CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND PRESENT HYPOTHESES
As early as 1930 Lewin and his student Hoppe introduced a new technique to study human behaviour. Many distinctly personal characteristics which were elicited in the laboratory were related not only to everyday ambitions and ultimate aspirations but expressed in many cases the main springs of actions and provided a clue to the essence of the individual's personality organization.

Haustman (1933) recognizing that the reactions to success and failures provide a significant clue to the personality organization or disorganization of the individual, utilized the aspiration Level technique to evaluate personality traits of 150 subjects, most of whom were psychoneurotics and Pre-psychotics. His approach was largely qualitative despite his recording of the performance scores and the individual's estimate of future performance. He analyzed these scores in such terms as the speed with which estimates were adjusted upwards or downwards and the large or small steps in such adjustment. On the basis of this analysis he came to certain conclusions regarding such characteristics of the individual as 'aggressiveness', 'perseverance', 'stubbornness' and instability' but the conclusions were taken to be tentative only.
In 1935 Frank improved the technique of studying the Level of aspiration by presenting tasks for a number of traits which allowed quantitative description of the relationship between estimates of future performance and actually attained performance. Frank contended that the 'average difference score' represents "a relatively permanent characteristic of the personality". Average difference score, quantitative measure of aspiration level, is the difference between the average performance and the average estimate in the same task. Various traits of personality have been studied as correlates of aspiration level. Excess of aspiration Level over performance is moderately associated with narcissism, aggression, emotionality and introversion (Frank 1935).

Frank (1935) Hausman (1933) Adams (1937) Hoppe (1930), Jucknet (1937) and Sears (1939) reported that self confidence, ambition, subjectivity and wishfulness might find expression in a high Level of aspiration and realism, cautiousness, self-protectiveness, fear of failure and 'sensitivity to lead' in a low Level of aspiration.

Attempts to verify such impressions through conventional statistical methods have been only partially successful.
Hoppe (1930), Frank (1933) and Jucknat (1937) deduced traits which they considered likely to be related to Level of aspiration but failed to provide independent assessment of these traits.

Gould and Kaplan (1941), Frank (1935), Gardner (1940) did attempt to provide such independent assessments but the great majority of correlations found were below the level of significance.

Hoppe (1930) Jucknet (1937) and Frank (1935) describe personality structures (based on a Lewinin concept of needs or vectors) which are deduced from the pattern of aspiration Level response, and which in turn are supposed to produce individual differences in such responses. Gould (1939) has also made an approach to this general problem through individual interviews with his subjects. The most definitive study on the problem to date is that of Gardner (1940) who wished to check some of the observations made by Hoppe, Jucknet and Frank on the relationship between broad categories of human behaviour and the patterning of aspiration level response and for this purpose obtained ratings for his subjects from exceptionally well qualified judges. The dimensions on which ratings were made included most of the aspects of personality considered by previous investigators to be influential in the production of a given form of aspiration level response.
Gould and Kaplan (1940) studied the relationship of level of aspiration to academic and personality factors. They used six tasks on 82 subjects in order to obtain 'average difference scores'. The tasks used were, addition, symbol digit, words, steadiness cancellation and target.

Following correlations of various difference scores with Dominance, Extraversion and total grades were reported by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dominance</th>
<th>Extraversion</th>
<th>Total Grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadiness</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol digit</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancellation</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median difference score</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz difference score</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most obvious feature of the correlations reported in the above table is their small size. The correlations of the difference scores with Dominance, Extraversion and scholastic achievement do not indicate any significant relationship.

Rotter (1942) attempted to examine the basis for individual differences in a level of aspiration situation.
by studying four types of defined groups which were distinguished on the basis of history of success and failure, reaction to success and failure and particularly behaviour in problem situations involving self-evaluation.

Following results were obtained:

(1) A group of crippled college students gave significantly lower D scores than a control group of normal college students although the crippled subjects were not handicapped in the motor performance of the task required.

(2) Prison intimates who before the aspiration test was given, were selected as normals in that they approached the norm of behaviour for their socio-economic group, showed very similar scores to a group of hospital employees of approximately the same economic background.

(3) The normal group of inmates differed from inmates selected, as showing defeated attitudes towards life problems in that the defeated group tended to show more very high and very low D scores.

(4) The normal group of prison inmates differed from a group of inmates selected, before the aspiration test was given, as showing conflicts, tension and emotional instability when faced with major life problems, in that the conflict tension group tended to indicate very low or very many shifts in aspiration level.
(5) A group of alcoholics, which overlapped heavily with the defeated group showed a strong tendency towards the extremes in both scores.

(6) In an attempt to determine the meaning of these deviations towards the extremes it was found that the scores obtained do not have a linear relationship to some specific trait.

(7) The grade D-scores of college subjects who made estimates of future grades were heavily influenced by their previous grade level, correlating .65. When the effect of previous grade was held constant by the partial correlation technique, then the partial 'r' between grade D-scores and aspiration D-scores was .61. When subjects were divided into pairs, matched for previous grade level, it was possible to predict roughly the Aspiration Board D-scores from knowing Grade D-scores.

It appears from these results that stable personality traits enter into the individual differences in the level of aspiration situation. When individuals are placed in groups on the basis of their attitudes and past behaviour, particularly where the selection is made in terms of feelings of inferiority or emotional instability in meeting problems, significant group differences appear either in the height or spread of scores obtained.
Although this investigation has been limited to a study of two scores, the D-score and the frequency of shifts or changes in aspiration level, analysis of these results indicate that there is no linear relationship between a particular trait or traits and a particular score or index.

Sears (1941) made some clinical studies of children and reported following personality variables in the four types of level of aspiration discrepancy groups, i.e.

(a) A low positive discrepancy group
(b) A high positive discrepancy group
(c) Negative discrepancy group
(d) Mixed type

The low positive discrepancy group subjects are found to be strongly involved in school work, require success in it for gratification of self-esteem and on the whole seem to find such success rather readily. The general personality picture is that of confident, practical, adaptable, realistic, energetic and well oriented children whose school achievement is comfortable rather than brilliant.

High positive discrepancy group — These children also have strong ego involvement in their school work and require success for gratification of self-esteem but
in contrast to the previous group, they rather freely admit, incompetence in achieving success. Self confidence is low in them, although they show strong pressure drive for success. In general they are not very well adjusted socially, are tense, apprehensive, sensitive, insecure, worrier and usually seem to utilize persistent non-adjustive forms of reaction to problems of their school and social life. Their thinking is rather inflexible, lacking in adaptability and hyper activity is observed in some of them.

The Negative discrepancy group - The common elements in their behaviour are self-consciousness, embarrassment at disclosing or being required to make a statement about their motivations or aspirations, strong social reactivity and a desire to impress others. They are unable frankly to admit either success or failure, seem insecure, self protective and they appear to be conscious and to fear failure.

Mixed Group - In this group children had a low ego involvement in school work.

This study clearly shows that 'Personality structure' is found associated with differences in aspiration level response. Critical ratios of the differences between means for the groups indicate that the low positive
discrepancy group is rated as significantly more self confident than the high positive discrepancy group.

The self-appraisal ratings provide measures of the child's evaluation of his own skill at various performances together with the level of skill which he wishes he possessed. The difference on the self-appraisal scale between the wish for achievement and the rated self-achievement or self-appraisal corresponds to the discrepancy score in the level of aspiration situation.

The mean difference values for the academic subjects of the scale are:

- Low Positive group $+ 0.70$
- High Positive group $+ 1.44$
- Negative discrepancy group $+ 0.60$

A plus value indicating a wish for the achievement higher than the self appraisal.

Cohen (1954) studied level of aspiration behaviour in relation to feelings of adequacy and self-acceptance. The findings in this study are (a) Both very high goal-setting and very low goal setting are significantly related to high degree of self rejection. (2) Self acceptance is related to low positive or low negative goal setting.

Relationship between feelings of adequacy and self-acceptance ratings with goal level setting ratings are
It is clear from the above results that the goal level setting was not related to feelings of adequacy but related significantly with feelings of acceptance. The results indicated that both very high and very low goal setting were related to self-rejection and that only those who could accept themselves were able to use low positive goal setting.

Eysenck and Himmelweit (1946) and Miller (1951) found that hysterics tend to predict scores below their performance while neurasthenics maintain high positive goal discrepancy scores.

Escalona (1940) and Miller (1942) found that level of aspiration of manics tended to show great mobility with special sensitivity to failure. The behaviour of depressed patients tended to be governed more by increased sensitivity to social standards than by success and failure. These patients raise their bids after failure and lower them after success. Paranoid type cling to high estimates, regardless of their achievement scores and inspite of the fact that they are doubly penalized for falling between their estimated scores:
Sheehan and Zelan (1955) compared forty adult stutterers with sixty normal speakers with regard to their performance on 'Rotter's Level of Aspiration Board'. The stutterers were found to be significantly lower in average D-scores than the normal speakers.

Summers (1957) working with obese children in a level of aspiration task concluded that these children have difficulties in making realistic estimates of their skills and they set extremely high level of aspiration for themselves.

Caplin (1966) working with elementary school children, found a significant positive relationship between self concept and academic achievement and between level of aspiration and academic achievement.

Mitchell (1959) studying the goal setting behaviour of students, found it to be related to self-concept over and under achievement and related personality variables.

Himmelweit (1955) showed that the aspirations of pupils of different social classes in the same school were similar than the aspirations of those of the pupils of the same social classes in different schools. Working class children in grammar schools were particularly apt to have increased their aspirations.
Barker Lunn (1970) has produced evidence of both upward and downward changes in parental aspirations. She concludes that attendance at a streamed school of children of above average ability appeared to raise parental aspirations particularly the aspirations of lower class parents.

Holt (1932) Schultz and Riccinti (1954), Sears (1940) studied Level of aspiration in relation to scholastic achievement of children and either found no relationship or low correlations between scholastic achievement and Level of aspiration.

Lowell and Atkinson (1953) report a positive but low, insignificant relationship between Level of aspiration (with regard to achievement grades) and achievement motive.

McClelland (1953) found that achievement motivation has a negative effect on aspiration as the latter is determined by reality determinants.

Kimball (1968) in a study of Mexican American students with regard to expectations, aspirations and motivation reported that according to the data compiled from school records and questionnaires, parents indeed influence school achievement as measured by the variable "Educational aspiration for the child" and that this variable was significantly related to all achievement
variables. Intensity of aspiration is slightly higher for the Mexican American group than for the Anglo group. The Anglo group, however, had higher educational expectations than the Mexican American group.

In a study by Trujillo (1971) an effort was made to assess empirically the aspirations and beliefs of rural youth and adults as result of their participation in an adult educational programme related to rural community rehabilitation. It was found that educational and occupational programmes can influence adults' aspirations positively. Further if these attitudinal changes are coupled with positive changes in the students' home environments, students' aspirations rise and bring about positive changes in attitudes towards work and school.

Anderson and Brandt (1939) and Summer and Johnson (1949) reported a relationship between academic achievement and goal setting. The results indicated that children with previous success in the academic areas being tested set aspiration levels slightly above than level of last performance.

In contrast children with previous failure set goals which were either (a) below or just at past performance (b) much higher than past performance.
Red, McCary and Johnson (1962) Walter and Marzoly (1951) also studied academic achievement in relation to goal setting in children but failed to find any relation between goal setting and school achievement. But they had used experimental tasks that are unrelated to school performance.

According to Atkinson's (1957) two motives are aroused in competitive situations:

1. The need to achieve (n Ach) and
2. The need to avoid failure.

In a Level of aspiration setting when a subject sets a very difficult or a very easy goal, he is thereby creating a situation in which his subjective probability of achieving success is far from .50. When he sets a goal that is slightly above past performance, he is creating a situation in which his subjective probability of achieving success is close to .50. Atkinson model predicts that high n Ach subjects set moderate goals and that high failure avoidance subjects set extreme goals. The prediction is also supported by Birney, Burdick and Teevan (1969).

Plowden Survey (1967) examined the relationship between parental aspirations and children's achievement in the infant school, early in the junior school and towards the end of the junior school period. Parental
aspirations were compounded with other variables such as parental interest in education and then regarded as Indices of a 'general attitudinal factor'. To treat parental aspirations in this way implies that they have a causal influence on the child's achievement. Yet the report itself recognized that the success or failure of children in school may increase or weaken parental aspirations. It is difficult to account for the increase in the size of relationship between parental aspirations and school achievement overtime if aspirations are thought to be a cause of achievement. The increase is readily explained in terms of the parent's acquiring information about their child's progress in the primary school, only after they have obtained such evidence do they begin to get realistic aspirations for their child.

Jucknet (1939) found with regard to Level of aspiration and school achievements of children that the good students showed a high initial Level of aspiration, the average students a medium initial Level while the poor students set an initial Level which was either at the upper or the lower end of the scale.

Sears (1940) using 10 and 12 year old pupils striving for high achievement divided them into success and failure groups. Successful pupils preferred to set realistic moderate goals while unsuccessful pupils chose either speculatively extreme or overcautiously low goals.
McLelland (1958) observed characteristic differences in tasks chosen which require skill, highly motivated children frequently chose moderately difficult tasks in a ring tossing game.

Atkinson and Litwin (1960) using college students produced similar results. Career aspirations have also been taken to demonstrate this tendency.

They were able to demonstrate that success motivated persons prefer moderate goals more than failure motivated persons. Smith (1963) and Isacson (1964) also supported this finding.

Mahon's (1960) finding was that failure motivated adolescents make more unrealistic career choices than success motivated adolescents, either above or below their ability.

Burnstein (1963) using Clark and co-workers' (1956) questionnaire method, investigated the extent to which desired careers are seriously aspired to and found that success motivated persons have a higher Level of aspiration than do failure motivated persons in this regard.

Minor and Neel (1953) proved that highly motivated persons throughout have a higher occupational Level of
aspiration. Meyer et al. (1961) Lambert and Klinberg (1963) have found in a cross-national study that boys career aspirations are higher in countries with higher achievement.

Locke (1969) found that difficult goals lead to greater performance than easy goals and specific difficult goals lead to higher performance than a goal of 'do your best'.

Bullock (1948) included a study of individual cases and found some evidence that individuals consistently over-rate or under-rate their achievement. In his study 60% of the elementary pupils who made three estimates of scholarships on report cards were consistently high or low and 80% were consistent in their predictions of citizenship, he found some evidence that Personality and adjustment are related to predicting tendencies especially in citizenship.

Shan (1925) found evidence that the apparent inaccuracy of self evaluation is due to a consistent error, peculiar to the individual. A systematic tendency to over or under estimate himself in all traits according to the kind of delusion he has about himself."

In explaining a negative correlation between self estimate and achievement in his study of incoming high
school freshman Mitchell (1959) reported a "defensive mechanism set up by slow pupils."

Klein and Schoenfeld (1941) have shown that level of aspiration operates only in "ego-involved situations" which have intense personal significance for the individual. Because of the pressures for academic success that many pupils face from both teachers and parents and the status needs of most elementary school children, the self-evaluation situation, whether continuous or periodic, is a highly charged situation in which the child's ego is involved.

Rosen and Andrade (1959) found that parents of high n Achievement boys tend to be more competitive, show more involvement and seem to take more pleasure in the problem solving experiments. They appear to be more interested and concerned with their son's performance, they tend to give him more things to manipulate rather than fewer; on the average they put out more effective acts. More objective data show that the parents of a boy with high n Achievement tend to have higher aspirations for him to do well at any given task, and they seem to have a higher regard for his competence at problem solving. They set up standards of excellence for the boy even when none is given, or if a standard is given will expect him to do "better than average". As he
progresses they tend to react to his performance with warmth and approval, or, in the case of the mothers especially with disapproval if he performs poorly.

Brook, Whitman, Peisach and Martin (1974) studied 127 first grade and sixty five 5th grade children and their parents in order to examine the correlates of the child's own occupational aspirations and of his parents' aspirations for him. Parents' educational and occupational aspirations for the child were related to (a) socio-economic status (b) race in the educational area only (c) Sex.

The results showed that the correlations between the parents' educational and occupational aspirations and between the parent and child aspirations were highest for the 5th grade children, for the white parents irrespective of SES and for the black parents of higher SES level.

According to Pettigrew (1964) and Rosen (1959) black parents have higher educational aspirations for their children than white parents. However, with respect to occupational aspiration, Rosen (1959) reports that the black mothers' aspirations for her sons was the lowest of all ethnic groups studied.
Todd, Torell and Ernak (1962) comparing 177 bright achieving male students with 67 underachievers concluded that the achievers had greater expectancy for academic success than the underachievers.

Uhlinger and Stephens (1960) studying the relationship of achievement motivation to academic achievement in students of superior ability, found that high achievers showed a greater expectancy for academic success and higher minimum grade goals than did low achievers.

In India also several studies were made regarding personality and academic achievement of children in relation to level of aspiration.

Sinha (1954) studied the level of aspiration and found it to vary in terms of the degree of frustration.

Sinha (1969) in an attempt to relate personality types to the level of aspiration, found extraverts to have a higher level of aspiration than the introverts.

Muthayya (1960) found the patterns of the level of aspiration to be related to frustration reaction types.

Muthayya (1963) and Abraham (1968) found the level of aspiration to be a general trait of personality independent of tasks.
Rabindradas (1969a) studied 'adherence' tendency as related to Level of aspiration. He found individuals having more 'adherence tendency' to be more consistent in their Level of aspiration.

Mehta (1968, 1969a) studied the relative influence of achievement motivation courses and aspiration boosting programme upon the n-Achievement development of teachers and students. Those who received both the programmes showed high n-Ach, followed by those who had only achievement programme. Underachievers with low socio-economic status also showed considerable improvement. In the study devoted to examine the relative efficacy of aspiration boosting programme, and Achievement Motivation training, it was found that the boys whose fathers had low socio-economic status showed greater changes in n-Ach than the boys whose fathers had middle socio-economic status.

Gupta and Arora (1977) in a study of Extraversion-Neuroticism and Level of aspiration of Juvenile delinquents found that Juvenile delinquents attempt in various ways to compensate for some deficiency and they have high Level of aspiration but work less.

Mohanty (1978) studied sex differences in shifts and rigidity in Level of aspiration experiments and found that females showed more typical responses than males.
Muthayya (1965) compared high achievers with low achievers in scholastic field. He found no difference between the two groups in Intelligence, aspiration level, and frustration reactions. His results further revealed achievement to be negatively related to dominance among high achieving groups and ego-defence response among low achieving groups.

Bhatnagar (1969) studied self-concepts of bright achievers and non-achievers and found a direct relationship between positive and negative self-concepts and high and low achievers.

Pal (1968b, 1970) studied students of professional colleges using Rorschach and found that engineering students have high level of aspiration and practical mindedness.

Muthayya and Rajeshwari (1968) studied the relationship between personality and achievement motive of normal and backward children. The problem of achievement motivation has been studied with reference to factors like personal aspiration, frustration, personality etc.

Sinha (1969b) found that "villagers not only have low motivation but weak aspiration also".

Sinha, Ojha and Prasad (1969) studied effect of sex and culture on achievement motivation and level of aspiration of villagers in community development block.
Madan (1968) reviewed the studies on Level of aspiration and academic achievement, he found the relation to be positive in most of the cases.

Rao (1972) conducted a survey on the aspirations and frustrations of university teachers and research scholars.

Ramlinga Swamy, Neki and Pareek (1972) surveyed the aspirations and apprehensions of medical students of a college.

As is clear from the Review of the past work in the field of personality traits in relation to Level of aspiration that the attempts of the various investigators have been only partially successful in relating Level of aspiration to various personality traits.

But Sears (1941) and Rotter (1944) have been more successful in relating types of scare patterns to the habitual reaction pattern in groups of school children, convicts and others.

The attempts to relate 'Level of aspiration' to known factors in the individual's life history and personality have been most successful in connection with the consideration of general cultural factors, such as

Even with regard to the relationship between Level of aspiration and school achievements the review of the literature in this field has shown contradictory results that is either there has been found to be a low insignificant relationship between Level of aspiration and school achievement or a positive significant relationship.

The present investigator inspite of being aware of the limitations in the problem taken for study wanted to investigate the effect of Level of aspiration of parents on the personality and school achievements of children in the context of Indian social and cultural conditions. The personality variables taken for investigation in the present study are different from those taken up by most of the previous studies so far, anticipating some relationship between Level of aspiration and these personality variables.

Hypotheses

The present study has one technological and a theoretical aim. The farmer involves the construction
of a device for assessing parents' position on the high and low aspiration continuum.

The theoretical aim involves the testing of the following hypotheses:

1. High aspirations of parents will be negatively related with such personality factors in their sons as C (Ego strength), E (Dominance), F (Surgency), H (Threat sensitive) and Q3 (High strength of self sentiments).

2. High aspirations of parents will be positively related with such personality factors in their sons as D (Excitability), O (Guilt proneness) and Q4 (High ergic tension).

3. High aspirations in parents will be positively related with the self concept of their sons.

4. High aspirations in parents will lead to low score in school achievements of their sons.