

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What do you want to be when you grow up? "A teacher", "an airline pilot", or "a scientist." These are some of the naive and self-conscious replies to this commonly encountered question. While this question may appear trivial, recent literature has evinced a lot of research interest in studying vocational aspirations*. Thus, we are no longer at a liberty to regard children's responses as just innocent absorption in play. Children are now getting acutely aware of the adult world at an earlier age due to the communication media - television, movies, videos, comic books, and the like.

The ideas expressed during childhood often sustain through the teen years and into adolescence - a period of "storm and stress". Researchers are often drawn to the study of adolescence as they conceive adolescence as an exciting period of development, full of intense and dramatic behavioral changes. The scientific study of adolescence has increased tremendously in recent years, in quantity and quality, because, besides it being a distinct and important period in the life cycle of an individual, it marks, in certain respects, the peak in the physical and mental growth of an individual.

During adolescence, growth occurs on many fronts and at different levels - changes due to pubertal development, social role re-definitions, cognitive development, school transitions and the emergence of sexuality. It is a time for seeking status and recognition as an individual - a period of emerging and developing vocational interests and striving towards economic independence (Lerner & Spanier, 1980). The nature and pace of these

*Note: The term "vocational aspiration" has been used while referring to vocations, and the term "occupation" has been used while referring to a job. However, the term "occupation" in the measure "Occupational Aspiration Scale" denotes vocation

changes have implications for personality development and make an ideal focus for scientific research.

One of the tasks of adolescence, according to Havighurst, is "to organize one's plans and energies in such a way as to begin an orderly career to feel able to make a living" (Rice, 1981). The late adolescent years i.e., fifteen to eighteen years of age, especially, are more crucial as formative years of life for selection of a vocation in the future. This is also the period when one has to think about the educational subjects which are commensurating to one's vocational aspirations (Chadha, Nijhawan, & Pershed, 1983).

Among the many factors that influence vocational aspirations, gender, social class and sex roles are ubiquitous determinants of vocational aspirations. Every individual is born into a social environment, that is, the context within which one's vocational aspirations develop. Each social class, to a greater or lesser extent, has its own differential set of ideology, values, aspirations and characteristic patterns of behavior. Apart from biology and anatomy, socially or culturally defined sex roles can also exert significant influence on one's vocational aspirations. Other specific determinants of vocational aspirations are individual level factors such as self-concept and achievement motivation. Adolescence especially has long been considered a time when self-concept concerns increase in prominence, and academic self-concept influences the level of vocational aspirations which also become particularly salient during this period. Achievement motivation refers to the behavior of an individual who strives to accomplish something, to do his best and to excel in performance. The academic performance of students depends upon their achievement motivation, which in turn is likely to influence their vocational aspiration.

Vocational Development

Education, per se, has been influenced by the political, economic, and environmental changes in society. Traditionally education was bookish, theoretical and meant for white collar jobs. It is now diversified in various fields of interests and is organized in such a manner that can enable the individual to find opportunities for self-employment or for work in actual life (Mishra, 1990).

In the present times, education is considered indispensable because it equips the adolescents of today to meet the challenges before them in future. It is a tool to realize their aspirations and find gainful employment. The vocational aspect of education includes the study of technologies, related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of social and economic life (Mishra, 1990). "The term vocation is understood to mean a trade or skill oriented preparation for gainful occupation or employment" (Mohan & Gupta, 1990, p. 14). An individual's choice of vocation depends upon intelligence, aptitude, interest and creative potentialities. In order to carry out a specified job efficiently, a sound vocational training, along with the knowledge of vocational interests and preferences of the individuals are inevitable. Specific training in a preferred vocation adds to the efficiency of the person by exhibiting the best in him in the job. According to Super (1957), just like social, emotional, and intellectual development, vocational development has both, distinctive characteristics which make focusing on it worthwhile as well as common characteristics which reveal it as one way in which the general development manifests itself. He describes the vocational task as a task encountered at or about a certain period in the life of an individual. This task is derived from the expectation that the members of a

social group manifest a relatively orderly behavioral sequence for participating in the activity of work.

In the wake of industrialization and urbanization, the world of work has grown very complex. The traditional social structure of work in which an individual was born to a vocation is toppling down. Technology has changed the attitude of man to work and certain categories of vocations which were looked down upon with contempt are considered respectable today. Work like tilling the land with a plough was below the dignity of high caste Hindus. Yet, today they do not hesitate in tilling the land by tractor (Yadav, 1983). Given such a scenario, the adolescents of today are in a bewildering position - at crossroads wherein they have not severed ties from the past totally, nor have they accepted the new values. While ample and varied opportunities are available to them, they are still floundering as far as the selection of the vocation is considered. In fact, so many choices confuse them and at times lead them to drift into inappropriate vocations.

The aspiration for a vocation is influenced by sociocultural changes across history like economic recession, difficulty in finding employment, social issues, besides factors like the individual's personality, the socioeconomic status of the family, and the educational and occupational background of the parents. In recent years increasing attention has been paid by researchers and theorists to vocational development i.e., vocational choice, interest, and aspirations of individuals. Some of the theories of vocational development as described by Jones, Steffire, & Stewart, (1970) are summarized below .

Theories of Vocational Development

Trait and Factor approach.

The most common formulation with regard to vocational development is based on the idea that the traits of an individual which have vocational salience are somehow matched with those of the occupation in which he works. According to Parsons (1967), a wise choice of a vocation involves three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of oneself, one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and condition of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work; and (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. In short, the individual compares his capabilities and dispositions with those demanded by vocations and selects the one with which he "matches" best.

Developmental theories

According to the developmental theories, vocational development is seen as starting in early childhood and continuing until the twenties. This period of vocational development is divided into three general stages: the fantasy period, the tentative period and the reality period. In the fantasy period, which continues until about age ten, the child responds to the question "what will you be when you grow up" with fantasy answers selected from the culture to which he has been exposed. These answers represent only a childhood view of the society in which he lives and not his own capabilities or desire. The tentative period is approximately from ages eleven to seventeen, and is characterized by the expanding recognition of several dimensions of the problem of deciding on a future occupation. This period is sub-divided into four stages. When he is eleven or twelve, the boy's choices

and planning are apt to be made largely on the basis of interest. The boy has learned what he likes to do and he may make his tentative choice on such a subjective factor. The next stage, thirteen to fourteen years, is that in which choices are made on the basis of recognized capacities. Here the boy may have learned that he is better in school than most and so he may plan on high level vocations, or he may have learned that he is not good in mathematics and may drop from those vocations which he thinks call for this skill. The third stage is characterized as the value stage and is placed approximately at fifteen to sixteen years. Here the boy begins to delineate what is important to him. Does he want money, prestige, a chance to be creative, the opportunity to work in a particular setting, or some other value which is enhanced by his vocation? Finally, the last sub-stage is that of transition when reality considerations which were on the periphery of consciousness move into a more central position. This shift reflects the fact that the values which an individual hopes to realize through work are deeply embedded in the social and economic structure to which he must adjust himself, and therefore, it becomes necessary to understand, test and know through experience.

The reality period which begins in late adolescence continues until the individual has finally settled into an occupation which he will hold for sometime. During the first part of this period, he explores various occupations either by direct work experience or vicariously. He does so in an attempt to link his decision making to reality. After sufficient exploration, his choices become crystallized and he moves in the occupation in which he will work. This stage of crystallization is culminated by the stage of specification in which he selects and enters into a particular job with a long range commitment to a given type of work, perhaps even in a particular company or geographic area.

Havighurst's concept of vocational development.

Havighurst's conception of vocational development implies appropriate kinds of development for each age level. These stages may be thought of as an extension and particularization of his better known "developmental tasks".

The first stage is that of "identification" and runs roughly from ages five to ten. During this period the boy identifies himself with the worker in the family who is an adult male, that is, in most cases with father. As he begins to understand that he will grow into an adult male, he realizes that this role typically requires going to work regularly and supporting a family.

From ages ten to fifteen the boy is in a stage where he is acquiring the basic talents of industry. The child begins to learn responsibility and to organize his life so that it includes the notion of work. Work at this stage may include part time jobs, chores around the house, or school homework. To pass through this stage successfully, the boy needs to learn to do some work without being specifically told what to do. He learns to organize his time and energy and to put "work before play".

The next vocational stage, from fifteen to twenty-five years is of acquiring an identity as a worker in the occupational structure of society. At this time the boy selects an vocation and begins to prepare for it. In most cases, he will enter into work during this period, and now sees himself not as a prospective worker but as an actual worker.

From ages twenty-five to forty the individual is a productive person and, in most cases, reaches the peak of his skill. He will move up the occupational ladder and most men at this time find that work has become the dominant force in their life.

The individual maintains his productivity from roughly ages forty to seventy. At this time he may not be so much concerned with personal productivity since he is more certain and secure about his vocational status. His attentions are now concentrated on his contribution to society so that the major task of this period is to "maintain a productive society".

Finally, the last role is that of contemplating a productive life. If he has been a productive person during the first five stages, he is likely to be more content during this stage.

It must be noted that the stages refer predominantly to males.

Super's concept of vocational development

Super's (1957) vocational development theory involves both structural and developmental aspects. Super posits the following five stages of vocational development:

1. The growth stage (till age fourteen) is sub-divided into a fantasy stage (ages four to ten), an interest stage (ages eleven to twelve), and a capacity stage (ages thirteen to fourteen).
2. The exploration stage (fifteen to twenty-four) is subdivided into a tentative stage (ages fifteen to seventeen), a transition stage (age eighteen to twenty-one), and a trial stage (ages twenty-two to twenty-four).
3. The establishment stage (twenty-five to forty-four) has two sub-stages: a trial stage from ages twenty-five to thirty and a stabilization stage from ages thirty-one to forty-four.

4. The maintenance stage (forty-five to sixty-four).

5. The decline stage (after sixty-four).

The names of these stages suggest the nature of vocational concerns. Such concerns start in late childhood with tentative probes and questions, become stronger in early adolescence as recognition of the importance of vocational decisions grows, and finally lead to educational, and sometimes preliminary vocational decisions. These decisions in turn are evaluated, then, either get modified or become crystallized, and lead in the mature stages of elaboration and embellishment of vocational behaviors. Each of these stages has its characteristic behavior and attitudes, and therefore the vocational maturity of an individual may be estimated by relating his chronological age to his vocational behavior. For example, during the tentative and transition terms of the exploration stage, the individual is engaged in crystallizing his vocational choices. This crystallization is characterized by an awareness of a need to make decisions, the appropriate use of resources and, an awareness of factors that need to be considered along with the contingencies which may affect his goals. During the establishment stage the individual is particularly concerned with stabilization for the first ten years (twenty-five to thirty-five) and interested in consolidation after that. The stabilization process is marked by an awareness of a need to stabilize, planning for stabilization, accepting the inevitability of some instability, and obtaining a stable, regular job. The consolidation period is characterized by an awareness of the need to consolidate and advance, securing information on how to consolidate and advance, planning for consolidation and advancement, and executing consolidation and advancement plans.

Structural theories

In the broadest sense the structural theories attempt to explain why an individual ends up in a particular occupation. According to Roe (1957), every individual has a tendency to expend his energies in a particular way which is dependent upon innate pre-dispositions as they are altered by childhood experiences. The combination of these two factors permits predictions about the kind of work in which the individual will find himself. Roe states that childhood treatment by the parent is the prime determinant of eventual occupational placement. These childhood experiences revolve around the satisfaction of needs. Needs which are routinely satisfied do not become conscious motivators; higher order needs will disappear entirely if they are unsatisfied, while lower order needs will become motivators if they are only rarely satisfied. Finally, needs that are satisfied after unusual delay will become unconscious motivators under certain conditions.

The core of her theory consists of childhood treatment which will result in various occupational placements. She first divides early childhood experiences into those which take place in a psychologically warm home as opposed to a cold home. Next, a home may be designated as one in which the parents are accepting of the child, are avoiding of the child, or concentrate emotionally on the child. A home in which there is much emotional concentration on the child may in turn be either overprotecting or over demanding. A home in which the child is accepted may be one in which the relationship is casual or loving. Finally, a home in which the parents are avoiding of the child may be one in which he is neglected or rejected. The child will be motivated to seek vocations in which he works with persons if he comes from the home in which the climate is loving, overprotecting, or over demanding. Examples of such vocations are those in service, arts and entertainment. Conversely, a home in which the attitude towards the child is casual, neglecting, or rejecting will tend to lead him toward vocations which

are in the fields of technology, outdoor work, or science. Thus, according to Roe's theory, the development and meeting of needs in the early years of childhood determines the general vocational direction toward working with people or away from working with people. Motivation rests largely on the intensity of needs and is a function of the degree of deprivation of an individual combined with his genetic structure.

Holland's concept of vocational development.

The central concept of Holland's theory of vocational development is a typology related to work. He believes that one can characterize people by their resemblance to one or more personality types and that the closer a person's resemblance to a particular type, the more likely it is that he will exhibit the traits and behaviors associated with that type. He also believes that the environments in which people live can be characterized by their resemblance to one or more model environments. Finally, he believes that the pairing of persons and environments leads to several outcomes which are predictable from the knowledge of the personality types and the environmental models.

The six orientations or types into which Holland divides people are:

1. The realistic type. The realistic type is characterized by aggressive behavior, capabilities in motor coordination, and masculinity. He tends to act out his problems and avoid tasks involving interpersonal and verbal skills. He seeks concrete rather than abstract problem situations, and such people tend to be low on social skills.
2. The intellectual type. The intellectual type tends to think rather than act, to understand rather than persuade, and to avoid close social contacts.

3. The social type. The social type gravitates towards teaching and other close personal relationships. He avoids vocations requiring intellectual problem solving or physical skills and seeks out vocations calling for skillful interpersonal relations.
4. The conventional type. The conventional type has great concern for rules and regulations, great self-control and tends to subordinate his personal needs while identifying with power and status. He likes structure and order and seeks out vocations where structure is available.
5. The enterprising type. The enterprising type is verbally skillful but uses these skills to manipulate and dominate people. He is concerned with power and status, and honours others for having it.
6. The artistic type. The artistic type has strong needs for self-expression and tends to relate with people indirectly through their artistic expression. He dislikes structure and prefers tasks which permit him to express himself. He tends to be more culturally feminine than masculine, show little self-control, and express emotions more readily than most people do.

The environments posited by Holland tend to fall into the same six types as the individuals. These types are identified in educational and other environments largely in terms of the vocational goals or status of the people in that situation.

All the above theories, to a certain extent throw light on how various vocations are aspired for, and duly selected. Today's adolescents have a clearer understanding of what they want to do, what their interests and aspirations are, and what their eventual goals will be. They are more aware

of the vocations that are suitable to them, and exactly how much they are capable of achieving.

Vocational Aspirations

Vocational choice is frequently equated with vocational aspirations. "Vocational aspiration" usually means what the individual considers to be the ideal vocation for him. Aspiration is quite similar to a person's fantasy choice. It refers to the level at which an individual wishes to work; it seldom, if ever, refers to the field which one wants to enter. Since the vocation to which an individual aspires is one index of his desire to improve his social position, the sociologist usually investigates vocational aspirations. Whereas choice is based upon a consideration of the many factors which may affect future job satisfaction and success, aspiration is formulated solely in terms of the individual's wants and wishes, i.e., irrespective of the limitations imposed by reality. An individual's "level of aspiration" is defined as the goal he sets for himself in the accomplishment of a task (Crites, 1969).

Vocational aspiration is a goal directed activity which involves conception of the self in relation to a particular level of vocational hierarchy (Good, 1973). An aspiration is the single vocation named as one's best alternative at any given time. As perceptions of compatibility and accessibility change, so too may a person's assessment of which alternative is the best, even though the social space may be stable (Gottfredson, 1981).

Vocational aspiration is believed to be an outcome of stimulating environment and the knowledge the individual has assimilated. While one may aspire for any subject; it is implied that the process of exclusion and inclusion is on. The selection is made from among the fund of information

one has available at that very moment (Chadha, Nijhawan & Pershed, 1983). Many psychosocial variables contribute to the development of vocational aspirations. Variables such as socioeconomic status of the family, rural - urban background, and the age of the individual have been found to play an important role in the development of vocational aspirations. Other specific factors that are important are gender of an individual, sex role typing, the individual's self-concept and the level of achievement motivation.

Ideally, the vocational aspirations should be consistent with not only the above factors, but also with the aptitudes and interests because these are supposed to be the most dependable predictors of success in various types of jobs. In case, the vocation aspired for is not consistent with the aptitudes and interests, there is a possibility of failure and maladjustment of the individual (Dabir & Pandit, 1988). For example, many students succumb to parental pressures and opt for vocations related to science subjects such as medicine and engineering. These are basically vocations with a lot of prestige attached to them, and usually students from the higher classes opt for them. Yadav's (1987) study of the motives for vocational preferences in 600 students revealed socioeconomic status and intelligence as important factors influencing preference. He found that students from better economic backgrounds opted for science streams and poorer students preferred the arts. Also, the most preferred vocational areas for the arts group were executive, linguistic and persuasive, and the least preferred were musical, biological science and artistic. The pattern of preferences for the commerce group was executive, computational and business as the most preferred and biological science, music and physical science as the least preferred. Similarly, science students accorded top ranks to vocations in the physical science areas and lowest ranks to musical, artistic and computational areas.

Thiagarajah's (1989) study revealed that the most liked vocations by the science students are medicine, engineering, law and journalism as

against executive and administrative service for the students of arts courses. The two streams of successful occupations most aspired by the science students were executive/administrative service and teaching and research as against clerical and related services for the students of arts courses. The least preferred vocations for students of both the groups were self-employment, and political and social service.

Researches have found differences in the personality characteristics of students opting for different streams. The personality adjustment pattern of arts and science students seem to differ in that arts students are better socially adjusted than science students (Sathappan & Kuppan. 1980). This may be due to the pressures attached to such vocations, and a lot of competition too.

Vocational Aspirations and Role of the Family

One of the most consistent and well-documented correlates of vocational aspirations is the influence of the family. According to Palmer and Cochran (1988), as primary figures in the lives of developing persons, parents have immense influence on the vocational development of their children. Parents view themselves as central figures in their children's career development and tend to play an active role. Children, in turn, consider their parents to be important influences and turn to them for help in vocational planning more than to anyone else. An extensive review and synthesis of the literature about what young children know about vocations, careers, and the developmental course of career awareness, depicts that parents are primary determinants of children's vocational choices.

Parental influence is characterized through the types of child rearing models they employ, the values they instill, the way in which they encourage

mastery in education and other aspects, and the social and educational aspirations they hold, In analyzing the background of family factors responsible for higher achievement of school children, Morrow and Williamson (1961) concluded that a more congenial home environment, less parental domination, sympathetic parental encouragement were found to be responsible for children's achievement. Henderson and Merritt (1968) found that children in high potential group apparently came from backgrounds that offered a greater variety of stimulating experiences than were available to those children in the low potential group. The potential factors examined were number of children in the family, status level of the father's work, high and low educated mothers, periodicals in the home, extent of weekly travels and extent of activity diversions.

There are particular types of parent - adolescent interactions that appear to facilitate successful school functioning. Morrow and Williamson (1961) found that high achieving adolescents, as compared to a group of low achievers, tended to come from families where they were involved in family decisions, where ideas and activities were shared by family members, and where parents were likely to give approval of and praise for the adolescent's performance and showed trust in the adolescent's competence. In turn, low achieving adolescents came from families marked by parental dominance and restrictions.

Parents who believe in the value of "getting ahead" start to apply pressure from the beginning of the school career. They encourage high marks, pay attention to what is happening at school and stress that good performance is necessary for vocational success. Their children reach high school with a markedly different outlook from those who are not pushed. Those who strive tend to have more specific vocational goals, they have educational aims to match, they work harder in school and think more of the future, and are more sensitive to status distinctions.

In identifying with their parents, children acquire traits and values which are particularly characteristic of either male or female roles in our society. This would be directly related to the formation of sex role preferences. They may also imitate parental behaviors which may not be sex typed but which are equally appropriate in males and females. Thus, the rate of development and type of sex role preference is influenced by parental behavior.

Studies by Pallone, Hurley, and Rickard (1973), and Steinke and Kaczowski (1961) have revealed that most adolescents listed their parents (usually the same sex parent) as most responsible for their vocational choice. Werts and Watley (1972), however have found that fathers influenced both sons and daughters as to "permissible" choices of vocations. Along the same lines, Alden and Seiferth (1979), reported that adolescents ranked parents as the most influential in determining their vocational aspirations, followed by friends, teachers, counselors, and siblings. Similar trends were also reported by Basow and Howe (1979), and Davies and Kandel (1981). Moreover, both Morrow and Williamson (1961) and Shaw and White (1965) concluded that high achieving adolescents tend to identify with their parents while low achieving adolescents do not.

Researches have also indicated specific parental factors such as educational level, efforts to offer concrete help and the like that influences adolescent's vocational aspirations. Sewell and Shah (1968) found that parents' educational attainment is highly related to their adolescent children's educational aspirations, and also to the actual success of adolescents in the school setting. The more educated the parents are, the better is the level of the vocational aspirations of their children and vice versa (Sundararajan & Chandra, 1991). Furthermore, both Swift (1967) and Rehberg and Westby (1967) report that parental encouragement and rewards are associated with

better adolescent school performance. Also, androgynous individuals have been raised by parents who stress cognitive independence, curiosity and competence.

Dynes, Clark, and Dinitz's (1956, cited in Crites, 1969) study of 153 male and 197 female college subjects revealed that the level of vocational aspirations is significantly related to several aspects of interactions with parents in the formative years of life. College students who aspired for high levels of vocation more often felt (1) that their parents did not want them, (2) that their parents showed favoritism to siblings, (3) less attachment to their parents, and (4) generally less happy in childhood. Furthermore, they confided less frequently in their fathers and were more fearful of punishment from them. Interestingly, they did not differ from "low aspirers" in (1) degree of conflict with their fathers and siblings, (2) the extent to which they confided in their mother, (3) their feelings that their parents compared them unfavorably with their siblings or peer groups concerning accomplishments in school and athletics, and (4) their estimations of the degree of disappointment their parents might have in them if they did not live up to expectations. In the recent years, especially, more than ever, high school students as well as their parents are seeking resources to help the adolescents make an informed vocational choice. They recognize the importance of choosing a satisfying vocation, in accordance with their aspirations; one that can provide a sense of fulfillment and adequate financial rewards. They are aware of the changing job market, and the fluctuating economy necessitates careful planning for the future. Parents serve as an effective support system as their child makes important life decisions, and most of them eagerly participate in their children's vocational development.

The studies cited above thus reveal convincing evidence that adolescent's vocational development is influenced greatly by family background and parent-child interactions.

Some specific family related factors are discussed below in terms of their influence on vocational aspirations of adolescents.

Maternal employment

An important family background factor that is likely to play a role in influencing adolescents' vocational aspiration is maternal employment. It is one of the key factors in determining the degree of role differentiation that occurs between parents. If the father is employed outside the home, while the mother remains a full-time home-maker, their roles are clearly polarized for the child. On the other hand, if both parents are employed outside the home, their roles are more likely to be perceived as similar. A child growing up in a family with a working mother, therefore, should experience less parental sex-role differentiation than would a child with a non-working mother. Children of working mothers see adult men and women as sharing more in their activities than do children of non-working mothers. Thus, children's concepts about sex-typing are less stereotyped when their mothers are employed than are the concepts of children with unemployed mother.

Employment of the mothers influences the vocational aspirations to a certain extent. Studies have revealed that daughters of employed mothers (i.e., mothers who were employed during some period of the daughter's childhood or adolescence) more often aspired to a career outside the home (Almquist & Angrist, 1971; Hoffman, 1974; Stein, 1973), get better grades in college (Nichols & Schaffer, 1975), and aspire to more advanced education. Men and women with employed mothers perceive significantly smaller

differences between masculine and feminine roles than do men and women with home-maker mothers (Hoffman, 1974; Stein, 1973). College women who have chosen a traditionally masculine vocation more often had employed mothers than those preparing for feminine vocations (Almquist, 1975; Tangri, 1972).

Vocational Aspirations and the Influence of Siblings and Peers

The influence of siblings on the vocational development might be positive or negative. The oldest child's success and satisfaction in an vocation for which he has aspired may influence the younger siblings in a similar that direction, or sibling rivalry may induce a younger brother/sister to make a definite effort to avoid following an older sibling's footsteps.

Peers have also been found to influence adolescents' aspirations and educational preferences, and, in most cases, there is a convergence between family and peer influences (Lerner & Spanier, 1980). However, the belief that peers replace parents in importance to adolescents is overstated. Although research has shown that peers become increasingly important during adolescence, the values of adolescent's peer group are more likely to support or complement parental values than to be in conflict with them (Brown, 1990; Epstein, 1983; Youniss & Smoller, 1985).

Kandel and Lesser (1969) found that if adolescent-peer relationships were characterized by closeness and intimacy, there was a great deal of correspondence between the educational aspirations of the peers and the adolescent. However, most adolescents were found to have educational plans that agreed with both, peers and parents. On the other hand, among those adolescents who disagreed with their parents, there was also a great likelihood that they would disagree with peers as well. Moreover, in those

cases when there was a discrepancy between parent and peer orientations, it was most likely that the parental orientation would prevail.

Vocational Aspirations, Gender and Sex Roles

Gender is a crucial determinant of the course of life of an individual. The implications are for both, biological and social development. In traditional cultures such as ours, gender influences the fact whether the newborn's birth will be welcomed or denounced; whether the growing child will be valued or rejected; and whether the adult will have power and privileges or will be without these. Being born female, in general, is likely to have negative characteristics attributed, though it has changed a lot in the recent years (Sharma & Anandlakshmy, 1990).

Sex roles refers to the constellation of qualities an individual understands to characterize males or females in his or her own culture (Block, 1973). The process by which the society transmutes males and females into "masculine" and "feminine" is known as the process of sex typing (Bem, 1981).

Sex role does not simply mean biologically defined categories. We are by nature male or female, but masculinity or femininity result from the complex process of socialization. Sex roles depend on cultural definitions and conditioning. Without the influence of society, people's sex would not define their identities or determine their personality styles

In every culture some roles are played primarily by males and others primarily by females, although there is a wide variation in the content of these roles across the planet. No culture of either the present or the past is or has been free of some form of gender role differentiation. Justification of

the division between men's and women's roles and equities in their legal status and access to political and financial resources has historically been based on purported differences between men and women in temperamental and intellectual qualities. Men have been perceived as intellectually more able than women, but also as possessing a cluster of self-assertive, and goal oriented qualities that permit them to discharge worldly roles. Women, in contrast, have been perceived as emotional and interpersonally oriented, characteristics making them suitable for nurturant domestic roles but also lacking in the instrumental qualities that would allow them to compete with men in extra domestic spheres (Babladelis, Deaux, Helmreich, & Spence, 1983).

Theories of socialization have well established evidence that boys and girls learn to behave in a certain way termed masculine and feminine, respectively, as a result of the process of sex typed socialization. Observation of parent behavior, imitation of peers and adults, and identification with selected models contribute to the gender and sex role identity of the child (Anandlakshmy, 1981). Also, for young children sex appropriate behaviors are determined and limited by social norms and conventions. They are restricted to the cultural roles that they have been taught as being appropriate to their society.

Sex role stereotyping starts before children enter school. Male children are encouraged to be physically active and aggressive, and female children to be quiet and passive. In fact, by the time children enter kindergarten, they begin to make stereotyped sex role distinctions and express sex role preferences (Weitzman, 1972). By the fifth grade they have already formed stereotypical attitudes toward sex roles.

The traditional formulation of sex typing suggests that adoption of sex roles appropriate to one's male or female gender is developmentally

desirable. Deviations from culturally sanctioned sex role behavior was until very recently considered maladaptive and undesirable. The terms "masculinity" and "femininity" are relatively enduring traits which are more or less rooted in anatomy, physiology and early experiences, and which generally serve to distinguish males from females in appearance, attitudes and behavior. The social sex role is an ascribed status which distinguishes the behavioral patterns of male and female from birth to death. This role carries with it a whole array of attitudes, feelings and activities - in short, it may involve anything and everything associated with being a male or a female within a particular culture. However, sex role patterns cannot be rigidly defined. An individual plays a combination of roles at any given stage in his life, and never a single role in an isolated manner.

Sex roles are pervasive across the various domains of an individual's life, including the vocational world. In fact, one of the most striking characteristics of the vocational world is intense gender segregation. Men tend to work in some occupations, women in others, and from very early years, boys and girls tend to aspire and prefer different vocations (Stockard & McGee, 1990). Extensive gender differences in vocational aspirations and preferences appear among children of all ages (Henderson, Heskth, & Tuffin, 1988; Marini & Greenberger, 1978; O'Keefe & Hyde, 1983; Saltiel, 1988; Selkow, 1984; Vondracek & Kirchner, 1974). A large number of studies concerning children's vocational interests and aspirations show marked differences, no matter how young they are. As early as the kindergarten years, boys basically engage in more active games calling for vigorous physical activity, whereas, girls are more likely to enjoy dolls, paper activities, and games calling for skillful movements. Boys choose play materials, like building materials and vehicles, whereas girls prefer articles of furniture, painting and modeling materials.

Studies have shown that sex stereotyping of vocations starts at the early age of seven and influences vocational choice and career development (Osipow, 1976). Bem and Bem (1970) indicated that children in primary grades display behavioral and achievement patterns consistent with sex role expectation. Thus, if one expects girls to act helpless and remain outside of aggressive activity and boys to be just opposite, they will.

Thus, from preschool years boys are treated quite differently from girls. Girls are expected to be more orderly and obedient, they are encouraged to participate in sedentary and domestic activities such as playing house or working in the kitchen. Whereas, boys are more inclined to be punished for dependency, passivity and open display of feelings. They are taught mechanical activities such as building models and games in which strength, speed and aggression are encouraged. Thus, boys, more frequently than girls, rate as important the opportunity to be leader, to be boss, to receive high pay, and to gain fame. Girls, more frequently value jobs which allow them to express their abilities and to help other people. They also set lower sights for themselves vocationally, and are much more likely to choose minor professional goals. This sex difference is of course culturally learnt. For example, according to Stockard and McGee (1990), the most preferred vocations for the boys are scientist, police officer, artist, farmer, carpenter, and architect and by the girls are nursery school teacher, artist, secretary. The least preferred vocations for boys are dancer, hairdresser, secretary and nursery school teacher. The least preferred vocations for girls are truck driver, T.V. repairer, pilot and judge.

Vocational education is assigned different values for boys and girls in our society. Traditionally, the boy will become the primary wage earner of his family. Therefore, his education is seen as more important than the girls. It is well known that the choice of subjects taken at school is largely determined by the child's sex. Boys tend to go in for science based subjects whereas

girls concentrate their efforts on arts subjects (Sharpe, 1976; Sutherland, 1981). Research evidence indicates that boys aspire to a higher level of vocations more than girls (Marini & Greenberger, 1978).

Previous studies of high school students have shown that girls are less likely than boys to desire or plan on obtaining college degrees and higher levels of education (Bordua, 1960; Ezell & Tate, 1955; Flanagan, Davis, Dailey, Shaycroft, Orr, Goldberg, and Neyman, 1964; Gordon, 1969; Harrison, 1969; Sewell, 1964; Stephenson, 1957; Turner, 1964; Coleman, 1961). It might be interpreted that the social pressure on the males to succeed in the occupational sphere produces higher aspirations and expectations among males than females for the educational attainment necessary for occupational achievement.

Research conducted in the mid seventies demonstrated the existence of strong, traditional occupational stereotypes among college students. Persons holding occupations such as electrician, stockbroker, and engineer were perceived by both men and women as having, and presumably needing, masculine traits. In contrast, persons in nursing, dietetics, and elementary school teaching were seen as having feminine traits (Shinar, 1975). Yanico's (1980) study on students information about "masculine" and "feminine" vocations, provides evidence that college women perceive themselves as being less informed about vocations that are nontraditional for them than about those that are traditionally female fields. They also report having less information about masculine vocations compared to men's perception of the same. College men, on the other hand, perceive themselves as equally knowledgeable about traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine vocations, and rate themselves as knowledgeable as women about so called women's fields.

Indian studies have indicated that boys at the school stage have greater familiarity with the world of work than girls (Srivastava, 1972; Mehta, Mathur & Pant, 1985). In our society girls are typically brought up to aspire to a marriage and not to a vocation. Most data still indicate that men and women remain oriented to traditional sex differences in vocational roles, despite the fact that the complexion of the workforce continues to change. Women learn at a very early age that male identified vocations are inappropriate for them and that sanctions are applied should they compete. These sanctions take the form of fear of negative consequences that befall the women who achieves success. Her alternative is to opt for an appropriate field where the sanctions are diminished (Berger, 1978). Gordan and Hall's (1974) study revealed that the perception of the male stereotype of femininity was the best predictor of various types of role conflict that the women experienced. Thus, if women believe that their achievement strivings may threaten their affiliative relationships, particularly with significant males, they may experience anxiety and conflict or even sacrifice competence and achievement related activities. Societal pressures have led certain women to avoid choosing prestigious vocations and have created a motive to avoid success. Success in competitive situations produces the anticipation of negative consequences such as unpopularity and loss of femininity (Berger, 1978).

However, the social changes heralded by the women's movement, and the flow of women into the work force have focused attention upon the effect of these major social changes on ideas about the appropriate roles for men and women, and in turn, the influence of these ideas on how people feel and behave. Consequently, in the past decade, there has been an increase in the percentages of women who pursue traditionally male dominated fields such as business management, law and medicine, engineering, and the like. Betz, Heesacker and Shuttleworth (1990) for instance, have reported a distinct increase in the percentage of women who choose careers in the

male dominated and gender equivalent areas rather than female dominated careers. In the present times, women appear to perceive a broader range of career options now than simply traditionally female dominated fields. With issues relating to women and development gaining prominence, values such as personal freedom and independence for women have assumed special significance, which in turn has led to a more liberal interpretation of women's vocational roles. Now, a greater similarity is seen between a man and a woman in vocational aspirations, and women today tend to adopt enterprising areas more than in the past.

Also, according to Spence and Helmreich (1978) the political, economic and social changes over the past few decades have led to a blurring of the formerly sharp divisions between the roles of men and women. Theorists have now proposed models of sex role development beyond the conventional and/or stereotyped level and the recent trend is to view them as independent, uncorrelated dimensions so that individuals can manifest high levels of both masculine and feminine characteristics (Bem, 1977).

Sex role development begins with an undifferentiated stage, in which masculinity and femininity and maleness and femaleness are not very important to the child. In later development the child forms rigid sex role stereotypes associated with gender. Males are masculine, females are feminine, and these stereotypes are applied to oneself as well as others. Beyond adolescence there may be some relaxing of this rigidity, but the linking of sex roles to gender remains a powerful influence on a person's self-conception and behavior.

Bem (1977) has used the concept of "psychological androgyny" which implies that it is possible for an individual to be both assertive and compassionate, both instrumental and assertive, depending upon the situational appropriateness. From the Greek "andro" for male and "gyn" for

female, androgyny defines a condition under which individuals do not adhere to role characteristics of their sex (Heilbrun, 1973). Androgynous individuals attribute both high levels of masculine and feminine traits to themselves, while those termed undifferentiated report low levels of both. Feminine persons report higher feminine traits and lower masculine ones, while masculine persons report higher masculine and lower feminine traits.

Traditional individuals, that is, those who possess high levels of same sex personality characteristics and low levels of opposite sex ones, are restricted in their coping mechanisms and in their ability to respond with flexibility to emerging situations (Bem, 1977). This suggests that the traditional female, faced with the need to work and with career decisions, would limit their career choices to traditionally feminine vocations such as nursing, teaching, and secretarial work.

An interesting dimension to this issue that has been reported by Hesselbart, (1977) has indicated that vocational sex role stereotyping by high school students was biased against men entering non-traditional vocations. For example, a woman who was training to become a physician was viewed positively, whereas, a man who wanted to become a child care worker, model, secretary or hairdresser was perceived negatively. On the other hand, androgynous individuals have been found to express vocational interests that transcend traditionally sex typed interests (Tipton, 1976). Androgyny seems related to progress in career decision making and to nontraditional vocational interests, but not necessarily to selection of nontraditional professions. Also, androgynous females as compared to feminine females were less traditional, inhibited or restrained regarding vocational and educational objectives, marital and childbearing preferences, sexual behavior and attitudes, willingness to discuss menstrual problems, and career versus family orientations (Giankos & Subich, 1986).

Clarey and Sanford's (1982) study on female career preference and androgyny indicate that androgynous females explore a wider range of career preferences, including both traditional and nontraditional careers for women, thus, increasing their chances for higher pay, higher status, and greater opportunity for advancement. Androgynous women were found to be more advanced in career decision making than women in other sex type, categories, while both androgynous and masculine males were more advanced than feminine typed males (Moreland, Harren, Montague, & Tinsley, 1979).

Various studies have found that sex role orientation may affect not only the process but also the content of career 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 traditionally sex typed interests, while traditionally typed individuals express conventional career interests (Tipton, 1976). Yanico, Hardin, & McLaughlin (1978) found that college women majoring in engineering were more instrumental than women majoring in home economics. In addition, Galejs and King (1983) reported that women majoring in engineering were more instrumental and less expressive than women majoring in social sciences.

In general, vocations stereotypically associated with rationality and competence are viewed as masculine, while those vocations associated with nurturance and interpersonal warmth are perceived as feminine (O'Dowd & Beardslee, 1967). Feminine vocations and the behaviors associated with them are viewed as less desirable and less deserving of reward than masculine fields and tasks (Shinar, 1978; Taynor & Deaux, 1975).

It is necessary to reiterate, however, that throughout the 1980s, there has been a progressive shift toward egalitarianism and a greater proportion

of both men and women are endorsing the concept of equal educational and vocational opportunities for men and women. An increasing number of career options are being made available to women of all ages, especially to school and college female students. No longer are certain vocations like law, engineering and medicine blocked for females. Today's females are allowed much more freedom in choosing their vocation.

Vocational Aspirations and Social Class

Social class means the position that an individual or family occupies by means of income, education, occupation, cultural position and participation in the group activity of the community (Ganguly, 1989). A social class may be defined as a group of people who share similar values and attitudes, a particular life style and feel themselves to be similar to each other. The placing of an individual in a given social class system depends on his social relationships, his occupation, income, education, type of house and area of the community (Blau, 1975).

Social class has been recognized as one of the most significant factors which generates as well as circumscribes the human behavior to a considerable degree. Social class is not a unitary factor, rather it is a composite one comprising of certain components which have been recognized as independent social and economic variables. Education, income, and occupation satisfy all the conditions. Income is indicative of economic status, and education and occupation constitute one's social status taking care of the extent to which an individual possesses political power and/or enjoys proximity to the center of power (Pandit & Dabir, 1990).

It has long been known that vocational success is highly related to educational achievement. On the average, those with the most education get

the best jobs in terms of income and prestige. Various longitudinal as well as cross-sectional studies (Super, 1960; Crites, 1969; Gribbons & Lohnes, 1969) have highlighted the role of social class in career development. Many studies have shown a positive relationship between the adolescent's level of vocational aspirations and measures of social status of his family. Reisman (1959) attributed this correlation to the educational and vocational achievement values that are presumed to be directly influenced by the family's position in the social structure. It is supposed that the level of aspiration is generally influenced by the educational and occupational values in the status milieu in which one is reared .

The pattern of vocational choice corresponds roughly with the job patterns associated with each class in the adult world of work. Therefore, the adolescent's ideas and desirable jobs are a reflection of their experiences in the class and family culture complexes. These adolescents are not only aware of the differential prestige attached to occupations, but they also know their own positions and those of their families in the prestige system, and they understand the connection which exists between the father's occupation and the family's economic and prestige positions (Crites, 1969).

From the knowledge of the individual's social class, one can to a certain extent predict his vocational aspirations, as individuals from different social classes tend to choose vocations at a level consistent with their status and background. Hollingshead (1949) hypothesized that lower class youngsters limit their horizons to the class and in this process they unconsciously place themselves in such a position that they will occupy the same level as their parents. Bogie's (1976) work with high school seniors concluded that social class was a strong predictor of the discrepancy between an individual's career aspirations and career selection. The higher an individual's social class was, the less was the discrepancy foreseen between career aspirations and attainment.

Studies have identified a positive relationship between social class and individual educational and vocational potential. Sundararajan and Rajasekar's (1988) study on the vocational aspirations of higher secondary students in Tamilnadu found that students whose parents belong to high or middle income group have a better level of vocational aspirations than those whose parents have a low income. Further, the students who were above average in academic achievement have a better level of vocational aspirations than those who are average in their academic achievement. As revealed by Dave and Anand (1979), more able students aspire to higher level jobs, and within all ability groups the higher social class youngsters were found to have higher aspirations. This was true irrespective of long-term or short-term goals.

Socially advantaged adolescents have been found to demonstrate significantly greater interest in the vocations of literary, scientific, artistic and persuasive fields as compared to socially disadvantaged adolescents. Perhaps, it may be due to the fact that adolescents belonging to the high social class have more conducive conditions for development of interests in vocations related to these fields (Sharma, Verma, & Swami, 1991).

Raina's (1987) study on vocational preferences of secondary school students of Kashmir valley report that the higher income group students preferred mostly the vocations of engineering, medicine, tourism, hotel management, police, business, and announcing and composing. Boys belonging to the low income group preferred teaching, agriculture, typewriting, forestry, arts & crafts, dairy farming, packing, and embroidery. On the other hand, middle income group preferred the professions of fishery, police service, medicine, typewriting, tourism, hotel management, announcing and composing, and radio and TV mechanic. There are a lot of similar professions preferred by the high and middle social classes. Studies

by Chopra (1984) and Pandit and Dabir (1990) revealed similar trends, wherein social class was most consistently associated with high vocational aspirations in case of boys as well as girls.

With specific reference to gender, Tully, Stephen and Chance's (1976) have found that more girls than boys choose cross-gender dominated vocations. Also, girls from high social class are more likely than those from low social class to choose male dominated vocations. In seeking high prestige vocations, high social class girls are more likely to consider male dominated vocations which offer greater status and income than most high prestige female dominated vocations. This can be explained by the major social movement encouraging females to choose-cross gender dominated vocations, while there is little impetus for males to consider anything but male dominated vocations.

Vocational Aspirations and Self-Concept

During the last two decades the issue of self-concept has received increased attention in educational and psychological literature. There has been a consensus between the educators and psychologists about the pervasive influence of self-concept on the individual.

Self-concept is the person's total appraisal of his appearances, background, and origins, abilities, resources, attitudes and feelings which culminate as a directing force in behavior. It refers to one's view of oneself, one's view of who one is and who one is not. When projecting oneself into the future, self-concept also includes who one expects or would like to be. People may or may not be consciously aware of their self-concepts and they may or may not be able to articulate them, but they act on the beliefs about themselves (Patel, 1989).

Self-concept is thus an important aspect of personality which affects behavior. Self-concept provides a framework for the perception and organization of life experiences. A positive self-concept will strengthen a person's ability to deal more effectively with everyday situations (Patel, 1989). Adolescence, especially has been long considered a time when self-concept concerns increase in prominence. Physiological changes and changes in the social circumstances (e.g., high school) contribute to the increase in self awareness and concern about how one is viewed by others (Gecas & Seff, 1990).

Self-concept has assumed a central place in vocational development. Some students have an unrealistic concept of themselves; consequently, their levels of aspirations are far above their abilities and level of successful achievement which elicit "feelings of inadequacy". Appropriate vocational aspiration as well as choice, to a greater extent depends upon knowledge about the self. According to Asha and Johnson (1994) it is a matter of clear understanding of one's self, aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambition, resources and limitations. Lack of information and awareness regarding one's own characteristics is likely to lead to lesser degree of vocational maturity. This implies that the process of vocational aspiration and choice involves developing and implementing an individual's self-concept, i.e., individual's personal / subjective evaluation or the idea of who and what one is.

Super (1975) has been most influential in introducing self-concept to vocational psychology. After all, people's occupations are among their most important social roles; occupations confer identities and restrict the kind of identities and life styles people are able to create or sustain. The process of vocational aspirations is essentially that of developing and implementing a self-concept.

Ghosh and Gordan's (1981) study on self-concept and vocational aspirations among girls strongly indicates a link between high self-concept and ambitious vocational aspirations. As academic self-concept influences the level of vocational aspirations, girls may not be choosing career paths appropriate to their level of academic success. Their aspirations may be too low and low job competence is a serious and related concern. Girls who do not see themselves as competent workers may be slow to seek and take advantage of work opportunities necessary for development of skills (Kelly & Jordan, 1992).

Students from urban schools possess significantly better self - concepts than their counterparts from rural schools (Singh, 1987). Also, there exists a positive and significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of science students.

Women's vocational decisions are limited by their adherence to stereotypically feminine role concepts and their related self-concepts. Putman and Hansen (1972) studied the relationship of the feminine role and self-concept to vocational maturity and found that self-concept was significantly associated with vocational maturity. Further, the more liberal the woman perceived her role to be, the higher was her level of vocational maturity. Girls tend to be vocationally immature in comparison to their male counterparts and have a lower than average self-concept. Thus, if women have low self-concepts because of low estimations of their own competence, or other factors, they are more likely to be vocationally immature. Vocational choices of girls are basically limited because of their poor self-concepts. They have less confidence and self-esteem because they see themselves as less competent.

Certain psychological factors operating within the family have also been studied in relation to self-concept. These include encouragement and

expectations, along with educational interests and activities. Family interest in cultural, intellectual and political activities contribute to children's achievement related perceptions and performances in school. According to Chapman and Lambourne (1990) general opportunities for learning, the educational atmosphere of the home, and parental expectations for the child were significantly associated with cognitive development and academic achievement. Similarly, the socioeconomic status and "home process" measures were significantly related to reading performance in children. These effects of family environment on school achievement are thought to occur through self-concept (Song & Hattie, 1984). Thus, families which value and foster an interest in academic activities probably value and expect competence in school. Such values and expectations may be associated with the development of positive school related self-perceptions, which in turn influence achievement outcomes and in turn, vocational aspirations.

Vocational Aspirations and Achievement Motivation

Achievement relates to accomplishments, mastering, manipulating and organizing the physical and social environment; overcoming obstacles and maintaining high standards of work, competing through striving to excel one's previous performance, as well as rivaling and surpassing others (Lindgren, 1979). Heckhausen, (1967) defines achievement motivation as the striving to increase or to keep as high as possible one's own capability in all the activities in which a standard of excellence is thought to apply and where the execution of such activities can either succeed or fail. McClelland (1953) defines achievement as a concern for excellence in performance as reflected in competition with the standards set by others or over unique accomplishment or long term involvement. It is an important determination of aspiration, effort and persistence when an individual expects that his performance will be evaluated in relation to some standards of excellence.

Therefore, achievement motivation can be defined as how well a pupil does in comparison with a given baseline .

Specifically, achievement motivation is a drive whereby behavior should involve competition, with a standard of excellence. If one is successful, it should produce a positive effect and, if one is unsuccessful, a negative effect will ensue. It has been argued that achievement motivation has been formed in early childhood experiences, and that parents who teach independent mastery, a sense of competition, and reward such behavior are giving their children "achievement training" (Castenell, 1983).

The need for achievement is characterized by a desire to attain a high standard of excellence and objective accomplishment, to increase self-regard by successful exercise of talent and to select tasks which are difficult and complicated (Natesan & Geetha, 1986). Many researches have revealed that the academic performance of students depend upon achievement motivation in addition to intelligence (Grewal & Singh, 1987). That is, those who have higher achievement motivation, performs better academically, which in turn makes them aspire for higher vocations. McClelland (1961), found a high correlation's between academic achievement and need for achievement as measured by Thematic Apperception Test. Bhatia (1977), Desai (1971), Reddy and Basavanna (1978) and others, using different measures of achievement motivation, have found it to be positively associated with academic achievement.

Studies have indicated that subjects who were higher in achievement need set harder goals, and performed better than did subjects who were lower in achievement need (Matsui, Okade, & Kakuyama, 1982). Ahluwalia and Kalia's (1987) study on adjustment differences among high and low achieving adolescents revealed that, high achievers have less adjustment problems on health, emotional and school adjustment in

comparison to low achievers. Interestingly, female high achievers were found better adjusted on social, health, emotional, school and home dimensions in comparison to male high achievers.

Gender differences in achievement achievement show that internal factors inhibit women's expression of the kinds of achievement directed behavior necessary to ensure promotions into managerial positions, nontraditional occupations, and other positions attributes and qualities presently defined by society as "male". Some of these internal psychological factors are fear of failure, low self-esteem, role conflict and the perceived consequences and incentives for engaging in achievement related behaviors (DiSabatino, 1976).

Family factors like social class, parents' education and occupation play an important role in developing achievement motivation. Singh and Basu's (1981) study found poor educational background, unfavorable economic conditions, and other facilities among parents of low social group to result in lack of encouragement and early independent training for achievement motivation. This eventually leads to less interest in academics and lower vocational aspirations.

Based on the above review of literature, it can be concluded that it is during the adolescent period that the major vocations are perceived, aspired for, and chosen. Therefore, important vocational decisions occur during this period. Vocational decisions are based on many factors and changes across history - sociocultural changes and economic recession, besides factors like the individual's personality, the social status of the family, the educational and vocational background of the parents, and the like.

The major trends indicated in the chapter are reiterated below :

Vocational education is assigned different values for boys and girls in our society from a very young age. Studies have shown that girls are less likely than boys to desire or plan on obtaining college degrees and higher levels of education. Hence, boys seem to aspire for a broader range of career options than girls.

The level of aspiration is generally influenced by the educational and vocational values prevalent in the status milieu in which one is reared. Studies have shown a positive relationship between the adolescent's level of vocational aspirations and various measures of social status of his family.

Sex roles are pervasive across various domains of an individual's life, including the vocational world. Sex stereotyping of vocations starts at an early age and influences vocational aspirations and choices.

Various studies have identified a positive relationship between self-concept and an individual's educational and vocational potential. A link has also been established between high self-concept and ambitious vocational aspirations.

Subjects who are higher in achievement need tend to set higher goals, performed better, and had higher vocational aspirations compared to subjects who are lower in achievement need.

Besides the above specific factors, the home environment plays a major role in the vocational aspirations of an individual, parents being the major influence. Studies have revealed that parents have been indicated as most responsible for adolescents' vocational aspirations and choices. Parents' educational and occupational status as well as their child rearing

practices can make a more congenial home environment which influences the children's vocational aspirations.

Thus, gender, social class, sex roles, self-concept as well as achievement motivation contribute to adolescents' vocational aspirations, interests and choices. The present study, thus, aimed at identifying how each of these variables is related to vocational aspirations.