CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL-ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The term attitude has been variously defined and as the term occurs in both scientific investigations and common talk it has to be defined unambiguously. Without listing the several shades of meaning attached to it, one may define it, as a more or less generalized tendency to think or act in a certain way in respect to some object or situation, often attended by feeling. Often the terms is identified with prejudices, biases, states of readiness, beliefs or ideas with an emotional tinge. Social psychologists define attitude as those states of readiness which are learned in relation to definite objects, persons, situations, norms or values and which are more or less lasting. Some distinguish between emotional and intellectual attitudes, others emphasize biological and cultural aspects too. But they all seem to agree that attitudes are formed as a result of specific types of habits, interests, personality factors, self-concepts, behaviour of adjustments, social and intellectual achievement.

Often we ask about the attitude of a particular person towards another person, his job, his employer and we are told
that it is one of dislike, of hate, of fondness, of affection, of disgust, of indifference. These attitudes indicate the direction and intensity of response of the person to stimuli i.e. objects, persons, situations, or social values. Since attitudes influence and determine most of our behaviour and since an individual's personality is evaluated in terms of his expressed attitudes it is an important responsibility of the school to develop wholesome attitudes among pupils and to understand the attitudes they have already developed.

The significance of attitude is very great. An individual's self-concept is essentially the sum total of the attitudes by which he lives. Thus a person who is known to be a scholar is expected to have a favourable attitude towards all those experiences and situations which demand intellectual work. The cultivation of favourable attitudes towards those values and ideals which society cherishes and appreciates is the best way of promoting behaviour consistent with the accepted codes and mores of social order. From the point of view of learning, attitudes are important in as much as they facilitate further learning and thus contain within themselves the source of further motivation. Much remains to be learned about the way attitudes are acquired, developed and changed from infancy to adult stage in the same individual. While some attitudes are acquired in early childhood and remain stable, others
are modified, and still others are acquired in later adolescence and youth and are subject to modification. Some investigators have studied children's attitudes at different stages and toward significant objects. The findings indicate that attitude towards social status are acquired quite early in life, persists and become confirmed with further learning. Attitude towards school are less enduring and change direction. With increasing age and experience some positive and negative attitudes become more marked and stable, and are integrated into the individual's characteristic approach to life or into his value system. But it is certain that attitude of school pupils is to a large extent determined by some personality variables (self-concept), affective variables (interest and adjustment) and cognitive variables (scholastic achievement).

When attitudes change and develop, and when they shift radically it is pertinent to enquire what conditions and principles are responsible for such shifts, what factors facilitate the formation of attitude. It must be clearly understood at the outset that attitudes are learned in very much the same manner as other things are learned. As attitudes have an emotional content they are often based on some sort of conditioning and unconscious imitation of others. When two stimuli are presented simultaneously, one having a strong affective tone
and the other neutral, the affective tone is likely to be associated with the neutral stimulus. Most of students' attitude towards school can be traced to such conditioning. Suppose, for example, they like and do well in a subject so they begin to have a favourable attitude towards the teacher who teaches the subject or because they have had some unpleasant incident with the teacher they begin to dislike the subject he teaches.

Attitudes like interest result from experiences. Satisfying experiences result in favourable attitudes and unsatisfying experiences lead to negative attitudes. One highly pleasant experience may lead to a lasting preference as one highly unpleasant experience may lead to a lasting aversion. If the class and the school are attractive and pleasant, if the teacher is an active, warm and sincere person, and if through teaching and personal dealings he provides for happy experiences in which young pupils achieve success in their learning tasks, he will ensure among pupils favourable attitude towards the school and its activities. The same thing holds good in modifying attitudes formed already. If the individual accepts that change and modification of existing attitudes are more rewarding or pleasant than holding fast to the existing ones, change and modification will be possible.

Pupils study in school to acquire knowledge, information
and skills but much more important are the development of attitudes to life, the teacher and the classmates whom they meet in school. Perhaps far more important is the attitude they develop towards the school itself and the values for which it stands. Too often and with too many pupils, the study of literature, history or mathematics has led to very unfavourable attitude towards those subjects. Their dislike and disgust with areas of study they had covered is an index of failure of the teacher in his profession. Though, sometimes parents are also responsible for indirectly encouraging such negative attitude toward the school, for example, when they try to produce fear of the teacher and the school, most pupils look forward to school going as a pleasant adventure and as a place for new experiences, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide favourable and happy experiences which may lead to the formation of favourable attitude towards school. The school work should never be allowed to function as a drag on the enthusiasm and interest of pupils and lower their morale.

Attitude arise out of experiences and therefore the school which seeks to develop specific attitudes among its pupils must provide opportunities for relevant experiences. From such experiences pupils will imbibe meanings and feelings contents of attitudes.
1.2 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL IN RELATION TO INTERESTS OF THE PUPILS:

The term interest has been regarded by psychologists as having some generalized feeling-tone or affective aspect of experience which draw our attention to attend to a person, thing or activity or which may arise from the activity itself and keep it going. That is, it may be the cause of activity, its motivating force, or it may be the outcome of participating in the activity. In education, these two aspects of interest are pointed out by saying that interest is both a means and an end, it arouses and sustains learning activity and also is the outcome of that activity. Today we are more aware of the large variety and complexity of interests among pupils.

Some define interests as likes and dislikes, motives, predispositions and the like; others describe interests as factors determining attention to, and away from objects, persons and activities; and still others identify them with likes, and aversions. But whatever may be the definition, it is true that interests imply personal feeling involving oneness between the individual and the object, he is concerned about the object of his interest.

Interest is a powerful source of human motivation and
it affects the feeling-tone of experience of individuals in such a way that the individual is able to form definite attitude towards the object of experience. In education, the quality and the effectiveness of our procedures and programmes, efforts and achievements, goals and outcomes, is determined largely by the interest and attitudes of pupils. What young pupils will attempt at, how they will behave and think, what they will strive to learn and become depends upon what preferences and inclinations they have, what mind-sets they have developed and what states of readiness, beliefs, or ideas they cherish. The most common way of ascertaining an individual’s interests and attitudes is to observe and interpret his behaviour or to ask him directly to state his preferences for certain objects and his tendency to think or act in a certain way in respect of some objects or situations, often attended by feeling. It is obvious that interests in certain events, situations, materials leads to the formation of certain specific attitudes towards those events, situations, and materials.

In other words, if one holds favourable attitude towards certain objects or situations, it is expected that he or she will develop genuine interest in ideas, materials, or anything connected with those objects and situations. It is also expected that an unfavourable attitudes towards some individual or objects will definitely lead to dislike or lack
of interest to the individual and or to the object concerned. Therefore, it is highly probable that interest of an individual is related to the attitude of the individual. Interest of an individual in certain object or situation is fundamentally dependent upon his or her attitude towards the object or situation. A favourable attitude will create certain types of interest. An unfavourable attitude, on the other hand will develop a totally different type of interest. The researcher failed to locate any study on the relationship between the variables attitude and interest.

An unfavourable attitude towards school of young pupils is often found to be associated with lack of interest in school work. Often the pupils develop unfavourable attitude towards the teacher and hence towards the school because teaching work of the teacher has become mechanical and uninspiring. Under the circumstances the pupils are expected to show varying amount of interest and enthusiasm in the activities of the classroom. It is desirable, therefore, to make an assessment of the extent to which lack of interest in classroom work of the pupils is associated with their attitude towards school. It may be worthwhile to measured the extent of relationship between attitude towards school of pupils and their interest in activities connected with school, if the school concerned is able to provide quality instruction and if the pupils are attracted by the sincerity of teachers.
The range and variety of interests of an individual are determined by his attitude towards the object of interests. Interests vary in types and ultimately the needs and values of a person determine how strong different interest will be. Attitudes indicate the direction and intensity of response of the person to stimuli, i.e. objects, persons, situations or social values. Observation of pupils engaged in games in which they are intensely interested or in writing a theme which is just after their heart confirms that strong interest and emotional enthusiasm not only raises the quality of their work but leads to the formation of very favourable attitude towards the task concerned.

1.3 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL IN RELATION TO SELF-CONCEPTS OF THE PUPILS:

The sharp increase in the number of research studies on self-concept and allied non-cognitive variables since 1960 has been attributed to the emphasis given to enhancing the child's self-concept. Consequently, the fundamental responsibility of schools towards improving self-concept of their pupils is being recognized by a number of researchers like Clark (1963)¹, Tannenbaum (1972)². According to Shavelson et. al. (1976)³ the construct of self-concept is linked with achievement and "whether used as an outcome of itself or a
moderator variable that helps explain achievement outcomes, is a critical variable in education and in educational evaluation and research".

Psychologists in recent years began to realise that a greater progress in understanding human behaviour can be possible through the study of the individual as a whole. It is the concept of self which personifies the individual as a whole. A self-concept is the individual's way of looking at himself. It also signifies his way of thinking, feeling and behaving. The problem of determining the relationship between self-concept and attitude towards school to a large extent still remains unsolved. Difficulty in conducting research in such area is the fact that the attitudinal component of self-concept has not been explored completely. Moreover, the fundamental dependence of one's attitude towards school on one's self-concept is in a state of flux.

According to Hurlock (1974)⁴ the concept of self has three major components. The perceptual, the conceptual and the attitudinal. The perceptual component is similar to physical self-concept which includes the image of one's appearance, attractiveness and importance of different parts of the body. The conceptual component is similar to psychological self-concept which relates to the origin of the
individual, his abilities and disabilities, his social adjustment and traits of personality. The attitudinal component refers to attitudes of a person about his present status and future prospects, his feeling about his worthiness, his attitudes of self-esteem, pride and shame. It includes his beliefs, convictions, values also.

The self-concept, a person's idea about himself or herself is one of the most important single factor affecting behaviour (Combs et. al. 1971). Educators have become increasingly aware of the impact that an individual's self-concept and self-esteem, the value or judgement she places on herself and her behaviour, have on her classroom behaviour and achievement. Many psychologists believe that the self has two aspects — concepts and feelings and therefore, distinguish between 'Self-concept' and 'Self-esteem'. Self-concept is the total organisation of perceptions an individual has of himself or herself. However, other psychologists did not make this distinction and referred to self-concept as a global term including personal judgement.

The individual learns to regard herself negatively because the self-concept she develops over a period of time as she assimilates her experiences with significant people in her life — parents, classmates and teachers. By the time a child
reaches school, she has acquired a good deal of information about herself from others and begins to 'act like' the type of person she conceives herself to be. Her initial school experiences often reinforce these beliefs. Thus there seems to be a relationship between one's beliefs about school experiences, or attitude towards school and one's self-concept.

In an extensive study of the antecedents of self-esteem among fifth and sixth grade children, Coopersmith (1967), found that individuals having positive self-esteem has developed favourable attitude towards life and those having negative self-esteem was found to hold unfavourable attitude towards life.

The pupil with poor self-esteem often expects to fail. This tendency exhibits the significant relationship between positive self-concept or high self-esteem and attitude towards school. Pupils possessing positive attributes are generally high achievers and hold favourable attitude towards school whereas those with negative beliefs and feelings about themselves are usually under achievers and showed unfavourable attitude towards school (Bledsoe, 1964; Brookover et al. 1964).

This relationship between self-esteem and attitude
towards school occurs very early in school. In one study, Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) found that the results of earlier self-esteem test were better indicators of reading achievement than was the children's earlier performance on the intelligence test. The implication of such research is that some children are poor readers because they believe they cannot read. Such children are caught in a vicious circle. They believe that they cannot read and so they have developed an unfavourable attitude towards reading which is one of the activities of the school. Because they avoid reading they fail to make adequate practice in school and therefore, they do not read well when called upon. The child's concept of his abilities grows mainly from his performance on classroom task and so his self-concept can be enhanced by arranging conditions conducive to his success in such task. The confidence of the pupils in performing the task successfully is also related to their attitude towards school activities. Thus pupils' attitude towards school seems to be significantly related to their self-concept.

A great deal of emphasis is now laid on the study of self-concept of individuals for understanding and predicting many aspects of their behaviour. Self-concept is also considered as one of the personality factors influencing the cognitive and effective behaviour of an individual. Successes
and other pleasurable events in life lead to enhancement of self-concept and also the formation of desirable attitude while failure, frustration and such experiences tend to lower the concept of self and thus weaken the formation of desirable attitude. Self-concept plays a vital role in human life as every one continuously strives towards self-realisation, self-actualisation and self-enhancement. In view of the significance of self-concept as determinant of the behaviour of an individual, its study has gained importance in recent years. Self-concept of creative school children, scientists, industrial workers, artists and student-teachers has been studied by a number of researchers. Delton (1978) studied the effect of role change on self-concept, attitude towards school and other variables. But there do not exist any conclusive findings regarding the relationship between attitude towards school and self-concept.

The self-concept of an individual therefore determines his or her interpersonal relationship with his or her parents, teachers, and fellow classmates. The self-concept is therefore a significant determinant of the attitude towards school of the pupils. It can, therefore, be inferred, that the two variables self-concept and attitudes are related to each other.
1.4 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL IN RELATION TO
ADJUSTMENT OF THE PUPILS:

Adjustment is very important in the life of every individual. The process of adjustment starts early in life. Mathis et. al. (1970)\textsuperscript{10} call it a continuous process. Boring et. al (1973)\textsuperscript{11} calls it a process which maintains a balance between the needs and their satisfaction whereas, Gates et. al (1964)\textsuperscript{12} define it as a process by which the person varies his behaviour to suit the conditions. Shaffer and Shoben (1956)\textsuperscript{13} consider good adjustment integrative in the satisfaction of motives. It has been described as a reaction of an organism to its environment by Symonds (1943)\textsuperscript{14}. Mathis et. al (1970)\textsuperscript{15} defines it as a degree of relationship between an individual and his fellows while Redl and Whattenberg (1959)\textsuperscript{16} define it as a relation between individual and his environment while Gates et. al (1964)\textsuperscript{17} and Arkoff (1968)\textsuperscript{18} finds it as the resultant of a constant interaction between the person and his environment.

A person who considers himself hard working has favourable attitude towards all those experiences and situations in which hard work is necessary. Therefore, the cultivation of favourable attitude towards those values and ideals which society cherishes and appreciates is the best way of bringing
good adjustment consistent with the accepted codes and mores of the social order. Promoting favourable attitude towards school is to encourage pupils to try for a better adjustment with school activity. Hence, there seems to be a relationship between attitude towards school and the adjustment pattern of the adolescent boys and girls.

The adolescents encounter many problems related to the radical changes occurring in their environmental situations. As a result of these changes they develop certain attitude towards school and the activities they are to perform in schools. School pupils change their attitudes under the impact of new influences, new experiences and in course of gathering new concepts, new meaning and values. Very often, a pupil faces problems which may appear to him insurmountable as long as he cannot make a satisfactory adjustment, his normal behaviour patterns are disturbed and all activities of his life are affected. When the pupil's mind is seriously preoccupied with problems, the entire effort for reconstructing and educating him will be futile. It is found that when an adolescent is confronted with a problem and is unable to make satisfactory adjustment there is a radical change of their attitude towards a system of their environment or towards the school. When there is a change of attitude due to inability in making successful adjustment with the school environment
it is pertinent to enquire what factors are responsible for change of attitude. It is apparent that the change in attitude takes place as the individual is able to form a more organized, consistent and conceptual gestalt composed of his feelings towards a system or organization and the like. For a school going adolescent the feelings may be in the form of an attitude towards school but the origin of this feeling may be traced back to his ways of adjustment with the school environment.

Oscerson (1969)\(^\text{19}\) has indicated that adjustment is related to grade level. Decoster (1970)\(^\text{20}\) did not find difference between experimental and control treatment of the different classroom conditions upon interpersonal relationship, personal adjustment and achievement for college freshmen. Kosta (1969)\(^\text{21}\), Young (1960)\(^\text{22}\), Tismer (1969)\(^\text{23}\), Gallegos (1970)\(^\text{24}\), studied the relationship of individualized instruction, organizational structure, physical fitness, school achievement on personal, social acceptance and social adjustment of fifth and sixth grade pupils.

Bhatt et. al (1961)\(^\text{25}\) found significant relationship among emotional, social and family area of adjustment. Pasricha and Rajani (1964)\(^\text{26}\) found that college boys had more problems of adjustment than girls. The pupils of arts faculty
were less puzzled with problems of adjustment and could adjust themselves easily than the pupils of other faculties. Rao (1965) found that college pupils of arts, science and commerce have more problems of adjustment than pupils of professional college. Pal (1969) found that on the general adjustment scale, student teachers were found to be different from engineering and law students. On home adjustment no significant difference was found among medical, engineering, teacher training and law students. Through a review of related literature the researcher could not locate any study concerning the relationship between adolescents' attitude towards school and their adjustment.

The above discussion has, therefore, indicated the necessity of studying adjustment as an important variable that may have significant relationship with attitude towards school.

1.5 ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL IN RELATION TO SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PUPILS:

The attitude towards school is now regarded as an important affective variable. An individual who occupies better position in life is expected to have a favourable attitude towards school because he realises that strict discipline of
the school, greater involvement of pupils in curricular and
cocurricular activities of the school has enabled him to
acquire the best, that is available from school education.
Therefore, the development of favourable attitude towards
those values and ideals of school is the best way of incul-
crating qualities which are necessary for the future citizens
of a democracy. From the standpoint of better achievement
in school, attitude towards school is important so far as
further achievement and continual progress are facilitated.

Favourable attitude towards school offers great possi-
bilities for better achievement in school subjects. Good
achievement in school subjects by an individual pupil results
when he is stimulated by an inner urge to concentrate whole-
heartedly in the subjects he studies. The urge is partly due
to his attitude towards school. The prevalent educational
system is not always directed to synchronize the process of
personality development with scholastic ability. Attempts
have been made by some researchers to understand the impact
of personality variable on academic achievement. But the
findings are not conclusive.

Carey (1978)²⁸ found no relationship between attitude
towards school and academic achievement. The general expec-
tation is that a favourable attitude towards school should
be related positively with high achievement in school subjects. Since attitude exercises much influence on an individual's behaviour, it seems quite logical to expect a linear relationship between attitude towards school and scholastic achievement.

The above study was designed to investigate the relationship between attitude toward school, intelligence, sex and academic achievement in an upper middle class suburban school district. The classes chosen were the third and sixth grades and were examined in reading and mathematics. Survey of School Attitudes (SSA) was administered on the sample. The Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test (O-L) scores were used to classify sample into three levels—low, medium and high. The SSA scores were also used to classify the sample into three levels of attitudes—low, neutral and high. A 2 x 3 x 3 analysis of variance revealed that intelligence is related to achievement in both subject areas in both grades but that attitude is not related to achievement.

Carey's investigation has indicated the need for exploring the relationship between attitude towards school and scholastic achievement.
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