

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data presented in the previous chapter, the discussion of the findings in the context of the theoretical framework and reviewed literature has been presented in this chapter. The sequence of the variables in discussion is similar to the previous chapter.

5.2 PEER INFLUENCE

The role of 'peer psychology' in controlling the personality dynamics of people is dependent upon the family system as well as the cultural background of a particular society. To make education more culturally relevant, suggestions may be put forward therefore, for using the strength of peer relations in educational strategies. Tryon describes the role of peer group as :

"It is in this group by doing they learn about the social process of our culture. They clarify their sex roles by acting and being responded to, they learn competition, cooperation, social skills, values and purposes by sharing the common life".

In the present study, the major concern is on student peer group in high school stage. Contradictions exist about impact of schooling on attitudes and personality of the students whether in terms of long range value or short range value. But it is argued that schools have very little impact on their students. Any impact seen, is attributed primarily to the informal environment of the school, determined by the composition of the student body rather than to the characteristics of the formal organisation (Feldman & Newcomb 1970; Greeley & Rossi 1966).

Area and Nature of institution : The findings in the present study documents the fact, that rural peer group is more homogenous than the urban peer group. It also highlights that peer influence is stronger in rural setting than in its counterpart urban setting.

Thus this finding of the present study is in conformity with that of Newcomb (1969) that peer group structural situation is more conducive to greater influence. Following Newcomb it can be said that student composition of rural school is more stable due to more stability in family movements. Mobility in family is more frequent in urban areas due to various reasons. From that point of view, peer group associations in rural areas, reflect a longer and more intimate configuration of peer relationship.

Newcomb delineated four structural conditions which tended to facilitate peer group influence on student's attitudes - size of the group, homogeneity of group members, isolation and importance of individual or attitudes.

The reasons cited above may be also applied to the population considered in this study. The rural peer group is more homogenous, more stable over time and relatively isolated from competing reference groups with divergent norms. The role of reference process influence in the social and private behaviours is a worth probing issue. The potential reference functions served by the peer group in directing behaviours is more prominent among the students in rural setup.

Another explanation may be, rural students are more attuned towards peer group than to parents, which is reflected in the stronger peer influence than that in

the urban student. Perhaps rural peer group can serve the modelling purpose for most of the students in that specific setup. The isolated condition makes the peer group more potential as a reference group for rural students. This notion has also been supported by the result of this study.

The findings in the present study contradict the findings of a synthesis of 10 prior studies done by Ide Judith et al. (1981). By Integrating research, they found that the strength of the peer influence-educational outcome is substantially high in urban settings. Ausubel (1958) suggested that peer group influence is stronger in urbanized societies. The probable reason produced for that is incidence of single parent families, degree of variation due to different streams in one school, etc. As all those studies are done outside India, the same reason cannot be applicable here. In traditional Indian society single parent family is very rare. Moreover at present there is no provision of different stream upto high school level.

The existence of a sex cleavage in peer interaction is much too well known to require extensive comment. It is observed in different studies that boys congregate in large cohesive groups and girls can be seen more often in pairs. These differences are noticeable from preschool years through middle childhood and adolescence (Lever 1976; Omark et al. 1973; Williams 1980a, 1980b).

The results of this study also concur with the empirical assessment of similar studies that peer influence is highest in boys school group and lowest in girls school group. Thus it is supported by the findings of a number of

studies that males are more susceptible to the influence of their peer group (Tuma & Livson 1960; Douvan & Adelson 1966; Burlingame 1967; Sampson & Hancock 1967; Cohen 1976; Simon 1977). Studies also reveal one interesting point of increasing trend of peer influence in Grades 10 through 12. This trend may reflect an increase in the importance of peer influences associated with increasing emancipation from parental values (Coleman et al. 1974).

Remarkably most of the researches on peer group has been done in single sex institution. It is interesting to note that majority of them tended to focus on boys (Hargreaves 1967; Lacey 1970; Reynolds 1976; Willis 1977) or in a very few cases on girls (Furlong 1976; Lambart 1976; Meyeum 1978).

McRobbie and Garber (1976) explored some of the reasons for the absence of girls from the literature on peer group subculture. In general, they felt that boys are much more likely to take subcultural options than girls. Of course, McRobbie and Garber tended to agree with Jules Henry, who described the American teenage experience as under :

"As they grow towards adolescence, girls do not need groups, as a matter of fact for many of the things they do more than two would be an obstacle. Boys flock; girls seldom get together in groups above four whereas for boys a group of four is almost useless. Boys are dependent on masculine solidarity within a relatively large group. In boys' group the emphasis is on masculine unity; in girls' cliques the purpose is to shut out other girls".

Although Henry described in context of American culture, some points still however may be considered relevant in Indian situation also. Being a male dominated society, Indian society is putting more stringent norms on the

girls as soon as they reach adolescence. Of course during late childhood, girls are found forming groups in which mixed group is also not rare. The present study attempted to highlight on peer groups in coeducational institutions. Mixed peer group is an interesting phenomenon, especially during the early adolescence period.

The results reveal that peer group in girls school is found to be most homogenous but peer influence is less in comparison to boys and coeducational school peer groups. Blyth (1960) in reviewing the literature on peer groups states 'girls' groups tend at all ages to be smaller and more intimate than boys. Coleman (1961) also found the structure of girls' peer network to be much more elaborate and complex than that of boys. In this study also it is seen that number of students in each girls' school is less comparatively. The reason of more homogeneity is therefore attributed to the fact of less number of students in girls school peer group.

Another pertinent point to mention here is that, the peer group in boys school although less homogenous than girls school peer group but more than coeducational school peer group. Overall, it can be said that mixed peer group is the least homogenous group. But interesting to point out that although coeducational school peer group shows less homogeneity in comparison to boys and girls school peer group but regarding influence it stands after boys group. This may be due to the fact that ratio of boys is more than the girls in most of the coeducational schools.

An easily observable phenomenon in most of the coeducational institutions is existence of two distinct groups based on sex. Except in strictly academic matters,

both the groups participate in different activities making that distinction more visible. It is not easy to put forward a single reason but there is scope to believe that this sex segregation in peer group is a combination of encouragement from adults, the compatibilities intrinsic in same sex play and sex role stereotypes prevalent in the society. As school is the subsystem of the existing social system, it is easily apprehensible that values and norms prevalent in any society will be reflected through different social institutions. The sex cleavage in coeducational school may be attributed to the aforementioned reasons.

Intelligence and SES : The present study also attempts to examine the impact of intelligence and socio-economic status on peer influence of the students. The results reveal that the effect of intelligence is not significant which implies that there is no significant difference between high intelligence and low intelligence group regarding peer influence. It may be suggested therefore, that intelligence does have no impact on peer influence of the students.

That socio-economic status of the students has no significant effect on peer influence is also evident from the result. Thus it can be expressed that high socio-economic status group does not differ from the low socio-economic status group regarding peer influence. But $F\text{-value} > 3.00$ (Table 4.4) shows that it has barely missed the significant level. The reason for this non significant result in the present study could be attributed to the further categorization of variables, reducing the sample size in each group. Therefore it is

suggestive from this result that by increasing sample size in each group, significant difference between high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status group may be obtained.

Another finding of this study also reveals non significant interaction effect between intelligence and socio-economic status on peer influence. But F -value > 2.00 (Table 4.4) implies that although not significant, interaction is present in that functional relationship.

Regarding the relationship between intelligence and persuasibility, Hovland and his colleagues hypothesized in the following way :

"(i) 'Persons with high intelligence will tend - mainly because of their ability to draw valid inferences - to be more influenced than those with low intellectual ability which exposed to persuasive communications which rely primarily on impressive logical arguments.

(ii) Persons with high intelligence will tend - mainly because of their superior critical ability - to be less influenced than those with low intelligence when exposed to persuasive communications which rely primarily on unsupported generalities or false, illogical, irrelevant argumentation (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953)".

But the present study fails to support the above hypotheses. Rather the results imply that high intelligence group does not differ in any way from low intelligence group in the case of influence.

Regarding the relationship, Eagly and Warren (1976) asserted that "the relationship between intelligence and persuasion would tend to be nonmonotonic in the form of an inverted 'U' for the messages containing arguments". McGuire (1968) provided a useful theoretical analysis about this nonmonotonic relationship. Thus the relation between intelligence and influence is suggested to be curvilinear (Simonton 1985).

The result of the present study also suggests that the functional relationship of peer influence with intelligence and socio-economic status may not be linear and additive. But although the relationship assumed to be nonlinear, it is not verified in the present study and hence the hypothesis is open for future verification.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION

Human talent is the greatest natural resource. Maximisation of this talent is not only important from a humanistic point of view but also it serves national interest. The individual's achievement should be reviewed taking his level of aspiration as context. The study on educational aspiration reveals a series of social, economic and intellectual characteristics of adolescents related to their future educational plans.

Area and Nature of institution: Most of the studies done on aspiration support the notion that social context is more influential in determining aspiration. The structural factors associated with formation of educational aspiration are considered as important determinants (Ovando, 1975).

The present study also advocates the significant difference between urban and rural group in educational aspiration. From Table 4.7, it can be observed that mean educational aspiration score is higher in urban group ($M = 6.67$) than the rural group (5.08). The difference due to residential variation has been confirmed by many past researches. Haller and Sewell (1957) assessed through findings that urban youths tend to have higher educational aspirations than their rural counterpart. This trend is also observed in some other studies (Sewell, 1965; Bisht 1972; Picou & Carter, 1976).

Of course, this finding contradicts the evidence forwarded by Pandey (1973) that in the field of education, no significant difference exists between rural and urban youth.

The reason for this difference may be due to various reasons. In comparison to rural students, urban students are more exposed to the modern amenities and media which ultimately encourage them to determine educational goal in a more upward manner. The competitive nature of urban society is also responsible for this upward trend.

'Sex has a potential bearing upon level of aspiration' is supported by theoretical background. In a male dominated society, being the bread winner of the family boys are naturally more motivated to aspire for higher education, which is ultimately connected with future vocation in life.

Due to this second grade social status, girls do possess a tendency to lower down their educational aspiration. It is also suggested by some studies that as girls are crossing early adolescence, their aspiration level tends to

decline. The impact of some social forces is more important in this connection than simply the variation in gender. That is, boys have higher educational aspiration than girls, not simply because they are boys, but because specific social forces conducive to planning for higher education are operating more upon boys than girls.

Contradictory findings are reported due to gender variation in educational aspiration. Some previous studies suggest that males reported significantly higher level of aspiration than females (Carpenter & Western, 1982; Hillman, 1980). On the other hand, studies on aspiration also reported that girls showed higher educational aspiration than boys (Ametewee, 1979; Mims, 1976).

In contrast to the above findings, the result of this study shows that there is no significant difference between boys and girls regarding educational aspirations. As stated already, the social context of the study may be the reason of finding equal level of educational aspiration for both boys and girls. The sample of this study has been taken from Guwahati, which is located in North-East region of India. Due to some prevalent social norms, as for instance, absence of dowry system, the status of women is comparatively higher than that in rest of India. Perhaps that reason may be attributed to the findings in this study about the 'no difference in aspiration level', between boys and girls.

Intelligence and SES: The theoretical framework specifies two factors in the formation of aspiration. Self assessment of characteristics like intelligence and financial ability as well as expectation from father, mother, friend etc. can be explained as the reason of different levels of

aspiration. Therefore, intelligence is considered as one major determinants of educational aspiration. It is an all accepted fact that intelligence and educational aspiration are intertwined factors. The result in this study also support the notion that high intelligence group shows higher educational aspiration than the low intelligence group (Refer Table 4.9).

In congruence to other studies, the result of this study also document the fact that high aspirants belong to families high in socio-economic status. The significant relationship between educational aspiration and socio-economic status has been demonstrated in a number of studies (Thakur, 1973; Blackburn, 1974; Shah et al, 1974, Beaublosson, 1975; Pappas, 1975; Ferrore, 1984).

The high socio-economic status of the family provides a kind of environment which is responsible for higher educational aspiration of the adolescents. Adolescents, who are sure of their financial security, naturally possess the elements essential for higher educational aspiration.

Freedman (1967) stated that the socio-economic background of the majority of the students in a school had a large influence on the educational aspiration of individual students. Taylor and Jones (1963) also reported that in low socio-economic group emphasis on formal education was lacking due to financial ability or they did not perceive education as a dominant value and consequently were not motivated to obtain education.

Interaction effects of area and nature of institution; intelligence and socio-economic status of students on educational aspiration: Aspiration being a socio-psychological factor is dependent not only on the structure

of the society but also its social-psychological processes and mechanisms. It can be suggested that aspirations are atleast partly formed and modified in social interaction. The social origin of the individuals affect their educational aspiration directly as well as indirectly through the school. Thus there is need to verify the effect of different factors as well as their interactions on aspirations.

The evidenced non significant two factor interaction i.e., area of institution x nature of institution (A x B) (Refer Table 4.6) indicates that area and nature of institution are independent of each other in effecting the educational aspiration of secondary school students. It is interesting to note that independently area of institution has a significant effect while jointly they do not produce any effect. The reason for this non-significant interaction in the present study could be attributed to the further categorization of variables, reducing the sample size in each group.

Table 4.8 shows non significant two factor interaction i.e., intelligence x SES (A x B) on educational aspiration. It is significant to note that although independently both intelligence and SES do have significant effect while jointly they do not produce any effect. Moreover near zero value of interaction suggests the functional relationship of educational aspiration with intelligence and socio-economic status as nearly linear and additive.

5.4 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The present study attempts to predict academic achievement of secondary school students considering the raw scores of 797 students in four different types of variables. Intelligence as a cognitive variable, socio-economic status as a background variable, student peergroup as a situational variable and educational aspiration as a personality variable constitute the list of explanatory variables.

It is assumed in the study that the school environment comprises of socio interactions of individuals in a particular situation, reacting to and being influenced by others.

The second assumption is that student peergroup developed in the high schools affect the motivation of the students to plan further education.

It is also assumed here that most high school students are sufficiently beyond the fantasy period of educational choice, so that atleast implicitly they ask two questions - 1) Do I want to persue post high school education? 2) Do I have the requisite abilities and financial or other resources for that?

Within that framework, the regression analysis has been attempted to find out the extent of predictability, of different explanatory variables considered in the study.

As correlation matrix is the first step in multiple regression analysis, it is also computed here.

Among 10 correlations only two are not significant, while others are significant either at 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance. All correlation coefficients are below 0.80, which can evade the problem of multicollinearity.

The partial regression coefficients have shown in the study that intelligence, socio-economic status and educational aspiration do have positive impact as significant at 0.001 level. On the other hand, peer influence shows negative impact which is significant at 0.05 level. This finding that negative behaviour tends to be associated with the peer group and with peer influence has been supported by so many studies (Coleman, 1957; Zeichner, 1976; Simon, 1977). Long back in 1957, Coleman suggested from his data that adolescent subcultures exert as a rather strong deterrent to academic achievement. Academic achievement did not count for so much as did other activities among school peer group.

School peer group has been considered as a reference group, whose perspective constitutes the frame of reference in the field of aspiration and achievement. Although the effect of peer group influence interested people from the early part of this century, Walberg (1980) classified it as one of the primary factors that influence school achievement. Peer influence was shown to be a small but consistent correlate. The finding of the present study that peer influence is negatively associated with academic achievement of secondary school student, of course contradicts the results derived from a longitudinal data by Epstein (1978) who reported that peers positively influence each other's college plan and academic achievements. The total regression equation has yielded a

multiple correlation of 0.76 indicating that at least only 58% of the variance in academic achievement can be accounted for on the basis of the four explanatory variables. The remaining 42% is attributed to the factors not measured in the study.

According to beta weights, the four explanatory variables can be ranked in order of magnitude : intelligence X_1 (0.56); Educational Aspiration X_4 (0.18); Socio economic status X_2 (0.17) and Peer Influence X_3 (0.05).

Regression analysis also gives the picture of very large unique contribution of intelligence (40%), moderately small unique, contribution of educational aspiration (8.58%) and socio-economic status (8.22%) and vanishingly small unique contribution of peer influence (0.52%).

The findings of this study also lend support to the hypothesis that all predictors do not predict in the same manner in the variation in academic achievement of high school students. The finding of this study contradicts. Chopra (1982) where socio-economic status preceds intelligence in predicting academic achievement of class X students.

Muthayya (1962) also reported lack of relationship between level of aspiration and ~~xxx~~ scholastic achievement as well as between intelligence and aspiration. Another noteworthy finding is there by Hussain (1977) who reported existence of curvilinear relationship between level of aspiration and academic performance.

Separate regression equations have been established for both urban and rural group, in order to know

- 1) whether regression estimates are consistent across subsamples, and
- 2) the variation of predictability in both urban and rural groups.

In reviewing the correlation matrix, it is seen, in urban group, seven correlation coefficients are significant at either 0.05 or 0.01 level, whereas in rural group only six are significant at 0.01 level. Of course all significant correlation coefficients are below 0.80 which can avoid the problem of multicollinearity. Altogether ten correlation coefficients have been computed.

Results also show that except peer influence (X_3), the means of all other variables viz., intelligence (X_1), socio-economic status (X_2), and educational aspiration (X_4) are higher in urban group. Thus peer influence is stronger in rural group, which is also derived and stated in the earlier part of this chapter. Regarding partial regression coefficients also both the groups show same trend. Except partial regression coefficient for peer influence, which is negative, all other regression coefficients are significant at 0.001 level.

One important point to mention here is that the standard error of the estimate for the rural group (5.957) is less than the standard error of the estimate for the urban group (6.816).

The ranking of beta weights also shows the same order for both rural and urban group. While intelligence (X_1) comes in the first position bearing positive impact, peer influence (X_3) occupies the fourth position bearing negative and negligible impact.

The four predictors in the analysis accounted for 52% of the variance in academic achievement of students in rural group, $R(4,419) = 0.72$, $P < .001$. On the other hand, the four predictors in the analysis accounted for 39% of the variance in academic achievement of students in urban group, $R(4,368) = 0.63$, $P < .001$. Thus the regression analysis indicates prediction in a more confirmed manner in rural group than the urban group.

Second set of regression equations have been established for boys, girls and coeducational school group separately. The purpose behind this comparison is to know whether the regression estimates are consistent across subsample, and to determine the variation of predictability among three groups.

The number of observations in each group is as follows - boys = 279, girls = 231 and coeducational = 287. In correlation matrix for boys group 6 correlation coefficients are significant, in girls group 7 coefficients are significant and in coeducational group also 6 coefficients are significant.

It is observed that means of intelligence, educational aspiration, peer influence and academic achievement is highest in boys school group. The mean of socio-economic status is highest in girls school group. The means of

intelligence, peer influence and academic achievement is lowest in girls school group. The means of socio-economic status and educational aspiration is lowest in coeducational school group.

The regression analysis also shows that in case of boys school group, all partial regression coefficients are significant, while in coeducational and girls school group partial regression coefficient for peer influence is not significant. Another interesting point to refer that the beta coefficient for peer influence is negative in boys and coeducational group while in girls school it is positive. Thus the data support the idea expressed in earlier studies that negative behaviours tended to be associated with peer influence (Burlingame, 1967; Condry & Simon, 1974; Simon, 1977). The results also supports that males are more susceptible to peer influence than the females.

The standard error of estimate is 5.964 for coeducational group, 6.673 is for boys school group and 6.859 is for the girls school group.

The ranking of beta weights shows the same order in girls and coeducational schools, that is, intelligence (X_1) is ranked as the first, educational aspiration (X_4) as second, socio-economic status (X_2) as third and peer influence (X_3) as fourth. Although peer influence (beta weight) is negative in coeducational group it is positive in girls group.

In boys school group, intelligence (X_1) is ranked as first, socio-economic status (X_2) as second, educational aspiration (X_4) as third and peer influence (X_3) which is negative, in the last. It appears for boys

group socio-economic status (X_2) has got more predictability than educational aspiration in comparison to girls and coeducational group.

The four predictors in the regression analysis accounted for 57% of the variance in academic achievement of students in boys school, $R(4,274) = 0.75$, $P \angle .01$.

The four predictors in the analysis for students in girls school, accounted for 47% of the variance in academic achievement, $R(4,226) = 0.67$, $P \angle .01$.

In case of the coeducational school group, the four predictors in the analysis accounted for 68% of the variance in academic achievement of students, $R(4,282) = 0.82$, $P \angle .01$.

Overall, from the result it can be inferred that power of predictability is highest in coeducational school group and lowest in girls school group.

The total sample for regression equation consists of 797 observations which is divided into rural-urban (424 - 373) and boys-girls-coeducational (279 - 231 - 287) groups as subsample for the study. In order to get reliable regression weight, the general rule of multiple regression analysis implies to use large sample, preferably 200 or more. Further subdivision of groups is ruled out as the number of observations will be less than 200.

5.5 A GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of analysis in a study is to determine whether or not the theoretical formulation is consistent with the data. The theoretical background presented in the first chapter supports the notion that peer influence in early adolescence is more pertinent feature to consider, whereas being in the last year of secondary stage, it is equally important to gauge their aspiration in the field of education.

After a careful study of the results, the residential variation in both peer influence and educational aspiration has been observed among the secondary school students. It is interesting to point out that peer influence is stronger among students from rural school while educational aspiration is higher among urban students. The findings of this study thus supports the theoretical guideline suggested by Newcomb (1969) about greater influence of rural peer group. Taylor and Jones (1963) also reported that in rural areas, pupil's peer group experiences are homogeneous in terms of social class. Naturally the homogeneity of experiences tend to minimize the pupil's introduction to different values and traditions. Therefore, it is observed that students from rural areas exhibit greater conformity to the cultural values of their own subcultural reference group i.e., student peer group. This conformity is also reflected in their educational aspiration.



Therefore, the result of this study is directed to the question of using referential framework for setting up level of aspiration. The social environment of which the student is a part, in which he is a constant inter-actor or where he spends a considerable amount of time, thus impels him to determine his level of aspiration. Thus it can be inferred once again that existing societal condition or social forces can intervene between an adolescent's social, economic and intellectual characteristics as well as his educational plans.

This is somewhat surprising finding that contrary to the existing literature on aspiration, the present study upholds the view that educational aspiration is same for the students studying in different types of schools viz., boys, girls and coeducational. No doubt there are many factors that may be associated with this exceptional finding. But primarily the specific social forces existing in that particular society are operating upon boys and girls in the similar manner. Therefore, the significance of this finding lies in the fact that, if girls are competent enough and societal context happens to be conducive, perhaps more probability is there about the equality in the level of aspiration especially in the field of education.

The study also demonstrates that students of boys school show greater degree of peer influence, while among girls school students it is least. The results also suggest that coeducational school groups are the least homogenous peer groups. This finding may be indicative of one important feature of adolescent peer group, that is the segregation of sex. Sex cleavage in peer group development particularly during early adolescence period has also been confirmed by this study.

Non significant interaction effect is found between area and nature of institution on both peer influence and educational aspiration. That implies that the main effects of the two factors appear to be generalizable to the specific levels of the variables, viz., peer influence and educational aspiration.

That intelligence plays a major crucial role in the field of education, is also reflected through this study. High intelligence group is reported to differ significantly from low intelligence group in educational aspiration. To put in a refined statement, that high intelligence group precedes in educational aspiration in comparison to low intelligence group. A reasonable conclusion may be therefore that high intelligent students are more aware of their educational plans than the low intelligent students. But unlike educational aspiration, intelligence does not play any significant role in the case of peer influence. Thus the results document the fact that high intelligence group does not differ from low intelligence group with respect to peer influence.

Socio-economic status of the students does not show any impact on peer influence of the students while it suggests significant difference on educational aspiration. Thus students from high socio-economic status have higher educational aspiration than the students coming from low socio-economic status. This result concurs with the empirical assessment of similar studies that the intellectual proficiency of a child in general, is positively correlated with the socio-economic status of his family. The main reason for this significant variation may be attributed to economic security provided by the family.

The study also demonstrates the non significant interaction effect between intelligence and socio-economic status on educational aspiration as well as on peer influence of the students. These analyses have concentrated on the nature of functional relationships of educational aspiration and peer influence with intelligence as well as socio-economic status. The assumption of linearity is therefore found to be valid for this functional relationship especially for educational aspiration. Moreover conclusion can be drawn in favour of educational aspiration that it is an additive function of intelligence and socio-economic status.

Ofcourse the second functional relationship i.e., of peer influence with intelligence and socio-economic status is inconclusive as F-value exceeds 2.0, although result indicates non significant interaction effect.

In case of educational aspiration negligible F-value (0.12) suggests validity of the assumption of linearity which cannot be said in case of peer influence.

The present study also attempts to serve two basic functions of predictive model namely prediction and explanation through a regression analysis model. The theoretical rationale behind the application of regression analysis is the assumption that interaction with peers and level of educational aspiration can facilitate academic achievement. It is also assumed that social origin of the individual as well as innate mental ability affect on the achievement of the students.

Altogether, six regression equations are computed and results show a trend of consistency across the sub samples. This consistent nature is an essential

requisite for model testing. This also gives the evidence of randomness in selecting the sample for the study. Synthesizing all regression equations it can be explained in the following manner. The results advocate positive impact of intelligence,, socio-economic status and educational aspiration on academic achievement. Findings also demonstrate negative impact of peer influence with an exception for the students of girls school. Thus the data for boys and coeducational group suggest negative impact of peer influence. The same finding does not hold good for the girls school group may be due to the fact that peer influence is least among students of girls school.

Regression analysis also gives the picture that intelligence is the sine qua non in learning. It has got highest accountability in predicting academic achievement of the students. The negligible variance accounted for peer influence is another important finding of this study. The results also set out equal contribution of socio-economic status and educational aspiration in predicting academic achievement.

The regression estimate has shown 58% accountability of the variance of the criterion i.e., academic achievement for the present study. More than 50% of variance suggests that the magnitude of relationship is strong enough to have a fair degree of prediction. Therefore other variables unmeasured in this study may make a lesser contribution of 42% to academic achievement of the students.

The results reveal that comparatively rural group and coeducational group possess more accountability to criterion and less standard error. The findings indicate the notion of more confirmation of prediction for those two groups.

The discussion of findings presented in this chapter has been followed by implications of findings and suggestions for future research.

5.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Isolation of theory from practice is neither possible nor desirable. But it is not always easy and feasible to proceed from theory to practice or from practice to theory. That is the reason of indirect implications of the findings of most of the researches undertaken.

The view that whatever research studies explore should be applicable, cannot be supported no doubt, but the intention for application must be there always. Being a social science, education is concerned with so many factors in the society that whenever the question of implication comes to the field of educational researches, a detailed analysis of the entire educational system should be taken into consideration. For applying any research finding in the field of education some of the following factors should be considered as significant and pertinent : the aims, ideals and expectation of education, resources of the child and resources of the education system, existing social context along with prevailing societal norms etc.

The study of adolescent peer group in an educational setting - the underlying theme of this study also leads to one general question of the existence of adolescent subculture. Again whether this notion of subculture is a subset of adult culture or a contra culture

is another leading question. No doubt, the existence of peerculture has been indicated by the present study but it is neither a supportive nor a distractive agency especially in the academic field. But this point should not be forgotten that all members of a group exert some influence ranging from very little to very much. The suggestion is therefore, in classroom group or in any group is to marshal as much of the influence as possible towards productive ends. Due consideration should be given to peer tutoring programme, peer interaction strategy etc. in an educational set up. Again classroom group also serves the functions of both membership and reference group for most of the adolescents. Deviation or transcendence from the group norm may be traumatic to some individual student. Need for an integrated curriculum guidance programme in the school is therefore felt necessary especially during the period of transition.

The findings of this study also implies that among the three incumbents in the life space of adolescents - parents, teachers and friends, the first two play the greater and more significant role. Therefore, this study implies entrusting more responsibility on the parents. But next to the parents, the role of teachers is also equally important as they are considered as parent substitute. Along with the respective responsibility of parents and teachers, sufficient coordination between them is also a much required factor in the field of education. This implies dire need of parent-teacher association, periodical meetings of parents and certain programmes on collaboration basis of both parents and teachers.

In contrary to Coleman and others who viewed adolescence as a dreadful period with every possibility of being a counter culture, the present study implies accepting adolescent culture as a subset of adult culture. And naturally this idea will imply more responsibility on the part of the older generation. Perhaps for minimizing the so-called 'generation gap', it is the older generation who should take the responsibility of bridging the gap.

Educational aspiration, another theme of the present study is not only considered as one of the enhancing agents in the field of academic achievement, but it can also help in utilizing human resources, as success of an individual in the field of education should be evaluated in terms of one's level of educational aspiration. The implication of this study is to gauge the level of educational aspiration especially at the end of secondary stage and to give them impetus for reaching that goal. The individuals try their level best to reach their goals which are set by themselves realistically. Another implication of this study is towards recognition of human resources. It is the greatest natural resource for developing any country and upliftment, betterment of any society is mostly dependent on the optimum utilization of human resources. The 'National Policy on Education - 1986' also has stated a human being as a positive asset and a precious national resource. For which the policy has entrusted more on education for playing its multifaceted role for a nationwide effort in human x resource development.

Another major implication of the present study is due to the finding of the remarkable role played by intelligence in the field of academic achievement. Its importance

is although a long established fact, controversy still persists whether intelligence can be improved or not. It can be suggested through this study to consider its role and impact in the field of education. Except in a very few instances, the tendency of inclusion of intelligence test is still alien in India. It is therefore felt necessary and suggested through this study for establishment of some guidance Bureau in each school. Provision should be there for administration of different standardized tests not only on intelligence but also of attitude, aptitude, interest, values etc. On the basis of different test results, the counselling can help the students in solving any problem related to education. In the selection of different educational as well as vocational courses also, suggestions could be offered if necessary.

Differences between rural and urban students is also prominent from the results of this study. Due to low socio-economic condition, inadequate communication system and lack of modern amenities, the students from rural areas are less exposed to the modern world. The disparity is also felt between rural school and urban school in regards to the facilities provided by the school. Lack of trained and competent teachers, lack of adequate library and laboratory facilities, inadequate provision for co-curricular activities are some of the common problems generally faced by the rural students. But for global national development the reduction of this disparity is unavoidable. This is also evident from National Policy on Education - 1986 (Part I; 1.12) - "The rural areas, with poor infrastructure and social services, will not get the benefit of trained and educated youth. Unless rural-urban disparities are reduced and determined measures are taken to promote diversification and dispersal of employment opportunities." Therefore special emphasis

should be given on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity.

Surely all these implications imply a better education, education for a better future cherished with both scientific and humane values. In the words of Mannheim - "Education is a means of influencing ways of living and thinking and is also an expression of the nations' institutional, social and philosophic values".

5.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Search for knowledge is a never-ending process. No research undertaken is complete itself. Especially, no study in the field of social sciences can be treated as perfect due to various constraints. Some of the limitations of the present study followed by suggestions for future research are presented below.

1. Two major variables viz., peer influence and educational aspiration are studied in detail along with their impacts on academic achievement. For prediction purposes six independent variables have been considered. Future researchers can use some other variables like religion, caste, ordinal position, motivation towards education etc.
2. The peer group considered in the study is confined to the classroom peers and activities occur among the peers only in academic setting has been taken into consideration. Future researchers can explore the role

of some other activities in different settings, e.g., playground setting, social service camp setting, seminar setting etc. Suggestion is also put forward to consider peer groups other than the classroom peer group.

3. Only early adolescence period is studied in the present study while for a complete understanding of the nature of peer group pre-adolescence and late adolescence can be taken by future researchers.
4. The students from Assamese medium school form the sample of the present study. But for having a clear knowledge about the existing society, knowledge of different infra-structure is also necessary. A comparative study of regional medium Vs English medium can help in getting a total picture of that society.
5. Cross-sectional survey method is used in the present study. Suggestions are put forward, therefore, for longitudinal, indepth study approach on the same variables.
6. Only the level of aspiration in the field of education has been surveyed in the present study. Future researchers can link educational aspiration with vocational aspiration as both are interrelated.
7. The data collection for the present study was a 'fixed time' procedure. A panel study can be undertaken taking the same sample after an interval of a considerable period.

8. The regression analysis model used in this study has been examined across sub samples i.e., rural/urban and boys/girls/coed only. Future researchers may verify this model on different samples either from the same region or from different regions.