CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mental Health

The thing, which is mostly desired in all the societies of the world, is the need of preserving mental health of the individual. Mental health is a potent determinant of one’s integrated personality and balanced behaviour identified on the basis of the level of his/her adjustment to own self, others and environment. The acquisition of such personality is indeed essential for a normal individual. Only then, an individual can be able to actualise his/herself, live his/her life to his/her satisfaction in the perfect tune of talking and giving something to the society.

The concept of being healthy is extended beyond the proper functioning of the body. It means the body and the mind are working efficiently and harmoniously. Human behaviour is determined by both physical and mental factors. Mental health is a basic factor that contributes to the maintenance of physical health as well as social effectiveness.

In recent years, clinical psychologists as well as educationalists have started giving proper attention to the study of mental health. Mental health connotates those behaviours, perceptions and feelings that determine a person’s overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness, and excellence of functioning as a person (Kornhauser, 1965). Mental Health depends on the development and retention of goals that are neither too high nor too low to permit realistic successful maintenance of belief in one’s self as a worthy and effective human being (Lakshminarayanan et al., 1993). Mentally healthy person is firm in his/her intentions and is least disturbed by strains and stresses of day to day life. The concept of mental health has taken ‘Gestalt’ view of individual. It incorporates the concepts of personality characteristics and behaviour all in one. It may also be understood as the behavioural characteristic of the person. A mentally healthy person shows a homogeneous organization of desirable attitudes, healthy values, and righteous self-concept and a scientific perception of the world as a whole. Several psychologists like Rogers (1961), Hurlock (1972), and Erickson (1936) have expressed similar views.

Over the years, a continuing matter of debate has been there on the question of how best to define mental health. The expression ‘Mental Health’ consists of two words ‘Mental’ and ‘Health’. Mental health, therefore, may refer to a sound mental condition or a state of psychological well-being or freedom from mental diseases. It is said that a sound body determines a sound mind and a sound mind exists in sound body. Mental health is ambiguous as it is not only difficult to agree on its general application, but even in a single context it may be used in many different ways (Schwartz et al., 1968). The noun mental health has one meaning
that the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioural adjustment (WordNet, 2009).

Wikipedia Dictionary (2010) explains the meaning of mental health as a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life.

According to Longman’s Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry (Goldenson, 1984), “Mental health is a state of mind characterised by emotional well-being, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and coping with ordinary demands and stresses of life”.

The Encyclopaedia of Education (Deighton, 1971) emphasises mental health has more than simply the absence of mental illness. Rather mental health is seen as the optimal functioning of the individual and social group in all emotional and intellectual areas. Physical component of the well-being has been stressed by Stewart (1965), Maes et al. (1989), and Bryant et al. (1983). Hattler (1979) perceived intellectual health as one of the six dimensions of wellness and considers emotional well-being as an essential ingredient of wellness.

Symonds (2010) had offered the four fold concept of mental health.
1. Balance between the demand of society and the desire of the individual.
3. Adequate functioning: The ability of burn out/release threats and frustrating situations.
4. Compromise between inner desire of individual and the demand of the society.

The chief character of mental health is adjustment. The greater the degree of successful adjustment, the greater will be mental health of the individual. Therefore, mental health is that ability by means of which establishment of adjustment with the difficult situations of life can take place. Mental health is a state of being conductive to harmonious and effective living.

Generally mental status has two possibilities: either health or illness. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness (World Health Organisation (WHO), 2006). Mental Health includes the ability to enjoy life, resilience, balance, flexibility, and self-actualization. Positive mental health consists of protection and development and satisfying human relationships and in the reduction of hostile tensions in persons and groups.

Some psychologists considered mental health as absence of mental illness. Mental illness is any of various conditions characterized by impairment of an individual's normal cognitive, emotional, or behavioural functioning and caused by social, psychological, biochemical, genetic, or other factors, such as infection or head trauma. It is also called emotional illness, mental disease, and mental disorder. Some experts consider mental health as a continuum. Thus, an individual's mental health may have many different possible values.

Mental health involves positive feelings, positive attitude, and positive behaviour. A mentally healthy person always does his/her work with keen interest. S/he loves her/his work. In
this way, s/he gets excellent results. On the other hand, if a person has no interest and aptitude in his/her work, it will lead to frustration. S/he cannot accomplish any great deed. Early morning S/he takes a pledge, which S/he breaks before evening comes.

Mental health is something that has to be earned. But its earning does not depend upon the individual alone. In other words, the individual is rarely capable of achieving a satisfactory measure of good mental health exclusively through his/her own personal efforts. This implies that each one also needs a legitimate measure of external help to be mentally healthy and sound to the optimum degree. The external assistance primarily comes through education both formal and informal. All educational institutions are charged with the responsibility of helping pupils in the attainment of mental health.

1.1.1 Elements of Mental Health

Following are the elements which constitute an individual’s mental health (MacDonald et al., 1998).

Physical Health: Sound physique is essential to keep good mental health. Persons who have some physical defects or deformities may develop various types of complexes and frustrations and the result is ill mental health.

Intellectual Health: Intellectual health is another important element of mental health. Intellectual persons can adjust well to the changing and frustrating situations. Thus, good intelligence keeps the mental health of the individual intact.

Emotional Health: Under mental health, emotional health is very important. An emotionally stable individual enjoys a good mental health, whereas emotionally unstable conditions cause maladjustments and mental disorders.

Interests and Aptitudes: It is essential that the individual should be healthy in interests and inclinations. The work assigned according to interests and aptitudes ensures success and development of wholesome and balanced personality. If the work assigned to individual is above his/her head or not according to his/her interests and aptitudes, then he/she will lack confidence and, hence, suffers from frustration, which leads to ill mental health.

1.1.2 Characteristics of Mentally Healthy Person

According to Melinda et al. (2010), following characteristics are attached to individual(s) who is/are mentally healthy. The individual(s) has/ have:

- A sense of contentment.
- A zest for living and the ability to laugh and have fun.
- The ability to deal with stress and bounce back from adversity.
- A sense of meaning and purpose, in both activities and relationships.
- The flexibility to learn new things and adapt to change.


- A balance between work and play, rest and activity etc.
- The ability to build and maintain fulfilling relationships.
- Self-confidence and high self-esteem.

These positive characteristics of mental health allow individual to participate in life to the fullest extent possible through productive, meaningful activities and strong relationships. These positive characteristics also help to cope when faced with life's challenges and stresses.

1.1.3 Impact of Mental Health

Mental health has a huge impact on every aspect of life (Hackner, 2010).

**Self-Image:** Good mental health means appreciating one’s achievements and accepting shortcomings. A mental illness can cause an inferiority complex, a negative body image and intense feelings of self-hate, anger, disgust, and uselessness, which could mutate into extreme depression, psycho-social disorders, or eating disorders.

**Education:** Students with mental problems socially isolate themselves and develop anxiety disorders and concentration problems. Good mental health ensures an all-round educational experience that enhances social and intellectual skills that lead to self-confidence and better performance/achievement.

**Relationships:** Mental health largely contributes to the functioning of human relationships. Mental illness can hamper even basic interactions with family, friends and colleagues. Most people suffering from mental illness find it difficult to nurture relationships, have problems with commitment or intimacy and frequently encounter sexual health issues.

**Sleeping:** An inability to handle stress or anxiety can cause insomnia. Even if one can manage to fall asleep, he/she may wake up a dozen times during the night with thoughts of what went wrong the day before or how bad tomorrow is going to be. One may develop severe sleeping disorders which leave him/her exhausted and less productive.

**Eating:** People with mental disorders are more prone to indulging in comfort eating or emotional binges. Finding comfort in food is something we all do from time to time. But with a mental illness, it becomes difficult to control oneself. Overeating can lead to obesity, which puts you at a risk for heart disease and diabetes, in addition to creating an unhealthy body-image.

**Physical Health:** Mental state directly affects body. For example, stress can lead to hypertension or stomach ulcers. People, who are mentally healthy, are at a lower risk for many health complications.

1.2 Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual intelligence is a new construct of psychology. Zohar et al. (2001) contends that in the early part of the twentieth century IQ, or rational intelligence was the big issue. More
recently, emotional intelligence (EQ) has been identified as a requirement for the effective use of IQ. Now, there exists much scientific data that points to the presence of a spiritual intelligence (SQ), the ultimate intelligence that serves as a necessary foundation for the effective functioning of both IQ and EQ. There is growing collective evidence that there is a third ‘Q’-‘SQ’ or Spiritual Intelligence.

The momentary definition of spiritual intelligence is the ability to respond to any given situation through the use of pure intuitive logical thought to empower the best use of our mind/body/spirit complex. Everything is connected in the holistic view. ‘Pure’ means without resistance; ‘intuitive’ means a person already knows the answer/response; ‘logical’ means it has identifiable repetitive patterns; ‘thought’ means that it is a function of the one mind. According to Levin (2000) there isn’t any new parcel of knowledge that we have to learn. It is almost as if knowledge or information has little to do with it. But, there is a new approach, a new way of understanding and acting that we must find. It is the approach of spiritual intelligence.

In an interview with Danah Zohar and Dr. Ian Marshall by David Bowman, Zohar (2003) explained that our spirituality is located in the deep self, which is ultimately connected to the ground of reality itself. Physicists would call this the quantum vacuum. Religious people would call it God. Buddhists would call it the soulful being. Doesn’t matter what we call it. Even in psychics there is a kind of fundamental reality as the base of things.

There is believed to be a built-in spiritual centre located among neural connections in the temporal lobes of human brain. On scans taken with positron emission topography, these neural areas light up whenever research subjects are exposed to discussion of spiritual or religious topics. Neurobiologists have now dubbed the area of the temporal lobes concerned with religious or spiritual experience as the 'God spot' or the 'God module'.

The brain's unitive experience emanates from synchronous 40 Hz neural oscillations that travel across the whole brain. According to Zohar et al. (2001), the 40 Hz oscillations are the neural basis of SQ, a third intelligence that places our actions and experience in a larger context of meaning and value, thus, rendering them more effective. Everything possesses a degree of proto-consciousness but only certain special structures, like brains, have what is needed to generate full-blown consciousness. In this case, we conscious human beings have our roots at the origin of the universe itself. Our spiritual intelligence grounds us in the wider cosmos and life has purpose and meaning within the larger context of cosmic evolutionary processes.

Zohar et al. (2001) defined spiritual intelligence as "the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or one life-path is more meaningful than another".
Wolman (2001) defined spiritual intelligence as “the human capacity to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life and to simultaneously experience the seamless connection between each of us and the world in which we live”.

According to Kravitz (2002), “Spiritual intelligence refers to the skills, abilities and behaviours required to develop and maintain a relationship to the ultimate source of all being, succeed in the search for meaning in life, find a moral and ethical path to guide us through life and act out our sense of meaning and values in our personal life and in our interpersonal relationships”.

Gardner (1993) has identified a form of intelligence to which he refers as, “Existential Intelligence”. This form of intelligence will have someone asking questions like: “Who am I?”, “Why am I here?”, “Where do I go when I die?”. Gardner (2006) proposed ‘Existential intelligence’ as the intelligence that incorporates the intangibles brought to question on perceiving spiritual matters. People all over the world ask these questions and art, religion, philosophy, and mythology are all efforts to deal with them. Even kids ask us, sometimes directly, sometimes through storytelling and play. Most of the intelligences are linked to tangibles like objects or other people, but existential intelligence deals with intangibles.

Some scholars argued that there is no difference between Gardner’s (2006) concept of ‘Existential Intelligence’ and Zohar and Marshall’s (2001) concept of ‘Spiritual Intelligence’. But, Halama et al. (2004) presented some difference between these. They studied the nature of intelligence related to the existential and spiritual dimension of individuals. They outlined relations between spirituality and thinking and review the most commonly known theories of spiritual intelligence. In the conclusion, they argued for an understanding of spiritual and existential intelligence as non-identical, however, mutually related and overlapping constructs.

According to Lama (2006) by developing spiritual intelligence, a sense of compassion that helps us be more sensitive, more aware of our own feelings and the feelings of those around us, we become more intuitive; we relate better and love better. Cultivating spiritual intelligence and learning how to connect will improve our capacity for intimacy, making us better mates, friends, parents and co-workers; it helps all of us to become more giving and brings us fulfilment, meaning and love.

Conscious Pursuits Inc. (CPI) (2005) suggested that spiritual intelligence is an innate human intelligence–but like any intelligence it must be developed. This means that we can describe and measure it by looking at the skills that comprise spiritual intelligence.

1.3 Altruism

Altruistic behaviour has come to be one of the central concerns of social psychology. Evidence of this concern is the inclusion of a chapter on the topic in social psychological text books like those of Baron et al. (1974), Berkowitz (1972, 1975), Freidman et al. (1974), and
Empirical studies on prosocial behaviour have been carried out both in laboratory and in the field.

Prosocial behaviour is defined by Bar Tal (1976) as voluntary behaviour that is carried out to benefit without anticipation of external rewards and is performed under two circumstances:

(a) The behaviour is done for its own end and,

(b) The behaviour is done as an act of restitution.

These conditions limit prosocial behaviour to two forms altruism and restitution.

Altruism is selfless concern for the welfare of others. It is a traditional virtue in many cultures and central to many religious traditions. In English, the idea was often described as the golden rule of ethics. Some newer philosophies such as ‘egoism’ have criticized the concept, with writers such as Nietzsche (2000) arguing that there is no moral obligation to help others.

The term altruism, which derives from the Latin word ‘alter’ ("the other"), means literally “other-ism”. It was created by the French sociologist Auguste Comte to displace terms burdened by a theological history (Encyclopaedia of Britannica, 1967). It was suggested by a French legal expression, “le bien d’autrui” (the good of others) (Stephen et al. 2003).

Altruism can be distinguished from a feeling of loyalty and duty. Altruism focuses on a motivation to help others or a want to do good without reward, while duty focuses on a moral obligation towards a specific individual (i.e. God, a king), a specific organization (i.e. a government), or an abstract concept (i.e. patriotism). Some individuals may feel both altruism and duty, while others may not. Pure altruism is giving without regard to reward or the benefits of recognition.

Another point of view regarding altruism focuses on obligation or ethical obligation like the concept of duty. This point of view describes altruism as ethical doctrine. According to Comte (1852) the social point of view cannot tolerate the notion of rights, for such notion rests on individualism. We are born under a load of obligations of every kind, to our predecessors, to our successors, to our contemporaries. After our birth these obligations increase or accumulate, for it is some time before we can return any service.... This ["to live for others"], the definitive formula of human morality, gives a direct sanction exclusively to our instincts of benevolence, the common source of happiness and duty. Man must serve humanity, whose we are entirely. As the name of the ethical doctrine is "altruism", doing what the ethical doctrine prescribes, has also come to be referred to by the term "altruism" - serving others through placing their interests above one's own. Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, English contemporaries of Comte, accepted the worth of altruism but argued that the true moral aim should be the welfare of society, rather than that of individuals.

However, attempts to explain the behaviour to which the term applies are ancient. For Comte (1852) altruism was an unselfish regard for the welfare of others. The term egoism was
also used along with altruism as opposite. Egoism is the selfish, ego centred unsocial behaviour. Comte (1852) maintained that the chief problem of our existence is to coordinate as far as possible ‘egoism’ to ‘altruism’. Spencer (1879) adopted the term and gave considerable space in his ‘Data of Ethics’ to discussion of the contrasted elements of egoism and altruism. The contrast between egoism and altruism was discussed by some earlier writers in psychology and ethics under the self-regarding and other regarding (i.e. benevolent and disinterested tendencies) sentiments.

Bryan et al. (1967) took altruism to mean those acts wherein individual’s sharing and sacrifice is a positive reinforcer for no apparent social or material gain. Walester et al. (1972) hold the view that altruism behaviour is generally thought of as behaviour that benefits another rather than one self, when something is done out of goodness of one’s heart. Aronfreed (1970) and Cohen (1972) stipulated empathy as an essential condition for altruistic behaviour. Leeds (1963) presents three conditions for altruistic behaviour:

1. It must be treated as an end in itself,
2. It must be elicited voluntarily and,
3. It must be judged by others as doing well.

Macauley et al. (1970) have defined altruism as “behaviour carried out to benefit without anticipation of reward from external source”. To this definition Bar Tal (1976) adds an extra condition namely that behaviour must be voluntary and done for its own sake. A more detailed description of altruistic behaviour comes from Walester et al. (1972) analysis of behaviour of the good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan’s actions are:

1. Not in response to social pressure or oral obligations,
2. Costly to himself and,
3. Gratuitous as he receives nothing for himself.

It seems to mean action that is freely directed toward the well-being of other persons.

Thus, all these definitions agree that a person caring out an altruistic behaviour should not accept any external award. The disagreement lies about self-award as being a part of altruistic behaviour. The inclusion of self-award in the definition makes the definition tautological. Moreover, there are difficulties in identifying self-award. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish helping behaviour carried out because of internal reward and without external reward. Bar Tal (1976) is inclined to include the possibilities of self-reward in altruistic behaviour.

The concept has a long history in philosophical and ethical thought and has more recently become a topic for psychologists, sociologists, evolutionary biologists, and ethnologists. While ideas about altruism from one field can have an impact on the other fields, the different methods and focuses of these fields lead to different perspectives on altruism.
Altruism concept in philosophy and psychology that holds that the interests of others, rather than of the self, can motivate an individual. Philosophers, who support egoism, have argued that altruism is demeaning to the individual and that no moral obligation to help others actually exists. Nietzsche (2000) asserts that altruism is predicated on the assumption that others are more important than one's self and that such a position is degrading and demeaning. Advocates of altruism as an ethical doctrine maintain that one ought to act, or refrain from acting, so that benefit or good is bestowed on other people, if necessary to the exclusion of one's own interests.

Biologists, however, have found the term ‘Altruism’ useful. They originally used the term to refer heroic altruism, often self-destructive directed towards the well-being of others (Wispe, 1978). More recently biologists have begun to use the term to refer that behaviour counteracts the effect of individual’s selection as altruistic. The behavioural scientists’ mean by altruism ‘any unselfish behaviour’ i.e. other directed. Both the biologists and behavioural scientists focus on the welfare of the others persons. However, two distinctions are worth noting. First, the term altruism seems to be a generic term for other directed behaviour and there are many synonyms for such behaviour. Secondly, altruism refers to actions that have at least the potential for extreme self-sacrifices. The self-sacrifice may be self-annihilating or merely inconvenient. In short, behaviour to be designated as altruistic must be directed to the well-being of others and must involve at least some non-trivial self-sacrifice.

While there are differences about the precise definition of altruism, there is general agreement that altruism behaviour must be carried out volunteering; must aim to benefit another; and must be carried out without anticipation of reward. The difference arises about further specification of altruistic behaviour. Midarsky (1968) took altruism to be a sub category of aiding referring to helpful action which incur cost to the individual, but bring either very little or nothing by way of gain, relative to the magnitude of the investment.

1.4 School Environment

Human beings are always immersed in social environment, which not only changes the very structure of the individual or just compels to recognize facts but also provides with a readymade system of signs. Two environments home and school share an influential space in child’s life (Tucker et al., 1979). The school is the most important experience in the process of child development next to home. When the child enters the school area, s/he is presented with new opportunities in terms of socialization and cognitive development. These opportunities are provided in different measures in school and may have a direct impact on cognitive and affective development of students.

The concept of organizational climate of an educational institution for the first time came into existence in 1954, when the idea of organizational climate of schools was
discussed. It is a concept which describes the role of participants interacting within the sociological and psychological framework of school interaction that take place within the school family.

The school is the most dynamic institution which should keep pace with the changing needs of the society. It should also develop in each individual the knowledge, interest, ideals, attitudes, habits, skills and powers, whereby s/he will find his/her right place in the social order and use that position to shape him/herself and the society both towards the higher and nobler ends. The attainment of such objectives require proper school environment.

The school is a social-psychological system i.e. principal and teachers working in a school constitute socially and psychologically interacting units and through their interactions, school acquires a land of distinct personality or a distinct atmosphere. The school administration should work towards the improvement of school climate, so that a better output from school could be expected.

O’ Neil (1987) defined school climate as a combination of eight variables:

I. Clear school mission.
II. Safe and well ordered learning environment.
III. Expectation for success.
IV. Classroom interaction.
V. High morale.
VI. Effective instructional leadership.
VII. Monitoring of student progress.
VIII. Positive home school relationship.

Lindelow (1989) suggested that school climate was defined as the feelings as individual got from experiences within a school system. More specifically, climate was the competitive of norms, expectations and belief characterizing the school social system as perceived by its members. It is an average of perceptions that individual has of their daily work environment (Deer, 1990). Owen (2000) defined organizational climate as the study of perceptions that individuals have of various aspects of the environment in the organization. So, majority of researches considered organizational climate as an attribute of an organizational perceptual in nature which is caused as a result of interaction over a period of time. However, some have used it to denote a combination of physical and psychological climate; very few have considered it as totality of all organizational variables. This is also true to some extent in relation to school.
Hence, school environment may be defined as a measure of the quality and quantity of cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the students during their school life in terms of teacher-pupil interactions.

School is that agency of education from which different members of society expect in different ways. The government of any country is always interested in knowing how its investment is utilized effectively in school education. Educational administrators look from the view point of resources. They want to ensure that the available resources are effectively utilized. A parent expects that the school should give good education to his/her child. Students want the schools to be in places where they can enjoy learning. To a person living in a particular locality, the school should be pride to his/her locality. In this way, a school can be considered effective in the functioning to the extent that it satisfies the expectations for various persons concerned. Hence, the factors that affect the quality of education are the education administration system, headmaster, teachers, the teaching-learning process, parents, students, school, and community. A school is said to be effective when it achieves its objectives using the available resources efficiently, economically and sufficiently. It is quiet natural that a school attracts more pupils when it enjoys high academic achievement.

Coleman et al. (1966) and Jencks et al. (1971) concluded that schools bring little independent influence to bear upon the development of their pupils. This period has been gradually followed in societies by the emergence of a wide range of effective schools.

Five factor theory, generated and popularized by Edmond (1979), Wilson et al. (1994), and Lezotte (1989), gave the characteristics for an effective school, which includes academic goal consensus, safe and orderly climate, strong instructional leadership, high expectation from student achievement, and frequent evaluation of student progress.

Brookerover et al. (1979) provided a strong research base that generally supported the five factor theory. By extending it, he proposes seven factor theory. Hathaway et al. (1983) and Barker et al. (2001) have promoted seven correlates as core to schools, where students learn and achieve. They are clear school mission; high expectation for success; instructional leadership; frequent monitoring of students progress; opportunity to learn and student time on task; safe and orderly environment; and home and school relations.

Literature describes numerous factors that may enhance the school environment, including effective principal leadership, a safe and orderly setting, engaging extracurricular activities, reductions in the size and impersonality of schools, and educational programs designed to fit the unique needs of specific students and school contexts (Teddlie et al., 1993; Bryk et al., 1989; Comer, 1988; Eberts et al., 1988; Gottfredson et al., 1985; Landers et al., 1978). School environment is often as palpable as the weather. Some schools have a warm,
friendly ambience, while others have a cold, foreboding environment that permeates classrooms and offices. School and classroom climate influences student performance (Hill et al., 1990; Fraser et al., 1982; Moos, 1979).

1.4.1 Types of Schools in India

There are following types of schools on the basis of finance and management. They differ in their basic functions, technicalities and environments.

*Government Schools:* These schools fully managed, financed and controlled by the government. They follow the curriculum prescribed by the government authorities; the teachers in these schools are selected by the government, and are completely dependent on the government in their day to day matters and functioning.

*Private Schools:* This broad category includes the private and public schools and basically can be differentiated on the basis of the aid and recognition they receive from the government. So, they are aided and recognised, unaided and recognised, and unaided and unrecognised.

Aided schools receive grants and aids from the government to run their day-to-day operations while recognized schools are the one which have formatted themselves on the norms set up by the government. The unaided schools do not get any financial help from the government. Unrecognised schools are not affiliated to any educational agency.

*Public Schools:* These fall under the unaided and recognized category of the private schools. Public schools are the model schools, which are generally famous for their good education.

According to Kochhar (2006) there are wide gaps in the structure of each variety of schools that create the differences. The difference between the public schools and the government schools is very sharp. There is a huge gap in the infrastructure of the two. The government schools struggle to impart the basic fundamental education to the wards, the public schools help the children to develop their overall personality by taking care of education as well as co-curricular activities. Similarly in private and government schools, there are differences at the financial, educational and co-curricular levels. The difference between the public and private schools is not that sharp as the all-round development is the major concern of both these schools and both are free to set their own standards.

1.5 Academic Achievement

Theoretically, the concept of education in India is comprehensive, but practically major focus of modern Indian education is academic achievement of the learner. It has always been a crucial area and the centre of educational research.

Academic achievement refers to the level of success or proficiency attained in some specific areas concerning scholastic or academic work. Concise Dictionary of Education (1982) explained academic achievement as “successful accomplishment or performances; in particular subjects, areas, or courses usually by reasons of skill, hard work and interest typically
summarized in various types of grades, marks, scores, or descriptive commentary”. Taneja’s Dictionary of Education (1989) referred academic achievement to performance in school or college in standardized series of education tests.

Marschner (2003) explained academic achievement as achievement in the result of a certain intellectual or physical activity defined according to individual and/or objectives (organizational) pre-requisite i.e. proficiency.

Academic achievement is the core of wider term educational growth and perhaps no one would deny the importance of academic achievement in child’s life. Achievement in the school may be taken to mean any desirable learning that is observed in the students. Since, the word ‘desirable’ implies a value judgement; it is obvious that a particular piece of learning may be referred to as achievement.

Academic achievement plays a very important role in the attainment of the idea of harmonious development of the child. In this rapidly changing world and with the growing advancement in science and technology, the place of education has become so vital that every parent today sets high goals for his/her child. Today at the time of admission, for entrance in jobs, for scholarship, for further studies good academic record is the major yardstick. Whatever one’s interest, attitude may be one cannot undermine academic record.

In recent years, academic achievement has come to occupy the central position. Sound development in academic front can be well matched with pillars on which entire future structure of personality stands. Importance of academic achievement can be judged when we realize that happy life, which we wish for every child, would be impossible unless s/he had some skills and intellectual and the scholastic arts. Academic achievement has to be considered as an important factor in the educational life of adolescents. It encourages working hard and learning more.

Perhaps, no one would deny the importance of academic achievement in child’s life. The success or failure of a student is measured in terms of academic achievement. It is the common observation that success in the academic field serves as an emotional tonic and any damage done to a child in the home or neighbourhood may be partially repaired by the success in the school. High achievement in school builds self-esteem, self-confidence and strengthens self-efficiency. Good academic record to certain extent predicts future of the child. It also helps the teacher to know whether teaching methods are effective or not and helps them in bringing improvement accordingly. Thus, assessment of academic achievement helps both the students and teacher to know where they stand.

The assessment of academic achievement has long been a routine part of educational process. It has two purposes namely specifying and verifying problems and making decisions about students.
It aims to assist professionals in making decisions about referral, screening, classification, instructional planning, and student progress.

Method of assessing academic achievement are categorized into one of the four types: viz. standardized norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests, performance-based assessment, and curriculum-based assessment.

Generally, academic achievement is the scores obtained in the examinations. A normal achiever is one who accomplishes what may generally be expected of him/her for his or her age. On the other hand, over-achiever is one who accomplishes more than his or her abilities would seem to justify and under-achiever is one who accomplishes less than his or her abilities. Thus, there are various aspects of the concept of academic achievement, which has a great bearing on the personality of the student.

1.5.1 Factors Affecting Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is most general responsibility of educational institution. Knowledge of level of correlation between different factors and academic achievement is, therefore, necessary for a teacher in ascertaining what contributes to high and low achievement of students. It consequently helps in promoting achievement of the students, which is also of great concern to the parents, institution and the society.

Academic achievement is a multidimensional and multifaceted phenomenon. There are innumerable factors which effect academic achievement viz. intelligence, personality, motivation, school environment, heredity, home environment, learning, experience of school, interests, aptitudes, family background, socio-economic status of the parents, and many more. Bruce et al. (1977) studied the factors affecting the academic performance of Indian students and found that main factors such as self-concept, achievement motivation, anti-Indian discrimination, culture conflict, and family instability; achievement motivation and culture conflict are the most important correlates of academic achievement among urban Indian students, and it is recommended that these should serve as target variables in programs designed to improve academic performance. In a comprehensive study, Sinha (1970) asked high and low achievers to check factors that they considered important in order of achievement significance. These were hard work, intelligence, memory, good health, availability of books, methods of study, financial security, and interest in social and practical work. Dave (1975) reviewed seventeen studies on factors affecting achievement. They vary from intelligence to physical health, socio economic status of the family, sex, caste, distance of school from home, and leisure time activities.

Correlates of academic achievement are divided into two broad classes as subjective factors and objective factors. Subjective factors are related to the individual himself while influencing one’s achievement e.g. intelligence, learning ability, self-efficacy, learning style,
study habits, creativity, level of aspiration, self-concept, locus of control etc. whereas objective factors are related to the environment of the individual, socio economic status, educational system, family environment, evolution system, value system, teachers efficiency, school situation, and environment. According to Aggarwal et al. (1998) main factors affecting academic achievement are affective factors viz. cognitive style, motivation, anxiety, study habits, level of aspiration, stress, value, perseverance, self-efficacy, emotional maturity, attitudes, adjustment, interest, need, and curiosity; cognitive factors viz. ability, intelligence, creativity, problem solving, reasoning ability, and learning rate; school related factors viz. type of school, school climate, teachers personality, homework, alienation, teacher’s expectation and attitude, training strategies, teacher’s experience, medium of instructions, teacher’s behaviour, and competency, class room environment; home related factors viz. family size, birth order, socio-economic status of family, gender bias, parental involvement, parental support deprivation, child rearing practices, working networking parents, and parental aptitude and expectation. Balasubramanium (1993) reported that medium of instruction and locality of residence influenced level of achievement. Guha et al. (1995) observed that mother’s education had positive effect on academic achievement. Haseen (1999) found that social class, parent-child interaction, and dependency behaviour had significant effect on academic achievement. Dangwal (2000) noted that obstacle dominance affected negatively and ego-defence positively related to academic achievement. Avinashilingan et al. (2005) reported that classroom factors followed by environmental and developmental factor played a major role in affecting the students’ academic performance. The students’ inner urge, competency of teacher, absence of physical distracters, like mindedness and colleagues’ contact make students more competent to succeed in life.