CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Women in general have been forced to occupy secondary place in the world in relation to men, a position comparable in many respects with that of racial minorities inspite of the fact that women contribute atleast half of the human race. Mazumdar (1978) stated that 'though women do not numerically constitute minority, they are beginning to acquire the features of a minority, community by the three recognized dimensions of inequality - of class (economic situation), status (social position) and political power. In most of the societies of the world, women have been defined largely in terms of their functions as wives and mothers and by their cultural image as a weaker sex.

Women of today are in a fair way to dethrone the myth of 'femininity'. Now more and more women have opportunity to pursue higher education and more and more educated women have started taking jobs outside their homes. The number of educated women, who continue to work after they marry and have children, is also increasing, but educated women workers tend to be clustered in occupations like teaching, clerical work and medicine. Despite official ideologies of quality, males remained dominant economically, politically and socially and the world of work still belongs primarily, if not exclusively, to men.

The fact that women are physically weaker than men seemed to suggest women's all round weakness. The sexual division of labour based upon the assumption of biological superiority of
of men have not only dulled women's mind and limited their horizons, but it has also robbed the country of the full utilization of its human resources.

In addition to biological factor host of other psychological sociocultural and environmental variables can be assumed to be responsible for the insignificant contribution of women in all spheres of life. As far as the abilities are concerned women are superior to men in their sensitivity to touch, pain and auditory discrimination (Tyler, 1965), Verbal ability (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) and language ability (Nance and Sinnott, 1964; Macy, 1973 and Hayes, 1978). Men have been found to be superior to women in mathematical ability (Burke, 1965; Priested and Hunsaker, 1969; Maier and Casselman, 1970 and Hayes, 1978); mechanical tasks (Deaux and Emsueiller, 1974 and Allen, 1974; McWay, 1976 and Mathews, 1987).

In most of the real life problem like situations better known as problem solving women have been found to be inferior to men right from school children to college students and adults (Bedell, 1934; Billings, 1934; Sweeney, 1953; Terman and Tyler, 1954; McNemar, 1955; Staats, 1957; Maier and Burke, 1967, Priested and Hunsaker, 1969; Maier and Casselman, 1970; Roll, 1970; Constantinople, 1974; Raheim and Kaufman, 1974; Felen, 1975; Maxwell, 1975; McWays, 1976; Singer, 1975; Hayes, 1978; Johnson, 1984; Kumar and Kapila, 1986 and Hasija et al., 1989).

In some of the studies no sex-differences have been found (Raaheim, 1963; Haffman and Maier, 1966; Mendelsohn, 1970;

Women take more time to reach the solution in comparison to men. Therefore, it may be assumed that there are certain factors which hinder women to concentrate on the task. Moreover, women's intelligence scores are at least as good as that of men (Johnson, 1972). It becomes evident that these sex differences are not due to ability deficits but due to performance deficits (Singer, 1975), due to environmental factors such as motivation (Lutes, 1926; Leibowitz, 1966; Nottelman and Hill, 1977; Kumar, 1983), social conditions like effect of group attributes upon decision making (Gibb, 1951; Slater, 1958; Bonner, 1959; Hare, 1976; Hill, 1982; Lee, 1987 and Wood, 1987) and psychological variables like anxiety (Spencer, 1957; Sarason, 1961; 1972, 1973; Sarason and Stoops, 1978; Sud, 1983; and Ferguson, 1987) and stress frustration and situational anxiety (Russell and Sarason, 1965; Robe, 1967; Horner, 1968; Carlomusto and Marler, 1977, 1978; Boor, 1980; Convington, 1983; and Deffenbacher and Hazaleus, 1985).

It has been established that women score high on neuroticism or anxiety (Sarason et al., 1958; Sarason, 1963; Devi, 1969; Allen, 1974; Kumar, 1975; Bernstein and Carmel, 1986; and Stoner and Spencer, 1986) and hence there are performance differences in males and females. According to Beauvoir (1982) women being neurotic, are unable to create anything worthwhile. Many researches have shown that high anxious subjects are poor performers because they have shown
task irrelevant thoughts and spend lesser time focusing on the task (Wine, 1971; Sarason, 1972, 1976; Wine, 1980; Carver et al., 1983; Carver and Scheier, 1984). At the same time Neuroticism/Anxiety is considered as a general factor in motivation or striving (Hall and Lindzey, 1962) and as autonomic drive (Furneaux, 1961; Eysenck and White, 1964). As suggested by Madan (1967) "how for this motivational force will retain its energising aspects and not become disorganizing and disruptive due to emotional accompaniments, will determine the prediction of effects of neuroticism on performance in learning and problem solving tasks". In many researches neuroticism/anxiety has been found to have detrimental effect upon problem solving efficiency (Romanow, 1958; Denny, 1966; Dunn, 1968; Kumar, 1975; Sinha, 1975; Upadhya, Chadha and Bhagat, 1985; Deffenbacher et al., 1985; Rusell, 1985; Jain, 1980; Alamo, 1987; and Ferguson, 1987). Hence, higher neuroticism/anxiety scores of females may reflect their overall poor performance.

Horner (1968) concluded: "It may be that females are in fact more anxious than males in testing and achievement-oriented situations because for them not only are there negative consequences and hence anxiety associated with failure, but also with success in competitive achievement situations. This latter type of anxiety is referred to as motive to avoid success". In the case of women the specific negative consequences may be rejection by men, loss of affection, friendship or one's datable
or marriageable quality (Horner, 1968). Ayim and Raphael (1983) suggested that the structural differences between men and women have been heavily ritualized and culturally elaborated which have led to the discrimination between men and women and now represent a whole super structure which takes the gender specific division of labour as an unalterable laws of nature and any break in this law can lead to severe punishment.

Kraus (1974) maintains that socialization in the family and education in the school reinforce 'gender roles' i.e. cultural definitions of traits and behaviours that are appropriate for men and women. The pattern of under representation of women in almost all the culturally prestigious arenas may be due to the fact that characteristics such as independence and assertiveness, which are considered necessary for achievement are not encouraged in females as they are in males. Women are less often encouraged sometimes even discouraged by parents, teachers and peers in the pursuit of intellectual achievement. Even women who are achievement oriented are much less likely than men to be recognized and rewarded by the culture at large. Women are successful only after they have overcome the societal biases against the recognition of females and often restrictive career/family conflicts. They have to direct their energies toward breaking the bonds of socialization and shifting the cultural ground rules. Epstein (1986) maintains that women are
cocooned in the intra familial arrangements much more than men, which according to Beauvoir (1982) has resulted in the general failure of women to take place of human dignity as free and independent existence associated with men on the plane of intellectual and professional equality, condition that not only has limited the achievement in many fields but also has given rise to pervasive social evils.

Thus the fear of success among women seems to be caused by the endemic condition of female life rooted in the contradictions of the social structure and the pervasive ideology of female inferiority. As Klein (1946) argued that women exhibited the traits of 'marginal' personality, identifying with the dominant group at one time and at other times with their own sub-group. Passing in and out of each world daily they experience undesirable ambivalence and insecurity about their identity. With the participation of women in extra-familial spheres, they come into conflict with traditional sex-roles assigned to them by the society. In India even where the right of women to work is occasionally conceded, this is only where women can manage both their professional and domestic duties, and it is always made clear that domestic duties are paramount (Caplan, 1985). Similarly, it is no longer considered morally disreputable if a woman studies, but this new goal cannot be brought into harmony with the structure of the family system. For example, woman must always take care that her educational qualifications do not go beyond that of a potential future or actual husband.
In this situation of role conflict contradictory ideas, values, concepts, ideals, norms, and contradictory realities collide with one another. The difference between the ideology and reality may prove to be further obstacle for woman when she realizes for herself the cultural goals on which our social system rests and hence may increase anxiety and tensions.

Mead (1935) observed that 'A female had two choices, either she proclaimed herself as an woman and therefore, less an achieving individual, or an achieving individual and therefore, less a woman'. Most often women want to emphasize their feminine qualities. Komorovsky (1946) reported that college girls played dumb to boys by lowering marks, misspelling words and generally acting like passive idiots. Blumberg and Dwarki (1980) stated that 'At first glance it seems unlikely that women should accept and be happy in inferior positions yet it is frequently the case. Woman goes forward not with her eyes fixed straight ahead on a goal, but with her glance wandering around her in every direction and her gait is also timid and uncertain. The more she seems to be getting ahead on her own the more her chances fade, she will make her unattractive to men by being too outstanding a success. So she restrains her aspirations and is easily reconciled to a moderate success. She does not dare to aim too high. Entering upon her profession with a superficial participation, she soon sets limits to her ambitions. Also, the educated woman is pictured as having more understanding, being more knowledgeable, more open
minded and more cultured in dealing with people provided she is careful not to act self important because of her education. According to Singh and Kaur (1987) anxiety, depression and guilt proneness tend to promote motive to avoid success and it is already clear that role-conflicts caused by the incongruence between their social situation and social ideal of womanhood, especially among working and educated women produce in them the feelings of guilt, fears, tensions and strains and hence motive to avoid success.

According to Shapiro (1979), fear of success appears to involve anxiety about engaging in achievement activities that have traditionally been considered inappropriate to one's sex-role. Thus the women who pursue a career in a male dominated field violate the most deeply held conceptions of a female role by competing against men and are more liable to share 'success anxiety' than women employed in female dominated fields. Therefore, the absence or presence of fear of success in women will have impact on their achievement striving and in particular their career salience (Spence, 1974; Fleming, 1977 and Hoffman, 1977). Ohri and Singh (1989) suggested that fear of success acts as one of the barriers in performance of women in different spheres of life.

According to Maier (1970) ability can exceed performance and loss of ability cannot be assumed merely because it is unaccessible under certain circumstances. Some persons fail to solve a problem, not because it is beyond their capacity, but because they have a pre-disposition (biologically or culturally...
determined) to favour certain solutions, and these must be inhibited if the correct solution is in conflict with them. When the solution to a problem involves the resolution of conflict, attitudes and feelings become a crucial part of the problem situation. The major goal is not that of finding a correct solution, but rather one of finding a solution that achieves the highest 'acceptance'. This is common in real life setting. Differences in personality, culture and opportunities as well as variations in needs and feelings, play a vital role. Maier and Burke (1967) also found that cultural factors do influence response tendencies. According to Pietrasinski (1969) major barrier in the way of critical approach to life is formed by various social factors. As a member of some social group, the individual has to adhere to certain standards of conduct and opinion. These conducts and opinions for males and females in a particular society lead to their sex-role identification.

Milton (1957) proposed that women's usual poorer problem solving performance is due to lack of motivation related to their sex-role identification. Kumar (1983) showed that females can be motivated to work at the top of their efficiency with the help of ego-oriented instructions and this can help to eliminate sex differences. According to Brown (1961) verbal instructions are stimuli, which like electric shock and noise may have motivational consequences. Motivating instructions
produce an urge in the individual to perform well up to the best of his capabilities and the resultant ego-involvement takes place. Ego attitudes and involvement give a pattern of personal consistency to the individual's behaviour. When the stability is disturbed, ego tension arises. When these ego tensions are caused by failure or threats to failures, anxiety germinates which serves as a motivating state.

Ego oriented instructions provide information to the person that his or her actions are meeting a set of challenges in the environment and this information can serve as a source of reward (Csikszentmihalyi, 1978). According to Deci (1975) if people's feeling of competence and self determination are enhanced, their intrinsic motivation will increase. Thus the ego-oriented instructions in the form of extrinsic motivation should in turn increase the intrinsic motivation also. Gagne (1962) holds that instructions may be viewed as attempts to establish sets to guide thinking within a given situation.

Thus the performance of women can be increased with the help of the 'short term determinants' as designated by Hyman (1964), in the form of ego oriented instructions. Carey (1958) tried to increase the motivation of the reluctant women in the form of group discussion. Hoffman and Maier (1961) found females to profit more from group discussions, which may be viewed as changing their attitude towards problem solving. Furthermore, students who scored higher on projective measures of achievement motivation worked longer on difficult problems and got more
right scores (French and Thomas, 1958). Kumar (1983) showed that the performance of women can be brought at par with men with the help of ego oriented instructions.

Strong motivation may even serve as a handicap in that it may generate 'solution mindedness' i.e., concern for exploring the character of the problem. This tendency to be 'solution minded' seems to become even stronger when there is anxiety over the nature of the decision. Ego oriented instructions may inhibit the performance when the information provided by them initiates the 'change in perceived locus of causality instead of the change in the feelings of competence'. On these bases the deduction may be permitted that induced motivation may have differential effect for different levels of neuroticism and fear of success. Kumar (1983) found that motivating instructions have less effect for males because of their higher initial motivational state.

Now it remains to be discovered that what is the effect of motivation upon the problem solving ability of university women and working women who are being provided the achievement oriented atmosphere, experiencing the excitement of intellectual exploration and are being treated as equals in the world of knowledge. According to Chafe (1977) the college years provide women a supportive community, a motivating spirit and a collective commitment which could carry individuals through the discomfort of alienation and provide them a sense of explicit
identity. Yet the possibility of such a community being successful depends upon the ability of the rest of the society to hear and respond. That ability in turn was a direct product of the relationship between the cultural norms and social and economic circumstances. Women's underrepresentation in almost all the spheres of life may be due to the fact that they are facing the problems of role conflict and fear of losing their femininity and have to direct their energies towards breaking the bonds of socialization.

Since it is an important area it would be plausible to study the psychodynamic reasons responsible for the poor performance of females even in most advanced and economically stronger societies. The studies which have been conducted in the area of sex differences to find out the determiners of problem solving ability have mostly taken one sided view of the complex and enigmatic situation (Burke and Maier, 1965; Farley, 1966; Kumar, 1975; Ajwani and Upadhyay, 1983; Patil, 1983; Hargreaver, Bates and Foot, 1985; Jain, 1986; Margret and Wesley, 1986). Any undertaking in this area should try to take the wholistic view for the host of variables responsible for the performance deficits in women through multiple and variety of tasks and multifactorial designs.

The investigation undertaken currently is a small step in this direction where the focus is entirely on university and working women. The present study aims to investigate the
differences in high and low scorers of neuroticism and fear of success under induced and task oriented instructions on variety of problem solving tasks through a multifactorial design.