A Probe into the Achievement Motivation of the School-Going Adolescents of South 24 Parganas

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Abstract: *Achievement motivation plays an important role in the life of adolescents.Achievement motivationis a disposition to strive for success in competition with others with some standard of excellence, set by the individual. To ascertain the descriptive status of achievement motivation of School-going adolescents, the present study was carried out through the descriptive survey method by administering Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale (n-Ach) (Deo & Mohan, 1985)on a random sample of 577 School-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas. In the test, there are 50 items and with each item, a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4 is attached; higher scores reflect higher achievement motivation. It was observed that the mean and standard deviation of the scores were 134.16 and 26.983 respectively. The mean reflects that School-going adolescents felt above-average achievement motivation. A high level of achievement motivation promotes the success of School-going adolescents in their learning process. It acts as a driving force in their academic achievement. Most of the School-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas had neglected to study habits during the COVID-19 lockdown, hence their need for achievement (n-Ach) was average.*
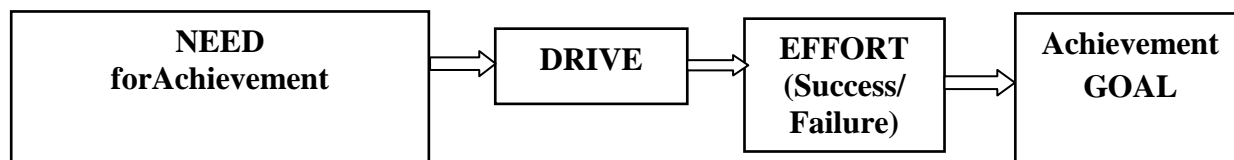***Key Word****: Achievement Motivation, Need Achievement(n-Ach), School-going Adolescent.*

I. Introduction

Achievement motivation (Need-achievement) is considered a prerequisite for success in academics as well as in other fields (**Gesinde, 2000; Wani & Masih, 2015**)[13,30]. Achievement motivation refers to the motive or desire of individuals to achieve a unique goal and standard of excellence in different fields of endeavour like education, culture, money, etc (**McClelland, 1985**)[20]. There is achievement motive, need, and desire for achievement which produces drive in school-going adolescents. That drive motivates them to act for reducing the drive-through achievement. Hence the behaviour of adolescents becomes goal-directed when they reach the desired goal, they get immediate encouragement.

Achievementmotivation is not innate but learned by the process of socialization through family, school and society i.e., socio-culture environment (**McClelland, 1985**)[19]. A person's desire for achievement is acquired through experience from his or her childhood. Higher achievement motivation can be seen in those adolescents whose families encourage to them compete with a particular standard of excellence and in their initial failures, parents and other members of the household do not get upset but advise them to continue their maximum efforts with patience. As it is a learned motive, the role of school also becomes imperative for its development. So psycho-social environment provided at home and school must channel and foster a desire for achievement in school-going adolescents.

Henry Murray (1938)[20]used the term 'Need for Achievement' (n-Ach) at first. Murraydefined the need for achievement as a desire or tendency "to overcome obstacles, to exercise power, to strive to do something difficult as well and as quickly as possible." Achievement motivationis a disposition to strive for success in competition with others with some standard of excellence, set by the individual (**McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell 1953**)[22].It refers to the motive or desire of individuals to accomplish a unique goal and to attain a high standard of excellence (**McClelland, 1985**)[20]and it directly influences the academic field

(**McClelland, 1961**)[17]. McClelland calls achievement need (n-Ach) "the urge to improve" or "a kind of spontaneously recurring concern to do things better." (**McClelland, 1969**)[21].

McClelland focused his attention on three human needs i.e., need for Achievement, need for Affiliation, and need for Power in the book named *TheAchieving Society* (**McClelland, 1961**)[17]although he identified four human motives related to the achievement motive, the affiliation motive, the sexual motive, and the power motive in Atkinson's book, *Motives in Fantasy, Action, and Society*. (**McClelland, 1958**)[16]. McClelland's Human Motivation Theory is also known as "Three Needs Theory", "The Three Social Motives", "Acquired Needs Theory", "Motivational Needs Theory", and "Learned Needs Theory" because those motivators are learned or acquired through our culture and life experiences during an individual's lifetime.
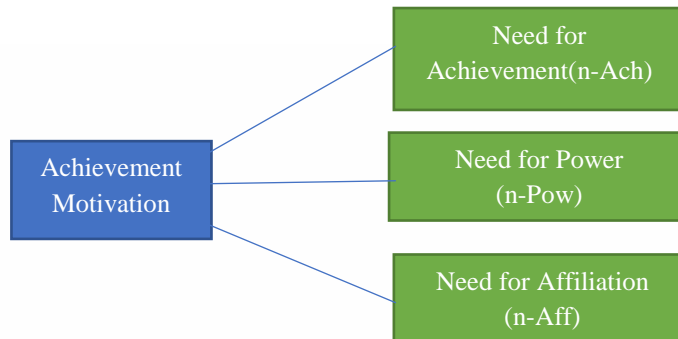

Fig. 1. Types of Needs by McClelland's theory of Motivation

The three social motives are described as:

i) Need for Achievement (n-Ach): It is defined as the human desire to accomplish something difficult, attain a high standard of success, master complex tasks, obtain satisfaction by achieving challenging goals, and surpass others (**Draft, 2008**)[6]. However, the individual may fail to achieve this goal, but the concern over the competition with a standard of excellence still enables one to identify the goal sought as an achievement goal (**McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1958**)[24]. ii) Need for Power (n-Pow): Need for Power is known as the unconscious desire to influence or control others, be responsible for others, and seek positions of authority over others (**McClelland, 1961; Draft, 2008**)[17,6]. iii) Need for Affiliation (n-Aff): It is defined as the personal desire to establish and maintain close affective relationships with another person, avoid conflict, and establish warm friendships (**McClelland, 1961; Draft, 2008**)[17,6]. McClelland's theory hypothesizes that individuals are motivated to varying degrees by their need for achievement, need for power, and need for affiliation, and that these needs are acquired or learned during a person's lifetime (**Daft, 2008**)[6].

A person's desire for achievement is acquired through experience from his or her childhood. **Atkinson (1957,1964)**[2,3] formulated a dominant theory of achievement motivation which Atkinson viewed as a conflict between approach and avoidance tendencies. According to him, people tend to seek situations that they expect will bring them pride or success, and avoid situations that they expect will bring them shame or failure. So, need achievement (n-Ach) is developed by a desire for success or hindered by a desire for avoiding failure. The success and failure of one is largely depending upon one's perception. **Atkinson and Feather (1966)**[4]defined "achievement motivation as the striving to increase one's capacity or activities in which a stand of excellence is to apply and where the execution of such activities can either succeed or fail".The desire to achieve success varies from person to person. The more desire for achievement grows, the more likely he or she becomes to succeed. For example, a student aspires to be among the top three in an exam.Some students want an average result in that exam and some just want to pass the exam.So this desire to achieve success is purely personal (**Atkinson, 1974**)[1]. The essence of this theory is that those at the highest levels of achievement motivation choose tasks that are neither too difficult nor too easy, i.e. they engage in moderately difficult tasks setting a realistic goal in mind.Conversely, those low in achievement motivation fear failure.They will engage in low-quality work so that failure is almost impossible or so difficult that no one will condemn them if they fail.

Connecting with achievement motivation, there are distinctive achievement goals based on one's perceived ability or competence framework.**Dweck (1986)**[10] identified two goal orientations: i) Mastery/Learning goals-Individuals who seek to increase their competence, to understand or master something new. ii) Performance goals- Individuals who seek to gain favourable judgments of their competence or avoid negative judgments of their competence.**Nicholls (1984, 1989)**[26,27]developed a two-factor goal orientation model: i) *Taskgoal*-Individuals who seek to develop their competence relative to their abilities (a self-referent standard). ii) *Ego goal*- Individuals who seek to validate their competence relative to the abilities of others (an other-referent standard). **Elliot and Church (1997)**[12]used a three-factor achievement goal model: i) mastery-approach achievement goal, ii) performance-approach achievement goal, and iii) performance-avoidance achievement

goal.There are three dimensions of achievement motivation according to goal theory: i) Task orientation (desire for understanding) is the goal of improving one's skill or gaining insight or knowledge and the beliefs that, to be successful, work hard, attempts to understand schoolwork and collaborate with their peers (**Duda & Nicholls, 1992**)[9]. ii) The second dimension, ego orientation (desire for superiority) is defined as the goal of establishing one's superiority over others and believes that success in school requires attempts to beat others and superior ability (**Duda & Nicholls, 1992**)[9]. iii)The third dimension, Work avoidance, entails the goal of not working hard (**Duda & Nicholls, 1992**)[9].

Achievement Motivation was measured in this study by the Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale. **Deo and Mohan (1985)**[8]made an achievement motivation scale that is actually in the statement form covering the areas of academic motivation, need for achievement, academic challenge, achievement anxiety, importance of grades, meaningfulness of task, the relevance of School to future goals, attitude towards education, work methods, attitude towards teachers, interpersonal relations, individual concern, general interest, dramatics, and sports. This scale covers 3 areas (Task Choice/ Perceived Choice of individual /Autonomy) such as *academic factors*, factors of the *general field of interest* and *social interest*, and competition in *co-curricular activities* (*Dramatics, Sports* etc.).

1.1 Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to explore the descriptive status of achievement motivation of School-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas district.

II. Methodology

The present study was carried out through a descriptive survey method.

Participants:

The study was done with subjects drawn through a multiphasic stratified random sampling technique. At first, the South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal was subdivided into 30 blocks. From all blocks, the selected blocks were Diamond Harbour, Joynagar, Magrahat-I, Magrahat-II, Patharpratima and Baruipur. From the list of all Government-sponsored Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools in those 6 blocks, a total of 6 schools (Durgapur K.C. High School, Patharpratima Anandalal Adarsha Vidyalaya, Benipur High School, Maiterhat High school, Gardewani High School, Diamond Harbour High School) were selected randomly from each block. Finally, five hundred seventy-seven only Bengali-speaking adolescents aged 14–16 yrs. studying in Class IX & X from those six schools were taken through simple random sampling method as participants.

Tool used:

Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-Ach) Scale (DMAMS) (Deo & Mohan, 1985):

Deo-Mohan achievement motivation scale was developed by Dr. Pratibha Deo (Pune) and Asha Mohan (Chandigarh) in 1985 and it contains 50 items, out of which 37 were positive & 13 were negative, and 15 subscales. It is a self-rating 5-point Likert scale and was administered to 577 no of school-going adolescents. A positive item carries the weights of 4,3,2,1 & 0 respectively for the categories of always, frequently, sometimes, rarely, and never. The negative items were scored reversely i.e., 0,1,2,3 & 4 for the same categories. The test-retest reliability coefficient of this test for boys is 0.67, for girls is 0.78 and for both is 0.69. The coefficient of correlation between the scale and the projective test is 0.54. The coefficient of correlation between the scale and the Aberdeen Academic Motivation Inventory is 0.75.

III. Result

Descriptive statistics of the "Achievement Motivation Scale"score of School-going adolescents are presented herewith.

Table no 1: Descriptive Statistics of Achievement Motivation Scale Score of School-Going Adolescents

Achievement Motivation	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
n-Ach	577	174	22	196	134.16	26.983	

Tables 1 & 2 present the descriptive statistics of "Achievement Motivation Scale"score obtained by the school-going adolescents in the present study. In case of total achievement motivation, the "minimum" of the scores was 22 and the "maximum" of those was 196 and the range was 174; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 134.16 and 26.983 respectively.

Table no 2: Descriptive Statistics of Achievement Motivation 15 Subscale Score of School-Going Adolescents

	Mean	Total Score
Academic Motivation	11.88	16
Need for Achievement	10.27	16

Academic Challenge	10.37	16
Achievement Anxiety	1.69	4
Importance Grade	6.17	8
Meaningfulness of task	11.18	16
Relevance of School to Goal	6.29	8
Attitude towards Education	11.42	16
Work Methods	13.25	20
Attitude towards Teacher	9.69	12
Interpersonal Relation	11.64	16
Individual Concern	5.88	8
General Interest	10.78	16
Dramatics	3.83	8
Sports	9.83	20
AM	134.17	200

In table 3, the mean percentile score of all the school-going adolescents was analysed using percentages to classify them according to the interpretation table provided in the test manual. Figure 2 depicts the frequency with NPC of the Achievement Motivation scale score of 577 no. of school-going adolescents.

Table no 3: Percentage of School-Going Adolescents falling under different levels of Achievement Motivation

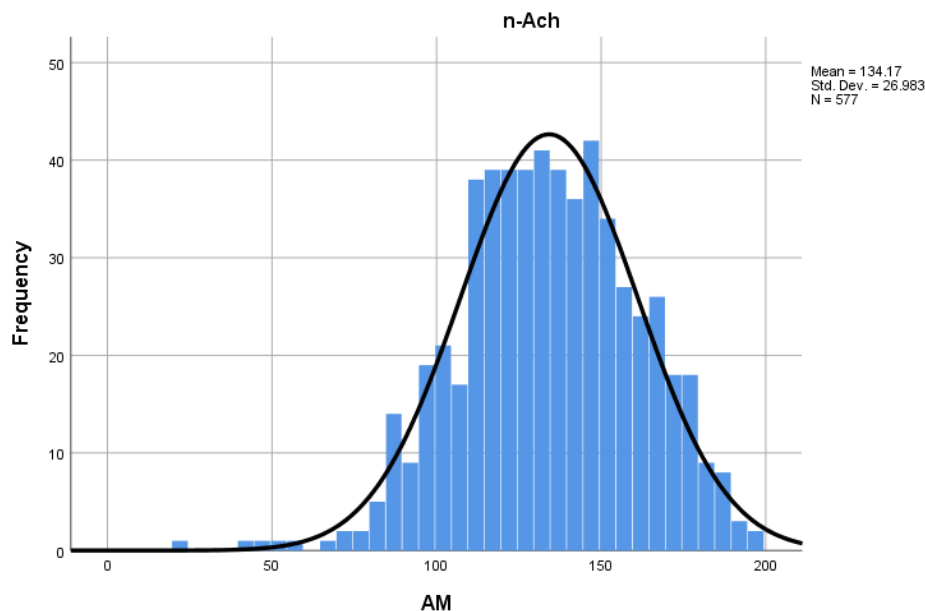| Percentile score	*f*	Interpretation	Percentage
80-100	107	Very High	19%
60-79	288	Above Average	50%
40-59	172	Average	30%
20-39	8	Below Average	1%
0-19	2	Low	0%

Figure-2: Histogram with the normal curve of Achievement Motivation Scale Scores of School-Going Adolescents

IV. Discussion

The mean (134.17) reflects that School-going adolescents felt above-average achievement motivation. Most of the School-going adolescents of South 24 Parganas had neglected their study habits during the COVID-19 lockdown, hence their need for achievement (n-Ach) was average. A high level of achievement motivation promotes the success of School-going adolescents in their learning process as well as acts as a driving force in their academic achievement.

The mean score of *academic motivation* is 11.88 out of a total score of 16. Intrinsic-motivated adolescents paid full attention to the work in class. They enjoyed reading more and more to find unknown regions of knowledge. This finding is supported by the study conducted by**Deci & Ryan (1985)**[7]**,** who found that intrinsic motivation, reflecting enjoyment, interest and inherent satisfaction, is the clearest form of autonomy and it reflects true self-determination. On the opposite side, when the teacher was teaching in the class, avoidance-motivated students who liked to disturb peers or talked with them anddid other activities instead of being attentive. They reached late to School and they thought and felt that it was better to spend time outside the classroom instead of being in. Also, they were more pleased if they had to miss classes for some days like school closure in COVID-19 lockdown period. The mean score of *meaningfulness of task* is 11.18 out of a total score of 16. Intrinsic-motivated learners found their lessons meaningful and interesting. Adolescents with low academic motivation did not understand their lessons while studying due to insufficient ability so they didn't get interested, had no fun and felt boreness. They gradually developed learned helplessness (**Seligman, 1975**)[29].

The mean score of *need for achievement* is 10.27 out of a total score of 16. Those with a high need for achievement set high standards for themselves i.e., achievement goals and then strived to achieve those realistic goals. They aspired highly to get excellent results in all academic competitions like school examinations. They wished to specialize and to become the toper in their academic field. They liked to experiment and to create new things and loved to surprise people. This finding is supported by the study conducted by**McClelland (1985)**[19], who described the need for achievement (n-Ach) as the motive of individuals to accomplish a unique goal, attain a high standard of excellence,obtain satisfaction by achieving challenging goals and surpassing others. Inthe present study it can be also found that some adolescents had very high achievement goals but average achievement motivation without striving to achieve their unique goals. This phenomenon can be explained by the views of J.W. Atkinson and Karen Horney. Those who are low in achievement motivation engage in low-quality work so that failure is almost impossible or too difficult that no one condemns them if they fail (**Atkinson, 1974**)[1]. The neurotic person sets a non-realistic goal that is somehow indeed possible (**Horney,1937**)[14]**.**

The mean score of the *academic challenge* is 10.37 out of a total score of 16.High academic challengers worked hard for hours together to be successful in academic tasks like reading, writing and mathematical problem-solving without leaving half-done work. Besides, they were more determined to find solutions of various text or mathematical problems when peers failed at. It is supported by earlier findings: an individual who is higher in achievement motivation is more persistent i.e., involve for a long time to enjoy the academic challenges, put forth an effort to succeed in a difficult task, and respond positively to compete(**McClelland, 1961**)[17]**.** Inour study, it also found that some early adolescents had high levels of achievement goals but low involvement in academic tasks. This may be due to they had low perceived competency and low ability self-concept (**Nicholls,1984**)[26].The mean score of the *work methods* is 13.25 out of a total score of 20. Highly motivated School-going adolescents regularly took down notes in class, completed their assignments and did a lot of preparation at home for the next day's work in class. They were interested to become masters in complex tasks. They believed in studying first and playing later and planned to study carefully all time in the academic session round. They also planned to put an effort to get good marks in all the subjects in everytest. Those with average achievement motivation didn't involve in such activities, forgot to do their homework and always tried to avoid mastery learning. According to **Duda & Nicholls (1992)**[9], Work avoidance, entails the goal of not working hard.

The mean score of *important grades* is 6.17 out of a total score of 8. Those with low achievement motivation would prefer to go to a party rather than preparethemselves for an examination next week. Another side, those with high achievement motivation were disappointed by getting low marks and were determined to work harder to do better next time. So, individuals differed in their perceiving intrinsic value of a grade.*Task value* refers to the degree of personal interest in a given academic task and the extent to which one considers the task useful, relevant, or important (**Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990**)[28].

The mean score of *attitude towards education* is 11.42 out of a total score of 16. The mean score of *attitude towards teacher* is 9.69 out of a total score of 12. Attitude toward education is an individual's predisposition to think, feel, and act toward education. Studious as well as balanced students thought about studies, sports and other activities side by side, and they felt very much frustrated if they didn't get a chance to compete in the academic field. They thought teachers were competent in teaching and they tried to please their teachers through their work. Besides, impatient students liked to create nuisances in the class and annoyed teachers. This finding is supported by a previous study which stated that each highly motivated individual thinks about resources, who (i.e., teacher) or what (i.e., regular school attendance) can help them to achieve their goals (**Atkinson, 1957; Atkinson & Feather, 1966**)[2,4]. The mean score of *relevance of School to goal* is 6.29 out of a total score of 8. It irritated low-motivated students a lot if they had to stay late in school hence, they wanted to leave the school at tiffin time without permission from teachers. The school haunted them and they wanted to

leave school at the very first opportunity. For that reason, some dropout students who were absent from School for a long time, werenoticed in the selected Schools. A sampling error occurred due to the absence of very low-motivated students in the present study.**Dweck and Leggett (1988)**[11] found that the school environment leads to high valuation by students of those people who control important resources such as grades.

The mean score of *interpersonal relations* is 11.64 out of a total score of 16. The looking-glass self (**Cooley,1902**)[5] can affect achievement motivation in either a positive or negative way, depending upon a person's perception of how others (parents, teachers and friends) view them. An adolescent's achievement motivation may increase gradually if he continuously believes others perceive him in a positive manner i.e., his friends consider him intelligent and his teachers think of him as a sincere and hard-working student.A motivated adolescent feels hurt if others criticise himafter thathe tries to improve upon his weaknesses. However, an adolescent's achievement motivation may decrease if he believes that he is perceived negatively by others. His friends and teachers consider him dull and shirker. Children may have low motivation if their parents advise them to take life easy and never bother too much about studies or future life. This finding is supported by the earlier study in which **McClelland (1961)**[17] found that achievement-motivated people are more likely to be developed in families in which parents hold different expectationsfor their children than other parents.

V. Conclusion

School-going adolescents felt above-average achievement motivation in the South 24 Parganas district.

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