CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Perhaps not the most compelling, but certainly the most pervasive, of all socially determined rewards and punishments are those leading to feelings of success or failure. In the home, the school, on the playground, in the church, competitive strivings for position and prestige vitalize the social organization. Change after change, event after event is conditioned by some one's desire for achievement.

From earliest childhood, good performances are greeted by praise and bad ones by reproof or disapproval. In any competition, the winner gets the prize, the loser has only fatigue for his efforts. The former is cheered, the latter jeered. These very expressions themselves eventually develop rewarding and punishing properties, and the older child or adult will work for the rewards of social approval alone. And if he is familiar with the pains of failure, he will struggle to avoid disapproval as much as to gain its opposite.

Every one has to fail occasionally; no one is good enough at everything so that he is never subordinated at anything. In our social milieu, nearly every kind of goal directed activity is tinged in some way with
competition. With adolescence and adulthood come new sources of striving, love affairs, vocational activities, social position. Every face-to-face contact serves as a challenge or a threat. This rich variety of opportunities for winning and losing ensures that no person can lack the complexities of personality structure, the habits of attack and defence, that are dependent upon success and failure.

Neither success nor failure can be generally defined in terms of the absolute and relative achievement scores. Success and failures are only relative experiences to some subjects, others have absolute standards for success and relative standards for failure and still others have relative standards for success and absolute for failure. Perfection, moreover, may be a sufficient but is not a necessary condition of feeling of success.

Success and failure have an intimate relationship with the level of aspiration of an individual.

From time immemorial man had been hankering for excellence both for himself and for his children, Excellence, which is the discovery of the best in oneself and the fulfilment of one's fullest capabilities, can only be achieved through a pursuit of perfection. Level of aspiration of a person represents a degree of excellence which deviates in direction and level from the performance
Level that has been reached - and degree of excellence which represents both the goal of performance and effort employed to attain it so that success or at least not failure will be experienced. Rotter (1954) speaks of a minimum goal; the degree of excellence is experienced as a compulsory 'claim' on one self whether it is in the form of a requirement set by the task, by the need for self actualization or by an accepted social norm. The attainment or non-attainment of the "degree of excellence" set, affects one's self esteem.

(1965) Adler wrote that we all strive to attain a goal which will make us feel strong, superior and perfect. According to him, striving for superiority is a basic urge in man. It is a great 'upward drive' which pushes the ego for greater and greater accomplishments.

Our ideals represent long-range drives or ends towards which we may strive. These grow out of the cultural norms of a society and are anticipatory projections of the future conduct of the individual. They are born out of Imagination. The achievement of these life goals is conditioned by the distance between the Individual's real self and the Ideal self. The better the individual is equipped with necessary productive resources of the personality to achieve these goals, the lesser will be the distance between the Individual's real self and the
Ideal self. Therefore, the Level of aspiration may be considered as high when it is not backed by the creative resources of the personality.

People develop expectations not only about objects and events, but also about their own behaviour. The manipulated variable has usually been the degree to which his subsequent performance actually matches his stated expectation.

Long before he becomes a parent, the typical adult, has certain notions about the kind of person he wants his child to be. Sometimes, these expectations are precise, he wants a boy of a particular personality pattern with these interests and those skills and this kind of physique, he wants the boy to be interested in mechanical things and to be a good athlete and so on. Many parents either because of pride in the child or because they feel that unusual success or achievement on the part of children reflects glory on the parent, have very high aspirations for their children. Parents sometimes attempt to realize their unfulfilled hopes by projecting their ambitions onto their children. If the father or mother had been a leading student, all the children of the family must be leading students. If this is done in the spirit of encouragement without too much pressure, the results may be constructive, on the other hand as the parents attempt
force their children to achieve their goals, it may result in the loss of the child's ambition.

From the moment of a child's birth, parents develop ambitions or aspirations for the child which they strive hard to have the children attain without often taking into consideration the child's abilities or disabilities. Parents form a concept of an idealized child against which they compare or rate their own child (Anderson, 1946).

Much of the psycho-analytic literature has suggested that unsatisfactory inter-personal relations in early childhood produce insecurity which is translated into neurotic striving for power, recognition and success. Adler and Horney (1937) among others have suggested that the quest for power is frequently used as a compensatory means of attaining reassurance against the anxieties produced by unhappy childhood experiences. In fact, there is a close relationship between aspirational level and interpersonal experiences. Unsatisfactory interpersonal relationships in the family are significantly related to high aspirational levels and satisfactory relationships are related to lower aspirational levels (Russel R. Dynes Alfered C. Clarks and Simon Dints, 1956).

Hackhausen (1955) said that persons setting extremely high goals are guided by high flying desires for success
and are thoroughly confident. Furthermore, they stand out because of extraordinary effort. It need not be a paradox to discover that their enduring achievement motivation level is nevertheless, failure and not success oriented, when one takes into consideration that their perception and behaviour in the level of aspiration test is an attempt to resolve a conflict between approach and avoidance tendencies. A further expression of this desire to resolve a conflict is rigid goal setting in the face of failure. Sheiner's (1957) finding is also illuminating. He found that setting very high goals is correlated with an uncertain self-image, while setting low goals is associated with pessimistic self-image.

Gould (1939) theorized that one's concept of the future is an expression of one's status in the present. "The more unsatisfactory the present is conceived to be the more urgent the desire (need) to depart from it in the future and the greater the psychological distance between now and the situation to be".

Hence some parents due to some sense of insecurity and feeling of inferiority have a greater need of upward mobility both for themselves and for their children. On the other hand there are parents who because of a fear of failure set either too high or too low goals both for
themselves and for the children.

Parents play a very significant role in the all round development of the child. A parent is not just a person who brings a child into the world and cares for him during the helpless years of childhood, instead, the role of the parent is to equip the child with the resources needed to meet the demands of life ([Nimkoff 1934, Murphy 1937, Prevey 1947, Bracknridge and Vincet 1959]). Normally there are two parents each with a different pattern of attitudes and behaviour dispositions in relation to their children. They are not likely therefore, to react to their children, with the same quality and intensity of feeling. The thing which is most important is the child's perception of a parent as loving, indulgent, rejecting, democratic or any thing else that will affect his development adversely if the child perceives the parent behaviour as negative (Martin and Standler, 1959).

The amount of rapport that exists between the parents and the children determines the degree to which the children absorb in themselves ideals and aspirations set for them by their parents.

For the first few years of life, the child has no standards by which to judge his behaviour, he merely knows
that certain acts are right and others are wrong by the reaction of adults to them (Davis and Havinghurst, 1947).
The very young child seems to know only satisfaction and dissatisfaction but not success and failure. In other words he has needs and goals but not yet a level of aspiration. An attempt to excel does not appear in a child until he has developed awareness of a 'self' (Frank, 1941).

Parents are influenced by many "oughts" and "oughts" concerning their parental role. A parent's child rearing behaviour flows from his values and beliefs, interacting with his personality characteristics, in a situation involving his child. Underlying the beliefs and practices of a parent are the values he holds: what he wants for himself and for his children, what he holds dear or abhors. We use the term 'values' to include the goals of parents, the roles they approve of for parents and their aspirations for their children as well as the behaviour they seek to inculcate.

Parents operate within a psychological and cultural milieu of particular kind and their aspirations for their children are determined by them. A set of aspirations can be viewed as a response to one's class situation and what one thinks about one's own abilities and chances for success.
A number of studies have shown that parental aspirations for their children's achievement, school leaving age and future occupations are related to both social class and school attainment (Hyman 1954, Inkeles 1960, Douglas 1964, Plowden 1967). Such findings have most frequently been explained in terms of a unidirectional causal chain, emphasizing that certain aspects of the socio-economic background of parents determine the degree to which they value education. Such values in turn influence the level of school achievement of their children. Although, attainment of education depends much on factors such as socio-cultural background of one's family, availability of educational facilities, individual talent and the type of social structure that a society has, at a given point of time, yet it cannot be denied that educational aspirations of parents for their children also play a vital role.

The educated parents, who are the real decision-makers in choosing careers for their children, tend to make all efforts to provide the maximum and better education to their children, despite socio-economic shortcomings, than the illiterate ones.

According to Lipsett (1962), "probably the broadest and most significant social factor affecting human behaviour
is social class identification. Jansen and Kirchner (1955) attempted to answer the question "Do sons follow their fathers' occupation?" Data were collected in 1951 on a nationwide basis from interviews with over 8000 heads of households. The overall evidence from this study reveals that sons do tend to follow the general type and level of their fathers' occupations. Sampson and Sleffire (1952) found that parents aspire for their son's occupations at a higher level than their own.

Although there are various social determinants of level of aspiration of parents for their children such as sex, economic conditions of the family, region in which the individual is reared, presence of educational facilities, education of parents, caste and past achievements of the children, but out of these factors the economic factor emerges as the most significant one.

Middle class parents tend to be ambitious beyond the child's intellectual capacity, while working class parents tend to be under ambitious and to under-estimate the child's intellectual ability. In terms of job ambitions, parents' aspirations are confirmed with their own class background rather than with the children's actual potentialities.
The ethos of the middle class home and environment supports the child’s intellectual development and steers him to higher possibilities in education. The working class child is discouraged by his environment and his educational aim is pitched at a level much below his potential in many cases.

Parents do not have the same level of aspiration for their sons and daughters. The parental level of aspiration is higher in the case of sons than in the case of daughters. Females typically set lower levels of aspirations than males and they also have lower expectancy of success than males even when their performance is superior (Crandall 1969).

In the Indian social structure, the institution of family has been found as an important factor in the development of human beings. The educational and career aspirations are generally decided by parents in India, though there may be some exceptions. There is a positive relationship between the education of the parents and their educational aspirations for their children (S.P. Jain, 1974).

Persons belonging to a nuclear family background exhibit a different pattern of aspirations as compared
with those who have a joint family background. Even parents' occupational background determines the educational and career aspirations for their children.

Sewell, Haller and Strauss (1957) studied a sample of high school seniors to test the association of youths level of educational and occupational aspirations with social status of their fathers. The relationship of level of occupational aspiration to educational aspiration was analyzed with sex and intelligence controlled. Results showed that both boys and girls from high status families more frequently chose higher level occupation than did students from lower status families. Moser (1952) studied the effect of level of parents' education upon vocational preference of high school students and the data showed that students whose parents had the highest percentage of college attendance preferred occupational areas with cultural status.

Hyman (1956) conducted a study to test the hypothesis that social status of the parents affects vocational interests of the children. But the data showed no relationship between social status and measured vocational interests.
Middleton and Grigg and Burchl (1961) found that farm residence is negatively correlated with levels of educational and occupational aspirations.

Straus' (1969) study revealed major differences in the extent of parents' support for their sons' aspirations. Only two per cent of rural boys as compared to 22 per cent of urban boys perceived their parents as wanting them to attend college. Straus concluded, "The fact that a smaller population of the parents in the sample wanted their sons to attend college than were actually planning to attend is undoubtedly one of the factors accounting for the low levels of educational and occupational achievement of the farm population" (1969).

Studies on occupational aspirations of Adolescents also show that the type and level of occupation aspired to are closely related to the intellectual capacity of individuals. Studies by Sparling (1933) show that aspirations are closely related to intelligence, despite interference by the family and social pressures. Intelligence has been found to be related to occupation level aspired to i.e. the brighter the individual, the more likely he is to aspire to higher level occupations and the duller he is, the more likely he is to be interested in a lower level occupation. Large and Blan
(1942) Sewell (1957) have found that both educational aspirations and aspirations for professional positions of high school seniors were related to intelligence.

Freyer (1922), Freyer and Sparling (1934), Cattell (1934), Harrell and Harrell (1945) and Stewart (1947) suggest that occupations are distributed on the intelligence continuum with high intelligence associated with high level occupations.

Stubbins (1950) reports a correlation of 0.43 between intelligence and aspiration. Latham (1951), Lockwoods (1958) showed in their study that intelligence is related to realism in vocational choices. Grites (1969) says that intellectually superior students choose a higher proportion of occupations at the higher hierarchy.
NEED OF THE STUDY

This investigation is expected to be particularly useful to the parents for adopting a more rational attitude towards setting of goals for their children. In fact a study of parental aspirations provides us knowledge of the goals which parents intend to set for themselves and for their children. As has already been said, parental aspirations for their children are determined largely by social and cultural conditions prevalent in a particular country. The present research investigation is new as it has been conducted in conditions found in the Indian family and society which are quite different from those in more advanced countries.

According to P. Spratt (1966) Indian parents treat their male children with extreme indulgence and the evidence is that this has been the practice since ancient times. From birth the Indian child is precipitated into an environment which may be characterized, perhaps like every family system, by patterned ambivalence. It begins with brief but intense indulgence, alternating with casual attention and discipline; it continues with strict authoritarian discipline interspersed with adulation, pampering and conflicting instructions from a plurality of parent surrogates.
Father in our country is still not a family friend, but a dictator and every member of the family tries to keep him happy. The father being head of the family, sometimes is used as policeman over all the activities of the children. So the children are never free in activities and speech in the company of their fathers. But though the child is mostly in his mother's company, he still likes to follow the father's mannerism... the father thinks that to look after the child's training is not his field and so he should not waste his time with the child. Many fathers do not even know what their children are learning in school (Margret Carmack 1961, quoted this in 'The Hindu Woman').

According to Psycho-analytic theory, the child in its early years assimilates current ideals and the example of the adults, and these form the ego ideal. Actual behaviour falls short of the ideal, but the ego is spurred on by the super ego, which is an unconscious image of the aggressive side of authority, especially the father, the super ego draws its strength from the subjects' own aggressiveness. The conscience is thus a change of aggressiveness directed against the ego and facing it to try to live upto its ideals. The emotion which it engenders is that of guilt.
The Hindu conscience differs markedly from the punitive type. The ego ideal is formed in the same way but the big charge of inward-directed libido; love for the self, gives it a more idealistic character. The Hindu ego-ideal is undoubtedly more idealistic than the European. The Hindu's principal moral emotion is aspiration. But if in any individual this aspiration is weak and the gap between the ideal and achievement is wide, the weak super ego does not cause the subject much distress. The resulting wide gap between ideal and reality which is wide everywhere, but wider than normal in India is well recognized (P. Spratt, 1966).

Most studies investigating the level of aspiration technique have failed to find any significant relationship between specific stable patterns of behaviour or personality characteristics and behaviour in the level of aspiration situation. The methods employed, however, have frequently lacked adequate controls so that ambiguity in wording of instructions, previous experience with the task used and limitations of analysis of the results to a single score may have clouded any relationship that might have existed. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship if any between the parental level of aspiration and personality and school achievements of their high school children.