THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVMENT:

AN INTERSECTIONALITY APPROACH

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
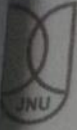*For the Award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSPHY

MONA YADAV

ZAKIR HUSAIN CENTER FOR EDUCATION STUDIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

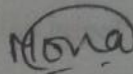**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY,**

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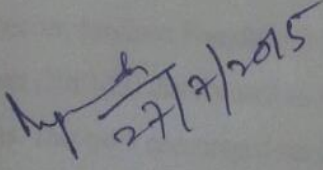SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Date. 27.7.15

DECLARATION

I, Mona Yadav, declare that the dissertation entitled "The Psychology of Academic Achievement: An Intersectionality Approach" is submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of the Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other university and is my original work.
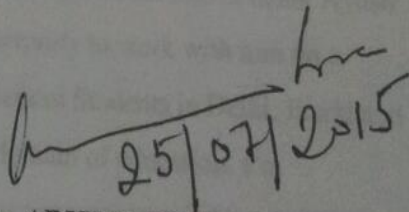
Mona Yadav

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for the award of degree of Masters of Philosophy in this University.

27/7/2015

PROF. MINATI PANDA

CHAIRPERSON

CHAIRPERSON
Zakir Husain Centre for
Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

25/07/2015

Dr. ARVIND KUMAR MISHRA

SUPERVISOR

Assistant Professor
Zakir Husain Centre for
Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawahar Lal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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Abstract:

Academic achievement has received attention of a large number of researchers in psychology. A plethora of empirical studies have analyzed the various factors which influence and are correlates of academic achievement. There have been empirical studies focusing on the role of individual factors such as, reasoning, executive functioning, intelligence, motivation, self-concept influencing academic achievement. There has also been an attempt made to understand the influence of contextual factors such as role of social class, gender, peers, and parents on the academic achievement on individuals.

Studying the role of contextual factors on the individuals indicates a limitation that social categories/identities based on social class, gender, race, ethnicity are seen as, demographic characteristics by psychologists rather than categories leading to experiences of discrimination and stereotype. In real life-settings, itøs the multiple social forces that shape individualøs experiences and behavioral outcomes. In most of the research studies on academic achievement, factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class are taken as demographic characteristics of individuals rather than social categories that influence the psychological processes related to academic achievement. In various studies, these social categories have been controlled while, analyzing any behavioral outcomes. In other studies, only the main effects of these social categories have been considered, no attempt has been made to analyze the higher order interactions. Evidences indicate that when the main effects are significant, the probability of higher order interactions to be significant decreases. Though, there is a need for intersectionality approach, methodological constraints are the main hurdles for the reluctance on the part of the psychologists to engage in the complexity of social reality due to limited methodological options.

 This dissertation aimed at deeply engaging with the wide research done in the domain of intersectionality approach. Further, the critical gap existing in this literature has been dealt by exhaustively reviewing the method section of various empirical studies done in the area of

academic achievement. The need to have an intersectionality approach has been reflected. Then, the use of intersectionality approach in various social science disciplines such as, feminist studies, sociology, political studies, economics and psychology has been deeply explored in terms of context, theoretical frameworks, methodological challenges and issues in various disciplines. This indicated the complexity with this approach. Lastly, the intersectionality approach was contextualized in the philosophy of method and it was realized that it was beyond the feminist paradigm and social constructionist paradigm. Then, the influence of this approach on various stages of research has been indicated through a table in the dissertation.

Key Words-

Intersectionality, Academic achievement, Social category.

Contents:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Thesis Overview

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation is focuses on exploring and critiquing the psychology of academic achievement. It proposes and aims to provide an alternative paradigm in terms of Intersectionality Approach to the domain of academic achievement.

Academic achievement has been a popular area of research in the discipline of psychology. A plethora of empirical studies have focused on analyzing the various factors that influence and correlate with academic achievement. The empirical work in the domain of academic achievement has been analyzed by focusing on two domains of psychology- first, psychology of the way things are and second, is the psychology of way learners make things (Winne & Nesbit, 2010, pg. 653).

The prevalent theoretical frameworks and empirical studies help us understand the influence of individual factors on academic achievement. Beginning with empirical studies done from the cognitive psychology paradigm in academic achievement; there have been studies reflecting the role of heuristics in learning, role of executive functioning in learning of mathematics (Bull, Espy, & Wieber, 2008; Bull & Scerif, 2001; Espy et.al; 2004; Geary, 1993), reading (Helland & Asbjornsen, 2000; Swanson, 1999), and reasoning (van ser Slus, de Jong, & van der Leij, 2007). Further, studies also, focused on the meta cognitive functioning of the individual and its role in academic achievement. It was believed that academic achievement can be explained by intelligence (e.g., Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2004).

But, it was soon realized that the differences in academic achievement of individuals cannot fully be explained by intelligence. This led to the shift of focus on motivation paradigm and its relevance in academic achievement. Dweck's work explained that it is the achievement goal construct which is the reason why children with equal ability display divergent responses to failure. This gave rise to the construction of achievement goals which are beliefs and feelings

about success, failure, feedback and standard of evaluation (Ames & Archer, 1987, 1988). Student's perceptions about their classrooms were understood in terms of mastery goals and performance goals. While mastery goals focused on attaining competence in the task and the performance goals focused on attaining normative competence.

The individual factors focused at looking at academic achievement from a cognitive, meta cognitive and motivation lens. There has been empirical studies focusing on how contextual factors such as social class, gender, parents, peers influence academic achievement of individuals. It has been realized that SES (socio-economic status) remains an important factor in influencing academic achievement but its influence gets mediated by factors such as parental aspirations for their children's education, parental transmission of oral vocabulary (Winne, Nesbit, 2010,pg. 666). Studies have shown how academically successful students are seen as popular by their peers (Walker & Nabuzoka, 2007, pg. 647). Studies have also shown parental influences on academic achievement in terms of maternal education(Kurstjens & Wolke, 2001; Okagaki,2001) and meta analytic study on parental involvement in academic achievement Wilder (2014).

Exploring the role of contextual factors on academic achievement further; there have been empirical studies focusing on the role of gender in the academic achievement of an individual. There have been studies concluding girls as low-achievers and subject to low achievement because of family background, sex-group schooling(Katapa and Swilla 1999;Lee and Lockheed 1990, Maqsud and Khalique, 1991; Robinson 1993), gender impacting teacher's expectations (Raag, et.al, 2011, pg.701-02).The role of social class affecting child's schooling experiences has been studied (Stephens, Markus & Philips, 2014, pg. 618- 21). It reflected that working class student's schooling experiences affirmed the cultural ideal of hard interdependence (awareness of social context, focus on strength and toughness, limited access to freedom etc.) and the middle class student's schooling experiences affirmed the cultural ideal of expressive independence(individual freedom, greater emphasis on creativity etc.)

The limitation of this approach of studying the influence of contextual factors on academic achievement is that factors such as social class, gender are considered as independent categories, demographic characteristics influencing academic achievement. Further, leading to an incomplete conceptualization of academic achievement of an individual. Social class, gender, race, ethnicity are social categories and identities of individuals which cannot exist in isolation and they function simultaneously.

This dissertation deeply explores and critiques this critical gap existing in the literature on academic achievement in psychology. The APA Task Force on SES (2007) clearly states the emergent need for intersectionality research. Instead of analyzing social factors (e.g., gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality) independently or additive phenomena, intersectional approaches consider these factors as multiple, interlocking dimensions of social relations. The scope of intersectionality in the domain of academic achievement has been detailed out by an exhaustive review of the method section of various empirical works done in the domain of academic achievement. After this exploration, it was understood that the social categories such as, social class, gender, race, ethnicity has been treated by psychologists as, mere demographic characteristics which are used for hypothesis testing. The social categories have not been loved at social categories that can lead to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stereotype.

To fill this critical gap in the literature of academic achievement; this dissertation attempts to provide an alternative paradigm of Intersectionality approach to be used in the domain of academic achievement. Intersectionality approachøs basic assumption is that individuals are interdependent, mutually constitutive and context bound. This assumption is in conflict with the basic assumption in psychology that conceptualizes individualøs as, independent, mutually exclusive and context free. This is the reason why intersectionality approach can help to provide a holistic understanding of an individual specific to the domain of academic achievement.

Intersectionality approach has been a popular approach used in the feminist studies and sociology for the race, gender and class analysis. This approach has been debated at the theoretical and methodological level of various social science disciplines. The discipline of

psychology has stated the need for intersectionality approach in the APA report on SES (2007) to understand the complexity of social identities and categories.

Since, intersectionality approach is relatively new to be adopted in the discipline of psychology; it became important to explore and review the understanding of this approach in various social science disciplines such as, feminist studies, sociology, political science, education and psychology.

The exploration and deeper understanding of this approach developed in various disciplines by engaging with the context, theoretical frameworks, methodological challenges and issues in various disciplines. This helped in understanding the complexity of intersectionality approach.

This reflected a need to contextualize intersectionality approach in the philosophy of method to apply it in psychology. This required to deeply critique the positivist psychology by bringing in the social constructionist paradigm. While, contextualizing the intersectionality paradigm in the philosophy of method; it was found that this paradigm goes beyond the feminist and social constructionist paradigm. Lastly, it has also been reflected how intersectionality approach affects each stage of research through a table.

1.2 Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of 4 chapters. The present chapter is already given. In the preceding sections, the problem has been stated in the context of existing research literature in the area of academic achievement. Then, an overview of this dissertation has also, been elaborated in this chapter.

The second chapter titled, õAcademic Achievementö focuses on the construct of academic achievement which was elaborated with greater emphasis on the theoretical frameworks and methodology used in various empirical studies. The exhaustive research in the domain of academic achievement has been understood in terms of individual factors such as cognitive, meta-cognitive, motivation, self- concept affecting the academic achievement. And, the

contextual factors such as social class, gender, race, ethnicity affecting the academic achievement of the individual. The limitation was identified as, how these social categories and identies are merely seen as, demographic characteristics. This shortcoming existing in the literature on academic achievement becomes clear by closer examination of literature on academic achievement indicated how the multiple social identities/categories have been treated merely as demographic characteristics and as independent variables. But, in reality it is the experience of belonging to these multiple social identities that leads to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stress. And, there has been just no attempt made by the psychologists to engage in the complexity of social reality. The most crucial reason for this reluctance on the part of psychologists have been the methodological challenges with intersectionality approach. And, this derives out from the old age tradition in mainstream psychology to engage in hypothesis testing and reaching the significant values. This hints at the complexity involved in this approach.

The third chapter, titled, õIntersectionality Approachö focuses on the construct of intersectionality approach used across social sciences disciplines such as feminist studies, sociology, political science, education and psychology. There was a detailed analysis of the context, theoretical frameworks, methodological challenges and issues of the discipline in using intersectionality approach were elaborated. This helped in understanding the complexity with this approach. The methodological challenge in using intersectionality in empirical studies have been highlighted in terms of asking intersectional questions and not additive questions, sampling dilemma such as which social categories to be included/excluded in the study using intersectionality approach. In the earlier chapter, it was argued that the discipline of psychology has till now, provided only intra personal explanation of the construct of academic achievement by too much emphasis on cognitive and meta- cognitive processes of an individual. The intersectionality approach provides explanation for behavioral phenomenon at the inter-group and societal level. But, to think of using intersectionality approach in the discipline of psychology it becomes essential to contextualize intersectionality in the philosophy of method.

The fourth and the last chapter õContextualizing Intersectionality in the Philosophy of Methodö focuses on exploring the use of intersectionality approach in psychological research. By

discussing a conceptual model, research design and methodology; understanding of this approach has been elaborated upon. In order to get further clarity discourse on intersectionality has been situated in the philosophical perspectives on method has been discussed in detail.

The social constructionist critique of positivist psychology has been detailed out in this chapter. It became important to contextualize intersectionality in the philosophy of method. Intersectionality approach indicates the limitation of feminist approach and social constructionist approach. That reflects the complexity of this approach at the philosophical, theoretical and methodological level.

Review of few selected studies in various social science disciplines was done with an aim to get clarity about the use of this approach as, a method in conducting empirical studies. It was found that the qualitative methods such as, in-depth interviewing, grounded theory and bio graphical approach has been used in various studies. The researchers Cuadraz and Uttal (1999) stated 3 major dilemmas with the race, gender and class analysis.

> One, what claims about race, class and gender can be made if the sample does not include comparative subsamples? Second, to what extend in the analysis can researchers overlay the social categories of race, gender and class onto the accounts articulated by interviewees? Third, how can one explore the intersections between structures and biography, while, giving relevance to the simultaneous intersectionality of multiple structures of race, class and gender? (p.162)

There have been studies using quantitative method but, there have been problems in asking intersectional questions and not additive questions. Further, there exists a greater methodological challenge that in an ANOVA, interactions are contingent on the size of main interactions. For example- when significant main effects exist, the probability of finding significant first order (two-way interaction) or higher order interactions decreases because the significant main effects account for bulk of the variance in the dependent variable. Lastly, the effect of intersectionality

approach in research and its effect on various stages of research has been elaborated using a table in the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2: Academic Achievement

2.1 Introduction

Academic achievement has received attention of a large number of researchers in psychology. A wide range of research findings have analyzed the factors that influence and correlate with academic achievement. A review article, *"The Psychology of Academic Achievement"* (2010) analyzes and contextualizes the empirical work in various strands of research in the area of academic achievement. Winne and Nesbit (2010) have analyzed the literature on academic achievement by looking at two domains of psychology-

> one; heuristics that focus on mechanisms between instructional designs and learning which is the psychology of the way things are, and mechanisms focused on metacognition and self-regulated learning which reflects the learnerøs application and use of heuristics which is called as, the psychology of the way learnerøs make things. (p.353)

Before dwelling into these 2 domains of psychology; it becomes essential to explore the question, ̵Who is the learner?ø A learner is understood as a physical and a socio-cultural being. Psychologists tend to ignore the physiological aspects of a learner while, there is a relationship between physiological and psychological aspects of an individual. Psychologists focus on the mental life of an individual which is composed of the cognitive, affective and motivational aspects. While learning is the outcome of all the three components most of the learning frameworks in psychology are understood based on the cognitive theories.

Considering this, further research indicated that cognitive and affective components are related. Western psychologists focused too much on cognition. There was an understanding that emotions weaken cognition. There was no emphasis on the emotional life of a learner. Research evidence also indicated a close relationship between motivation and learning. For instance -low academic achievement of a learner can be explained by the motivational aspect of an individual. So, this reflects that there are various aspects and levels of explanations to understand any psychological phenomenon for instance; learning etc.

This requires us to understand how an individual and a learner can be analyzed from various levels of explanations. The first level is *intra individual explanation*, which is focused on understanding the individualøs mind by analyzing the cognitive and meta cognitive processes. The second level of explanation is *interpersonal explanation,* where the individual is understood in the context of other individuals; giving an impression that although, the person changes but, the processes around the individual remains the same. The third level of explanation is the *inter group level analysis,* where the group is understood as, an objective reality though, psychologist view group as, a subjective reality. Group becomes part of self concept. This is the inter group level. Thereøs a symbotic relationship between self and others. Social group becomes a part of the self concept and it develops by interaction with others. The last level of explanation is *interactions at societal level*. Any understanding that is shared at the societal level forms the individualøs subjectivity. Thereøs a need to have shared understanding collective living.

For example- the issue of low academic achievement can be used as, an example to understand various levels of explanations. At the intra personal level, the low academic achievement of a student will be attributed to his/her poor learning outcomes. At the intra personal level, the low academic achievement of a student will be attributed to his/her poor family background, lack of resources at home etc. At the inter group level, the low academic achievement of a student will be attributed to the student belonging to a marginalized community in terms of caste, race, gender, class and ethnicity. At the level of interactions at societal level, poor academic achievement can be understood as, intersections between various social categories to which an individual belongs to. So, academic failure can be attributed to a girl who belongs to a subordinated gender, low socio economic background and a dalit caste. It becomes important for

us to understand the theoretical frameworks on academic achievement to further, understand the gaps and the relevance of intersectionality approach in the domain of academic achievement.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks in Academic Achievement:

2.2.1. Individual factors that influence Academic Achievement:

The theoretical frameworks in the domain of psychology can help us specifically understand the individual factors that influence academic achievement. The first strand of research in the domain of academic achievement comes from cognitive psychology**.** Studies indicated that heuristics can promote learning such as, contiguity effects, spacing effect, cognitive flexibility and coherence effects etc. Neuropsychological studies indicated a relationship between executive functioning and academic achievement. Executive functioning has been shown to relate to mathematics *(*Bull, Espy, & Wieber, 2008; Bull & Scerif, 2001; Espy et.al; 2004; Geary, 1993), reading (Helland & Asbjornsen, 2000; Swanson, 1999), and reasoning (van ser Slus, de Jong, & van der Leij, 2007) performa*nce"* (Latzman et.al, 2009, pg.456). Research evidence indicates that cognitive strategies are designed to get the individual to some cognitive goal or subgoal and meta cognitive strategies are used to monitor cognitive strategies; these facilitate a learnerøs academic achievement.

The second strand of research on academic achievement comes from Meta Cognitive paradigm. Winne and Nesbit (2010) elaborated the relevance of meta cognitive paradigm in academic achievement:

> Meta cognitive achievements are identified as, alertness to occasions to monitor, having and choosing useful standards of monitoring, accuracy in interpreting the profile generated by monitoring and having and choosing useful tactics or strategies, feeling motivated to act and modifying the environment that affords the chosen action. (p. 657)

The cognitive and meta cognitive paradigm reflect the traditional perspective of psychology that academic achievement of an individual can be understood only by analyzing the cognitive processes of the learner thereby; providing the intra personal explanation for the construct of academic achievement.

Academic achievement is largely understood as, school achievement which is highly related to general intelligence (e.g., Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2004). It has been believed that the variance in the academic performance cannot be explained only by intelligence. This led to the need to look at the constructs of motivation that can support the school achievement.

The three most prominent approaches of motivation are need for achievement, expectancy-value theory and goal theories. According to Murray (1938), the need for achievement is one of the basic human needs. McClelland and colleagues advocated that the need for achievement results from the conflict of needs to approach success and avoid failure. The third strand of research on academic achievement comes from the motivational paradigm. The vast span of theories and empirical work in this area has been surveyed by Covington (2000) and Meece et.al. (2006).

Dweck's work advocated that achievement goal construct is the reason why children of equal ability display divergent responses to failure. Achievement goals were seen as, õnetworks or patterns of beliefs and feelings about success, effort, ability, errors, feedback and standard of evaluation" (Ames & Archer, 1987, 1988). They assessed student's perceptions of their classrooms in terms of an emphasis on mastery goals and performance goals. Mastery goals (also, called as, task involvement goals) focus on the development of competence or the attainment of task mastery. Performance goals (also, called as, ego involvement) focus on attainment of normative competence. Nicholl's work propagated that õhigh ability is equated with learning and improvement through effort and the purpose of achievement is to develop high ability õ(1976, 1978, and 1980). There are two goals; task involvement (seeking to develop skills by learning) and ego involvement (focus on outperforming others). Winne and Nesbit (2010) argued that this theoretical framework faces the following challenges:

Learners are not unidimensional in their goal orientations (Pintrich, 2000), self-reports have been the only basics for researchers to identify goal orientations (Zhou 2008) but, goals may be unstable and the self reports are also contextually sensitive (Hadwin et al. 2001)ö. These challenges reflected the need for performance based measures which can raise achievement.*" (p.659)

Studentøs self-perceptions of competence are closely related to academic achievement and their self-concept. Giota(2006) advocated that õacademic self concept is divided into self-concepts in particular subject areas, such as, mathematics and English, and non-academic self-concept is divided into social, emotional and physical self-conceptsö.(p.442) According to Assor and Connell (1992) having inaccurate self-perceptions of competence maybe of advantage if they are higher than should be expected, given actual achievement. It was reported that inflated self-reports were related to positive achievement while, deflated self-assessments lead to negative achievements.

Further, research indicates that test anxiety was related to academic achievement. Hembree(1988) concluded that test anxiety leads to poor achievement thereby causing defensiveness and fear of negative evaluations. Research also shows that both mastery and performance goals leads to positive self-perceptions. Giota (2006) found that õthere is a positive relationship between mastery goals and adaptive outcomes while, there a negative relationship between performance goals and academic achievement.ö (p.442). The findings of this study indicated that a differentiated approach is needed to assess studentøs self-perceptions of competence.

There have been studies that look at the relationship between constructs of self, motivation and academic achievement. According to Markus(1977) õself-schemas are cognitive frameworks about the self, derived from past experiences and influence that information related to oneself contained in the social experiencesö. (p.64). Academic self-schemas are defined as, studentøs cognitive frameworks derived from their earlier experiences and that influences studentøs

cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects in learning. Ng, C.C (2014) argued regarding the academic self- concepts:

> Evidence indicates that it is possible for students to develop an academic self-schema involving desire or fear in relation to different school subjects. Positive academic self-schemas are valued self-perceptions associated with successful learning experiences that lead to positive self-worth. Negative self-schemas are feared self-perceptions associated with worries; apprehension and repeated failure experience (pg. 731).

These challenges with the goal orientations led to advanced research in the area of **interest.** Interest refers to the choices that learners make to engage, to attend and to concentrate on a particular activity. The research in the area of interest and learning (Renninger et. al. 1992) comprised of two kinds of interest- individual interest (quality of interest) and situational interest (interaction between person and environment). The major challenge with the research on interest has been that interest as a construct dynamically interacts with other variable that mediates the effect of interest itself. The research in the area of academic achievement progressed with analyzing the contextual factors and their influence on the academic achievement.

2.2.2 Contextual factors that influence Academic Achievement:

The individual factors that influence the academic achievement of the learner have been looked at from the cognitive, meta-cognitive, motivational perspectives. These provide only the intra individual explanation of the construct of academic achievement. This reflects the limitation of the assumption in the discipline of psychology that perceives individuals as, uni-dimensional, mutually exclusive and independent. But, in the real life settings various contextual factors such as, parents, peers, gender, social class influences the academic performance of an individual.

Under the construct of **contextual factors influencing academic achievement**, there have been research focusing on peer supported learning, influence of classroom and class size on learning

and the focus on home work. **Socio economic Status** (SES) has emerged as an important factor that influences academic achievement. Winne & Nesbit(2010) argued about the effect of SES:

Systematic analysis of the issues in operationalzing SES indicated that õthe effects of SES are likely to be mediated by factors such as, educational resources available in the home, parental aspirations for their childrenøs education, home literacy activities, and parental transmission of oral vocabulary. (p. 666).

Evidence indicates that in England, as, in China and North America, **academic achievement is related to social functioning.** Children who received higher exam scores were more popular, received greater number of nominations for the prosocial behaviors as, that of others who received fewer nominations for help-seeking behavior and they showed anti-social behaviors. Walker & Nabuzoka (2007) brought out the following evidence about the relationship between academic achievement and social functioning:

These findings indicate that during childhood academic performance and social functioning are linked; children who achieve higher scores are seen by their peers as more popular and as displaying more prosocial behaviors. Studies also reflected that that there was a predominance of bullying and fighting behaviors among boys than girls and these behaviors are associated with the academic achievement of boys. (p.647)

Studies indicate that **parental influence on child's academic achievement** is important õMaternal characteristics, including parenting style and maternal personal adjustment, have been shown to have a clear impact on childrenøs developmentö. (Kurstjens & Wolke, 2001; Okagaki, 2001). Similarly, low levels of SES and limited education were related to lower achievement and increased classroom behavior problemsö (Shumow et.al., 1998) (Noria et.al, 2009, pg. 723).

There is abundant literature on the important influence parental involvement has on the academic achievement. Wilder (2014) did a meta-synthesis of the studies done on the relationship between academic achievement and parental involvement. The results indicated that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was positive. Further, it was found that the relationship was strongest when parental involvement was understood as, parental expectations in terms of academic achievement of their child.

 The result of the meta- analysis by Fan and Chenøs indicated that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement should not be generalized across different areas of academic achievement. The findings indicated that parental aspiration and expectation for educational achievement had a significant relationship with academic achievement than parentøs supervision of children at home.

The results of the meta analysis by Jeynes (2005) indicated a strong relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among urban students regardless of their gender or ethnicity. Patall, Cooper and Robinsonøs (2008) meta analysis indicated that overall effects of parental involvement in homework on academic achievement were not significant. Hill & Tyson (2009) found that there is a positive relation between parental involvement and academic achievement in middle school.

While research in the area of academic achievement continued over several decades, the focus came down to **gender** as a social factor affecting the academic achievement. Raag et.al(2011) in their work on SES and gender found the following evidence:

> Research in various parts of Africa showed underachievement of girls and various explanations were offered to account for girlsø low achievement, including sex-grouped schooling, family background teachersø gender and gendered school experiences. (p.4)

Kamwendo (2010) studied the Malawi culture in Central Africa where 51% of the population are women living with dominant gender stereotypes such as, heavy domestic workload, lack of

decision making power and having careers meant only for girls. Some of the thematic findings from her study are:

> the self-image of girls as, low achievers, girls saw sexual relationships as a way of gaining financial support, girls pointed out that they had to do chores before going to school which made it difficult to concentrate in class, as they were tired and girls resist the position of underachievers(p.436).

Another study (Raag et.al, 2011) focused on analyzing the SES and gender divide in literacy achievement. Hinnat et.al (2009) found that **child's gender** is a significant predictor of teacher expectations. Teachers consistently overestimated the reading abilities of their female students. Specifically, the important building blocks of reading readiness are accessible during parent-child interactions and are fully within the control of families regardless of SES.

Kamp et.al (2012) focused on the relationship between the contributions students make to the problem based tutorial group process as observed by their peers, self-study time and achievement.õResults suggest that there are indeed causal relations between a studentøs contributions to the process of tutorial group and achievement*"* (pg.385).

Stephens, Markus and Philips (2014) analyzed the role of *social class* in the context of schooling. The authors advocated the influence of social class on the school:

> Though, school is considered the center of knowledge and excellence but, the middle class schools cannot be considered neutral spaces as the ideology, curriculum, practices and school culture focuses on maintaining the middle class American cultural ideal of expressive independence. (p. 618- 21)

While the schools in working class, low-income communities often reflect and promote the norms of hard interdependence which focuses not only an awareness of the influence of social contexts (Kraus et.al. 2009, 2012; Stephens et al. 2007, 2011) but also focus on strength and

toughness (Chen & Miller 2012 , Kusserow 2004, Stephens et.al. 2009). The classroom experience in the working class schools is focused on cultivating the skills and values needed in working class occupation such as limited individual freedom, restricted access to class materials and supplies, more routine and structured activities throughout the day and stricter rules. While, the classroom experience in the middle class schools is focused on cultivating the skills and values needed for professional or managerial occupations such as ample individual freedom, open access to class materials, complex and varied tasks, freedom of movement and activities, there is encouragement on asking questions and greater emphasis on creativity and challenging assumptions.

But, the disjuncture arises when a working class student attempts to study in a middle class school. Though, middle class school provides access to higher education for the working class students they become bicultural and get an opportunity to develop the expressive independence norms. This is a disadvantage as expressive independence is the only right way to be a student. The school culture prevents the working class students from realizing their full potential. For many working class students guided by the norms of hard interdependence, expressive independence is often disconnected from their previous experiences at home and less likely to feel comfortable in the school setting. They experience difficulty in choosing a major or planning out their schedules to manage multiple tasks as they are more accustomed to working class schools with highly structured curricula and clear rules. These difficulties result in putting the working class at more disadvantage than do their middle class peers.

The contextual factors such as gender, social class, parental influences, peer influences focused on how these factors affect the learner's academic achievement. The limitation of this approach is that these factors are again analyzed independently confirming the essential assumption of the discipline of psychology about the individual. In real life- settings, it is the simultaneous intersection of social identities such as gender, race, social class, ethnicity that can influence and provide a holistic explanation of academic achievement of an individual. This understanding get reflected by the **APA Task Force on SES (2007)** as it clearly states the emergent need for *intersectionality* research as theories of intersectionality are influencing how social inequality is conceptualized and understood. Instead of analyzing social constructs (e.g., gender, class, race,

ethnicity, sexuality) independently or as additive phenomena, intersectional approaches consider these constructs as multiple, interlocking dimensions of social relations.

Stewart & McDermott(2004) advocated intersectionality is based on three central tenets:

> No social group is homogenous, people must be located in terms of social structures that capture the power relations implied by those structures and there are unique, non-additive effects of identifying with more than one social group. (p. 531-532)

Cole (2009, pg 170) proposed that õlegal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw (1989/1993) is credited with originating the term intersectionality. In a ground-breaking work, Crenshaw critiqued the mainstream feminist theory which homogenizes the category of women thereby marginalizes the women of color.

Bowleg (2008) clearly commented on the invisibility of intersectionality approach in psychology:

> The discipline of psychology has not at all promoted the understanding of intersectionality. Despite an abundance of theories on social identity within psychology, the prevailing view of social identities is one of uni-dimensionality and independence, rather than intersection. (p. 313)

Very few studies have examined the *intersection of race and gender* within the **context of stereotype threat**. For example, Asian American women are stereotyped to be skilled at math because they are Asian, and unskilled at math because they are female. Shih, Pittinsky and Ambady (1999) found that the aspect of identity that was activated (Asian or Female) predicted whether Asian American women evidenced performance decrements or enhancements under

stereotype threat conditions. When their ethnic identity was primed, they evidenced performance enhancements. In contrast, they showed performance decrements when their gender was salient.

One study has examined whether performance decrements due to stereotype threat are additive in this sense (Gonzales, Blanton, & Willams, 2002). In this study, white and Latino men and women were randomly assigned to perform a math task either under stereotype threat conditions or not. Whereas white men evidenced performance enhancement under stereotype threat conditions, white women and Latino men evidenced some performance decrements, and Latino women evidenced the greatest performance decrements. These studies indicate that the effects of both gender and ethnic stereotype can accumulate and have an additive effect on performance.

The following section focuses on analyzing the method section of the plethora of empirical work in the area of academic achievement. This section focuses on analyzing the treatment of various social factors such as, gender, social class, race, ethnicity with the construct of academic achievement.

3. Scope of Intersectionality in the Purview of Academic Achievement:

For the purpose of uncovering the scope of intersectionality in the area of academic achievement, research studies in the time span(1990-2014) were analyzed as part of review of literature giving great emphasis on the method used in these studies. The focus here is to analyze how the social identities such as gender, race, ethnicity and social class have been dealt with in the empirical work on intersectionality.

Beginning with this, analysis in the time span (1990-2000) two studies have been taken into sharp focus. First, focusing on low income adolescentǿs perceptions of school, intelligence and themselves as students (Brantlinger, 1990, pg. 305) used naturalistic methodologies, 40 low income teenagers were interviewed. Results indicated that they had internalized the negative feelings, blaming themselves for their school failure. The second study, focused on linking

parent involvement with student achievement- Do race and income matter? (Desimone, 1990, pg. 11) used ordinary least squares regression to indicated that statistically significant differences existed in the relationship between parental involvement and achievement according to their race-ethnicity and family income. Cross- model comparison was used in this study.

Analyzing the method in both the studies, the first study through qualitative interviews low income student¢s perceptions about school, grading system, achievement and intelligence were studied. Influence of gender as an independent variable has been completely ignored though, the sample consisted of 25 girls and 15 boys and the influence of race too has been ignored though, the sample consisted of 34 were white students and 6 black students. This study didn¢t attempt to analyze the intersection of social categories such as, race, gender, class and their impact on student¢s achievement. The second study did attempt to study the racial-ethnic and income differences in the relationship between parental involvement and achievement. The models including main interaction terms (income*achievement, race*achievement) were studied and found significant but, higher order interactions i.e the intersection between class, race, parental involvement and achievement were not been analyzed. Also, gender as an independent variable was completely ignored.

Over the time span (2000-2010) 30 research studies in the area of academic achievement were analyzed for the purpose of this dissertation. The study, õTowards a Positive Psychology of Academic Motionö (Pajares, 2001) focuses on an integration of positive psychology constructs with motivation theories. Evidence from this study is as, follows:

> Results indicated that task goals were associated positively with optimism and invitations whereas, performance- avoidance goals were associated negatively with positive psychology variables. Positive psychology variables were stronger in high-achieving students than in low achieving students; boys had stronger perceived authenticity than girls. (p.7).

Analyzing the method, correlations were calculated for motivational constructs. There has been use of hierarchical regression to determine the influence of achievement goals and expectancy value constructs on each of the positive psychology variables. Further, multivariate analyses of covariance were calculated to determine whether the positive psychology variables differed as a function of gender, academic capability or age. This study consisted of Caucasian, middle class students. Since, the sample consisted of middle class students the social class gets neutralized and this negates the possibility of engaging in intersectionality research. As intersectionality research requires the study of disadvantage groups this is followed by analyzing the intersection of social categories such as social class, gender, race and ethnicity.

Another study, Reducing the effects of stereotype threat on African American College Students by Shaping Theories of Intelligenceö (Arson, Fried& Good, 2002) focused on examining the negative stereotypes leading to academic failure of African American college students. An experiment was performed to test a method of helping students resist these responses to stereotype threat. õResults indicated that the African American students encouraged to view intelligence as malleable reported greater enjoyment of the academic success, greater academic engagement.ö(p.113)

 Analyzing the method, the sample consisting of 79 male and female participants (42 Black, 37 White) were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions of the study, a 2*3 design yielded by crossing race(African American or Caucasian) with treatment(malleable pen pal, control pen pal or non pen pal). An initial observation was that Black participants had lower SAT scores than White participants. To determine if these differences were significant, a 2(race)*3(condition) ANOVA was performed on the participantøs SAT scores. Results revealed significant main effects of race and the condition and all analyses were conducted using SAT as a covariate. All analyses were initially conducted including participant gender as a factor. Because no main or interaction effects were found, the gender variable has not been discussed in this study.

The study, Family Decision-Making Style, Peer Group Affiliation and Prior Academic Achievement as predictors of Academic Achievement of African American Students(Engerman

et.al, 2006) examined family decision-making style, peer group affiliations, and prior academic achievement as predictors of academic achievement of African American students. ӧResults indicated that prior academic performance and socio economic status (SES) predicted academic achievement.ӧ (p.443)

Analyzing the method, a forward stepwise logistic regression was employed to identify predictors of academic achievement. In Model 1, the effects of family decision making style, peer group affiliation, and academic achievement in 10th grade were based on academic achievement in 12th grade. In Model 2, ethnicity was controlled and the effects of family decision making style, peer group affiliation and academic achievement in 10th grade were based on academic achievement. In Model 3, SES was controlled and the effects of family decision making style, peer group affiliation and academic achievement in 10th grade were based on academic achievement in 12th grade. In Model 4, both ethnicity and SES were controlled and the effects of family decision making style, peer group affiliation and academic achievement in 10th grade were based on academic achievement in 12th grade.

In these four models, one group as a reference category and other categories were entered as, dummy variables. In this study, the social categories such as, ethnicity social class (SES) has been controlled and the influence of other independent variables on academic achievement have been studied. And, the influence of gender as, a social category has not even been considered. This reflects an additive approach where individuals are seen as, independent, one- dimensional and mutually exclusive. And, ethnicities, SES are merely demographic characteristics rather than social categories that lead to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stress. This study could have attempted to engage in an intersectionality method to analyze how low SES African American studentsø academic achievement gets influenced by their multiple disadvantaged social statuses?

Another study, Implicit Theories of Intelligence Predict Achievement across an Adolescent Transition: A Longitudinal Study and an Intervention (Blackwell & Dwell, 2007*)* involving two studies explored the role of implicit theories of intelligence in adolescentøs mathematics achievement. In study 1, the belief that intelligence is malleable (incremental theory) predicted

an upward trajectory in grades over the two years of junior high school, while, a belief that intelligence is fixed (entity theory) predicted a flat trajectory. In Study 2, an intervention teaching an incremental theory to 7th graders promoted positive change in classroom motivation, compared to control group. Focusing on the method, the sample consisted of 99 students (49 females and 50 males) in the seventh graders and 52% Africans American, 45% Latino and 3% White and Asian. A meditational model including learning goals, positive beliefs about effort, and causal attributions and strategies was tested. A one way analysis (ANOVA) to test whether the experimental and control groups differed in how well they learned the material.

This research study confirms that adolescents who endorse more of an incremental theory of malleable intelligence also endorse stronger learning goals, hold more positive beliefs about effort, and make fewer ability-based, helpless attributions. But, the whole focus of testing whether teaching an incremental theory leads to a change in those motivational variables is limited as, the influence of social factors such as social class, gender; race-ethnicity has been completely ignored. It appears as if learning is uni-dimensional and is homogenous as its impact will be same to all the individuals. The intersectionality method becomes important here as it helps in dwelling into the complexity of behavioral phenomena such as, teaching an incremental theory by focusing on its influence on the social groups with multiple disadvantaged social statues.

An intensive review of the method in numerous empirical studies in the domain of academic achievement found that gender as a social category has been maximally ignored. Despite the belief that SES has higher predictive power it has been seen as only a moderately strong predictor of academic achievement in United States (White, 1982). There is a lack of relevant research to investigate the role of SES in academic achievement. It becomes important not to consider SES as a demographic characteristic of individuals but, a social category that demonstrates experiences of prejudice, discrimination and resistance. This is when intersectionality research method becomes important as this helps in re-conceptualization of disadvantaged social groups with multiple social statues.

Over the time span of (2011-14) 10 research studies were analyzed in the area of academic achievement for the purpose of this paper. two research studies done in this time span will be discussed here. First study, African American European American Studentøs Peer Groups during Early Adolescence: Structure, Status, and Academic Achievement (Wilson, Karimpour & Rodkin, 2011) focused on a sample of 382 African American and 264 European American(132 female) students and this study investigated three questions concerning the connections between peer groups and academic achievement during early adolescence. Results were similar for African American and European students. Group hierarchy was positively associated with group centrality but negatively associated with individual academic achievement.

Focusing on the method used in this study, the analysis plan had three stages: each employed two- level Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), taking into account the dependence of individuals within peer groups or classrooms depending on the research question. There was use of MANOVA with gender and ethnicity as independent variables to test for gender, ethnicity and Gender*Ethnicity interaction effects. But, there was no significant differences found. This study found that the African American and European American students with higher status in the peer group achieved better scores in mathematics and reading after controlling individual and classroom SES. High SES had positive effects on achievement for both ethnic groups.

Another study, Social Influences, school motivation and gender differences: an application of the expectancy- value theory (Fan, 2011) examined the structural relations of social influences, task values, ability beliefs, educational expectation and academic engagement for both boys and girls. Focusing on the method used in this study, a structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the research question. A two-step SEM process was used. The study evaluated the measurement invariance of the resulting baseline model and explored the latent mean non-invariance across boys and girls using the Multiple Indicator Multiple Cause (MIMIC) approach.

The findings from this study established the significant role of social agents including teachers and peers in student school motivation. This study also adds to the literature by demonstrating that the magnitude of gender differences was moderate on four motivational components

including ability belief in math, intrinsic value in English, educational expectation and academic engagement.

This analysis of the method part of the empirical studies on academic achievement clearly indicates how the multiple social identities/categories have been treated merely as demographic characteristics and as independent variables. It is the belonging to these multiple social identities that leads to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stress. And, there has been just no attempt made by the researchers to engage in the complexity of social reality. The most crucial reason for this reluctance on the part of psychologists is the methodological challenges with intersectionality approach. And, this breeds out from the old age tradition in mainstream psychology to engage in hypothesis testing and reaching the significant values. This is exactly what limits us in engaging with the complex social reality.

The next chapter focuses on the introduction of intersectionality approach in various disciplines. Since, there are theoretical and methodological challenges in the application of this approach its relevance in terms of context, theoretical frameworks, methodological issues within the discipline of feminist studies, sociology, psychology, education and political science have been exhaustively studied.

Chapter 3: Intersectionality Approach

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter aims at understanding the conceptualization of the intersectionality approach in different disciplines/interdisciplinary areas in social sciences. In the earlier chapter, it was reflected that the discipline of psychology has till now, provided only intra personal explanation to the construct of academic achievement by too much emphasis on cognitive and meta-cognitive processes of an individual. Another group of researchers focused on the contextual factors such as gender, social class, race, ethnicity on the academic achievement. These researchers tried to examine the influence of social factors separately on academic achievement. However, in real life settings, these factors operate and influence the functioning of human being jointly. Even, one of the important social psychological theories Social Identity considers the role of social identities based on any one of these social categories in psychological functioning. The real challenge is to understand how to study the effect of multiple social identities on the psychological processes and behaviors of the individual. Intersectionality approach has emerged to address some of these challenges.

Intersectionality approach has been studied across various disciplines/inter displinary areas of social sciences. For this dissertation, 60 research articles were exhaustively reviewed to understand the context, theoretical framework, methodological challenges and issues using this approach in various disciplines and inter displinary areas. Out of the 60 articles, 17 papers were from feminist studies, 14 were from sociology, 12 were from education, 6 were from psychology, 4 were political science and one each from public health and economics.

3.2. Context of the disciplines:

3.2.1. Feminist Studies:

Over the last few decades, there is a sense of united voices of women raising political demands rather than few isolated voices. There has been dissatisfaction among women of color with the

mainstream feminist movement for only reflecting the voices of white, middle class women thereby, homogenizing the category of women and marginalizing the women of color. The mainstream feminist movement has also been criticized for over-identification of interests and because White women constitute the dominant group in the American women's movement they have created the notion of õessential womenö leading to ignoring important differences between women. The essential woman is white, heterosexual, middle class and has been placed on a pedestal by white patriarchy.

So, women of color argued that they are marginalized when their experiences don't coincide with those essential white women. The other line of argument is that women of color is in a better position than white women and this line of reasoning is called By Southwell (1994) is as, follows:

> The twofer argument that entails that in situations where racism is her major problem, women of color can call on the ant-racist movement and when sexism is her major problem, they can call on to the feminist movement (p. 361).

The intersectionality approach has been applied beyond the context of women of color too. For example, intersectionality of race, gender and class in the Jewish American context has been studied by Belkhir et.al (1999). Jews are generally perceived to be outside the race, gender and class discourse. In their study notes, õIt has been argued that people do not speak, think and live in identity boxes and various identities influence and blend into each other.ö Marla Brettschneider, in õTheorizing Diversity from a Jewish Perspectiveö reflects a Jewish perspective on the identity politics of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. Jews are seen as poor and working class people, as, women, queers, secular, single, geographically, racially, culturally and politically diverse. Jessica Greenebaum's paper, Placing Jewish Women into the Intersectionality of Race, Class and Gender, places Jewish women into the feminist and sociological conversation of identity, oppression, and the intersectionality of õrace, gender and classö. It has been argued that anti- Semitism has been equated with racism (pg. 7). Hinda Seif in her work, õexplored the ways that race, gender, class, sexuality and other identifications intersect in a Jewish bisexual

community in the San Franciscoö (pg. 8). This Jewish perspective provides a lens to develop multicultural philosophy of social justice in the struggle against racism, sexism and classism.

The intersectionality of gender and identity has also been looked upon in the context of two democracies, Indian and US. Both nations have contextualized gender concerns and reflected the influence of patriarchy upon the lives of women. This articulation doesnøt help in understanding the concerns of women at the margins in terms of racial, religious and caste inequalities. Agnes(2002) advocated about gender and identity as, this:

> Gender concerns for theö marginalized women rose for the first time in the context of Shahbano case at the Supreme Court ruling that upheld the right of divorced Muslim woman for maintenance. In this case, the communal campaign mounted upon the patriarchal paradigm and got legitimized. (p.3695).

Greenwood (2008) in her work aimed at understanding the intersection of white race and gender. How consciousness of the intersection between (white) race and (women) gender affects white womenøs appraisal of Muslim women and their covering practices.

Greenwood elaborated around this in her study as follows:

> To accomplish this, they attempted an integration of feminist theory with intersectionality (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1994; Dill 1983) with the social identity approach to group processes and intergroup relations (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et.al. 1987)ö. This study aims at testing the hypothesis about general social psychology processes of group consciousness. Thereøs a debate about Muslim women who practice hijab. Some white women see the hijab as a symbol of Muslim womenøs oppression and tend to construe Muslim women as, in need of liberation from oppressive, patriarchal Muslim societyö(Greenwood, 2008,pg. 404). But, this contradicts the Muslim women in Western

countries who see it as, a sign of pride, agency and security. This study only attempts to study the intersection of race and gender and not the influence of complexity caused by belonging to other social categories such as class and religion. (p. 406).

Intersectionality has become a ÷buzzwordø for the exploration of differences within, as much as between, social groupsö (Cronin & King, 2010, p. 879).

Rasky (2011) argued that thereøs a need for reconsideration of intersectionality theory by focusing the ÷other sideø of power relations and the intersection of whiteness and middle-classness has been explored in relation to the problem of racism. There was a need to understand power in the domain of intersectionality. One of the risks to this approach is that there is inclusion of people who exercise power over people of disadvantaged groups.

3.2.2. Sociology:

Intersectionality is considered as a contribution of feminism to the discipline of sociology. Feminist scholars within sociology are guided by following assumptions: õwomen are legitimate subjects of study; they are socially constructed rather than biologically determined and that, as a social category, they have been subject to subordinationö (Denis, 2008, p. 678).

Intersectional analyses have been seen as an attempt to engage in complex analyses of identity. The important thing is the configuration of oneøs social location based on class, ethnicity/race and gender as roots of oppression. õSince late 1980øs intersectional analyses became widely used by American, British and English Canadian feminists and feminists from the economic south, especially in studies of ethnicity/race, migration and citizenshipö (Denis,2008, p. 681).

Intersectionality, as an approach attempts to engage in the theorization of relationship between different forms of social inequality.

Walby (2007) elaborated the complications with intersectionality approach such as adding up multiple identities is insufficient as it does not help in determining the point of intersection, complication in reducing complex multiple identities into single axis, third complication stated

by Walby (2012, p. 452) is micro-reductionism (analyzing for example- female, African-American, working class), the fourth complication is the anti-categorical approach (McCall, 2005) i.e. rejecting the social categories altogether as deconstruction of multiple identities is much needed rather than completely rejecting them and the fifth complication is segregating and bases of each social category/identity.

The three major theorists of intersectionality approach have been Crenshaw, McCall and Hancock. However, their work has led to theoretical dilemmas pointed out by Walby et.al (2012) such as:

> How to address the relationship between political and structural intersectionality without reducing political projects to social structures? How to conceptualize intersections to bring agency to the disadvantaged by keeping the powerful out of focus? How to balance the stability and fluidity of inequalities while, they are available as stable for empirical analysis, while, recognizing that they change? How to not leave class out of focus nor to treat it as of overwhelming importance? How to bring into focus the projects of small minorities? How to simultaneously identify the intersecting inequalities while recognizing that their intersection changes what they are? (p. 229).

Scholars have referred the non additive way of understanding social inequality with various terms, including **"intersectional"** (Crenshaw, 1991), **"integrative"** (Glenn, 1999) or as a **"race-class-gender"** approach (Pascale, 2007)ö (Choo & Ferree, pg 129). There has been a realization that the potential of intersectionality approach has been underutilized. õBased on the feminist theorizing on intersectionality (Hancock, 2007; McCall, 2005; Walby, 2009) the various styles of intersectional practices have been identified as, group-centered, process-centered, and system-centeredö (p. 130).

Intersectionality framework requires the choice of model to describe and explain the relationship among multiple interacting aspects of power and difference.

3.2.3. Psychology:

An attempt to point out the relevance of intersectionality approach in the discipline of psychology has also been made. Gender is traditionally recognized as an empirical factor or variable that influences many aspects of behavior.

Stewart & McDermott (2004) found õgenderö to be a conceptual tool in 3 ways-

> In sorting individuals into male and female and exploring the ways in which differences in behavior, performance and characteristics are associated with that individual difference; in understanding how gender might relate to individual differences among men and among women and in understanding how gender structures social institutions within which men and women operate(p. 522).

Various multicultural and bicultural identity theories for the psychological study of gender miss out the interaction of various social identities. Thereøs a need for an intersectionality perspective in psychology that will require a more inclusive methodological choice.

Under the discipline of psychology, õidentifying the context in which gender differences appear or disappear continues to be important in primary research and in *meta-analyses*ö (Hyde, 2014,p. 393).

Under the clinical psychology paradigm, evidence indicates that the effect of sex, race, and psychopathology can be separated and examined independently. Because of this, they do not acknowledge the distinct life experiences of sex/race subgroups and how they differentially shape the prevalence and correlates of these factors. Baskin-Sommers et al (2013) argued that the prior research on sex, race and violent behavior suggested that the experiences of all Blacks or all women, for instance are not homogenous.

This study found that Blacks were more likely to commit violent crime as well as be more crime versatile than Whites. And, regardless of sex or race, having psychopathy explained more violent offending than having neither of these diagnoses. So, it was the violent crimes that were explained more by psychological dysfunction rather than examining that it may happen due to belonging to disadvantaged social categories. Additional analyses indicated that the similarity between White males and Black females became attenuated at the multivariate level.

3.2.4 Education:

With the advent of intersectionality approach, its application has also been used to understand **educational outcomes** of marginalized students. One of the studies (Battle et.al, 2005) linked race, social class and gender as simultaneously intersecting categories in the family experiences and educational achievement processes of Black students, the relative importance of family configuration and social class on educational achievement was examined.

The finding of this study was that õthe Black family structure is innately tied to changes in the economy and the simultaneously intersecting categories of race/class/genderö (Collins, 1998). õThis study found that parental configuration in the 8th grade has no impact on educational achievement in the 12th grade, economic capital is more important in predicting educational outcomesö (Battle et.al, 2005, p. 145).

Intersectionality approach has been applied to understand the educational inequality of Undergraduate students in U.S (Solorzano et.al, 2005). Further, the proper and appropriate education of African American students in U.S is problematic. The educational goals of equity and parity havenøt been fulfilled. There still exists an idea of African American intellectual inferiority. Walker and Archung (2003) have termed the õeducational leadership framework as, being interpersonal caring and institutional caring and have documented and detailed this framework to student empowerment and achievement in schools within the African American communityö (Foster, 2005, p. 692). Mitchell (1992) observes that õAfrican American students

may learn better and achieve more when they have the opportunity to operate within the type of kinship system which has nurtured their lives outside schoolö (pg.24)

Intersectionality approach has found its application in the area of multicultural education. Disabled students are marginalized in the public education system. õMany students identified with disabilities were considered uneducable or too disruptive to be included in general education settingsö (Sullivan et.al, 2010). Multicultural education has been looked at as an approach to accommodate the diversities in the school and disparities in opportunities for students.

3.2.5. Political Science:

There was a realization that there exists a gap between intersectionality as a theoretical approach and its methodologies. And, this has been priority area of concern. õRonnblom targets very specific elements in policy analysis- space-to understand different power relations and their mutual production in policy. According to him, political space reflects dominant ways of thinking about society, politics, and change, and she provides a number of questions to help interrogate the role of power, a key element in any intersectionality analysis, in producing policy and policy problemsö.

 Dhamoon (2011) advocated the need for mainstreaming intersectionality as it will benefit political science and other social science disciplines in order to conduct and catalogue and interpret research. Various terminologies are used for intersectionality such asö interlocking, multiple jeopardy and discrimination-within-discrimination, multiple consciousnesses (Mastuda 1992; King 1988), multiplicity (Wing 1990-1991), multiplex epistemologies (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006), translocational positionality (Anthias, 2001), multi-dimensionality (Hutchinson, 2001) , inter-connectivities (Valdes, 1995), and synthesis (Ehrenreich, 2002)ö (pg. 232).

Greenwood, (2008) advocated four aspects of the focus of intersectional analysis:

> Identities of an individual or set of individuals or social group that are marked as different (e.g. a Muslim woman or black woman), the categories of difference (e.g., race and gender), the processes of differentiation (e.g., racialization and gendering) and the systems of domination (e.g., racism, colonialism, sexism and patriarchy). (p. 233).

Intersectionality approach has given voice to the experiences and perspectives of the marginalized communities legitimized by political science and other conventional disciplines. There are risks involved with intersecting identities such as the issue of essentialism where the boundaries of identity become so rigid such that there's a risk of seeking wholeness (Beltran, 2004).

3.3 Theoretical Frameworks in the disciplines:

3.3.1 Feminist Studies:

Crenshaw in her pioneer work argued that "feminist and anti racist discourses hasn't focused on intersectional identities such as, women of color and she looks at how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" (Crenshaw, 1991,pg. 1244). Intersectionality is seen as "a way of mediating tension between multiple identities and the assertion of group politics" (Crenshaw, 1991, pg 1296).

Crenshaw's work analyzed the intersection of race and gender in the context of violence against women by analyzing/studying narratives of battered women's shelters located in minority community in Los Angeles. Many women of color are burdened by poverty, child care responsibilities and the lack of job skills and these are result of intersection of race and gender oppression. This influences the intervention and affirmative policies. Intersectionality brings out the sense of of homogenizing and stereotyping Black men as offenders and white women as victim's thereby, not focusing on the violence experienced by Black women.

In the United States, "the debate on essentialism and intersectionality has greater practical significance for women of color and they are reflected in the area of employment law" (Southwell, 1994, pg. 366).

> For instance- "an employer is not particularly sexist. White women hold positions in top
>
> management in the company and it has an affirmative action program and has an
>
> appropriate number of people of color as employees. However, as the employer thinks
>
> that all women of color are lazy, stupid and sexually licentious, it treats them poorly
>
> when it comes to promotion and job assignment" (p. 366).

Research studies indicate that there has been a failure in perceiving women as class subjects**.** The class reduction leads towards "gender reductionism, focusing primarily on the differences between boys and girls or women and men and failing to account for gender differences within sex categories. Various feminist studies have perceived and presented "women not as class or racial/ethnic subjects but, only as gendered" (Bettie, 2000, p.5). The gender reductionism has been criticized by "third world feminism" for looking at only "white middle class women".

Very little attention has been paid to the cross racial analysis of class. The way class is conceptualized is that white women are socially located in the middle class and women of color are socially located in the working class, again creating a dichotomy of "middle class" (white feminism) and "working class" (black feminism) (Bettie,2000, pg.6). So, Bettie's work on

õWomen without classö was focused on understanding girlsø commonsense of self-identity and experience in terms of absence/presence of class.

And, there was a realization that class remained obscure and absent. Class has been understood as õperformativeö and as õperformanceö. This study reflected the reproduction of invisibility of class and the reproduction of inequality along multiple axes. The class differences was looked as õdifference in styleö, õacting whiteö between middle class students and working class Mexican Americans students. Looking at class as a performance helps in understanding how class determines the future in terms of economic and cultural resources. This also indicates the negotiation of identities. Bettie, (2000) advocated that:

> For instance, when middle class-students of color felt compelled to perform working
>
> class identities as a marker of racial/ethnic belongingö (Bettie, 2000, pg. 29). Class as
>
> performative is more of a cultural than a political identity and this cultural identity is an
>
> effect of social structure(p. 29)

For the past twenty years, intersectionality has emerged as a compelling response to the identity based politics. This approach has focused on the simultaneous and interacting effects of gender, race, class, sexual orientation and national origin as categories of difference. Intersectionality theory has found its foothold in feminist theory, social movements, international human rights, public policy and across the disciplines of sociology, critical legal studies and history.

But, this approach hasnøt developed much as a research paradigm. Hancock (2007) advocated three strands of race, gender and class analysis in terms of the following:

> The first strand, the unitary approach emphasizes on a single category of identity or
>
> difference or political tradition as the most relevant explanation. The second strand is the

multiple approaches because it recognizes the role of several categories such as race and gender or race and class as equally important. The third strand is called intersectional approach because it focuses on one category's explanatory power in explaining political institutions. Intersectional approach moves beyond the multiple approach as it changes the relationship between the categories of investigation from the one determined before.(p. 67).

Jennifer C.Nash (2008) reflected upon intersectionality approach serving various purposes. Firstly, it goes beyond the race/gender binary and looking at the complexity of identity; secondly, it provides a strong critique of identity politics for not looking at intra-group differences. But, this approach leads to various questions such as lack of a clearly defined intersectional methodology, the use of black women as prototypical subjects, ambiguity inherent in the definition of intersectionality and the coherence between intersectionality and lived experiences of multiple identities.

The emerging questions about the intersectionality methodology are õHow does one pay attention to the points of intersection? How many intersections are there? Is the idea of intersectionality the right analogy?ö (Chang and Culp, 2002, pg.485).

Crenshaw(1991) advocated that the theoretical reliance of intersectionality approach on black women is seen to be problematic:

Black women are seen as one unitary category rather than, focusing at differences among black women, including class and sexuality, intersectionality recycles black feminism without demonstrating what new tools it brings to black feminism to help it become a more complex theory of identity (pg.1244).

Further, the intersectionality theory hasnøt looked at the questions like, õBlack women use their multiple identities to interpret the social world or they deploy one at a time? What determines which identity is foregrounded in a particular moment?ö (Nash, 2008, p. 89).

Greenwood (2008) in her study used the theoretical framework of self-categorization, which is how an individual perceives himself/herself as belonging to a group through a process in which the self is categorized along with similar others and in contrast to dissimilar others (Turner ,1999). This theory helps us to understand that in a given social context gender is the most salient social category such that the differences among women are minimized and differences between men and women are likely to be accentuated.

> It reflects on the concept of õgender consciousnessö which includes both an awareness of gender discrimination and the awareness that, as members of the ethnic majority, they receive societal privileges that put them at an advantage relative to women from disadvantaged groups .The results from this study demonstrate that intersectional consciousness is a phenomenon different from the singular group consciousness. (pg. 406).

Cole (2009) in her work proposed three intersectional questions that need to be asked to engage in an intersectional research. This is elaborated in detail through a table in chapter-4.

Intersectionality theory provides a useful framework for examining stereotypes associated with the combination of gender and ethnicity. Ghavami and Peplau (2012) developed the intersectionality hypothesis predicting that intersecting gender and ethnic stereotypes will contain unique elements that are not the result of adding gender stereotypes to ethnic stereotypes.

Ghavami & Peplau(2013) advocated the social dominance theory proposes that

> Human social systems tend to organize themselves as group based hierarchies of status and power. Based on social dominance theory, there was an expectation that gender and

ethnic stereotype will map into the social hierarchies of gender and ethnicity(p. 115). The findings of this study show that , õcultural stereotypes are distinct and differentiated based on gender, ethnicity, and the combination of gender and ethnicity, this study added knowledge about the stereotypes of Latinos, Asian Americans and Middle Eastern Americans, the research showed that attributes other than personality traits are central to gender and ethnic stereotypes.(p. 125).

Intersectionality approach can be used to highlight the dynamic and complex processes of individual, community and institutional negotiations of power in relation to each other at a specific historic moment. (Leong ,2010).

Intersectionality framework requires the choice of model to describe and explain the relationship among multiple interacting aspects of power and difference. The first model conceptualizes identities, categories, processes or systems in isolation and they function through each other. The second model focuses on the differences that are located outside the subject which are pure and noncontradictory entities. The third and fourth model focuses on how the multiple differences might be added to each other or there could be an overlap. The fifth model depicts the hierarchy of multiple aspects of identity in all contexts.

3.3.2 Sociology:

Collins advocated the **main elements of this approach** as race, gender and class are õdistinctive yet interlocking structures of oppression, the notion of interlocking refers to macro level connections linking systems of oppression such as race, class and gender.

But, the struggling question that remains is how to think about oppressions? This can be resolved by looking at race, gender and class not only as individual attributes but also in interaction with others. Gimenez (2001) advocated that the ethnomethodological stance is that õpeople simultaneously õdoö difference during interaction thereby reproducing the structures. But, Collins argued that this õdifferenceö leaves out the power and material inequalities which

constitute oppression.ö (p. 27) Individuals are distributed into categories, different statues, power, and privilege leading to a hierarchical structure. This leads to differentiating between **"legitimating identities"** which are products of dominant institutions and groups and õ**resistance identities"** which emerge from the grassroots (Castells, 1997). There is still a lot of ambiguity and conflicting interpretations of an intersectionality approach.

Walby et.al (2012) has identified six dilemmas with intersectionality on the insights of critical realism and complexity theory:

> The first dilemma is how to address the relationship between structural and political intersectionality .The second dilemma is how to address the relations between the inequalities without leaving the actions of the powerful within each set of unequal social relations out of focus. The third dilemma is how to balance the stability and fluidity of the concepts capturing the sets of social relations. The fourth dilemma is how to address class, which appears to be differently situated in intersectionality debates from other inequalities. The fifth dilemma is how to address the issue of the so-called õOppression Olympicsö and the tension between a normative tendency to declare all inequality projects equal and an analytic stance that treats this as an empirical question. The sixth dilemma is how to address the preference for the visibility of each inequality in the context of an emerging hegemonic conceptualization of intersectionality as, ‑mutual constitution. This article looked at the resolution of these dilemmas from the version of critical realism and selective deployment of complexity theory.(p.236)

Tomlinson (2013) argued that, õ as, a conceptual framework that focuses attention on the degree to which all identities are multi-dimensional, intersectionality is a nexus of complex arguments about gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, nation, hierarchy, power, control, and value. Intersectionality, has also, served as a resource for European social scientists and philosophers developing tools for multidimensional analysis of social identities. Many European scholars seek to create intersectionality specific to European contexts (p. 255).

The study reflects that there is a denial of race and denial of racism in Europe leading to racial Europeanization. õRacial Europeanization is based on a desire to see that race no longer exists as a category in Europe. The result is not to eliminate race as a category of being in the world and it continues to shape European social relations and social lifeö (p. 257).

3.3.3. Psychology:

The APA Taskforce Report on SES (2007) clearly reflected the need for an intersectionality approach in the discipline of psychology. õAlthough, intersectionality has been integral to feminist and critical race scholarship for some time (Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill, 1994;Collins, 1990), psychology has been slower to adopt this approach because of the methodological challenges of studying simultaneous identitiesö (McCall, 2005) as stated in this report.

3.3.4. Education:

Intersectionality approach has been applied to understand the educational inequities of Undergraduate students in U.S (Solorzano et.al, 2005). This study makes use of critical race theory as a tool to understand the structures, practices, policies that led to the dismal educational attainment levels for Chicanas/os (largest single group of color, only 46% of them have attained atleast 4 years of high school).

Solorzano et.al (2005) advocated:

Critical race theory in education explores the ways in which õrace-neutralö laws and institutional structures, practices, and policies perpetuate racial/ethnic educational inequality. This framework emphasizes the importance of viewing policies and policy making within a proper historical and cultural context to deconstruct their racialized content.(p. 274).

The data in this study reveals an underrepresentation of Latinos college students and persistent educational inequities. The critical race theory points to how in practice, higher education adopts practices that curbs the success of students of color, the higher education cannot separate itself from the concepts of race, ethnicity etc.; this theory provides a framework to understand how the institutions exert oppression by sustaining a campus culture that marginalizes, devalues and silences Latinos/students of color.

The study by Sullivan et.al in this area advocated that the multicultural education is more than an issue of race based achievement/opportunity gap. Gender, class, disability, and other identities, and their intersection have major implications for studentøs experiences and outcomes in school. Evidence indicates that õthe one-dimensional approach fails to account for the multidimensional identities of learners or the complex power relations that space their lived experiencesö (Sullivan et.al, 2010, p. 102).

There was a realization that disability or race cannot explain the experiences of disabled students in school. Intersectionality has been popular as critical theory and extensively applied to women studies but, this has found its relevance in educational research. It is a more comprehensive and holistic approach to understand individuals with intersecting multiple identities that shape their experiences.

õInclusive hybrid learning environments are settings in which multiple identities are recognized. The inclusive classroom provide all students are able to engage, learn, and know that they are importantö (Sullivan et.al, 2010, p. 105). In the educational discourse, a paucity of literature was felt in examining the multiple identities.

Grant & Zwier (2011)suggested that õUsing intersectionality as a frame of differentiating curriculum and instruction to meet studentøs academic needs will better support equal opportunity and equity in the learning environmentö (p. 182). There was a need felt to prepare intersectionality aware teachers to cater to students from diverse communities. This study reflected that in õclassroom, teachers who adopt an intersectional lens view students, their families, and communities from an asset-based perspective, and seek to be culturally responsive to their studentøs identities and experiences, which can foster improved student outcomesö (Akom et.al, 2009).

The intersection of race and gender socialization in the educational context was reflected upon in a study by Thomas and Stevenson (2009). This study analyzed gender and racial disparities in classroom opportunity structures and school discipline procedures that places urban low-income African American males at greater risk for poor academic outcomes. õThe findings imply that racial bias is an important risk factor in considering gender inequalities and therein lies a difficult set of circumstances facing African American boys, especially in Americaøs schools.

Under the ambit of research on gender equity in education, low income African American boys remain at most risk, relative to other groups, for disparities in education and are at a disadvantage in terms of academic outcomes. This was further reflected in terms of higher dropout rates, overrepresentation in remedial and special education of African American boys.

3.3.4. Political Science:

The sense of belonging and not belonging has been explored from an intersectional perspective in a study by Christensen (2009). The question of belonging and unbelonging is situated in the context of globalization and multiculturalism and it is a question of larger public discourse. This study is in the context of Nordic countries where ethnicity is constructed in a close interplay with other categories such as, gender and sexuality. õIn a Nordic context, it has been shown how the intersection between gender and ethnicity plays a decisive role in mediaøs construction of stereotypical conceptions of ethnic minorities, where oppressed immigrant women are constructed in contrast to aggressive immigrant men and equal to ethnic Danish womenö (Andreassen, 2005).

Christensen (2009) focused on õbelongingö and õpolitics of belongingö and argued:

> Belonging is an interplay between organizational and subjective factors and is constructed at three major analytical levels: social locations such as gender, ethnicity and class ; individualøs identifications and emotional attachments and ethnic and political value systems by which people judge their own and otherøs belongingö (p. 25).

3.4. Methodological Issues in the Disciplines:

3.4.1. Feminist Studies:

With the emergence of intersectionality approach in the 1990øs, there were **methodological concerns** with the race, gender and class analysis. Qualitative research reemerged in 1960øs as a methodological alternative for these analyses. By 1980øs, õthree methodological frameworks- C. Wright Milløs history and biography approach, feminist in-depth interviewing and grounded theory were regularly used as the new tools for doing race, class and gender analysesö (Cuadraz, 1999).

But, various scholars argued that these methods were used uncritically which was problematic. Mills (1959) stated that õno social study that doesnøt come back to the problem of biography, of history and of their interactions within a society has completed its intellectual journeyö, (Cuadraz, 158). Women of color have challenged feminist scholarship for its primary focus only on gender as a category of subordination meant overlooking other aspects of womenøs lives such as race and class.

Evidence indicates that very little focus has been given on the methodological issues that arise in the race and gender analysis. It has been argued that individual accounts must be included. This analyses of race, gender and class research has reshaped various disciplines. There has been a theoretical calling for intersectionality approach. Collins (1995, pg.492) advocated the õnotion

of **interlocking oppressions** refers to the macro level connections linking systems of oppressions such as race, class and gender. She defined the notion of **intersectionality** as micro level processes namely, how each individual and group occupies a social position within interlocking structures of oppression described by intersectionality. Both notions shape oppressionö (Cuadraz, 1999,p. 159).

Cuadraz, (1999) elaborated on various methodological approaches:

Milløs ÷history and biographyø approach, õcritiqued macro sociological theories for failing to take into account how individuals are both shaped by and shape social structure. Feminist in-depth interviewing focused on õallowing individuals to explain how they viewed their circumstances, to define issues in their own terms, to identify processes leading to different outcomes, and to interpret the meaning of their lives to the researcher, rather than identifying the outcomes The Discovery of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued to õprovide a method for generating theory from the voices of lived differences. This method proposed beginning with the empirical data first and analyzing the categories and theories that emerge directly from the data. Evidence indicates that the feminist in-depth interviewing has been a popular method used for race, class and gender analysis. There has been criticism of attribute based comparison studies. (p.160)

In-depth interviewing studies have often been viewed as õreducing social life to relativistic experiences and lose sight of these social structures as they privilege individual accountsö

(Cuadraz, p. 178). For the usage of in- depth interview to analyze the intersectionality of race, class and gender, the researcher needs to contextualize the social construction of meaning and the researcher needs to examine the relationships between structure (e.g. race, gender and class) and biography (e.g. individual accounts) separately and simultaneously.

Under the ambit of race, gender and class analysis the sample composition is a problem and this can be resolved by locating the particular character of the sample within specific historical and socio economic circumstances.

Over the years, the methodological challenges with making use of intersectionality have been thrown light on. **Survey research** has been criticized by feminist scholars for not being able to capture the complexity of social relationships and identitiesö (Reinharz, 1992). But, surveys are found to be necessary to operationalize intersections of gender and race. The major challenge in the survey is to classify the survey respondents into õwomenö or as õAfrican Americansö or õwomen and Blacksö or õwomen and minoritiesö.

In this broad classification, Black women remain invisible. Thereøs a common consensus on the **central tenets of intersectionality** such as, õintersectionality is the theory that race, gender, class, and sexuality are socially defined categories whose meanings are historically contingent (Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill 1996; Higginbotham 1997), specific locations in this matrix of intersecting hierarchies create a unique set of experiences that involve more than the sum of their parts and reflect the multiplicative nature of intersecting oppressions (Collins, 2000;King 1988), intersecting forms of domination create both oppression and opportunity (Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill, 1996), because, hierarchies of power are cross-cutting; it is likely that a person will be simultaneously advantaged by various identities and disadvantaged by othersö (Steinbugler et.al, 2006,pg. 808). There has been an understanding on how the gender/racial stereotypes about Blacks influence the Whiteøs opinions about two different affirmative action policies, there may be a stronger connection between Black women and affirmative action policies in the minds of U.S. Whites than assumed.

Intersectionality theory became a popular approach over the past fifteen years. The common principles of intersectionality theory are: õindividuals belong to multiple demographic categories

so, that the same individual has a specific gender, an ethnicity, and a social class position among others. Intersectionality theory focuses on the effect of categorical intersection above and beyond the effects of its componentsö (Dubrow, 2008,p. 86).

This study on õHow can we account for intersectionality in quantitative analysis of survey data?ö looked at examining the challenges of incorporating intersectionality into quantitative survey analysis, compare and contrast the unitary or additive approach with multiplicative approach and this approach was illustrated using European Social Survey data for Central and East European countries. The challenges with the quantitative method in terms of survey data is that surveys are usually not designed with intersectionality in mind and demographic categories are represented in a limited number of cases with which to construct intersections (Hancock 2007;66). Another challenge is how to choose among demographic items. The intersectionality paradigm focuses on õmasterö categories- demographics that are theorized to encompass all aspects of a personøs identity such as gender and may give way to õemergentö categories which are undiscovered. The unitary approach is a popular method. Its assumptions are that õdemographic categories have social properties distinct from the other characteristics of individuals, a separate category could be the best predictor of the dependent variableö. õMultiplicative approach is also called categorical (McCall, 2005).

Bowleg advocates (2008) that measuring intersectionality requires the researchers to ask good questions. The problem arises as to how to ask questions about experiences that are intersecting and interdependent. The assumption of the additive approach is that social inequality increases with each additional stigmatized identity. For example- õa Black lesbian would be multiply oppressed because of a combination of her ethnicity, sexual orientation and sex/genderö(Bowleg, 2008,p. 314).

 Bowleg argued that questions about intersectionality should focus on meaningful constructs such as stress, prejudice, discrimination rather than relying on demographic questions alone(Betancourt& Lopez,1993;Helms et.al 2005, Weber & Para- Medina,2003). Questions must be intersectional in nature. Despite criticism, additive approach is seen as a critical step. Cuadraz

& Uttal(1999) concede that isolating the meaning of each identity is an essential step to analyze each structural inequality separately.

The major issue within additive measure is that most of the statistical methods are inherently additive and this doesn¢t fully tap intersectionality. In an ANOVA, interactions are contingent on main effects when main effects are found to be significant, the probability of finding first order/higher order interactions significantly decreases (Bowleg, 2009). Under this research paradigm, there is a/the premise that multiple factors uniquely combine to define an individual¢s experience. This necessitates the statistical interactions. Regardless of qualitative/quantitative method, the data needs to be interpretated within the context of socio-historical and structural inequality.

Evidence indicates that there has been a greater attention being paid to individual and social diversity within the human and social sciences. This has occurred because of õa theoretical shift in conceptualizing identities as unstable, multiple and contextually produced;for example-intersectionality theory in feminist studies (Davis, 2008;Yuval-Davis, 2006), social diversity theories in both race and ethnicity studies (Hartmann and Gerteis, 2005) and the study of later life (Calasanti et.al, 2006;Daatland and Biggs, 2004), and queer theory on sexuality studies (Green, 2007; Seidman, 1995)ö (Cronin & King, pg. 877).

 Evidence indicates that the older LGB (lesbian, gay and bisexual; older in age) are represented as a largely stable, fixed and taken-for-granted identification (King and Cronin, 2010). While research indicates the differences that exist between homosexual and heterosexual adults in later life, recent research addresses the differences that exist between older LGB adults (Cronin and King, 2010).

Intersectionality approach is critical of additive approach that examines people¢s identities and inequalities as simply adding up to produce a greater degree of discrimination. For example, õan additive approach would posit that an individual older LGB adults could experience a double or triple inequality related to ageism, heterosexism and in the case of lesbian and bisexual women, sexismö (Cronin & King, 2010, p. 879).

An additive approach ignores these differences and wider social and political structures. And, the intersectionality approach emphasizes the need to examine the differences between within and between groups. õThe social diversity approaches attend to the numerous ways in which both cumulative and newly emergent inequalities experienced over the life course will lead to multiple, different realities in old age (Dannefer, 1996). This led to greater awareness of how gender, socio-economic status, race or ethnicity, alongside other forms of social and cultural diversity, impact on the lives of older peopleö (Arber and Ginn, 1991; Conway-Turner, 1999; Evandrou, 2000; McFadden, 2001) (Cronin & King, 2010,pg. 881).

Intersectionality approach emerged because of the discontent with the additive approach of merely summarizing the effect of dimension of inequality- such as gender, class, race or sexuality because, õIntersectionality stresses the interwoven nature of these categories and how they can mutually strengthen or weaken each other (Crenshaw, 1989)ö. However, there has been little clarity on methodologies for studying intersectionality.

But, this was seen as a problem since researchers in various disciplines have been working on this concept. Winker and Degele (2011) advocated a multilevel approach that focuses on social structures, including organizations and institutions (macro and meso level), as well as processes of identity construction (micro level) and cultural symbols (level of representation).

3.4.2. Sociology:

The social diversity approaches attend to the numerous ways in which both cumulative and newly emergent inequalities experienced over the life course will lead to multiple, different realities in old age (Dannefer, 1996). This led to greater awareness of how gender, socio-economic status, race or ethnicity, alongside other forms of social and cultural diversity, impact on the lives of older peopleö (Arber and Ginn, 1991; Conway-Turner, 1999; Evandrou, 2000; McFadden, 2001) (Cronin & King, 2010, pg. 881).

Following McCallø categorical approach, Walby (2007) distinguished the three categorical approaches: õanti-categorical complexity is seen as deconstruction of analytical categories such as gender and race, and focuses attention on ways in which concepts, terms and categories are

constructed; *intra-categorical complexity* focuses on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection, it is concerned with reconstructing intersections of single dimensions on a micro level; this approach fails to look at the larger questions ; *inter-categorical complexity* makes a strategic use of categories and analyses relations of multiple inequalities between socially constructed groups.

The study by Winker & Degele suggested a multiple level approach (2011) where the interactions of categories of difference at both a single level and at the three levels such as:

> identity constructions, ÷this is the doing different approach in which gender, class and ethnicity form and function simultaneously, refers to the interrelation of categories at the construction of identityø ; symbolic representation, ÷focuses on the structural power relationsø ; social structures**,** ÷under this, there is a focus on the identifying concrete relations of power and then analyzing their interrelatedness; there is a distinction between categories of class, gender, race and body on the socio-structural level and the focus is on the deduction of power relations of classisms, heteronormativims, racisms and bodyismsø (p. 55).

In disciplines of psychology, education and political science intersectionality approach is found to be relevant but, still, there are conceptual issues within the disciplines; therefore, the methodological challenges associated with this approach are not given much importance.

3.4. Issues in intersectionality across disciplines:

In the discipline of feminist studies, intersectionality approach was introduced to deal with the race, gender and class analysis as it remained a õhot topicö in the 1990øs. Various metaphors were used for this approach such as to describe this nature of intersection such asö triple oppression, interplay, interrelation, cumulative effects, interconnections (Belkhir, 1994);

interactive, triadic relation, overlapping, interactive systems (Belkhir, 1993:4); multiple jeopardy, meaning not only several simultaneous oppressions but also the multiplicative relations among them (King, cited in Barnett et.al., 1999;14), multiplicative, simultaneous, inter-connected systems of a whole (Barnett et.al., 1999:15)ö (Gimenez, 2001,p. 26).

Intersectionality has engaged scholars in the academia for a long time. There have been questions such as whether intersectionality is a paradigm (Hancock, 2007) or a theory of marginalized subjectivity or generalized identity (Nash, 2008) or if it should be considered a methodological approach (McCall , 2005)and as discussed before Walby et.al (2012) identified six dilemmas of intersectionality (McBride et.al, p. 2). Crenshawøs critique of the single axis framework prompts questions about research strategy and requires questioning whether researchers appreciate and acknowledge the implications of voices that are both present and missing (Holgate et.al., 2006).

Intersectionality leads to further questions such as õthe concept reminds us that there will be diversity within each category such that, again at the very least we should acknowledge the individuals within an intersectional space who maybe experiencing differently than those occupying one of the categories. Thereøs a need to be intersectionally sensitiveö (McBride et.al,2014, p. 5) This approach helps in dealing with questions such as, õHow does being intersectionally sensitive add to an already revealing study of gendered violence at work? An intersectionally sensitive approach would ask whether racial or class identities may lead to tolerate violenceö (McBride et.al,2014, p. 6).

Methodologically, the most popular qualitative techniques applied are biographical approach, feminist in-depth approach and grounded theory. There has been criticism about attribute based comparison studies. The additive approach was criticized for conceptualizing identities as, independent, mutually exclusive rather than interdependent and mutually constitutive. But, survey research was used with intersectionality approach. Survey research has been criticized by feminist scholars for not being able to capture the complexity of social relationships and identitiesö (Reinharz, 1992). But, surveys are found to be necessary to operationalize intersections of gender and race. The major challenge in the survey is to classify the survey

respondents into õwomenö or as õAfrican Americansö or õwomen and Blacksö or õwomen and minoritiesö.

Under the discipline of sociology, intersectionality was applied to understand the relationship between various social inequalities based on gender, class and ethnicity. Walby (2007, 2012) identified the dilemmas with the interesctionality approach such as, how to determine the points of intersection? There is an issue of reducing multiple identities into single axis of identity. Anti-categorical approach is another problem of deconstructing the identities. There have been various other complications with intersectionality approach such as, analyzing the disadvantage by keeping the powerful out of focus etc. There still has been no theoretical consensus on intersectionality approach.

Under the discipline of psychology, various multicultural and bicultural theories of identity for the psychological theory of gender donøt engage with the intersection of various identities. This led to the relevance of intersectionality approach to study the intersecting identities of gender, race, ethnicity and class. The main assumption in traditional psychology has been that individual is independent, one-dimensional and mutually exclusive. In real life-settings, it is the multiple social forces that shape individualøs experiences and behavioral outcomes.

In most of the research studies on academic achievement, factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class are taken as demographic characteristics of individuals rather than social categories that influence the psychological processes related to academic achievement. In various studies, these social categories have been controlled while analyzing any behavioral outcomes. In other studies, only the main effects of these social categories have been considered, no attempt has been made to analyze the higher order interactions. Evidences indicate that when the main effects are significant, the probability of higher order interactions to be significant decreases. Though, there is a need for intersectionality approach, methodological constraints are the main hurdles for the reluctance on the part of the psychologists to engage in the complexity of social reality due to limited methodological options.

Under the discipline of education, gender, class, disability, and other identities, and their intersections have major implications for studentøs experiences and outcomes in school.

Evidence indicates that õthe one-dimensional approach fails to account for the multidimensional identities of learners or the complex power relations that space their lived experiencesö (Sullivan et.al, 2010, p. 102). Intersectionality has been popular as critical theory and extensively applied to women studies but, this has found its relevance in educational research. Itøs a more comprehensive and holistic approach to understand individuals with intersecting multiple identities that shape their experiences.

Under the discipline of political science, the issue of belonging and unbelonging to various social categories has been analyzed from an intersectional perspective. The discipline found it challenging to accommodate multifaceted analyses to accommodate diversity of race, gender, class and ethnicity. There was a realization of gap that exists between theoretical approaches and methodologies. Dhamoon (2011) advocated the need for mainstreaming intersectionality as it will benefit political science and other social science disciplines in order to conduct and catalogue and interpret research.

Chapter 4: Contextualizing Intersectionality in the Philosophy of Method

4.1. Introduction:

The previous chapter of the thesis provided a detailed account of application of intersectionality approach in 5 major disciplines/interdisplinary areas of social sciences- Feminist Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Psychology and Education. It focused on the context, theoretical framework, methodological challenges and issues in the various disciplines on intersectionality approach. This approach has been maximally applied in the discipline of feminist studies.

Despite the relevance of intersectionality approach, there has been negligible use of this approach in the discipline of psychology.

The second chapter of this thesis focused on the analysis of the method part of the empirical studies on academic achievement that clearly indicated how the multiple social identities/categories have been treated merely as, demographic characteristics and as, independent variables. It is the belonging to these multiple social identities that leads to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stress. And, there has been just no attempt made by the psychologists to engage in the complexity of social reality. The most crucial reason for this reluctance on the part of psychologists are the methodological challenges with intersectionality approach. And, this breeds out from the old age tradition in mainstream psychology to engage in hypothesis testing and reaching the significant values. This is exactly what limits us in engaging with the complex social reality. This brings out the complexity with this approach.

So, this chapter focuses on developing a conceptual model of intersectionality approach which can be applied in the discipline of psychology. This chapter will look at contextualizing intersectionality in the philosophy of method. This would require bringing out the critique of the positivist paradigm on which psychology is based on and philosophically contextualizing intersectionality.

4.2. Critique of Positivist Psychology:

The mainstream psychology is focused on the individual and the individual is conceptualized as, independent, mutually exclusive and context free. Revisiting the previous chapters of the thesis, it can be argued that social categories such as, social class, gender, race and ethnicity are treated merely as, demographic characteristics rather than categories leading to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes in the context of academic achievement.

This brings out from the positivist paradigm in psychology that focuses on hypothesis testing, comparison and experimentation. Such a paradigm doesn't provide a holistic understanding of the social reality. Coming out from an understanding that, *"sum of parts is greater than the whole"* thereby, not providing a holistic picture of social reality. While, intersectionality approach conceptualizes an individual as, interdependent, mutually constitutive and context dependent and shows an intersection of social class, race, ethnicity and gender to understand the complex social reality. This approach is in line with the Gestalt psychology principle that, *"the whole is greater than sum of its parts."*

The major branches of psychology such as, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, humanistic psychology have always emphasized on the **individual self.** Referring to the Gergen's writings on *"Social Constructionism"* (1999)

> the beliefs of the individual self can be traced back to the Enlightenment era where the
>
> modernist beliefs were born. There existed the dominance of the rule of the church and
>
> the king that led to oppression of the less powerful. This era focused on , *"each*
>
> *individual is capable of observing the world for what it is, and deliberating about the best*
>
> *course of action- that is, the capacities to observe for oneself, to think, evaluate, and then*
>
> *to choose one's actions* (p. 7).

This emphasis on the individual self led to various philosophical traditions focuses on the *"inner world"* and the *"exterior world"*. This started with *"dualist ontology"* which is the reality of mind and of world. It led to the difficulty in understanding the causality within the physical world and the outer world. *"*The question of how the "mind stuff" produces changes in material or vice-versa remains unanswered*"* (Gergen, 1999, pg 8). There was *"monism"* which reflected the presumption that there's only one world. In the 19th century, there was *"philosophical idealism"* which advocated that there's only one world and it is in the mind. *"*The assertion is that all we can be sure of is our own experience (Descartes); the presumption that there is a

material world is something we generate within our minds*".* Another philosophical paradigm called *materialism* developed which advocated that there is only one world which is material. *"*From this standpoint, whatever the mind is the expression of material (brain) processes.ö But, this too raised questions such as, how do we come to know what is material? Also, reducing everything to material limits the tradition of individual self.

This positivist emphasis on the individual self lead to other set of problems of *epistemology* in terms of understanding of õ*How individual consciousness comes to have knowledge of the external world?* (Gergen, 1999, p.9). The empiricist advocated that the mind can be conceptualized as, a *mirror to nature* and all the knowledge can be derived from the experiences with the world. John Locke too advocated that an individual mind is at birth a blank slate or *tabula rasa* and the experiences of the world fills that slate. While, Francis Bacon; British Empiricist advocated that the knowledge of the world can be built by inductive reasoning; moving from observations to empirically based conclusions. (Gergen, 1999, p. 10).

But, these empiricist views were contested by another philosophical paradigm called *rationalism.* Rationalism advocated that it is the innate mental processes within the individual that dominate the construction of knowledge. Plato illustrated that individualøs relationship with material reality by the taking example of a*" cave in a way that we might imagine ourselves to be born in a cave, capable of observing only the shadows of objects cast upon the wall".* Immanual Kant argued that itøs the innate ideas that can help in understanding the world. There are mental concepts which help in shaping the world. (Gergen, 1999, p. 11).

But, the debates around the mental knowledge continued. Empiricist advocated that the concepts to understand the world are learnt through experience while; rationalist believed that there are concepts which are innate which can help in understanding the world. This led to questions such as, how are the new concepts emerging in the culture? How are the material events causing mental events?

The debates around *"inner world"* and *"external world"* led to unresolved questions around individual self and the construction of knowledge. The popular claims of objective knowledge are that such *"is based on the experience of the world as, opposed to subjective imagination"*

(Gergen, 1999, pg. 13). The questions around knowledge lead to questions around the concept of truth. *"Truth"* is believed when *"we accurately observe a phenomenon and accurately report on our observations. If everybody reaches the same conclusion, then, that conclusion is understood to be the truth"* (Gergen, 1999, p. 14). But, again there have been debates around if the concepts of truth and objectivity depends on states of knowing mind. *"*Philosophers have advocated the possibility of pure thought but, they have never been able to clarify how the thinker could look inside to know his/her thoughtsö (Gergen, 1999, p.15).

Itøs the Western tradition that engages in the generalization of scientific truths, reasons and moral values. The scientific truths are believed to be universal truth. Individuals are seen as, atoms and possessing emotions are seen as, cultural belief (Gergen, 1999, pg. 17). It was believed that before the Second World War Americans used to talk, share and laugh but, soon after; there has been an existence of individualism at work. The sense of individualism at work stem from the belief that each individual has the power of observation and reason. The rise of science, objectivity and truth begets from individual knowledge. The rise of science created a dominance of scientific method; methodologies, modes of analysis and reasoning. The biggest criticism of scientific method is that it ignores the *role of personal values, spiritual insights and commitment to other tradition.* Individual is reduced to an atom of society leading to a rigid tradition to evaluate measure and judge individuals (Gergen, 1999, p. 18).

This leads to ignoring the essential aspect of interdependence among individuals and how various behavioral phenomenon are mutually constitutive for individuals. This too much emphasis on õselfö while, ignoring the õotherö leads to instrumentality, focusing only on extrinsic worth and leading to a materialistic lifestyle.

Thereøs a sense of neutrality of science with no openness to critical scrutiny. Emily Martin elaborated about the rigid scientific method by the way biological science has conceptualized womenøs body in texts which are used in labs and classrooms. Science portrays womenøs body as, a õfactoryö whose essential function is to reproduce species. Processes of menstruation and menopause are seen as, wasteful as, they are judged as, periods of non-production. And, such,

descriptions are not neutral. These led to negative judgment about women who are childless. Herein, there's a need for an ideological critique demanding questioning of scientific truths, logic and reason (Gergen, 1999, p. 22-23). *"Such an ideological critique demands questioning the scientific truths, logics and reasons. Ideological critique is mostly used by Marxists and feminists and it is typically against those in power- who have wealth, position, privileges, and security"* (Gergen, 1999, p.23).

4.2.1 Social Constructionist Critique of Psychology-

It was believed that chief aim of social constructionist is to dismantle the scientific method (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 168). *"Social Constructionist has critiqued social psychological theories for being focused on unrealistic assumptions on individualism and universalism. And, the methodological approaches are too simplistic and are tautological".* (Jost, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 169).

There have been same roots of two intellectual traditions; experimental social psychology and social constructionism. The forefathers of social psychology Hegel, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Sinunel, Cooley, Dewey, and Mead have dealt both with objective and subjective analysis of social behavior and mind *(*e.g., Allport, 1962; Jones, 1985*)*. They managed to predict and were the first to address the relationship between individual and society; how individual and collective representations are intertwined *(*e.g., Gergen, 1998; McGuire, 1986; Moscovici, 1988*)*.

There are really **three** interrelated **critiques** that social constructionists advance against experimental social psychologists (see also Blank, 1988; Gergen, 1977b, l985a; Jackson, 1988). First, is the methodological critique on experimenter's overemphasis on objective methods and develop accurate theories of cause and effect of social behavior (e.g, Gergen, 1999*)*.

The social constructionist rejects the notion that it is possible to use scientific methods to devise a õMirror of Natureö *(*Rorty, 1979*)*.The scientific method has been heavily criticized as, it breeds out of individualism and abstract universalism. The way knowledge is constructed by experimental social psychologists is limited to specific socio-cultural historical contexts whereas, experimentalist generalize a lot about human nature *(*e.g., Gergen,1973*)*. *Gergen (1998) writes*

contentiously that õthe sociocognitive position [favored by experimental social psychologists] never fully escapes its Western roots and thus operates subtly as a form of Western imperialism*"* *(*p. 303*)*.

Gergen (1982) have argued that experimental social psychology reflects an impossibility of accurate representation of individuals; while, social constructionists reflect an openness to self-knowledge, contextual variation, skepticism etc.The major differences between the two paradigms exist in terms of method that experimental social psychologist retains to objectivist methods whereas, social constructionist reject the scientific method. (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 172). The rift between social constructionism and experimental social psychology exists on three issues- issue of truth; Experimental social psychologists view truth as, something to strive for while, social constructionists donøt believe the same. Experimentalists believe that itøs possible to make and test valid empirical statements about the complex reality (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 173). Second, point of contention between the two perspectives is the issue of language;

Social constructionist argued that scientific voices that shouldnøt be the dominant voices and thereøs a need for openness for different types of discourses (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 174). Third, point of contention between the two perspectives is the issue of politics; Experimentalist is indifferent to the political agenda of social constructionists. They donøt find it important for scientific inquiry. Jost (1995a) argued that the dismissal of ideological issues is a mistake, insofar as social psychological research is as relevant to society and politics as clinical psychological research is to mental health*"* (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, p. 175).

With the relevant critiques of experimental social psychology by the social constructionist paradigm there was a need felt for *"contextualist or perspectivist epistemologies that expand on previous philosophies of science and open the doors to an understanding of recursive and dynamic effects, the incorporation of historical and cultural variables, and the consideration of multiple levels of analysis"* (e.g., Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1995; Campbell, 1989, 1993; Cook & Campbell, 1979; Doise, 1986; Harrd & Secord, 1972; McGuire, 1973, 1983, 1989, 1997; Rosnow & Georgoudi, 1986). õDonald Campbell and William J. McGuire, both have abandoned the experimental method.

They are called *postpostivist.* They also applied reflexively social cognition to understand the scientific process leading to epistemological stance and reflexive application. In different ways, evolutionary critical realism and perspectivism merge social constructionism and experimental social psychology, and so they are valuable as meta-theoretical models for how to attempt integrationö (Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 176).

Campbellǿs (1989, 1993, 1994) philosophy of science (his so-called critical evolutionary realism) places greater emphasis on generating multiple hypothesis, introducing the process of selective retention; choosing among competing alternatives to arrive at compelling accounts of research design. His is a perspectivist epistemology. McGuireǿs *(*1973, 1983, 1989, 1997*)* starts with an assumption that all knowledge is flawed but, reflected trust in researcherǿs perspective towards theories and findings. He acknowledged the socio-cultural and historical limitations of scientific method but, he offers methodological recommendations on creating creative science and assess scientific notions and ideas ((Josh, Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 177).

Social constructionism also, gave a theory of personhood and identity. The following section focuses on contextualizing intersectionality in the philosophy of science. And, this section, explores various philosophical paradigms in terms of feminist theory, critical theory and social constructionism and the possibility of contextualizing interesctionality paradigm in any of them.

4.3. Contextualizing Intersectionality in the Philosophy of method:

The feminist theory builds on the recognition of the significance of addressing various questions in the research such as, *'power issue'* (whose research, research for whom, research in whose interests) and *the need to address the emancipatory element of research.* Positivist research conceptualizes the set of power relations existing in the Western society further, empowering the white, male-dominated research community thereby, excluding the disadvantaged groups of

society. While, feminist research aims to look at the empowerment, voice, emancipation, equality and representation of oppressed groups and recognizes the necessity of dealing with issues of power, silencing and voicing. *"In feminist research, women's consciousness of oppression, exploitation and disempowerment became the focus of the research which was the paradigm of ideology critique".*

But, the feminist theories tends to generalize the category of *"women"* thereby excluding the interests of women of color leading to *identity politics.* The mainstream feminist movement has also been criticized for over-identification of interests and because White women constitute the dominant group in the American women's movement they have created the õ*essential women, a model of the gender experience of all women that ignores the critical differences between women. The essential woman is white, heterosexual, middle class and has been placed on a pedestal by white patriarchy* (SouthWell, 1994, p. 361). And, it's this dissatisfaction led to the intersectionality paradigm.

Crenshaw(1989, 1990) in her pioneer work argued that *"feminist and anti racist discourses hasn't focused on intersectional identities such as, women of color and she looks at how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism"* (Crenshaw, pg. 1244). Intersectionality is seen as, õa way of mediating tension between multiple identities and the assertion of group politics**"** (Crenshaw, p 1296).

 Crenshaw's work analyzed at the intersection of race and gender in the context of violence against women by narratives of battered women's shelters located in minority community in Los Angeles. Many women of color are burdened by poverty, child care responsibilities and the lack of job skills and these are result of intersection of race and gender oppression. This influences the intervention and affirmative policies. Intersectionality brings critiques the sense of homogenizing and stereotyping Black men as, offenders and white women as, victim's thereby, not focusing on the violence experienced by Black women.

Intersectionality theory paradigm goes beyond the feminist studies paradigm. Further, social constructionism attempts to provide a theory of identity. *"Social constructionism in psychology began as a theory of personhood and identity (e.g., Gergen, 1971, 1977b, 1982; Gergen & Davis,*

1985). Specifically, it was claimed that the self-concept is socially constructed, meaning that it emerges and changes in the context of social interaction with others. Rather than being fixed, stable, and unitary, therefore, the self-concept was hypothesized to be flexible, dynamic, and multifaceted.

Innumerable experiments have demonstrated that individual behavior is determined by a variety of contextual features, including the norms and characteristics of social groups with which people identify, the history and nature of relations between groups, and structural features of the situation in which groups find themselves(Hogg& Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1981; Turner &Oakes, 1986).

4.3.1. Table 1 reflects the major proponents of Intersectionality approach.

PROPONENTS OF INTERSECTIONALITY APPROACH	MAIN ARGUMENTS (Contribution)
1. **Crenshaw**(1989, 1991)	• Provided a critique of the invisibility of black women at the intersection of

	race/ethnicity and gender. • Produced a critique of Identity Politics paradigm. • Provided this insight that it was the lack of understanding of intersection of race and gender that led to marginalization of black women and their experiences.
2. **McCall**(2005)	• Intra- categorical approach- focus on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection. • Anti-categorical approach- Deconstruction of analytical categories. • Inter-categorical Approach- Focuses on existing analytical categories to understand relationships of inequality among social groups. McCall recommends the inter-categorical approach as, it engages with larger structures that generate inequalities.
3. **Hancock** (2007)	• Unitary Approach- only one category is examined which is primary and stable. • Multiple Approach- more than one category having stable relationships with each other. • Intersectional Approach- More than one category that mutually constitute each other.

Reference-Walby, Armstrong and Strid (2012). Intersectionality: Multiple Inequalities in social theory. *Sociology.* 46(2), 224-240.

Social identity researchers have brought about a veritable transformation in the study of group dynamics and intergroup relations by investigating the fluid, socially constructed character of

identification processes*" (Jost & Kruglanski, 2002, pg. 178). But, the intersection of contextual factors such as, social class, gender, race, ethnicity hasnøt been focused upon both theoretically and empirically in this paradigm too which is the main assumption in the interesctionality paradigm.

Intersectionality paradigm in various disciplines of social sciences is still being debated at the theoretical and methodological level despite, its genuine relevance to understand the complex social reality. Itøs a complex task to contextualize intersectionality paradigm into a philosophical tradition since, it goes beyond the feminist paradigm and social constructionist paradigm.

4.4 Intersectionality As, a Method:

Intersectionality approach has been largely debated at the philosophical level, theoretical level and also, the methodological challenges in using intersectionality approach as, a method has been explored in various social science disciplines. Though, under the discipline of psychology, only the relevance and the need to use intersectionality approach has been reflected upon in one or two studies. But, to be able to understand how to use intersectionality approach as, a method in empirical studies can be extremely useful for the psychologists. This would require us to deeply understand how intersectionality method has been used in the discipline of feminist studies and sociology.

4.4.1. Feminist studies:

Under the discipline of feminist studies initially, to study the race, class and gender analysis; 3 major methods were used namely: History and Biography approach, feminist in-depth interviewing and the grounded theory.

Cuadraz and Uttal (1999) elaborated the two qualitative studies they engaged with from the race, gender and class perspective. *Cuadraz conducted 40 topical life histories with a political generation of Chicanos and Chicanas who entered doctoral programs at a major research*

university between 1967-1979. This study aimed at capturing individualøs experiences at the higher education institutions under ambit of changing social and historical context.

Uttal conducted 32 in-depth interviews with a socioeconomic and racially diverse group of employed mothers to learn about how they perceived their experiences with making, maintaining and changing childcare arrangements for preschool aged children. This survey based research analyzed the relationship between motherøs characteristics and various child care arrangements and satisfaction levels. The child care research earlier only examined the demographics and economics of child care but, put no attention to social and cultural factors involved in child care practices. So, Uttaløs research was developed to explore the child care issues concerning the employed mothers (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, p. 161).

But, this kind of research led to various questions leading to sampling dilemmas. This particular research raised questions such as, *"What claims about race, class, and gender can be made if the sample does not include comparative subsamples? Second, to what extend in the analysis can researchers overlay the social categories of race, gender and class onto the accounts of interviewees? Third, how does one explain the intersections between structures and biography while, also, analyzing the intersections of multiple structures of race, class and gender?"* (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, pg- 162).

The greater sampling dilemma in using interesectionality method is who should be included in the sample, how should they be included and how many? How homogenous or diversified does the sample need to be to have a comprehensive race, class and gender analysis? The in-depth interview studies tends to prefer small homogenous samples and the method of grounded theory collects data from small, nonrandom samples identified through purposive sampling.

The use of small homogenous samples in the race, gender and class analysis have been critiqued because the validity of racially- specific claims made in studies of women of color are challenged when no racially comparative group of whites is included in the sample (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, pg- 163) This brings to the larger dilemma that how to address the relations between the inequalities without leaving the actions of the powerful within each set of unequal social relations out of focus? (Walby et.al, 2004 p.236-237).

The 2 major critiques of qualitative methods is one, the need to have comparison groups when people of color are the unit of analysis and second, challenging *the typicality/ normality of one's group's experiences*. This reflects the limitation of positivist social science research methods and also, the limitation of psychological research wherein the common practice is to conceptualize race, class and gender as, individual's demographic characteristic and sub groups are needed to see if there are any differences. If there are statistical differences between the groups; then, it is concluded that it is the gender, race or class causing a difference in the individuals. But, if there are no differences then, the finding is problematic and is concluded that gender, race or class has no significance (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, p- 164).

The other sampling dilemma is about the sampling descriptions on how to conduct qualitative research. The purposive sampling or the theoretical sampling used initially is not the same as, that of final stages of sampling. So, the sampling is not clearly defined. õA common recommendation to resolve this sampling dilemma is to simply collect larger sample sizes which will provide greater representation in the different comparative cells. (Cuadraz & Uttal, 1999, p. 166).

4.4.1.1 Table 2 – Conceptual differences among approaches to the study of race, gender, class and other categories of difference in political science.

Approach	Unitary Approach	Multiple Approach	Intersectional Approach
1. How many categories are addressed?	One	More than one	More than one
2. What is the relationship between categories?	Category is examined is primary.	Categories matter equally in a pre determined relationship to each other.	Categories matter equally; the relationship between categories is an open empirical question.
3. How are categories conceptualized ?	Static at the individual or institutional level	Static at the individual or institutional level	Dynamic interaction between individuals and institutional factors.
4. What is the presumed makeup of each category?	Uniform	Uniform	Diverse; members often differ in politically significant ways.
5. What levels of analysis are considered feasible in a single analysis?	Individual or institutional.	Individual or institutional.	Individual integrated individual integrated with institutional
6. What is the methodologica l conventional wisdom?	Empirical or theoretical; Single method preferred; multiple method possible.	Empirical or theoretical; Single method sufficient; multiple method desirable.	Empirical or theoretical; Multiple method necessary and sufficient.

Reference- Hancock, A(2007). When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as, a Research Paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*. 5(1), 63-79.

Research done with Black Lesbians indicate the use of intersectionality method. Two studies, The Black Lesbian Stress and Resilience Study (BLSR), a mixed methods study with Black Lesbians in southern California (Bowleg et.al, 2008, 2004, 2003) and a qualitative study with a subsample of Black lesbians in Washington, DC who were part of the Trials and Tribulations Study (TT), a larger study of Black Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (Bowleg, 2008, p 312-313).

This research made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. This research provided clear insights about using intersectionality method in research. One, no part of the questions should even, hint at addition. For example- I would like you to tell me about some of the day-to-day challenges that you face as, a Black Lesbian women. This question clearly taps the experience resulting from an intersection of race, gender and sexual orientation of the individuals. The challenges with interpretating intersectionality data is how to handle intersectionality data that are more implicit than explicit; and the additive assumption implicit in both qualitative and quantitative analytical strategies (Bowleg, 2008, pg. 315-17).

Under the ambit of intersectionality method mainly, additive and multiplicative approaches are used. The additive approach is heavily criticized since, additive approach reflects a notion that social identities and inequality that are intersectional can be separated, treated independently, or added (Collins 1995; Cuadraz and Uttal 1999; Weber and Parra-Medina 2003). But, still addition is seen as, an important step as, isolating the meaning of each identity is an important analytical step (Bowleg, 2008, pg. 319).

Bowleg(2008) advocated that Most of the statistical methods used in psychology are implicitly additive, even, when testing for interactions.

> In an ANOVA, interactions are contingent on the size of main interactions. For example- when significant main effects exist, the probability of finding significant first order (two-way interaction) or higher order interactions decreases because the significant main effects account for bulk of the variance in the dependent variable (for e.g; discrimination;

Landrine et.al., 1995). This problem is not trivial for intersectionality researchers because the multiple social identities define individual⌀s experience. A finding of significant main effects for all variables would signal a lower probability of finding a significant higher order interaction(p. 319).

This is the biggest challenge that restricts psychologists from using intersectionality method in research since, the positivist psychological research emphasizes too much on achieving the significant values. This obstructs psychologists from dwelling into the complex social reality.

4.5. The Way Forward:

For researchers interested in designing and conducting intersectionality research, the assumption of intersectionality approach that individuals are interdependent, mutually constitutive and context bound rather than independent, mutually exclusive and context free poses a variety of thorny methodological challenges. These challenges shape key aspects of the research process such as measurement, data analysis, and interpretation.

 Asking good questions is vital to intersectionality research too, but doing so well can be quite challenging. õAsking questions about experiences that are intersecting, interdependent, and mutually constitutive, without resorting, even inadvertently, to an additive approach*"* (Bowleg, 2008, p. 314). The additive approach advocates that with each stigmatized identity, the social inequality increases. Critics reject the additive approach because it conceptualizes people⌀s experiences as separate, independent, and summative (Collins 1995; Cuadraz and Uttal 1999; Weber and Parra-Medina 2003).

Furthermore, they disavow the additive approach⌀s implication that one⌀s identities and/or discrimination based on these identities can be ranked (Collins 1991; Cuadraz and Uttal 1999; Weber and Parra-Medina 2003). Questions about intersectionality should focus on meaningful constructs such as stress, prejudice, discrimination rather than relying on demographic questions alone (Betancourt and Lopez 1993; Helms et al. 2005; Weber and Parra-Medina 2003). Second, questions should be intersectional in design; that is they ought to tap the interdependence and

mutuality of identities rather than imply as the BLSR (Bowleg et al. 2008, 2003) and TT (Bowleg, manuscript in preparation) studies of Bowleg et al. did, that identities are independent, separate, and able to be ranked.

4.5.1 Table 3- Influence of 3 questions of intersectionality approach and their influence on research cycle.

Research stage	Who is included within this category?	What Role does inequality play?	Where are the similarities?
Generation of Hypotheses	Is attuned to diversity within categories.	Literature review attends to social and historical contexts of inequality.	May be exploratory rather than hypothesis testing to discover similarities.
Sampling	Focuses on neglected groups.	Category memberships mark groups with unequal access to power and resources.	Includes diverse groups connected by common relationships to social and institutional power.
Operationalization	Develops measures from the perspective of the group studied.	If comparative, differences are conceptualized as, stemming from structural stemming from structural inequality (upstream) rather than as primarily individual level differences.	Views social categories in terms of individual and institutional practices rather than primarily as, characteristics of individuals.
Analysis	Attends to diversity within a group and may be conducted separately for each group studied.	Tests for both similarities and differences	Interest is not limited to differences.

Interpretation of findings	No group's findings are interpreted to represent a universal or normative experience.	Differences are interpreted in light of group's structural positions	Sensitivity to nuanced variations across group is maintained even when similarities are identified.

Reference- Cole, E.R. (2009). Intersectionality and Research in Psychology, *American Psychologist*, 64, 170-180.

Table 3 indicates the Implications of Intersectionality Approach for Each Stage of the Research Process. There's a clearer reflection on how intersectionality approach impacts each stage of research such as, generation of hypothesis, sampling, operationalization, analysis and interpretation of findings.

4.6. Conclusion of the Dissertation:

This dissertation had major research objectives. One, was to analyze the research work in the area of academic achievement with special focus on the influence of multiple social identities/categories on the academic achievement. This objective was worked on in this dissertation in Chapter-2. Here, firstly, the individual and contextual factors influencing academic achievement were deeply explored by various empirical employing cognitive paradigm, meta-cognitive paradigm, motivational paradigm, role of parents, peers, social class and gender. Further, the scope of intersectionality was analyzed by focusing on the method section of various empirical work done in the area of academic achievement. It was found from those studies as to how the social categories such as social class, race, gender, ethnicity are understood as demographic characteristics rather than as categories leading to experiences of discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes. This affirmed the age-old tradition of psychologists to only engage in hypothesis testing rather than engaging deeply to the complex reality of individuals that could help in understanding the complexity of academic achievement.

The second objective of this dissertation was to engage in a review of literature on intersectionality across social science disciplines with special focus on the theoretical frameworks and methodology. This objective was worked on in Chapter-3 focused on conceptualizing intersectionality approach. Here, the intersectionality approach has been deeply explored and stated in terms of context of disciplines, theoretical frameworks, methodological challenges and the issues existing in various disciplines around the intersectionality approach. This analysis clearly reflected that in the discipline of psychology intersectionality approach is hardly known and hence there∅s a clear need to incorporate it. In the other disciplines works on intersectionality approach reflected the complexity involved in using and engaging with this approach.

The third objective of this dissertation was to propose the way intersectionality approach could be used in psychological research with special focus on the area of academic achievement. This was dealt with by first critiquing positivist psychology philosophically and then, contextualizing the intersectionality approach into the philosophy of method. It was realized that this approach goes beyond social constructionism and feminist paradigm and is still being debated by various disciplines at the theoretical and methodological level. It was seen how other disciplines have used this approach in terms of method. Lastly, there is a clear understanding on how this approach affects various stages of research and this has been stated in a table.

  The critical gap existing in the literature on academic achievement has been pointed out. And, it has been argued, this can be filled in by adopting an intersectionality approach. But, the exploration of intersectionality approach in various disciplines has indicated the complexity and challenges involved in this approach; and also, how this approach affects the research cycle.

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