

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The results are discussed as per the highlights that have been revealed among the study variables.

Vocational Aspirations, Gender and Sex Roles.

There was a significant gender difference in the vocational aspirations of adolescents. More specifically, the vocational aspirations of girls were significantly lower than that of boys. Basically, Indian social norms prescribe two clearly differentiated roles for men and women, and majority of Indian women have been socialized to believe in the traditional subordinate role - that of giving priority to family and children. Therefore, venturing into the outer world and exploring and aspiring for something which falls out of the stereotyped expectations requires extra effort.

The division of societal responsibilities and privileges according to gender are universal in human cultures. Although the particulars and severity of these distinctions vary across societies and historical periods, the roles assigned to men, almost invariably carry with them more prestige and greater social and economic power than those assigned to women. Girls, in general, tend to choose their vocations from a relatively small range of traditional female career options like teaching, nursing, social work and the like, thus, resulting in limited career options. This has been indicated in a study on job perceptions among adolescents wherein girls were found to have a more restricted choice of vocations than boys (Akhilesh, 1991).

In line with the present research, many Indian researchers (Gaur, 1973; Sharma, 1975; & Khan, 1985) have studied the vocational

interests and aspirations of secondary level students and found significant differences between boys and girls.

Interestingly, in the present study, sex roles were not found to be significantly related to vocational aspirations of adolescent boys and girls. One of the reasons for this could be the possibility of a discrepancy between one's wishes and actually choosing a vocation. That is, when lifting the restrictions and requesting their ideal vocational aspirations, respondents aspirations seem to be relatively high. Thus, it is likely that the adolescents belonging to the various sex role categories all had similar higher aspirations, not keeping in mind the various limitations they might have to encounter.

Basically, both males and females choose their vocations for traditional reasons, i.e., male dominated fields are selected for their status and potential for material gain, and female dominated fields for their value on service and interpersonal skills.

Girls select vocations that fulfill a role expectation and reduce the anxiety that accompanies achievement in nontraditional fields. It becomes a shelter for them, where they need not compete in the male syndrome of profit, independence, power and leadership. On the whole the results of the present study are contradictory to the contemporary situation in which the aspirations of the girls are becoming on par with those of boys.

Studies have revealed that from kindergarten through the fourth grade the girl typically outperforms the boys in all areas. Yet, there is a developmental shift between age six and seventeen. Thus, the academic performance of girls which is superior to boys during the early school years, gradually become inferior during late adolescence and adulthood (Lerner & Spanier, 1980). One reason could be that among late adolescent boys, academic proficiency is linked to vocational success and the boy's motivation

is stronger than it was during the early years of school. Moreover, the girl's motivation towards mastery is decreasing with age as a result of anxiety over feeling intellectually more competent than the boys and conflict over excessive competitiveness as this would have implications for her goals of marriage and motherhood.

Studies have indicated that stereotypes of the appropriate vocations for men and women are acquired early in life. Even more potent than those vocational stereotypes are the images that young women have of themselves as passive individuals, lacking the abilities conducive to effective decision making processes and lacking an active orientation toward shaping their futures. The net result of sex role conditioning is the "homogenization" of women into narrow role definitions that are not consistent with a broad range of individual differences (Bem & Bem, 1973).

Basically, interpersonal relationships are more important to women, and hence, the woman achieves her identity through the intimacy of marriage and family, i.e., in a close relationship with a man, whereas, a man attains his identity through satisfactory work performance after which he is ready to establish intimacy with a woman. The young women's identity process tends to remain incomplete until she merges with a man in marriage. Boys are taught very early to develop competence and skills required to achieve mastery of the environment, whereas, girls are taught to control their environment by dependence on others. Although cultural values are changing in India, and career interests are becoming more common in girls, the overwhelming majority of adolescent girls still expect to marry and have a family, and this goal is generally regarded as their primary one. The clear and firm message transmitted by parents, relatives and friends to the adolescent girl is that academic excellence and thinking about careers are fine, but marriage and maternity are of paramount importance.

Also, because interpersonal relationships are more important to women, they might sacrifice their vocational aspirations, or aspire for vocations that are comparatively lower than those of men. Thus, societal pressures have led certain females to avoid choosing prestigious vocations and have created a motive to avoid success. Success in competitive situation produces the anticipation of negative consequences such as unpopularity and perceived loss of femininity.

Women in our society have believed and still continue to believe that certain skills and vocations in technological fields are the domain of one sex with the consequent exclusion of the other. Thus, the perception of stereotypes has not only narrowed the vocational choices and aspirations of women, but has also limited their roles to areas approved by society. The primary reason for women's limited career scope and stereotyping are deeply ingrained in our culture and its institutions.

However, Indian females are not the only ones who generally confirm to the society norms and prescribed duties. From early childhood, boys as well as girls are taught that each person is expected to perform his or her duty (dharma), according to his or her caste or function (varna). This pressure to fulfill and conform leads to sex typing in Indian females, and a greater likelihood of androgynous functioning in Indian males (Ravinder, 1987). Thus, in our society, for both females and males, the pressure is on acceptance, on fulfilling one's duty, conforming to society's dictum, and foregoing individual determination.

Due to their differential socialization, women develop less confidence in their skills, less independence, and lower self-esteem than do men. Even if she performs well on a task, a woman is more likely to attribute her success to luck rather than skill or intelligence. And because she lacks confidence and self-esteem, a woman is more vulnerable than a man to bear

fear of failure. Consequently, even when vocations are technically open to her, a woman is likely to aspire for less prestigious and satisfying vocations than she would if she were not inhibited by those psychological factors. Thus, females learn to avoid prestigious vocations, not out of free choice but because of learned attitudes.

During the last decade, educators and social scientists have expressed concern over the possible detrimental effects of rigid gender roles on both males and females. An examination of the content and influence of sex role stereotypes on individual and collective behavior have concluded that characteristics ascribed to men are more positively valued than characteristics ascribed to women, and men and women incorporate both the positive and negative traits of their appropriate stereotypes into their self-concepts. Feather and Said (1983) found strong gender effects for male dominance ratings, with males preferring gender congruent, ideal, and realistic vocations more than females. While the thrill of being a "pilot" attracted the boys, the glamour of being a "singer" attracted the girls. For example, boys disliked the vocation of "baby sitter" the most, and girls disliked the male dominated jobs like watchman, plumber etc. Especially, in our society the job of a baby sitter is generally reserved for females.

Another probable reason for girls' lower aspirations could be the internal factors. Nontraditional vocations require certain attributes and qualities which are defined by society as "male". Thus, some of the psychological factors like fear of failure, low self-concept, and role conflict prevent girls from choosing and aspiring for certain vocations. These attributes, qualities and values are imbibed from a young age and they are reflected in the vocational aspirations.

Lack of same sex models, might be another major reason which hinders the development of girls vocational potential. The lack of females'

professional and occupational models has been identified as a significant barrier to women's career development, while conversely, the availability of female role models has received support as an important positive influence (Hackett, Esposito, & O'Halloran, 1989). For example, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) have concluded that lack of female models in general, and especially in male dominated vocations, leads to limited career options for girls. Therefore, it is very important to provide female role models to aid in the acculturation of women into nontraditional roles. Role models who are happy and successful in their occupations and dual role patterns, provide incentive and information on how to combine roles successfully (DiSabatino, 1976).

On the whole, there is more input from family and friends as far as boys are concerned right from encouraging them to aspire for higher vocations to helping them secure jobs. Boys are encouraged to take up vocations in science, engineering and other technical fields. The above statement is supported by Chitnis, Gore and Desai's (1970) study on Indian girls and boys. It was found that boys sought vocations in the category of executive and scientific, personnel like managers, officers, physicists, analysts, chemists and doctors. Girls on the other hand, opted for clerical and allied vocations.

According to Giankos and Subich (1986) studies have revealed that sex role orientation may affect not only the process but also the content of vocational decisions. A nontraditional sex role orientation seems related to broader choice considerations, especially for women. It may be that androgynous individuals are less likely to limit themselves, since they express vocational interests that transcend sex-typed interests, while traditionally typed individuals express conventional career interests. Also, according to Burlin (1976) females who have either chosen or aspired to vocations which are dominated by men are different on many psychosocial variables than those women who have chosen or aspired to vocations

dominated by women. Women in the former category have been referred to as innovators, pioneers, and nonconformists, while women in the latter category have been called role traditional, home-makers and conformists. Evidence from past studies has suggested that among women the best career choices may be made by those who have been less susceptible to the influences of traditional gender role socialization (Betz, Heesacker, & Shuttlesworth, 1990).

Research indicates that a more androgynous perspective may be suitable for coping with the present lifestyles where increasing number of women are making career decisions and are living with the consequences these decisions bring. In the present study, irrespective of their different sex role orientations, on the whole, the adolescents have aspired for higher vocations, thus keeping a pace with the present educational trends. Thus, on the whole, there have been a lot of changes, and there has clearly been a decline in the degree to which college students stereotype vocations according to gender. In White, Kruczek, Brown & White's (1989) study on vocational sex stereotyping among college students, respondents rated 14 of 19 identically named occupations as significantly more gender neutral. Yet another study examining the attitudes of college students towards gender roles (Rao & Rao, 1988) implies indirect evidence of the association between less traditional gender role attitudes of females and employment outside home. Girls holding nontraditional feminine concepts showed a greater maturity in their vocational development than those with traditional views. This may be interpreted to mean that girls who held less traditional sex roles consider vocational choice more important to their identity formation and they have developmental patterns similar to boys (Matteson, 1975).

Hence, due to the changing trend of the educational field, increasing interest in education, and the influence of women's active participation in the same, a new breed of college students has been created, whose changed

outlook includes the wish to pursue nontraditional careers. This especially holds true in students belonging to high class. In Ghadially and Kazi's (1979) study on attitudes towards sex roles of college students, the percentage of non-traditional respondents was found to increase in higher income group. Similarly, a relationship between gender stereotype and social class has also been demonstrated by Tarrier & Gomes (1981) in their study with Brazilian children. One of the reasons could be that most of the higher group respondents are not so hard-pressed with the basic issues of survival and thus have greater opportunities to be exposed to and act as agents of social change.

An important aspect that merits attention is that although sex roles are deeply entrenched across culture and across times, it does not imply that they are natural and inherent. Events such as world wars, major social movements and governmental policy have facilitated changing of sex roles, more specifically the female role (Ghadially & Kazi, 1979). Currently in India, industrialization and urbanization along with their concomitant socio-cultural changes and influence of mass media have obviously started affecting men and women differently. The growing awareness and consciousness of women as individuals in their own rights, a condition spurred by the women's liberation and equality movement seem to result in similar purposes in life for both genders. Another reason could be that in present times the proliferating nuclear families are more exposed to the pressures of a changing society. Earlier the women used to remain in the house to look after the children and other household duties, whereas the men worked and ensured financial stability. Presently, the necessity of making two ends meet often result in both parents working and adjustments can only be made by relocating responsibilities between the sexes and traditional role expectations disintegrate. Thus, it promotes in children the desire to aim for vocations which are not sex-typed.

Since the number of women defining themselves in less stereotypic ways has increased in India, the difference between males and females has naturally decreased in their conforming behavior, attitudes, values, potentialities and the amount and the kind of work. Thus, there has been a steady increase in the percentages of women who pursue traditionally male dominated fields such as medicine, law, business management and the sciences. For example, Nurmi (1987) found that boys and girls were similar in terms of their vocation, profession and education. Hence, as many more people are coming to perceive the equality between men and women, it is leading to a blurring of the formerly sharp division between men and women based solely on biological sex, and women and men are starting to come closer together in their personality make-up. Recent literature shows that college women think of their life-styles as a full-time career with family responsibilities. Scanzoni and Fox (1980) report a decrease in sex role traditionalism as a result of major life transitions. A particularly noteworthy study has been conducted by McBroom (1987). Adopting a longitudinal research design, the study demonstrated that experiences such as getting married, having children, and becoming employed were associated with decreased traditionalism. It must be noted here that such findings may be confounded by factors such as generational changes, women's increased participation in labor force, and higher levels of education.

Also, the increase in female involvement in the work force over the last decade is rapidly changing the roles of women in our society, and creating a need for investigation of the relationship between a woman's self-image and sex role identity and her affective behavioral responses, especially in the vocational area. There is a growing concern and awareness that the traditional female, limited to stereotypical feminine personality traits, is poorly suited to the vocational demands of our modern life (Clarey & Sanford, 1982).

Also, the question of sex appropriateness of an vocational choice has become an issue only recently, with increasing number of students entering fields traditionally dominated by the opposite sex. The reason for the above may be that the present generation of adolescents may not have been indoctrinated to traditional sex roles in the childhood years. They may not have been restricted to distinctively masculine or feminine activities, but may have been equally exposed to both types of activities. Hence, the culturally approved sex-typing might not have been part of their training.

Vocational Aspirations and Social Class

Adolescents belonging to different social classes were found to differ in the way they attribute meaning and purpose to their life goals. More specifically, upper class subjects were found to be significantly higher in their vocational aspirations, followed by middle class and lower class subjects.

Social class has often been studied in relation to level of vocational aspiration and a positive relationship has been revealed (Carolli & Petrucci, 1978; Harvey & Kerin, 1978; Chopra, 1984, Pandit & Dabir 1990).

Various reasons can be attributed to the relationship between one's vocational choice and social class. Some vocations tend to be placed on a hierarchy with social prestige attached to them. Gottfredson (1981) developed a model of vocational choice which addresses gender and socioeconomic background. According to the model, as children develop a cognitive awareness of gender roles, they limit their image of possible vocations to fit their newly acquired gender norms. In a later developmental stage, children become aware of social class differences and further limit their vocational choices to prestige levels equivalent to or below their own

socioeconomic status background. By the time adolescents are ready to make job choices, they have been strongly influenced by social norms, gender and class.

A probable reason for this could be that the attitudes, values, lifestyles and goals of people are different by virtue of their status in the society. An individual is not free from his existing conditions - be they biological, sociological, or psychological in nature. The society or environment in which the individuals grow up have an important influence on their overall development, relationships, adjustments and roles. Differential socioeconomic class structures and the related ethos create differential patterns of social ambiance for the child. Through learning (i.e., role modeling) children tend to seek their identity in consonance with that of their parents. For instance, the learning environments in the middle and upper classes seem to be aimed more at setting long-term goals and they emphasize a stronger sense of control over events and a greater optimism as to the realization of one's future goals. The lower class individuals, on the other hand, seem many a times to be forced to compromise with situational and societal demands which are different from personal demands.

Straus (1971), in his linkage theory hypothesizes that parents inculcate in their children the skills, capacities, feelings about self and the personality needed to cope with the typical life circumstances which the child will face as an adult. For example, the socialization practices of the upper and middle classes are aimed more towards strengthening the self-concept, self-confidence and self-responsibility of the child. They also encourage the development of supportive personality traits such as punctuality, honesty, respect for authority, good manners, religious observance, and the like. Parents from the lower class on the other hand, are sometimes too preoccupied or defeated by their own problems to give their children adequate attention and guidance.

Some ecological theorists (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suggest that sociocultural influences tend to direct behavior of parents as socializers and disciplinarians of their offspring and thereby affect the overall development of the individuals. Parents direct their children into preconceived roles and commitments since they may feel that these roles and commitments may be more adaptive and better for their children. Family experiences, thus play an important role in the vocational aspirations.

Also, one's social class to a large extent determines the range and level of stimulation one receives and is a primary factor governing a wide range of interests and motivations. People belonging to different social classes thus experience different degrees of aspirations.

Lower class families in India especially, tend to be more concerned with maintaining hierarchical order. The atmosphere is one of imperatives and absolutes. The environment is invested with physical violence, too much tension from bickering, quarreling and overcrowding. In disciplining also they seem to emphasize physical punishment rather than verbal explanations and requests. Among lower class youth, physical, social and emotional emancipation from the family comes early and is often abrupt and psychologically premature. This lower status may result in their being exposed to a narrower range of available vocational and ideological roles and commitments, and all this leaves little scope for aspiring for higher vocations. The lower class youth take themselves for granted - they are what they are because that is the way it is, and they have little capacity to introspect and reflect on it very much. Also, lower class culture does not encourage advanced levels of cognitive thinking probably, in part, because there is not a great need for it. Therefore, many highly capable youngsters of low social class fail to seek educational and vocational levels actually available to them because they do not need to obtain a high level job in order

to be considered successful in their own social surroundings. Conversely, adolescents from high social class families often feel compelled to obtain high level jobs in order to maintain their standing in the eyes of the family and friends, but this is no doubt a great source of strain and unrealistic aspirations for the less capable adolescents (Gottfredson,1985).

Although, Ginzberg (1980) found that boys from low income families went through the same stages of vocational development as did high income boys, there were considerable differences in the choices and the reasons for them. In the high income group, the boys even at an earlier age tended to assume that they would go to college, and as they entered the realistic stages, their choices tended to be limited to the professions. Low income boys on the other hand thought in terms of a job that would pay more than the fathers' steady employment, skilled work and a job without exposure to serious accidents. For most of this group, to own a business is an outer limit of their expectations. One of the major limitations facing the lower income group is their modest level of aspirations. Their environment obscures the appropriate translation of interests and capacities into realizable vocational choices.

As per Sharma, Verma, and Swami's (1990) study, the interests of adolescents were affected by the socioeconomic status in the following five vocational areas viz., literary, scientific, constructive, artistic and persuasive. Adolescents from the high and middle social class showed more interest in the above fields. Mishra's (1990) study revealed a similar trend wherein social class significantly and positively correlated with administration and scientific areas of vocational interests, but interests in agriculture and social service correlated negatively with social class.

According to Nelson (1990) pupils from higher income group tended to choose vocations at the same levels as those of their fathers, while those

from lower income group selected vocations above the level of their fathers vocations. Reddy (1977) too reported the dependence of vocational choices on the social and economic aspects of the family.

Sultana and Joshi (1977) reported that the greater the enrichment and wider the range of experiences the higher will be the possibility of combination of experimental pattern to produce original elements and life goals. Thus, the level of aspiration is generally influenced by the educational and vocational values specific to the status milieu in which one is reared.

Adolescents from lower class aspire for vocations that are realistic and within their reach, i.e., higher the social class, higher the aspirations due to the various facilities available to them at home and otherwise. Thus, individuals belonging to high social class definitely aspire for vocations in which a person gets a good salary and prestige, while the individuals belonging to low social class aspire according to their status and position in society.

With reference to gender, those girls who belonged to educated and high social class families may have learnt to aspire for a certain vocation because of the more permissive attitude of their parents in comparison with low class and less educated parents, who view girls as taking up the role of housewives only.

Also, to be academically successful one requires a certain amount of guidance from the home too. Parents need to keep an eye on the educational progress of their children, and this in turn depends on their educational and occupational status. The parents from the higher class are usually better educated and more competent to guide their children more effectively than parents of lower class whose educational status is usually at a lower level. For lower class children, the jobs that their parents hold, and to

which they often aspire, do not require much in the way of formal education, academic skills and school curriculum. The children might not be encouraged to do homework regularly or take examinations seriously. As a result of these family and cultural factors, the lower class children often have negative attitudes towards school, and their motivation is correspondingly low. Due to the lack of interest on the part of the parents, little attention is paid to the child's school progress. Thus, apart from innate mental, physical, and intellectual deficiencies, there are some unfortunate environmental factors which hinder the scholastic progress of students. Therefore, members of the lower social class are constrained by lower levels of education and aspire for vocations void of self-direction.

Vocational Aspirations and Self-Concept

In the present study, the adolescents with either low or high self-concepts did not differ in their vocational aspirations. This is contrary to the expectation that adolescents having a high self-concept would go in for higher vocations in more professional fields compared to adolescents having a low self-concept. Education is considered a valued attribute that brings prestige and positive feedback from others, which enhances feelings of self-worth, and this in turn leads to an increased awareness and prestige elicited by higher levels of vocation.

A fundamental assumption of most vocational and counseling theories is that people prefer, seek and are most satisfied in vocations that are consistent with their views of themselves (Gottfredson, 1985).

Over the past twenty years educators have focused increased attention on the relationship of self-concept to educational achievement. With few exceptions, like the present study, researches have demonstrated the

importance of the relationship of student self-concept to important classroom variables such as avoidance of success, social learning, general achievement, reading achievement, motivation, behavior, school and age. It is generally accepted that self-concept is positively related to achievement and good mental health, because self-concept evolves and is influenced by the valuation of the significant others in one's life (Leonard & Willekens, 1987).

The association between vocational maturity and different aspects of self-concept has been explored in a few studies. For example, Khan and Alvi (1983) reported a close relationship between higher career maturity scores and higher self-concept. Similarly, Helbing (1985) found vocationally immature students as having low self confidence and self-esteem. They are also seen as lacking a strong sense of identity and as having problems with personal identity.

According to Chandrasekharan (1987) it has been proved that self-concept affects academic achievement. Similarly, Goswami's (1983) study reveals a positive relationship between self-concept and achievement, and the adolescents with good self-concept are likely to achieve more than those with poor self-concept. For example Singh's (1987) study revealed that there exists a positive and significant relationship between self-concept and the academic achievement of science students. Similarly, Ghosh and Gordon's (1981) study too reveals a link between high self-concept and ambitious vocational aspirations. Students high on self-concept scale opt for professional and other prestigious vocations. Therefore, one of the important developmental tasks for education should be building a positive self-concept.

One of the major characteristics of the disadvantaged according to Gordon (1969) is a low self-concept. Several researches (Ausubel & Ausubel, 1963) have revealed a low self-concept for the deprived groups

based on considerations of this membership and low socioeconomic status. Lower class individuals are also more physically, emotionally and totally distressed than the middle and upper class individuals, as a result of their lowered self-concept (Seth, 1979).

Bright but under-achieving students, especially boys, have been found to have more negative self-concept than do students who are equally bright and achieving at the level of their ability. Such studies do not provide evidence that self-concept influences academic achievement, but they do encourage educators to believe that special attempts to enhance the students self-concept might increase their educational progress (Scheirer & Kraut, 1979).

According to Super (1975) the process of vocational aspirations is essentially that of developing and implementing a self-concept. Studies have indicated that androgynous individuals have self-concepts that are independent of masculine and feminine stereotypes, resulting in a behavior receptive to a blending of all elements of the human personality. An androgynous self-concept may be a better indicator of positive mental health than the traditional self-concept since culturally imposed definitions of masculinity and femininity limit the individual's behavior and produce feeling of discomfort (Bem,1977; Kelly & Worell, 1978; Marecek,1977). Sex role stereotype may thus be one factor intervening in the relationship between vocational aspirations and self-concept.

Vocational Aspirations and Achievement Motivation

As expected, there were significant differences between the vocational aspirations of students having high, average and low achievement motivation, that is, students who had high achievement scores

aspired for higher vocations and students with low achievement scores aspired for comparatively low vocations. Achievement motivation is closely related to vocational aspirations, and therefore it would be natural for high achieving adolescents to have higher aspirations and low achieving adolescents to have lower aspirations.

Researchers in the field of education have demonstrated that academic performance is invariably the function of achievement motivation which in turn influences the vocational aspirations (Gupta & Veeraraghavan,1989).

Along the lines of the present study, Natesan and Seetha's (1986) study too has revealed a significant correlation between achievement motivation and academic achievement, thus indicating that the high achievers have a high need for achievement score. Also, to promote optimum achievement, high need for achievement is a pre-requisite.

A problem with achievement motivation, however, is that despite the implicit assumption that it is not a unitary construct, it has quite often been treated as if it were. The evidence is that it is multidimensional in nature (Cassidy & Lynn,1991). The assumption that achievement motivation is a single phenomenon has been questioned by some investigators. Though achievement behavior is common to all groups, it extends the theoretical argument by suggesting that this construct is situational. For example, one may be motivated to achieve in sports but not in the classroom. Similarly, one may experience a need to achieve in school today but not have a need to achieve in school tomorrow. This situational factor along with expected group differences may particularly explain why research on race, sex and class variation in achievement motivation remains inconclusive. Thus, all adolescents do not perceive academic achievement as being necessary for

success in life. Some adolescents are also capable of perceiving achievement in home situation and or peer relationships (Castenell, 1983).

Research on achievement motivation seems to indicate that it is a socially learned mechanism where parents, society and social class play a major part in inculcating motivation for achievement or the need for achievement. Socialization plays an important role in the development of achievement motivation. The general model holds that achievement motivation is produced by early emphasis on independence and mastery training that is apparently more effective in egalitarian families (Cassidy and Lynn, 1991).

The influence of socialization (formal and informal), through family background and school, combines with the more stable and early developed characteristics of personality and intelligence, to produce a particular achievement motivational style which in turn predicts educational achievement. The importance of recognizing the role of achievement motivation lies in its implications for educators and parents. It is an aspect of the individual that would appear to take longer to develop and is more malleable. It presents an area of focus which suggests ways in which we might improve the probability of higher educational achievement (Cassidy & Lynn, 1991).

McClelland (1961) revealed high correlations between academic achievement and need for achievement as measured by Thematic Apperception Test. Finlayson (1970), Bhatia (1977), Desai (1971), and Reddy and Basavanna (1978) in their studies using different measures of achievement motivation, have found it to be positively associated with academic achievement. It has been reported that those with high need for achievement scores were concerned more directly with achieving success while those with moderate or low achievement scores were security minded

and chiefly concerned with avoiding failure or with achieving a minimal level of aspiration.

Home background variables namely, mother's education, parental social class, and home ownership are also important in determining one's achievement motivation. The child whose mother is better educated, and who comes from a more economically stable background, is more likely to aspire to leadership, higher vocations etc. Whereas, poor educational background, unfavorable economic conditions, and other facilities among parents of low social class might result in lack of encouragement and early independent training for achievement motivation (Singh & Basu, 1981).

A number of studies have also shown the influence of child's immediate environment on the development of achievement values (Anshu, 1988; McClelland, 1955; Winterbottom, 1958; Rajalaxmi and Tapa, 1970; Larson, 1972; and Kalra, 1979). All these studies have shown the importance of parent-child interaction in relation to achievement values. According to Kalra (1979) in our culture, the development of achievement values also seem to be influenced by significant non-family members like relatives or teachers.

Research has shown contradictory findings in achievement motivation between the genders, and the differences are not due to human biology but rather due to the socialization process. The cultural norms and standards of most societies encourage or motivate boys more than the girls from childhood to achieve something in life, for as adults they have to support their families. So the gender differences in the aspiration levels or need achievement are due to the identification of sex roles which starts early in life. Interestingly, girls seem to equate achievement with a loss of femininity (Cassidy & Lynn, 1991).

However, as Dhillon and Acharya (1987) have pointed out, the cultural values are changing, especially in urban areas, wherein girls do not feel the loss of femininity to achieve success and compete with boys; their need to achieve is often greater than that of boys. This may be partly due to the increasing opportunities for education, high cost of living, parental aspiration level and their attitude towards girls achievement, and partly due to the desire of girls themselves to become financially and socially independent and establish a status for themselves like men.

On the whole, highly motivated students do better in schools and colleges. Also, according to Ahluwalia and Kalia (1987) high achievers are better adjusted on health and emotional areas in comparison to low achievers. High achievers also have superior adjustment on school adjustment scale and have more educated parents. Similarly, Sharma and Mehta's (1988) study has revealed that subjects having high need for achievement have significantly higher emotional and educational adjustment, higher academic achievement and were more disciplined than low achievers.

Importantly, need for achievement is associated with realistic aspirations. According to Matsui, Okada, and Kakuyama (1982) subjects who were higher in achievement need set harder goals than did subjects who were lower in achievement need. Gupta and Veeraraghavan's (1989) study revealed that a student with high intelligence and high achievement motivation levels and studying in a public school performed better on the whole.

Thus, adolescents who have high achievement motivation levels seem to be doing well in many areas like better adjustment in school and home, are emotionally as well as psychologically well adjusted, and usually

strive for higher aspirations. On the other hand, low achievers basically have less ambition as far as their vocations and future jobs are concerned.

Hence, on the whole, research on achievement motivation indicates that it is a socially learned mechanism, where parents, society and social class play a major role in inculcating motivation for achievement or the need for achievement.

Study Stream and Psychosocial Variables

A significant relationship was revealed between sex roles and study stream. More adolescents from the science stream have a masculine orientation. According to Gottfredson (1981) investigative work (science and medicine) is the field with the highest average prestige, and traditionally, the science stream has always been viewed as a masculine domain, reserved mainly for the males. Those who opt for this field are basically supposed to be bright, serious, career minded individuals, with high goals and aspirations in life, as well as high commitment levels and men are usually socialized to develop these traits. As they have a very clear goal in their mind, they are on the whole more circumspect and thus end up performing well. Hence, adolescent girls as well as boys having masculine traits have opted for science. The most preferred areas of vocation for the arts group have been found to be executive, linguistic and persuasive (Yadav, 1983), which comparatively seem to be less prestigious than the vocations related to the science field. Interestingly, there are more androgynous adolescents in the arts/commerce field than the science stream. Due to the changing times there are a lot of opportunities as well as varieties in jobs that are not highly sex-typed in the arts/commerce field, hence it is possible to pursue varied vocations such as executive, linguistic, computational business, etc.

An interesting finding revealed in the present study was that adolescents belonging to the arts/commerce stream have a higher self-concept than those from the science stream. A similar finding was revealed in Arora's (1985) study wherein the medical students had a low self-concept. The reason may be that the students from the science field do not feel satisfied with what they have achieved and, therefore, strive to improve upon what they actually possess. This desire may be due to the fact that medical professions are put on a high pedestal and society, family members, close relatives and friends expect more from doctors. Thus, besides being accountable to themselves, they are accountable to others too. Basically, the respondents from the science stream face a lot of competition and have to undergo a lot of pressures to excel. Often they develop a deep rooted fear of failure that they will not be able to do as well and all this may eventually lead to a lower self-concept. Those belonging to the arts/commerce stream, on the other hand, do not necessarily have as high aspirations as those from the science stream, and they do not have much to lose even if they do not perform as well.

With reference to achievement motivation the results have revealed that adolescents belonging to the science stream had higher achievement motivation scores than those from the arts/commerce stream. This needs to be viewed in light of the finding that those who had higher vocational aspirations belong to the science stream. According to Gupta and Veeraraghavan (1989) researches in the field of education have demonstrated that academic performance is invariably the function of achievement motivation. That is, those who have higher achievement motivation scores are more inclined towards academics, hence, their vocational aspirations are also higher.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings of the present research reveal the social and psychological factors that influence adolescents' vocational aspirations. The major trends indicated are in the expected directions, that is, gender, social class and achievement motivation show a significant relationship with the vocational aspirations.

Gender, sex roles and social class are pervasive variables that influence much of one's life goals. Interestingly, despite modernization, the traditional orientation of adolescent girls aspiring for lesser whereas adolescents with a masculine and androgynous sex role orientation aspiring for higher vocations persists. This indicates the deep-rooted sociocultural beliefs and attitudes that reinforce differential gender socialization. In the last two decades, however, concern about vocational equality has focused on men as well as women. Empirical investigations have emphasized encouraging women to cross over into traditionally male occupations for higher psychological and monetary rewards and to reduce the sexually segregated nature of the labor force.

The significant influence of social class on one's vocational aspirations must be viewed in relation to gender and sex role orientation. It is quite likely that families from lower social strata are more steeped in tradition. Coupled with a relatively small range of experiences beyond the family, it is not surprising that the adolescent develops aspirations that are more realistic in their social context. Whereas, adolescents' belonging to high social class aspire for vocations with higher money and prestige attached to them.

Interestingly, a crucial variable such as self-concept does not seem to play a significant role in determining one's vocational aspiration. This may well be an indication that by and large the adolescents' vocational choice has

been in consonance with their perceptions of their abilities. Also, in a traditional culture such as India, one's self-concept is intricately inter linked to one's gender role orientation. Thus, choosing vocations that are in line with one's gender, would generally elicit positive reinforcement from significant others, thereby, making the adolescent feel fairly satisfied with oneself.

As achievement motivation is closely related to high academic achievement it is natural for high achieving adolescents' to have higher aspirations and low achieving adolescents' to have lower aspirations.

With respect to the study stream, more adolescents' from the science stream have a masculine orientation. Whereas, there are more androgynous adolescents in the arts/commerce stream. They also have a higher self-concept than those from the science stream. Basically, society, family members, close relatives and friends expect a lot from the adolescents' from the science field. Therefore, besides being accountable to themselves, they are accountable to others too. In the process they might develop a deep rooted fear of failure that they will not be able to do as well and all this may eventually lead to a lower self-concept. Adolescents' from the science stream also had high achievement motivation scores, besides having higher vocational aspirations. And those who have high achievement motivation scores are more inclined towards academics, hence it is not surprising that they have high vocational aspirations.

One of the major implications of the present study would be to make adolescent girls and boys aware of the range of vocations available to them. Both, girls and boys can be encouraged to aspire for vocations that are stereotypically dominated by one gender. For instance, if a boy has the aptitude for becoming a teacher, he may be encouraged to pursue this vocation. It is heartening to note that the feminist movement and the increased communication network has enhanced awareness about various

vocations and opened new avenues. Consequently, the present day adolescents' experience greater educational and career opportunities than ever before.

One of the fall outs of such scenario is that students often make career plans without possessing adequate knowledge about various vocations. Thus, they fall an easy prey to pressure from parents and suggestions from friends, and aspire for unrealistic career decisions without assessing their suitability for themselves. This leads, in many instances, to floundering from job to job, resulting in dissatisfaction and maladjustment in the vocation thus selected. In view of this, adolescents need individual as well as group counseling to enable them to choose vocations that are in line with their interest, aptitude and ability. In fact, such counseling may also be extended to parents as they play a significant role in this process. Parents should set up a democratic home environment by showing unconditional positive regard for the adolescent, by listening to his or her ideas, suggestions, opinions and points of view, be they idiosyncratic or revolutionary. Parents can induce a meaningful dialogue with the adolescent on significant issues like future goals and plans, about their own selves, and possible vocations they can opt for.

Suggestions for future research.

1. The present research included adolescents from the urban area only. A comparative study of the urban and rural adolescents can be carried out since the social setting and economic conditions are different in urban and rural areas.
2. The present study took into consideration only English medium schools. Further research can be carried out on adolescents from

Gujarati or Hindi medium schools since the social setting, economic conditions and home environment in the schools are likely to be different.

3. The present study dealt with the perspectives of adolescents. It would be interesting to know what parents themselves think about adolescents' choices of vocations, how they encourage or discourage their children from choosing certain vocations, the factors that guide them to direct their children's choices, and such other aspects.
4. In terms of methodology, it may be useful to conduct a more in depth study using qualitative research methods such as individual in depth interviews and small group discussions to capture some of the thought processes that adolescents' experience while aspiring for certain vocations.