Chapter – 1

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM UNDER INVESTIGATION

We are living in the era of globalization and technological revolutions. The role of education is vital in the development of human capital because it is closely linked to a person’s life chances, income and well being (Battle and Lewis, 2002). In order to occupy a leading role in world’s economy, the education system of a country must produce students who can compete in global job market.

In this ever-growing competitive world everyone desires a high level of achievement as the mark of one’s performance. The whole system of education is centered on academic achievement of students, making it a fertile ground for research work. Learning takes place effectively only when proper and congenial environment is provided for children in classroom. Their learning environment plays an inherent role to mould the innate potentialities of the individual and school has always been regarded as an important factor in the child’s education.

Recent findings, that cognitive achievement is statistically important in determining workers productivity imply that the academic performance of students in school has important implications for economic growth (Boissiere et. al., 1985; Kingdon, 1999). Student performance is also meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally (Farooq et.al., 2011). International surveys such as Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) for OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries have been focusing on relative ranking of countries on the basis of students’ average performance in science, mathematics and reading. The academic performance of students is also used by policy makers to analyse the translation of education inputs into outputs (Aslam, 2003). The academic performance of students in school also affects their further educational attainment. It has been observed that most of the students having higher academic performance at 10th level examination prefer to join science stream at senior secondary level. This is because studying science have better opportunities for joining professional courses like engineering, medical, pharmacy, architecture etc.
Aspirations of youth have long been of interest to educational researchers and practitioners. In exploring educational or occupational aspirations, researchers generally examine variables such as sex, community size, place of residence, race, socioeconomic status, age (effect of time), as a determinants and its influences on aspiration, development or a combination of these (MacBrayne, 1987).

Occupational aspiration, constitute a persons’ desired work related goals under ideal circumstances. These goals can reflect information about self concept, perceived opportunities and interests and hopes (Rojewski, 2005). Researchers often treat occupational aspiration as unidimensional construct that is determined by asking people what type of occupation they would choose at some point in the future if they were free of barriers or limiting factors (Rojewski, 2005). Early adolescents are likely to express high prestige occupational aspirations, regardless of the likelihood of attaining them. Gradually aspirations are lowered through compromise as young people realize that they may not possess necessary skills or abilities, do not receive support or possess aspiration (Armstrong Crombie 2000; Lee & Rojewski, 2009). The occupational aspirations of students are shaped and influenced by various socio-economic-status and personality factors. A number of studies have been directed to identify these factors and to study how these influences the occupational and academic choices of students (Gupta, 1992).

Vocational aspirations in the formative years of life are supposed to determine success in later life in regard to job satisfaction, productivity, personality, adjustment, etc. Several variables appear to fashion the nature and reality orientation of such aspirations. Parental occupation and social background, intelligence, school achievement, peer group experiences are some of the variables which may influence vocational aspirations (Seetharamu & Rao, 1983).

Today’s modern society expects everyone to be a high achiever. The key criteria to judge ones’ true potentialities and capabilities are perhaps scholastic or academic achievement (Siwach, 2008). Academic achievement has become an index of a child’s future. Research studies have proved that many factors like socioeconomic-status, self-Esteem, family environment, sex, could enhance a child’s scholastic achievement. Mau and Bikos (2000) declared that academic achievement was perhaps the single best predictor of occupational aspiration. Lower achievement
may damper educational goals, which diverts students from certain academic activities and limit future occupationally related opportunities and experiences (Arbona, 2000; Wang & Ma, 2001).

Socio-economic-status is another factor which affects occupational aspiration of students. The socio-economic-status of a child is most commonly determined by combining parents’ educational level, occupational status and income level (Jeynes, 2002). Studies have repeatedly found that socio-economic-status affects student outcomes (Baharudin and Luster, 1998). It is believed that low socio-economic-status negatively affects academic achievement because low socio-economic-status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Etriaon, 2005; Majoribanks, 1996; Jeynes, 2002).

Gender has been a prominent factor in research on occupational aspirations. The effect of sex on students’ academic achievement has been debated and heavily researched over the past several decades (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004). Past research has indicated an academic achievement gap between the sexes, with boys ahead of girls. However, more recent research has shown that the achievement gap has been narrowing and that in some instances girls have higher academic achievement than boys (Chambers & Schreiber 2004). Male adolescents are more likely to aspire to moderate prestige occupation, while females are more likely to aspire to either high or low prestige occupation. Despite higher aspirations, females tend to restrict their range of potential occupations at an early age and are more likely than males to adjust or narrow their educational and occupational expectations downward over time. These differences, coupled with lower occupational attainment for females, have led some to conclude that gender is one of the most powerful and persistent influences on occupational development (Goltfredson, 2005; Mello, 2008; Rojewski, 1996; Roiewski Yang, 1997).

Self-esteem is one of the strongest research topic in psychology (Gabauer, et.al., 2008). The literature provides consistent evidence that Self-esteem has the most important effect - or relationship on academic achievement (Miraei, 2005; Poursina, 2003). Healthy Self-esteem is an essential component for learning (Soloman, 1992).
Regardless of age, the Self-esteem of a learner facilitates or inhibits learning. Esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as worthy of happiness (Nathaniel, Branden, 1992), Self-esteem is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning, et.al., 2006). Self-esteem is defined as the experience of being capable of meeting life challenges and being worthy of happiness (Reasoner, 2005). Research has documented the important role high self-esteem plays in academic achievement, social and personal responsibility (Redenbach 1991).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The students of secondary level are in the stage when they have to select and prepare for their occupation. In that stage they require assistance of their teachers, parents, who can direct them to reach their goals. Today due to Globalization whole world has been converted into global village. Each and every information can be shared within a minute across the world. Due to this, the world is becoming more and more competitive. Everyone wants to stand first in the row. Quality of performance has become the key factor for personal progress. Every parent desires high and high from his child. It puts a lot of pressure on students. They dreams for high and prestigious profession without caring that whether they are capable for that job or not. There is a need to help these students to know their abilities, interest, personalities, values, beliefs and potential.

Different researchers regarding scholastic achievement in general have taken up various studies. However, a comprehensive, yet concise research work, regarding vocational aspiration with these related variable could not be located in world research scenario. Hence, much work needs to be done in this field so that parents, teachers and students themselves can come to know about their potential.

Self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem. People high in self esteem claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships and to make better impressions on others than people with low self esteem.
The investigator hopes that the study will be of great use to the parents, teachers, educational planners and all of those who are interested in the field of education and welfare of students. It will help the students to take decision about their future occupation accurately.

Occupational aspiration of the students is affected by many factors, so there is a need to understand these factors by which educationist can make the strategies for alleviating all those factors which affects the academic achievement and occupational aspiration of students. This study will help the teachers to understand students in better way and help them in finding out the low achievers, so that they would be helped out of their problems.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study has been stated as, “Academic-achievement and occupational aspiration of secondary level students in relation to their self-esteem and socio-economic status”.

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:

Academic achievement is generally regarded as the display of knowledge attained or skills developed in the school subject (Busari, 2000). It is the level of performance in school subject as exhibited by an individual (Ireeebhu, 1992). In the school setting it is referred to as the exhibition of knowledge attained or skills developed in school subject. Test scores or marks assigned by teachers are indicators of this achievement. It is the school evaluation of the pupils’ class work as quantified on the basis of marks or grades (Adedipe, 1985). These marks assigned by school could either be high or low, which means that academic achievement could either be good or bad.

Thus, academic achievement is an indicator of how successful a student is at different tasks and responsibilities. It in the outcome of education-the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals.

It is no longer questioned that high education level and human capital formation promote human well-being and are two of the main predictors for economic
growth (Romer, 1989). Moreover, along with evolving globalization, competition and economic challenges world is facing, returns to academic achievements have become larger than ever (Harmon and Walker, 2001), and low academic achievements can be seen as a constraint for economic independence. It has been observed that during the World financial crisis unemployment has risen exactly among the less educated people. Therefore, it would be just natural if we would see more young adults, from both genders and all ethnic and social groups, reaching for higher educational levels and taking advantage of possibility to gain higher returns. However, evidence shows that educational attainment among youth differs significantly (Betz and Fitzgerald, 1987). Therefore, the question remains: why equally talented individuals with similar abilities and initial preferences make different academic choices, and why some of them end up in lower paying jobs and occupations?

Academic achievement is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspect are most important-procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Annie Ward, 1996)

The most predominant form of grading in Indian higher education is the percentage system. An examination consists of a number of questions each of which credits. The sum of credits for all questions generally counts up to 100. The grade awarded to a student is the percentage obtained in the examination. The percentage of all subjects taken in an examination is the grade awarded at the end of the year. The percentage system is used at both school and the university.

With respect to theories on academic achievement, the self-regulation theory of academic achievement is very crucial. According to Zimmerman (1990), self-regulation theory of academic achievement emphasizes on how student select, organize or create advantageous learning environment for them and on how they plan and control the form and amount of their only instructions. These self-regulated students are distinguished by their systematic use of meta-cognitive, motivation and behavior strategies; by their responsiveness to feedback regarding effectiveness of their learning and by their self-perceptions of academic achievement.
Teaching, learning and evaluation are the main important activities of education institutions. The suitability and appropriateness of the various methods of imparting knowledge may be judged on the basis of the academic achievement of the students. Development of suitable techniques to accurately measure the academic achievement may be made a reality by understanding the nature of the impact of various socio-psychological personality characteristics, a behavioral trait on academic achievement of students.

It terms to be worthwhile to assume that academic achievement is, on one hand influenced by the teaching devices employed by the teachers, and it is also depend upon the various factors, such as mental make-up, socioeconomic background, literate and illiterate parents, directly generated by the socio-psychological characteristics of students. Gender is one of the most prominent factor. Data shows girls around the world lag behind boys in math and science, but confidence is a key factor. The strong relationship among self belief, gender and performance in maths and science hints that countries may be unable to develop a sufficient numbers of individuals with strong mathematics and science skills partly because girls lack of confidence in their abilities.(www.washingtonpost.com).

After facing multiple challenges in the previous years in school to score high marks, many students seem not do well academically in the successive years. Even students who had a brilliant academic record in their previous year seem to falter in their academic performance in the future. They did well in previous years, they have the potential to do well even in the future and yet they fail to do well in the coming years. Bad performance could be traced right from the beginning of the semester in the class tests. When we come search the probable reasons of this happening we find the following factors responsible for this –

The Intrinsic Reasons are;

(a) Mismanagement of time and assignments
(b) Lack of interest in subject,
(c) Having the habit of studying towards the end of the year just before examination
(d) Relaxed as there is no individual attention pressure in the house.

The Extrinsic Reasons are;
(a) Missing of initial classes due to late joining,
(b) Commuting long hours to reach school, hence getting tired and could not concentrate on studies,
(c) Changing of teacher in the middle of the semester,
(d) Finding the syllabus of subject tough,
(e) Feedback on performance not given.

The learners tend to perceive these intrinsic and extrinsic issues as critical situations in their academic life. Thus, academic achievement is an important measure of success or failure for a student. It indicates the student’s mental ability.

Some of the studies used to examine achievement in this review have used the words “intelligence” or “ability” (Feingold, 1923; Byrun, 1939; Livesay, 1942; Moser, 1949). Though achievement, intelligence and ability have distinct and individual meanings, these are close, interlinking relationship between these words. First, although it has been argued that there are many different kinds of intelligence and ways to define it, it is generally universally thought of in terms of ability (Hood and Johnson, 2002). Because of the complex nature of the term intelligence, counselors may refer to intelligence tests in terms of mental ability, cognitive ability, school ability or academic ability (Hood and Johnson, 2002). Next, ability is defined by a capacity to perform a mental or physical act while achievement could be seen as the actual completion of that act or series of actions (Vanden Bos, 2007). Therefore, although achievement does not necessarily define ability, it can be used as a measure to describe it.

Educators and psychologists have studied academic achievement in relation to different aspects of other psycho-educational factors such as social milieu, type of curricula, teachers’ qualifications and experience, parents and peers’ expectations, interest in school, academic self-assessment, self-perception, motivation, children’s rearing, home background and individual’s personality. From these kinds of empirical researchers, educators and psychologists have developed a number of theoretical frameworks in order to understand and predict students’ academic achievement.
Researchers have used different techniques for measuring academic achievement. In a meta-analysis study Hansford and Hattie (1982) identified sixty-one performance or achievement tests during their analysis. These kinds of measures can be divided into ‘teachers or student rating’, ‘home-made test’ and ‘published test’. However, the analysis of the studies that used these performance or achievement tests suggested that the researchers did differentiate between different kinds of abilities (Hansford and Hattie, 1982). In most of the studies the authors are more interested in measuring a general or heterogeneous ability rather than a specific or homogeneous ability. Although the use of particular measures in various studies is dependent on the aims of study, sometimes it is apparent that using different kinds among these measures has yielded similar results. For example, it has been reported that evaluations of academic performance either by students own ratings or by teachers’ ratings have been a good agreement (Feather, 1991). In another study measuring school achievement, in regard to reading ability, it has been reported that all the estimated relationships have been in the same direction, whether reading tests or teacher ratings were used to criteria for measuring academic achievement (Skaalvik, 1983). Also in a meta-analysis, the results of five different tests of verbal ability (reading, vocabulary, verbal, language and English Comprehension) showed no statistically significant differences (Hansford & Hattie, 1982).

In spite of these reports regarding the similarities between different kinds of academic achievement measures, it seems that the relationship to other measures is different. For example, when achievement tests were related to various self-measures, a correlation range between 0.09 for spelling to 0.39 for work study has been found (Hansford & Hattie, 1982). Also, it has been found that, among different techniques used for measuring academic achievement, the grade-point average has the highest correlation with measures of overall self-regard (r=0.34) (Hansford & Hattie, 1982). Generally, it has been shown that ‘home-made’ tests including teachers ratings and grade-point averages, have produced a higher mean correlation than ‘published’ or ‘published and well-norm’ achievement tests (Hansford & Hattie, 1982). It can be concluded that the choice of type of achievement measures used can be influenced by the strength of the relation between academic achievement and other self-measures.
In another approach to the problem, researchers have studied academic achievement at different levels of education from early childhood of higher education. But the majority of these studies had concentrated on academic achievement at secondary-school level and beyond, especially in developed countries; and academic achievement was regarded as dependent variables, while other socio-educational or psycho-educational factors were regarded is independent variables. The direction of the influence was from the socio-educational or psycho-educational factors towards academic achievement. In some studies, completing high school or continuing study beyond year 10 was regarded as the independent variable (Ainley, Foreman & Sherert, 1991). But, it should be mentioned that there is a difference between academic achievement and completing or remaining at high school beyond year 10.

Academic achievement problem have been focal points for educators and researchers for decades, because problems in the performance and achievement of students’ school careers predict school dropout (Ekstrom et.al. 1986) and delinquent behaviors (Tremblay et.al., 1992). Much of the previous academic achievement research has focused on the psychological mechanism (Fortier et.al., 1995; Normandeau and Guay, 1998), self-efficacy (Mitchell et.al., 1994), and family factors such as parental response to grades are proven to contribute to academic achievement (Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994; Gimburg and Bronstein, 1993). On the other hand, autonomy-supporting family styles have been found to be associated with higher academic performance. Guay and Vallerand (1997) presented evidence that the use of autonomy-sup-protive techniques by teachers and school administrators has been associated with academic achievement. Hymel et.al. (1996) also provided evidence that peer support may also contribute to children’s achievement because it has a profound influence on their day-to-day behavior in school for instance, Frentz et.al. (1991) showed that students who were rejected by their peers had lower academic achievement scores than more popular students.

Intense emotional arousal was predicted to interrupt the performance of work (Maslach, 1993). It students have serious emotional exhaustion, they will be emotionally fatigued, used up, irritable, frustrated, or even worn out (Maslach and Jackson, 1981), and they will have lower academic performance. Cohen (1983), in his research, clearly showed that a person with higher stressors would show negative
emotions and low work performance. McCarthy et.al.’s (1980) research showed that there is a negative relationship between student burnout and academic achievement.

Divorce has also, found to negatively affect academic achievement (Jeynes 2002). William Jeynes (2002) found that students whose parents had divorced were among those who scored lowest on standardized test, possible explanation for this relationship are that divorce can cause a family’s SES level to decrease and parental connections are harmed (Jeynes 2002, Majoribanks 1996).

Research shows that supportive and attentive parenting practices positively affect academic achievement (Eamon 2005). In addition, high parent aspirations have been associated with increasing students’ interest in education (Majoribanks 1996). The effect of parental involvement in their children’s school has an academic achievement is less clear (Domina 2005). Parental involvement in school has been linked to both positive and negative influences on academic achievement (Domina 2005; McNeal 2001). Explanations for his discrepancy are not conclusive. It is though that the type of involvement may make difference and that in some cases parents become involved after their child has already had academic difficulties (Domina 2005, McNeal 2001). Other recent research has found more conclusively that while parental involvement may not help academic scores, it does help prevent behavioural problems (Domina 2005).

Maternal characteristics are another key factor that affects academic achievement (Baharudin and Luster 1998, Eamon 2005; Majoribanks 1996). Mothers who are more dedicated and have higher self-esteem have children who receive higher test scores (Baharudin and Luster 1998, Eamon 2005; Majoribanks 1996). Also, mothers who delay childbearing have been shown to provide more “cognitively stimulating” and supportive environments at home which has a positive effect on school performance (Eamon 2005).

Smaller family size has been linked with higher academic achievement (Eamon 2005, Majoribanks 1996). Students with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention and have more access to resources than children form large families. The additional attention and support leads to better school performance (Eamon 2005, Majoribanks 1996).
Adolescents who live in higher quality neighborhoods typically perform better in school than those who live in poorer neighborhoods (Eamon 2005). Poorer neighborhoods often lack positive role model, adult supervision and connections to good schools (Eamon 2005) that kind of environment often prevents students from. Creating healthy school networks and leads to a lack of motivation which negatively effects academic performance (Eamon 2005).

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION:

The terms occupational aspirations vocational aspirations and career aspirations are very similar concepts. In the APA dictionary of psychology, occupations are defined as jobs or professions, and vocations are described as occupations. Career aspiration is defined as long-term individual work related goals (Vanden Bos, 2007). From these definitions it can be concluded that occupational aspirations, vocational aspirations and career aspirations are relatively interchangeable.

It is also noteworthy here that aspirations and expectations are different concepts. Aspirations are defined as an individual’s desire to obtain a status object or goal such as a particular occupation or level of education. Expectations are the individual’s estimation of the likelihood of attaining those goals, plans, ambitions or dreams. The conceptualization of these terms is credited the Kuvlesky and Bealer (1966) in their attempt to define occupational choice which they consider to be a reflection of an individual’s aspirations or preferences concerning work statuses.

Work is essential for living; there is no place on earth where life can be maintained without work. Work is the only means to provide necessities, comforts and luxuries of life. The importance of work in the life of an individual can hardly be ever estimated, work is the condition of life and all its enjoyments. The importance of work can be understood and realized not only in impersonal sense but also in personal and social sense. An occupation is a collection of tasks performed for pay in some organized way because others need to have them done. When we talk of success in life, we primarily think of vocational success. Occupation thus becomes much more than a mere means of producing necessities, comforts and luxuries. Different people hope for different vocation in accordance with their interests, aptitudes, values, status
The future prospect of every country rests on the human and material resources, it includes educational system, and vocational set-up etc. That's why education is not considered as consumption good now-a-days rather it is viewed in terms of investment in human capital. Through education, quality of human being is developed but there is growing inadequacy of educational system to meet fully the demands of developing nations. The developing countries have to look forward in their educational and vocational plans and to adopt suitable practices to cope with the individuals, social groups and nations. The stereo typed systems in educational, professional spheres deliver little good and hamper the growth extensively. Education is a powerful mean for providing all kinds of necessary information, preparing for suitable educational and vocational courses and leading to fruitful vocational choices. It promotes new ideas and trains in more useful methods. It controls resistance to useful changes. It allows for comparison and takes to useful decisions. It develops new needs, interests, motives, and aspirations and helps to keep pace with the development in the various fields. (Shodganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/23699/8/08).

Gottfredson (1981) stated that on occupational aspiration is the single occupation named as one’s best alternative based on compatibility and accessibility at any one gives time. According to Powell and Butterfiled (2003), an individual’s career aspiration refers to the individual’s desire for future employment. Career aspirations represent dreams that individuals have about what ideal careers would be for them (Farmer and Chung, 1995). Farmer (1985) noted that career aspirations can influence a person’s achievement and persistence in a career. Generally women tend to have lower career aspirations to top management position compared to men (Melamed, 1995).

Researchers often treat occupational aspirations as a unidimensional construct that is determined by asking people what type of occupations they would choose at some point in the future if they were free of barriers or limiting factors (Rajewski, 2005). Early adolescents are likely to express high prestige occupational aspirations, regardless of the likelihood of attaining them. Gradually aspiration are lowered through compromise as young people realize that they may not possess
necessary skills or abilities, do not receive support or possess aspiration (Armstrong and Crombie, 2000; Lee and Jojewski, 2009).

**Roe** (1956) stated that a person chooses either a person oriented or non-person oriented career based upon how the individual was treated by his/her family as a child. Person oriented careers may include teacher, counselor and nurse while non-person oriented careers may include engineer, astronomer, and computer programmer.

**Holland** (1985) reported that people choose careers that best match the needs of a person’s individual personality style. He determined that there were six personality styles and matching work environment-realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional.

**Markus and Nurius** (1986) have reported aspirations as one’s ideas and hopes of “possible selves”, i.e., what a person would like to and what would not like to become or achieve. In psychology, aspiration level has been defined as the level of quality of a task which one desires to attain. It is a determinant of an individual’s performance level in the future. It has been hypothesized that aspiration level varies from persons to person and place to place and is determined by factors that may change and influence aspirations level during the lifetime.

**Krumboltz’s** (1979) theory corporate three major factors into the generation of career decisions –

1. Genetic Endowment
2. Environmental conditions
3. Person’s individual learning experiences

According to Krumboltz, the factor genetic endowment includes sex, race and innate talents while the factor environmental conditions include cultural norms and economy. The third factor, a person’s individual learning experiences, assists with the development of work habits and problem solving skills.

**Lent et.al.’s** (1995) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) has the most significant impact on career development research (Swanson and Gore, 2000). The structure of SCCT is based on Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory.
The SCCT hypothesized that personal, contextual and social cognitive factors influence interest formation of career goals and performance, and background contextual variables influence career self-efficacy. According to this theory, several cognitive-person variables (e.g., self-efficacy outcome expectation and goals) interact with other aspects of the person and the environment variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity social support and barriers) to help shape the course of career development. Lent et al. (1995) found that individuals were more likely to pursue and be successful in occupations in which they have high self-efficacy and to which they believe with have positive outcomes.

Super’s (1953) life span developmental theory also referred to career choice as a developmental process and outlined specific stages of career development through a person’s life, but unlike Ginzberg et al. (1951) and Gottfredson (1981) he did not focus his work on early developmental stages.

Ginzberg et al. (1951) were the first theorists view career development as a lifelong process and also emphasize early development. A review of Ginzberg et al. (1951) described this general theory of career choice as a developmental process involving a series of decisions with largely irreversible effects (“Review of Occupational Choice,” 2008). Ginzberg’s (1951) career development states that the irreversible effects in the individual are due to investments of time, money n an individual and ego. Following these investment, a career decision is made arrives at a compromise between interests capacities, values and opportunities. Ginzberg’s (1951) career development process occurs over a span of about 10 years and is broken down into three periods. The first period, fantasy choices, is influenced much by the child's wish to be an adult (Ginzberg et al. 1951). Next is tentative choice, a period determined first by interests, then capacities, and finally values (Ginzberg et al. 1951). Realistic choices, the last period of career development, begins at age 17, and involves exploratory, crystallization and specification phases (Ginzberg et al. 1951). Osipow (1968) describes this process in terms of the development of specific behaviors such as the ability to perform the reality testing task, the development of a mature time perspective, the ability to delay the gratification of desires, the ability to compromise, and the ability to identify with appropriate adult models. In order for mature career behavior to occur these abilities must be met by adolescence (Osipow
1968). If they are not, the individual will he dissatisfied with his career choice and pursuit of a career (Osipow, 1968).

According to Ginzberg et al. (1951), career choice at the interest stage is based primarily on current likes and interests and is influenced by the work and choices of the young adolescents’ parents. Most 11-year-olds reference the influence of their parents in relation to their career interests. Whiston and Keller (2004) noted that parental achievement and socioeconomic status as well as parental support and expectations influenced the career aspirations of middle school and high school students. Trice (1995) found support for Ginzberg’s observation that interest plays a major role of selection and rejection of occupations during the interest stage and after. At about age thirteen, students start considering their abilities when thinking about future career decisions. This process makes the Capacity stage, in which students start making relationships between what subjects they are good at and future careers. Athanasou (1994) found this trend to continue well after middle school and reported that most college students preferred and excelled at the subjects related to their career choice.

Linda Gottfredson (1981) proposed the developmental career theory of circumscription and compromise. Circumscription was used to describe career exploration as a process of maintain and discarding career choices (Brott, 1993). Personal guidelines for making these decisions involved consideration of one’s perception of sex-typed careers and acceptable level of prestige within the career (Gottfredson, 1981). These guidelines are developed through a period of 4 developmental stages including orientation to size and power, orientation to sex roles, orientation to social valuation, and orientation to the internal unique self (Gottfredson, 1981). Circumscription suggests that as individuals pass through these stages, their acceptable career alternatives diminish as careers are discarded (Brott, 1993). As circumscription deals with the development of career aspirations, compromise deals with the implementation of them. When compromise is needed the latest guidelines developed will be the first ones sacrificed in order to make a decision (Brott, 1993). Therefore interest would he neglected first, followed by ones prestige preference and finally sex-type, which was the first guideline developed.
According to Gottfredson (1981), the four stages in the development of career preferences, begins with orientation to size and power, established at ages 3-5. At this stage children begin to recognize the difference between real and make believe careers, begin to prefer the company of their same sex peers, and although they do not have concrete beliefs concerning sex roles they are aware of some of the differences in the adult roles of men and women (Gottfredson, 1981). At stage 2, orientation to sex roles, occurring between the ages of 6-8, children agree on which sex should perform what career and express their least preferred careers to most preferred careers on this basis (Gottfredson, 1981). Children ages 9-13 have entered the 3rd stage, orientation to social valuations, in which their career aspirations reflect their desired level of prestige based on social class and ability level (Gottfredson, 1981). Finally, during the 4th stage, orientation to the internal unique self, adolescents develop a greater sense of self therefore demonstrating a greater awareness of their abilities and interests as they relate to career aspirations (Gottfredson, 1981). When progressing through each stage of this process, children's personal list of possible career aspirations becomes smaller and smaller due to the growing number of limitations they possess. For example, an adolescent at the age of 18 has established the difference between real and make believe careers, his/her idea of a sex appropriate career is, and has most likely established a level of prestige acceptable to him/her based on his/her abilities and social class. Gottfredson believes that once a child has discarded a career on the basis of these limitations they will no longer exist as possible career choices later in life (Gottfredson, 1981).

Gottfredson's career development theory places young adolescents in the Orientation to Social Valuation Stage. By this point young adolescents have already limited their list of future career options starting with real adult occupations, (as opposed to non-human or magical states of being) by the age 5, and what they view as sex appropriate occupations by age 8. Later studies have confirmed that the range of careers considered by teenagers is greatly limited by gender lines (Kelly, 1989; Biggart, 1999). Beginning at the age of 9, students develop an awareness of social class and reject occupations that they consider to hold an unacceptably low level of prestige (Gottfredson, 1981). Helwig (2004) demonstrated this concept and discovered that students between the ages of 12 and 14 had higher career aspirations than younger students. Gupta (1982) also presented pertinent evidence and reported
that adolescents from low income households did not want or expect a future career with high prestige. At the same time students are recognizing social class they are also becoming aware of their ability (Gottfredson, 1981). Studies have supported this notion and demonstrated that adolescent’s reported ability was related to their career aspirations (Durik, Vida, & Eccles, 2006; Schoon, 2001). Using their grades as a guide they begin to narrow their possible future career choices even more.

In accord with Gottfredson’s theory 7th grade students have developed a sex-type of work they prefer, and through reflection of their social class and ability, are at least in the process of establishing a general level of work that is acceptable to them. Like Ginzberg et al. (1951), Gottfredson (1981) believes that by the 7th grade, students are at least beginning to take their ability into consideration when choosing a future career.

Aspiration is the goal which an individual sets for himself in a task which has intense personal significance for him. The strength of aspiration depends on how important the aspiration is to the individual. The values of an aspiration to an individual in turn are affected to some extent by how hard it is to reach (Manju N Garg 2012). The more difficult to reach, the greater the halo in the eyes of the aspirant and the more strongly motivated he is to reach it (A K Gupta 1984). During adolescence, young people’s future aspirations and expectations begin to crystallize, especially in the domains of education and the kind of career one wants are formulated during this period. Further these goals are associated with educational and occupational attainment in adulthood (Beal & Crockett 2010, Mello 2008, Messersmith & Schulenberg 2008).

Morgan(2007), while aspirations are generally conceptualized as idealistic representations of future outcomes, expectations are considered more realistic, probable outcomes.

Gottfredson( 1981), it is believed that student educational and career aspirations are the most relevant factor determining one’s future educational attainment. Therefore it is essential to understand the exact meaning of aspirations. Markus and Nurius (1986), have reported aspirations as one’s ideas and hopes of possible selves ie what a person would like to and what would not like to become or
achieve. In psychology, aspiration level has been defined as the level of quality of a task which one desires to attain. Gender effect has a relevant role in determining one’s aspiration level. A considerable amount of literature has focused on gender related differences in academic and career aspiration (Howard 1979, Betz and Fitzgerald 1987, Danziger and Eden 2007). One of the explanations for different gender related career expectations is that women career decisions are more complex than those of men. This arises from a bigger involvement in family and children lives or possible early pregnancy (Vanderacek et al, 1986, Lucas et al 1997, Eucles 2005).

Educational Aspirations and Academic Achievement:

The following research suggests the likelihood that by the time students reach middle school they have at least decided whether or not they will be attending college in the future Ginzberg et.al. (1951) discovered that 11 years olds repeatedly made reference to college and accepted it as part of their future plan. High school students in a study completed by Clements and Kifer (2001) said they had decided on their postsecondary education plans by middle school or earlier. These studies give evidence to support that by middle school, students have decided upon a general level of future career based upon preparation needed for that career.

Research has also shown middle school student academic achievement to be directly related to their educational aspirations (Clements and Kifer, 2001; Garg et.al., 2002; Mau and Bikos, 2000). Garg et.al. (2002) noted a direct relationship between academic achievement (student grades) and education aspirations of Canadian middle and high school students. Mau and Bikos (2000) found academic achievement (based on a reading and math proficiency test) of middle school students to be a predictor of educational aspirations. More specific in their findings, Clements and Kifer (2001) found grade point averages of Kentucky juniors and seniors to be highest among those planning to attend private or out of state institutions. They were lowest for students planning to attend community college, technical school or trade school (Clements & Kifer, 2001). The finding of middle school student academic achievement as a predictor of educational aspirations gives evidence towards a finding of a direct relationship between academic achievement and career aspirations, if categorizing career aspirations on the basis of level of preparation needed to attain the career. Other studies have shown a direct link between education aspirations and
career aspirations (Mau & Bikos, 2000; Saha, 1982). Saha, (1982) reported that career aspirations were certainly affected by the student’s choice to leave school after the 10th, 11th or 12th year. Mau and Bikos (2000) offered more evidence, stating that academic achievement was a significant predictor for both educational and career aspirations.

**Occupational Aspirations and Academic Achievement**: Occupational Aspirations have been correlated to academic achievement since at least 1923 when it was done by the use of standardized testing with high school freshman (Feingold, 1923). This review reveals findings of research through to recent years by comparing career aspirations not only to test scores but specific subject achievement, and even reading levels of students. The majority of research found on this topic is concerning, high school subjects and has been included due to the lack of research based specifically on 7th grade and middle school students.

**Occupational aspirations and test achievement**: Gustave Feingold (1923) completed the earliest study found that examined the relationship between test achievement and occupational aspirations. In this study, the intelligence of 1200 incoming high school freshman was tested and compared to the vocational choice of each respective student (Feingold, 1923). It was determined that 46% of the students tested made a vocational choice that was consistent with their test score, while 47% made choices that were considered beyond their mental reach (Feingold, 1923). Only 7% of the students seemed to underrate their intelligence by choosing a career that was considered significantly below their tested potential (Feingold, 1923). From this data one could conclude that because almost half of the students overestimated their own ability (according to their test achievement) when choosing a career, this study did not find a significant relationship between academic achievement and career aspirations.

Byrns (1939) conducted a similar study, this time with high school seniors. She discovered that there was some relationship between the career choice of students and their tested intelligence. More specifically, certain career groups attracted students with the highest test scores and certain other career groups attracted students with the lowest test scores (Byrns 1939). Byrns (1939) also found it
important to note that there was a wide range of ability within these groups. Two years later, Livesay, (1941) established a relationship parallel to Byrns (1939) with high school seniors but like Feingold (1923), acknowledged that a significant number of students held aspirations that were likely beyond their abilities. Moser (1949) also used high school students' achievement on an intelligence test to compare to their career aspirations. He reported that students aspiring to careers requiring a greater degree of training were generally selected by students that exhibited a higher level of achievement while careers requiring a lesser degree of training were selected by students that exhibited a lower level of achievement (Moser, 1949).

Jumping ahead to 1989, Kelly found that the academic ability of British teens (again determined by achievement on an IQ test) was only slightly related to their career aspirations including the range of career choices that they considered. Mau (2003) reported that high academic achievement was a common factor among 8th grade science and engineering career aspirations. Much more recently, in Australia, Creed, Conlon and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) completed the only study found that used seventh grade students for subjects when comparing test achievement to career aspirations, Ability, as decided by achievement on standardized testing, was not related to the career aspirations of 7th grade students (Creed et al., 2007). Most of the students surveyed aspired to high status careers regardless of test achievement (Creed et al., 2007).

Instead of using IQ tests. Benbow, Arjmand and Walberg (1991) were the first researchers found to use academic based testing, as a basis of comparison to students' career aspirations. Eighth-grade test achievement was revealed to be directly related to career aspirations (Benbowy, 1991). Rojewski and Yang (1997) also used an academic based test to measure achievement but their results were similar to most researchers that used intelligence based testing. They reported that academic achievement had a minimal affect on the career aspirations of teenage students (Rojewski & Yang, 1997).

A summary of the previous findings shows that regardless of achievement level, a large number of students, grades 7-12, held higher level career aspirations. Most studies found a correlation between academic achievement and career aspirations but this relationship was generally weak.
Occupational aspirations and other achievement measures:

Studies found using factors related to student academic performance in school, such as grades, as a determinant of academic achievement were rare. The only study found comparing student GPAs to career aspirations utilized data from 930 eighth-grade female students (Mau, Domnick, and Ellsworth. 1995). It stated that students who aspired to careers in science and engineering reported higher GPAs than did students who aspired to homemaking careers (Mau et al., 1995). The remaining studies found tended to reveal, data based primarily upon academically at-risk students.

Rojewski and Hill (1998) found that adolescents who were at risk of failing were more likely to hold lower career aspirations. Silverman and Silverman (1973) discovered that 7th grade student reading below grade level had lower career aspirations and expected to make less money than 7th grade student reading at or above grade level. Shapka, Domene, and Keating (2006) reported that 9th grade students who were low achievers in math also had lower career aspirations.

Thus far the relationship of academic achievement and career aspirations has been examined by looking specifically at test achievement and at risk students. Some researchers have taken a step further and investigated the relationship between achievements in a specific academic subject as it relates to student career aspirations.

Livesay (1942) established a relationship between high school student career aspirations and preferred academic subject. He also found that the students planning to attend college tended to choose a core academic subject (Math, Science, Language or Social Studies) as their favorite (Livesay, 1942). Athanasou (1994) not only found that most college students excelled at their preferred subject but also discovered a direct relationship between this subject and their vocational choice. Another study examined math related achievement of 130 high school students and revealed that high achieving students aspired to full time careers in math, science and engineering (Franklin & Wong, 1987).

Sex differences in occupational aspirations:
Gender effect has a relevant role in determining one’s aspiration level. A considerable amount of literature has focused on gender-related differences in academic and career aspirations (Howard, 1979; Betz and Fitzgerald, 1987; Danziger and Eden, 2007). Different views exist on the nature of the differences among both gender aspirations. Patton and Creed (2007) has argued that male students tend to hold higher aspirations for education level and position in the labor force. However, it has been observed that not too many women expect to follow careers which are mainly associated with the opposite sex, such as science and technology, despite the fact that these careers usually yield higher salary. This pattern becomes even more compelling as there is no evidence observed of differences in quantitative abilities in tasks related to science and technology between both genders (Betz and Hackett, 1981).

**Upadhyaya (Amar ujala, 7 july 2007)**, writes that females are ahead in education than males in uttarakhand, which has been marked by an increase in registration of females in colleges and higher than males. Instead of this high registration, the employment ratio of girls are very low. This number can be increased only with the help of educational guidance.

**Seth,( 1970)** found in his study that the female teenagers had home, school, sex, personal, social and vocational problems.

The reasons were found to be –

1. The lag between social and physical development.
2. The emotional changes that occurred in this period.
3. The desire for activity and interest in peer group and in members of opposite sex.
4. Tendency to substitute dependence with independence and self-control.

**Silverman and Silverman (1973)** reported that in general, 7th grade girls have higher career aspirations than seventh grade boys. **Rojewski and Yang (1997)** backed up this finding and further stated that while adolescent females aspired to high
and tow prestige careers, adolescent males more often aspired to careers with high prestige careers.

Factors associated with occupational aspirations:

Although there is a great deal of literature on aspirations to select careers, there have been few empirical investigations on factors associated with aspirations to advance to upper level positions. In the 1980’s, career aspiration studies have frequently been reported in the vocational literature (Farmer, 1985; Gottfredson & Becker, 1981) with a focus on aspirations to select certain careers. More recent research (Nauta, Epperson, & Kahn, 1998; Flores & O’Brien, 2002) have examined career aspirations to leadership or advanced positions among college students. Overall, most of studies of career aspirations were focused on college students and very few were on working adults and factors associated with career aspirations.

Research confirms that self-efficacy plays a highly influential role in occupational development and pursuits (Nauta et.al., 1998; O’Brien et.al. 2000; Mau, 2003; Nauta & Epperson, 2003). Self-efficacy refers to the way individual views their abilities and capabilities in for example an academic endeavor or a career choice. If an individual has a low sense of self-efficacy, he or she may not persevere in challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997). The higher the individuals’ perceived efficacy to fulfill occupational roles, the greater their staying power in challenging career pursuits (Bandura, 2001). Individuals tend to eliminate those occupations they believe are beyond their capabilities, regardless of how attractive the occupations are. Self-appraisal of capabilities determines goal aspirations and hence, the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal aspirations and the firmer the commitment to them (Locke & Latham, 1990).

Another factor associated with career aspiration is work-family role conflict. According to Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosenthal (1964), inter role conflict is described as the psychological tension that is aroused by conflicting role pressures. Whiting and Wright (2001) found that work-family conflict, as a form of inter role conflict, was negatively related to career aspirations among female accountants in New Zealand. Since the females were more involved in balancing
work and family demands, they would aspire less for higher job status (business partner, principal, director, chief executive officer). Furthermore, once children become part of the family structure, females generally take more responsibilities for these children and consequently work fewer hours, take more time off from job and subsequently will have lower career aspirations. In 2003, Hite and McDonald found that family role responsibility was associated with career aspirations and choices of non-managerial women. Most of their respondents have turned down promotion opportunities because they perceived the potential opportunities involved traveling or less flexibility that might be in conflict with their family responsibilities. The participants’ career aspirations were influenced by the need to accommodate their family demands. Similarly, Larson (1994) found that the primary reason for the lack or career aspirations among middle management nurses was work-family conflict. Contrary to expectation, Marongiu and Ekehammar (1999) found that the work-family pressure factor was not related to career aspiration.

Besides self-efficacy anti work-family conflict, Ramer and Borders (1997) found that gender role attitudes contributed to career aspirations while Flores and O’Brien (2002) found that feminist attitudes predicted career aspirations among Mexican American adolescent women. Colaner and Warner (2005) found that gender role attitude had a positive effect on the levels of females’ career aspirations. They investigated the effects of two opposite religious gender role attitude (Complementarianism and Egalitarianism) on the career aspirations of female college students at an Evangelical Christian university in the Midwest of the United States. The research found a significant relationship between gender role attitudes and career aspirations.

Different forms of support are conceived with SCCT as environment variables that can facilitate the formation and pursuits of individuals’ career aspiration and choices (Lent & Brown, 2000). According to White, Cox and Copper (1997), family acts as a social support system. They believed that a supportive family served as a secured base on which an individual build a career. In a study by Mau (2003), bright young women simply cannot be recruited into the science and engineering pipeline without continued support and encouragement from informal groups.
According to this study informal support groups could be helpful in addressing the problems young women face in their career aspirations and choices.

Bandura (1986) was one of the first psychologists to propose that people learn from other people by observing them and he called this as vicarious learning or social learning theory. Betz and Hackett (1997) applied this theory to career development. They proposed that people's career aspirations and career choices are partly based on what they have learned from observing other people. An individual's identification and connection with a role model, even when it is on a short-term basis, could have a long-lasting impact on the individual's career aspiration (Whelley, Radtke, Burgstahler & Christ, 2003). Additionally, the role models can help those having no intention of being role models or those who are fully aware of and are willing to commit time to being role models. Gaston and Alexander (1997) found that lack of female role models will affect the confidence that females have in their own abilities to supervisors thus helping to perpetuate a vicious circle of low aspiration and under-achievement. This finding was obtained from a survey on male and female constables from a large police force. They found that supervisors themselves are influential role models and hence suggested that female officers who have gained promotion to supervisory and management positions should be visible to the juniors in order to help increase their career aspiration level. Nauta et al. (1998) found that positivity of role model increased the levels of career aspirations. According to them women who had been influenced positively by role models were more likely to believe that careers in math, science and engineering were compatible with commitments to marriage and family, and such beliefs were linked to increase in the levels of career aspirations in these fields.

In 1999, Lockwood and Kunda found that outstanding role models inspired high aspirations. They compared people's normal hopes and aspirations with those inspired by a star. The biology and chemistry university students were asked to list their hopes for future achievement either before or after reading about an outstanding role model. The positivity of each participant's hope was coded and found that the exposure to the star has generated higher aspirations among the participants. Perrone, Zanardelli, Worthington and Chartrand (2002) found that role model supportiveness predicted career decidedness and aspirations. Their findings were in
line with previous findings by Nauta et al. (1998) who found that positivity of role models predicted career aspirations of women in sciences and mathematics.

MEANING AND CONCEPT OF SELF-ESTEEM:

Self-esteem is a thoroughly complex human characteristic and many theorists have put forward different definitions of the term. Generally, it can be defined as “how we positively or negatively feel about being ourselves. It is the value we place upon ourselves as a unique and valuable human ‘being’ rather than a human ‘doing’. It depends on how well we know ourselves, the extent to which we feel we are accepted, and on belief that we can exert an influence over other people and the world” (Morris, 1997).

Earlier, in a comprehensive study, Coopersmith (1967) reported three factors that led to the promotion of self-esteem in children. Coopersmith described an increase in self-esteem as being down to the careers that love and value their child whilst setting firm, fair boundaries and providing opportunities for their child to be involved in decision-making. It has subsequently been suggested that aggressive and irresponsible parenting can significantly reduce a child’s self-esteem levels, implying that the presence of others is a vital determinant in the shaping of one’s self-concept, both positively or negatively. Extensive research has demonstrated that individuals with high self-esteem have more positive, clearer views about themselves than those with low self-esteem (Campbell 1990).

Further studies have also demonstrated how an individual’s self-esteem is entirely reliant upon the attitudes of others, primarily their parents (Marsh, Relich and Smith 1983). Particularly, hostile parenting has been linked with low self-esteem (Farrington 1993). Farrington highlighted the importance of the intergenerational hypothesis and how authoritarian parents who act in an aggressive manner, are likely to cause their child to model such behaviour, chiefly in their interaction with others.

However, it has also been suggested that such belligerence can consequently disrupt the development of a child’s self-esteem, causing it to slowly decrease (Lawrence 1988). Highly aggressive children with low self-esteem who exhibit such behaviours in the peer setting are classed as anxious bullies (Bowers 1994) and are reported to share the same characteristics as those of the victim.
Nonetheless, it is important to illustrate that not all children from authoritarian families inevitably develop low self-esteem or automatically become a perpetrator of bullying, one must take to consideration other factors such as individual characteristics and the severity of the hostility being experienced (Sullivan 2000).

Butler (1970) also regarded a child’s peers as vital in their social and emotional development. The self is something which has a development, it is not initially there at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that it develops in a given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process…. The self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure and it arises in social experience (Mead 1934, p.4) Mead suggested that the development of our self-concepts is vitally dependent upon social concepts. In other words, if an individual belongs to a group low in status and power, it is more than likely that they will have feelings consistent with that in group.

Morris (2002) reported from research that low self-esteem can have a negative impact upon individuals learning and ability to succeed. Extensive studies have suggested that self-esteem is influenced by a number of factors comprising of gender, socio-economic status, appearance and peer acceptance (Coopersmith 1967, Rosenberg 1965). Katz (1999) further indicated that 27% of boy’s self-esteem decreases significantly throughout adolescence. However, criticisms of the methods used to measure self-esteem have been put forward due to the difficulty in accurately assessing it. Salvin-Williams and Jaquish (1981) discovered that self-reports and ratings by others can be inaccurate and those specifically focusing on the same measure produce very different result, indicating great inconsistencies. Coopersmith (1967) however, refutes such claims and affirms a significant correlation between the two measures.

Research suggests that self-esteem can change throughout adolescence and there is debate over whether it is in fact global or situational. Rosenberg (1965) criticized this finding and advocated that self-esteem remains relatively stable. He defined self-esteem as a global positive or negative self-assessment, therefore regarding self-esteem as a personality trait.
According to Marsh et.al. (1983) and Hall and Taylor (1985), global measures of self-esteem may be biased towards stereotypical male characteristics. Males are assumed to be proud and positively promote their own self-image, in contrast to females, who are expected to be modest. Thus male’s responses may be more optimistic, or consist of exaggerated self-perceptions.

Francis and James (1996) claimed that there are important discrepancies in the self-esteem levels of males and females. Specifically, that males reported considerably higher levels of self-esteem and females lower, advocating that self-esteem scale such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale unintentionally discriminates against females, as not all measures of self-regard uncover more positive scores among males, for example the Lipsitt Self-Concept Scale (1958). Francis and James (1996) also support previous studies suggesting that females have more of a negative self-image than males. Evidence suggests that gender differences in self-esteem increases with age. McLean (2003) reports that female’s experiences lower self-esteem during secondary education with regards to perceptions of attractiveness and other people’s perceptions of them, whereas males are more likely to demonstrate inflated levels of self-esteem through exaggerating their abilities.

Self-esteem at a relatively young age is based heavily upon concrete descriptive characteristics (Sitpek, Rechia and McLintic 1992). As children between the ages of 4 and 7 are unable to use social comparisons accurately and they receive constant positive feedback, they often overcompensate their sense of adequacy. As children enter adolescence however, self-esteem becomes highly significant as individual are increasingly concerned with their self-image and become more vulnerable and concerned about peer acceptance and approval.

Self-esteem continues to develop throughout adolescence and although individuals strive to maintain their independence, parental support during this time is still increasingly important (Hart, Fegley and Brengelman 1993). Self-esteem generally remains relatively stable but it has been reported to fluctuate, particularly at critical periods in a person’s life (McLean 2003). Branden (1983) reported a link between low self-esteem, anxiety and depression and suggested that this ultimately impacts upon an individual’s social performance.
Mclean (2003) described contingent self-esteem as differing from low self-esteem. He described how some individuals’ self-esteem is entirely reliant upon the approval of others, constantly facing controlling standards or competitive situations. Schools may often reinforce contingent self-esteem due to the nature of activities and the pressure to deliver results and this could lead to increased social comparison. Some theorists advocate that low self esteem leads to underachievement and disaffection, although it seems the evidence suggesting this a relatively small (Baumeister, Smart and Boden, 1996). High self esteem on the other hand, is not always associated with positive outcomes and has been closely united with aggressive behavior and delinquency in some cases (Hughes, Cavell and Grossman, 1997). Bourneister (1993) further suggested that high self-esteem sometimes creates in individuals the need to undertake excessive high risks and goals.

The literature provides consistent evidence that self-esteem has the most important effect or relationship on academic achievement (Miraei, 2005; Poursina, 2003). Healthy self-esteem is an essential component for learning. Regardless of age, the self-esteem of a learner facilitates or inhibits learning (Solomon, 1992). According to Nathaniel (1992), “self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as worthy of happiness”. Self-esteem is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning, et.al., 2006). Reasoner (2005) defines self-esteem as “the experience of being capable of meeting life challenges and being worthy of happiness”. Research has documented the important role high self-esteem plays in academic achievement, social and personal responsibility (Redenbach, 1991).

Drawing from various theoretical perspectives eg social comparison theory, symbolic interaction theory, much research has validated the assumption that high self esteem is associated with educational achievement. (Marsh, Byrne and Yeung 1999). Ability levels may influence depressive symptoms and levels of self esteem (Humphery, Chartlon, and Newton 2004).

Helm (2007), a positive self esteem has been viewed as a desirable attributes for students and therefore studies investigating self esteem measures often note the important influence of teacher dispositions.
Adolescence is a challenging phase of one’s life. Suitable environmental opportunities, proper role models and optimum guidance can help the adolescent accept and face these challenges boldly and consequently develop a positive self concept. Success and happiness in the long run rests upon how much satisfied an individual remains with oneself. Those who value their own worth are said to possess high self-esteem. self-esteem, which is an evaluative component of self concept, it is the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. The most important attitude that each person holds in his or her attitude about self, is an evaluation that we level self-esteem, (James, 1890).

Some of the challenges during adolescence revolve around physical self, social status and school related aspects. In boys, high self esteem can result from multiple sources, most significant being a good body build. However, any deviation can cause anxiety and depression resulting in a lowered self-esteem. Boy’s aggression is generally motivated by issues of social status and self-esteem, while girl’s aggression, being principally concerned with resource acquisition, is more likely to take less physically dangerous and more covert forms. Girls prefer cooperation, while boys prefer competition, and among adults, men value competition more than women (Hoyenga & Hoyenga, 1993).

Fischer et al. (2001), found that woman’s self-esteem is largely based upon the quality of her intimate relationships. Quatman & Watson, (2001), found boys to demonstrate a slightly higher level of self esteem than girls, but unrelated to grade level during adolescents; whereas (Baldwin & Hoffmann 2002), found gender effects to be strongest for younger rather than older adolescents. (Shiv kumar singh 2012), in his study found significant difference between self-esteem of boys and girls. His study indicates that male have high self esteem than female adolescents.

Defining self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy

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Definitions of these three self constructs emphasize different internal components. Self-esteem and self-concept are two separate but related constructs. Self-esteem is defined as the value that individuals place on themselves. It involves both judgements about a person’s own worth, and the feelings associated with those judgements. It is the way individuals perceive themselves and their self-worth. A person with high self-esteem is satisfied with the person they are and meets their own standards as a human being (Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1985).

Self-concept is a more encompassing construct than self-esteem. Broadly defined, self concept is seen as an overall composite perception of oneself; it is a general, self descriptive construct that incorporates many forms of self-evaluative feelings, attitudes and aspects of self-knowledge, for example, about our abilities, skills, appearance and social desirability (Jerslid, 1965; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; West & Fish, 1973).

Self-esteem is viewed as the global aspect of the self-concept (Harter, 1990; Marsh, 2006; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008; Rosenberg, 1979), which is also variably referred to as global self-concept or global self-worth. Self-esteem is based more on generalized affective (or emotional) responses to the self, whereas self-concept perceptions are more cognitive and descriptive (Skaalvik, 1997).

Self-efficacy is defined as the belief that one has the capability to succeed in specific situations (Bandura, 1977). It is a context-specific judgement of capability to perform a task, or engage in an activity. It is a judgement of one’s own confidence which depends mostly on the task at hand and is independent of any socially or culturally assigned values. One of the basic tenets of self-efficacy theory is that individuals who exhibit a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to consider setbacks and difficult obstacles as challenges and therefore generally perform at higher levels than individuals who question their self-efficacy. Individuals who exhibit weak or low self-efficacy often view challenges and setbacks as threats, resulting in low aspirations and weak commitment to goals (Bandura, 1995). Individuals with strong or high self-efficacy tend to set higher goals and remain motivated in the face of failure and disappointment.
MEANING AND CONCEPT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC-STATUS:

Socio-economic status is also an important factor which affects occupational aspiration and academic achievement of students. The socio-economic status or SES really involves a number of dimensions, chiefly, economic and status dimensions—both of which are glib and slippery. If we take the economic dimension its measuring scale will require revision almost every five years because an income that comes in a higher scale in a particular years comes down to a lower grade within a span of a few years only. This means that the most important aspect of socio-economic status, the economic aspect, is in an ever fluid state so far as categorization of individual is concerned. The other aspect, that is social aspect, is equally nebulous because it is composed of so many constituents such as education, prestige value of occupation, and even caste in many localities and culture.

The socio-economic status of the student is important from psychological and educational perspectives because it is an important and significant determinant of human personality. The socio-economic status of a child is most commonly determined by combining parent’s educational level, occupational status and income level (Jeynes, 2002). Studies have repeatedly found that socio-economic status affects student outcomes (Baharudin and Luster, 1998). It is believed that low socio-economic status negatively affects academic achievement because low socio-economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Majoribanks, 1996; Jeynes, 2002; Emaon, 2005).

(Okoroduder (2010), Mezieobi & Opara (2007)), family is generally acknowledged as the smallest social unit in society. The family has among other roles and responsibilities of socializing and providing the basic needs to the child. (Morris Rosenberg 1978), searched the social class and self esteem among children and adults. The literature on the relationship of social class to self esteem is riddled with contradiction, showing positive, null and inverse relationships. According to Gove (2007), socio-economic background is relative standing of a family in a society based on its income, power background and prestige. Ovute (2009), explained that family socio-economic background includes family, income, standard of house occupied or rented, family size, parental education and level of family stability among other
factors. From the foregoing SES can be categorized into level such as high, middle and low.

Singh (1996), reports that unemployed or low income parents tend to see themselves as incapable because they cannot meet the needs of their children and families. Inadequate resources create conflict in the home. Such a state of affairs may influence the parent child relationships and subsequently the holistic development of the child, including education and academic achievement.

Psychologists, educationists and other social scientists have considered socio-economic status as correlate of many psychological characteristics and socio-educational status of individual. From this point of view the study of academic achievement and occupational aspiration of secondary school student in relation to socio-economic status is one of the objectives of this research.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS UNDER STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

The variables considered in study have been defined clearly and unambiguously in operational terms as follows:

**Academic Achievement:**

Crow & Crow (1969) defined academic achievement as “the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning, i.e. achievement is reflected by the extent to which skill or knowledge has been imparted to him.”

In the present study score obtained by students in last annual exam has been considered as their academic achievement.

**Occupational Aspiration:**
Occupational aspirations constitute a persons’ desired work related goals under ideal circumstances, these goals can reflect information about self-concept, perceived opportunities and interests and hopes Rojewski, (2005).

In the present study, occupational aspiration means students’ ambition for his occupation or desire of students that what they want to be in future. This has been taken as mean Occupational Aspiration score obtained on Grewal’s (2011) Occupational Aspiration Scale.

Self-Esteem:

It can be defined as an individuals’ attitude about him or herself, involving self-evaluation along a positive-negative dimension (Baron & Byrne, 1991).

Reasoner (2005) has defined self-esteem as “the experience of being capable of meeting life challenges and being worthy of happiness”. According to Taneja (1989), “Self-Esteem is the persons’ judgment of the self concept he has formed”.

In this study, the thinking and feeling of students for themselves has been considered as self esteem of students. It is taken as mean self-esteem score obtained on M S Prasad and G P Thakur’s self esteem inventory (1977).

Socio-economic-Status:

Socio economic status refers to the position that an individual and family occupies with reference to prevailing average standards, cultural possession and participation in group activity of community Chaudhari et.al. (1998). According to Taneja (1989), it refers to a persons’ position in any given group, society or culture.

In the present study, Family background, parents’ education, parents’ income, constitute the socio-economic-status of students. It has been taken as mean SES score obtained on Upadhyay and Saxena’s (2008) socio-economic status scale.

Secondary School Student:
Education provided in secondary schools following primary education is known as secondary education and the student taking secondary education are known as secondary school student (Taneja, 1989).

In the present study students studying in 10th, 11th, 12th, has been considered as secondary school students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives:
1. To study the relationship between socio-economic status and occupational aspiration of students.
2. To study the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement of students.
3. To study the relationship between academic-achievement and occupational aspiration of the students.
4. To study the relationship between self-esteem and occupational aspiration of students.
5. To study the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students.

The Subsidiary Objectives:
1. To examine gender wise differences in self-esteem.
2. To examine the gender wise differences in academic achievement.
3. To examine gender wise differences in occupational aspiration of students.
4. To examine the difference in self esteem of students of secondary level in rural and urban area.
5. To examine the difference in academic achievement of secondary level students in rural and urban area.
6. To examine the differences in occupational aspiration of secondary school students in rural and urban area.


8. To examine stream wise difference in academic-achievement of students.

9. To examine stream wise difference in occupational aspiration of students.

**THE HYPOTHESES :**

The following hypotheses were framed to test:

1. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and occupational aspiration of students.

2. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement of students.

3. There is no significant relationship between academic achievement and occupational aspiration of students.

4. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and occupational achievement of students.

5. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of students.

**SUB-HYPOTHESIS;**

1. There is no significant difference between Self-esteem of boys and girls.

2. There is no significant difference between academic-achievement of boys and girls.

3. There is no significant difference between occupational aspiration of boys and girls.
4. There is no significant difference between Self-esteem of students of rural and urban area.

5. There is no significant difference between academic-achievement of students of rural and urban area.

6. There is no significant difference between occupational aspiration of students of rural and urban area.

7. There is no significant difference between Self-esteem of students of arts and science stream.

8. There is no significant difference between academic-achievement of students of arts and science stream.

9. There is no significant difference between occupational aspiration of students of arts and science stream.

10. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in idealistic expression of occupational aspiration at initial career point.

11. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in idealistic expression of occupational aspiration at mature career point.

12. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in realistic expression of occupational aspiration at initial career point.

13. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in realistic expression of occupational aspiration at mature career point.

14. There is no significant difference between idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of rural and urban students at initial career point.

15. There is no significant difference between idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of rural and urban students at mature career point.

16. There is no significant difference between realistic expression of occupational aspiration of rural and urban students at initial career point.

17. There is no significant difference between realistic expression of occupational aspiration of rural and urban students at mature career point.
18. There is no significant difference between idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students of arts and science stream at initial career point.
19. There is no significant difference between idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students of arts and science stream at mature career point.
20. There is no significant difference between realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students of arts and science stream at initial career point.
21. There is no significant difference between realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students of arts and science stream at mature career point.
22. There is no significant interaction between Self-esteem and idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at initial career point.
23. There is no significant interaction between Self-esteem and idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at mature career point.
24. There is no significant interaction between Self-esteem and realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at initial career point.
25. There is no significant interaction between Self-esteem and realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at mature career point.
26. There is no significant interaction between socio-economic-status and idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at initial career point.
27. There is no significant interaction between socio-economic-status and idealistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at mature career point.
28. There is no significant interaction between socio-economic-status and realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at initial career point.
29. There is no significant interaction between socio-economic-status and realistic expression of occupational aspiration of students at mature career point.

**LIMITATIONS OF STUDY :**

1. This study was confined only within students of district Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand.

2. 200 boys and 200 girls from different Government secondary schools were included in study.

3. 200 students from urban area and 200 students from rural area were selected for study.

4. The study was confined only within students of science and Arts stream. 200 students from arts stream and 200 students from science stream were selected for study.