

CHAPTER: I

INTRODUCTION:

Korckhoff (1959) in his study, following the work of McClelland, collected TAT stories from 63 Ojibwa American-Indians and 76 White children. All were students in the fifth through eighth grades in schools. Results indicate that the Whites express more achievement motivation (μ -ach) than the American-Indians.

Feld Husen and Klausmeier (1962) found that socioeconomic status (SES) is related with anxiety, educational aspiration and self-concept. Positive attributes are more closely associated with high SES than with low SES.

In a study by Kaushal (1971), in India, the effect of family pattern on achievement was investigated using 116 students with the same type of schooling subjects. It was concluded that poor economic standing of the family creates a stimulus for better career orientation and competition as compared to higher family economic levels.

In regard to specific type of aspiration as well as achievement in the Rotter's Board test, Rath (1974-75)

found the tribal children doing the best and Brahmin and Scheduled Castes children were similar to each other in scoring low. They were not significantly different from each other but the tribal children were significantly better than the two other groups in this respect.

The above results clearly indicate that socio-cultural background is an essential ingredient of scholastic attainment. This is logical as well as natural. One can hardly deny the basic fact that individual as a member of social groups is largely a product of the process of socialization. Socializing processes are itself functionally dependent upon environmental conditions. It has been argued that even the various components of personality make-up is a product of the forces inherent in the surrounding of psycho-social field. This is the main reason that Rath (1975) has argued that study of personality traits without any reference to the basic socio-cultural field forces remain a mere abstraction. Sharaf and Singh (1977) have also concluded that social disadvantages influences attitudinal and personality traits. It encourages traditional socio-religious attitudes and sense of morality. It inculcates rigidity, conformity, anxiety, self-esteem, and low intelligence. However, they failed to find authoritarianism and alienation related to social

disadvantage. Their advantaged groups consisted of high caste and high income groups.

The complexity of the stimulating world and multidimensionality of responding organism make the prediction of the resultant behaviour somewhat uncertain. However, a general trait of personality syndrome of group of individuals living in a well defined matrices of social field forces can be generally indicated. It is hoped that studies of this kind would facilitate the social scientists and planners in bringing about induced social change.

"The disadvantaged child is one who is reared in a pre-school environment which fails to develop the kind of behaviour necessary for beginning his formal education in the public schools" (De Cocco, 1968). Their home environment lacks necessary qualitative stimulations for the adequate development and functioning of cognitive abilities. Their adverse home conditions include such things as economic deprivation, history of court intervention, negative parental attitude toward the child, inadequate and overcrowded housing, sub-standard nutrition, low parental educational attainment, poor household management, social and economic deprivation, etc. (Miller, 1968).

During the last three decades, the general trend in literature suggests that certain socio-cultural environment are generally associated with inferior intellectual functioning, poor school achievement, poor level of aspiration, language deficiencies and minimal occupational and social adjustment. The terms 'deprived' (Kirk, 1958), 'culturally deprived' (Reissman, 1962), 'socially disadvantaged' and 'disadvantaged' (Havighurst, 1964) are all used in current literature to identify the group whose children in the main are marked by three general characteristics during their school career. These three general characteristics are the following:

1. Progressive decline in intellectual functioning;
2. Accumulative academic achievement deficits; and
3. Premature school termination or higher drop-out rate.

All these seem to be the effects of a deprived socio-cultural environment.

McCandlese (1964) suggested that it might be useful to extend the concept of objective and effective environment to differentiate between the educationally retarded child and the culturally deprived child. He described an adequate objective environment as one in which intellectually stimulating objects and things are

available to the child. Adequate effective environment is one in which intellectually others are available for interaction with the child and between the child and things. If this concept is followed one can describe a disadvantaged child as one coming from deprived objective circumstances and, probably, also from deprived effective environment. Research findings have shown that an educationally deficient child almost always comes from deprived effective environment and perhaps also from deprived objective environment. McCandless suggested that the research task should be defined as identifying dimensions of the objective and effective environment in isolation and interaction which are necessary and sufficient for development and competence.

Miller (1968) has distinguished four major classes of variables where culturally disadvantaged children show deficit in performance as compared to the advantaged children. These four factors are:

1. Culturally disadvantaged children have often been observed as scoring low on cognitive factors such as perceptual constancy and discrimination, attentional deficiency, cognitive depression (Jensen, 1966), auditory learning, verbal ability, reasoning, number facility and space conceptualization (Lester, Fifer and Clark, 1965), memory ability, notion of future, sense of pattern and regularity (Leshan, 1952).

2. Motivational variables have been defined by Miller (1968) as those learned attitudes which maintain the task-orientation of the individual and retain task relevant involvement necessary for achievement. Disadvantaged children have been found to maintain very low level of motivation which stands in their way for further progress. Several studies have been cited in the next chapter (Chapter II, Review of Literature) in this connection:

3. Personality traits, and

4. Life style.

Study of personality traits and life style must be undertaken with reference to the basic socio-cultural fields. The available studies to identify personality and behavioural pattern provide portraits of life style of the disadvantaged children. It is said that disadvantaged children do evidence significantly lower self-esteem than more advantaged children (Keller, 1963). These inadequacies seem to be related to failure experiences in school environment. In comparison to advantaged children, the disadvantaged children do not possess persistence in school task and they have lower sense of control over the environment.

Reissman (1962) described the disadvantaged children and their families as traditional patriarchal

cal, superstitious and religious. They are poor readers, suggestible and suspicious of new fangled ideas. They feel socially alienated. They are not individualistic, self-centred or self-expressive. They have greater need of 'getting by than getting ahead.' They are egalitarian, anti-communist, attracted to stronger leaders, prejudiced, intolerant, very much interested in family and personal comfort. They are informal, easy and comfortable. They are attracted to gossips and excitement. They are anti-intellectual and perform the manual labour best. They are also attracted to masculinity.

Leshan (1952) has reported that disadvantaged children are more present-oriented and they have vague and indefinite notions about future and have little sense of pattern and regularity. Lack of sense of pattern and regularity may arise, chiefly, out of temporal and spatial disorganization in a disadvantaged home condition. Most disadvantaged families do not have a regular meal time which has been considered by some psychologists as the most basic time ordering event by which one can begin to develop time concept and a future orientation (Miller, 1968). In fact, this and similar personal style variables are the real psychological impediments operating in them which keep them away from sharing the experience and information with more advanced sections of their society.

It has, sometimes, been suggested that the expressed vocational level of aspiration may be high among the lower class children but their functional levels of strivings are generally low and failure leads to loss of academic interest and a perception that a child cannot achieve because of his status. It follows then that failure comes in the way of adequate development of 'ego maturity' that is necessary for success. Not only the time perspective but even job and vocational aspirations have been found to be linked with familial and cultural heritage. For example, in our country, a job is generally regarded as a family responsibility to such an extent that its performance is shared by all the members of a family (Daftuar, 1975). Moreover, attempts to bring in any one from outside the family are likely to be resented. That means, the caste system in India may have throttling effects. Fraser (1966) states that the failure of a Weavers' Co-operative started at Barpati village service was due in part to the fact that the project technicians, interested only in selecting the best workers, had drawn weavers from different caste groups that could not by tradition work together.

Similarly, conservative, tribally oriented Bantu mine workers of South Africa are generally not interested in learning new skills or in seeking promotion. They cling to the jobs that their tribe has by traditions always had (Wyndham, 1975).

Besides the general attitudes towards work and professions, the concept of efficiency in Indian thinking is different from what is generally understood in the West. To refer again to the Barpati Village Service Project, McClelland and Winter (1969) concluded that another reason for the failure of the project was that the norm of efficiency conflicted with caste traditionalism. Raising poultry is a low-caste occupation, and those engaged in it did not want to improve their performance lest it prevents them from rising socially.

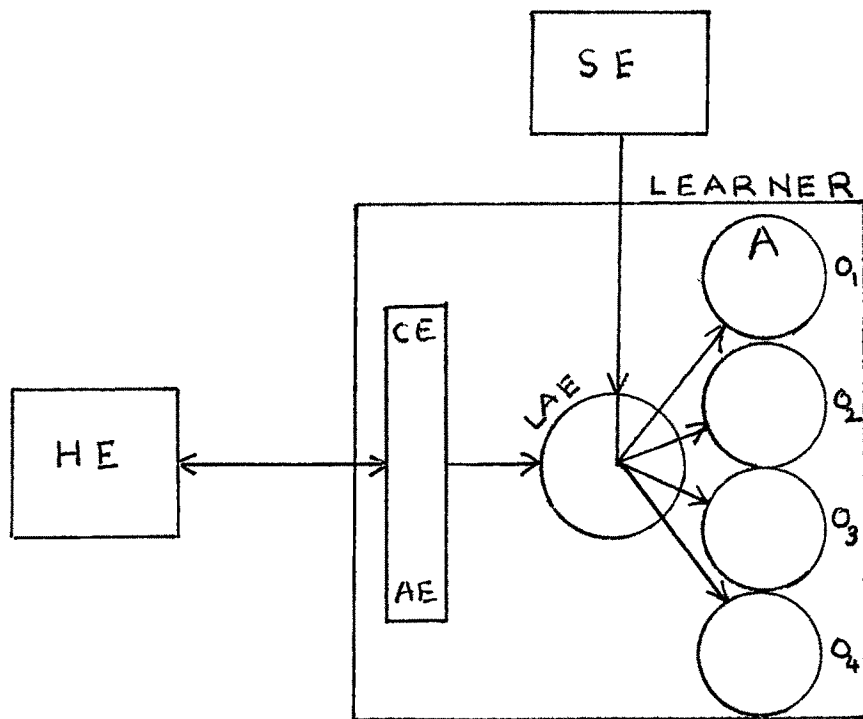
There do appear some genuine differences among certain ethnic groups in the way they can perceive, judge or learn things (Daftuar, 1979; Winter, 1963). Winter experimented with Bantus of South Africa and reported that safety posters whose intent and meaning could be grasped immediately by Europeans were completely unintelligible or even completely misunderstood by Bantus. Some more data on Bantu mine workers have been reported. In matter of visual accuracy it was found that in 1,000 lux illumination level, the Bantus showed better visual accuracy (Van Graan *et al.*, 1971) than London School Children (Hopkinson, 1949). However, Bantu subjects showed significantly slower dark adaptation than Europeans (Wyndham, 1975). Bantus have far less number of colour blinds (1.4%) than the European (8%) population (Wyndham, 1975).

The present study is a probe into a behavioural manifestation (scholastic attainment) of a sample belonging to four strata of the Indian Society - Rural Tribals, Rural non-tribals, Urban tribals and Urban non-tribals. It is needless to add that Indian Society is a hierarchy ridden society. The Indian social hierarchy has several levels, which are generally classified into four broad categories -- the forward castes, the Backward castes, the Scheduled castes and the Scheduled tribes.

These four groups are supposed to belong to various sub-cultural groups because they suffer various forms of disadvantages. In fact, the scheduled caste people are considered culturally deprived persons within the broad canvas of the Hindu culture, these caste groups have their own customs, traditions and often values. In the same tradition, the tribals in Indian Society are viewed to suffer in the same way as the scheduled castes. Both of these groups have long been identified as economically, socially and culturally deprived segments of the Indian Society. It is assumed that the factors associated with their backwardness may be the same as those identified by Miller (1968). To paraphrase the above mentioned four sets of factors by Miller, one can suggest that three sets of factors, namely, personal factors (the first three of Miller, 1968), the home environment factors and the school

factors (the forth factor of Miller, 1968) operate in the academic performance of a child. Of course, there may be differences in emphasis on these factors among the various studies cited. In certain studies, the home factor is more important than the school components in explaining academic achievement. However, Heyneman's (1983, cited by Khader, 1985) analysis using data from developed and developing countries including India revealed that the quality of schools, particularly the classroom tools, in low income countries was shown to explain three, and even four times, the differences in achievement than it can in high income countries. For Heyneman, the poorer the country, the larger the impact on achievement, school quality seems to have. However, Austin's (1973, cited by Khader, 1985) analysis using both student characteristics suggested that student characteristics, particularly ability, are the most important factors in determining academic success. For a meaningful enquiry, it is imperative to incorporate data on home environment, school environment, student factors and their interactions to explain the casual relationships of achievement phenomenon. Following the notion that academic achievement is a product of three sets of elements, the following diagram illustrates this point:

A MODEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



HE - Home Environment, SE - School Environment,
 CE - Cognitive Entry Behaviour, AE - Affective Entry
 Behaviour, LAE - Learning Activities as Experienced
 by the Learner, O's - Outcomes of Instruction, A - Academic
 Achievement.

Home environment influences the level of cognitive and affective entry behaviours of the learner and these behaviours, in turn, influence home environment. Home, also, influences the type of the school the learner may attend. School influences the learner directly

and its influence on the home is only through the learner.

The above description clearly indicates that the scheduled tribe groups may have severe economic and social deprivation. We presume that economic and social deprivation breeds its own cultural traditions. It is our common everyday experience that these groups have their own traditions, social values and behavioural manifestations. Following this line of argument, the present study was planned to see if these social status influence the academic performance of the children of these groups belonging to different sub-cultural backgrounds. The details of the planning, objectives and hypotheses have been described in Chapter-III.