who enjoy giving their students a hard time. They think their teachers are negatively biased towards them.

A second form of debilitating thought pattern is a dislike for certain subjects or an aspect of academics (Osborne, Simon & Collins, 2003; Georgiou, Stavrines & Kalavana, 2007; Kush, Watkins & Brookhart, 2005). When students do not like a particular subject, they tend to avoid studying it. They do not see it's importance and believe it to be an unnecessary burden on them.
These constitute a rejection of educational objectives, practices and requirements (Brown & Holtzman, 1967). When students hold such beliefs, they just want to have their full share of fun and do not consider studies important. They often feel like skipping school. They are confused and have not decided what to do in the future. They believe that academics do not help a person meet adult problems. Thus, they finally come to the conclusion that school is a waste of time and want to drop out. When students display these faulty behaviour patterns and harbour such dysfunctional beliefs about education, their performance in academics suffers.

Thus, it becomes important that such student’s study skills (study habits and study attitudes) should be improved by means of an intervention programme. This will be effective in removing the gap between ability and performance. This purpose can be accomplished with the help of a study skills training programme. In the past some endeavours have been made in this area in order to improve academic achievement (e.g., Beidel, Turner & Taylor-Ferreira, 1999; Harris & Trujillo, 1975; Lapan, Kardash & Turner, 2002; Mackay, 1999; Vaughan, 2002; Wade & Moore, 1998). Another aspect that has come to light from previous research is that Cognitive-Behavioural Modification techniques can be effective in enhancing the study skills of students (Bradley-Klug & Shapiro, 2003). Such programmes will aid them to adopt effective study habits and remove their dysfunctional beliefs which are prohibiting them from working hard and achieving their potential. Enhanced study skills (study habits and study attitudes) in turn would help in improving academic achievement. This in turn may give direction to their lives and they might start moving on the right path.

The intervention programme in the present study will include Economy in Learning which includes methods of Part Learning and Distributed Learning as well as Regular Study Scheduling. These methods will assist the subjects to imbibe their study material better.
Chapter- III  
Aims and Hypotheses

The Problem Solving Strategy (Nezu et al., 1989), a form of Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy will also be used. The Problem Solving Strategy will be used in the present study in an endeavor to teach systematic study methods and test taking strategies as well as to remove the mental blocks of the subjects', which are proving detrimental to their academics.

A factorial design with repeated measure on the last factor i.e., 2X2X(2) will be employed. There will be two groups of underachievers i.e., an Experimental Group (n=50) and a Control Group (n=50). These groups will further be divided on the basis of gender i.e., 25 Boys and 25 Girls. In order, to examine the effects of the study skills training programme, a pre-test and post-test assessment of study habits (delay avoidance & work methods), study attitudes (teacher approval & education acceptance) and academic achievement will be conducted.

Keeping in view, the importance of study habits, and study attitudes in determining academic achievement, the present study has the following aims:

Aims:

1. To test the intelligence of students in the age group of 12 to 15 years enrolled in Standards-7th, 8th and 9th from a number of public schools in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

2. To examine the scholastic achievement of these students and to relate it with their intelligence, thereby studying the deviation level as well as to find out the underachievers through regression analysis (regression line).

3. To formulate strategic interventions for removing the gap between the achievement level and intelligence.

4. To implement the strategic intervention programmes i.e., Economy in Learning (Regular Study Scheduling, Part Learning Method and Distributed Learning Method) and
Problem Solving Strategy for enhancing study habits, study attitudes and academic performance of underachievers through Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy.

On the basis of the major aims of the present study and review of related studies, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

1. Study skills training programme will have a positive effect on Delay Avoidance (Study Habits).
2. Study skills training programme will have a positive effect on Work Methods (Study Habits).
3. Study skills training programme will have a positive effect on Teacher Approval (Study Attitudes).
4. Study skills training programme will have a positive effect on Education Acceptance (Study Attitudes).
5. Study skills training programme will have a positive effect on Academic Achievement.