10.9 CLASSPATH Environment Variable

By default the Java run-time system search the class file at the current location. But if we talk about packages, it must not be stored at the same location. Therefore, we have to provide the path, where packages and class path are stored. The CLASSPATH is a user defined environment variable that is used by Java to determine where predefined classes are located. The CLASSPATH is also used by the Java Virtual Machine to load classes.
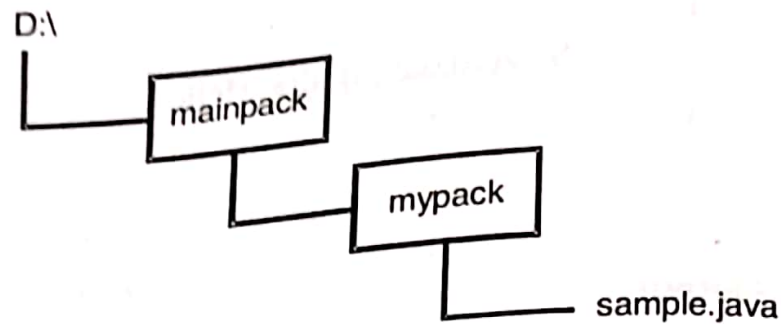
CLASSPATH can be set in two ways :

(a) **By giving the command at command prompt.**

set CLASSPATH=<package path>

Example 10.13

The **mypack** package is created in d:\mainpack. We want to store the class file of **sample.java** in it. The directory structure for this package is

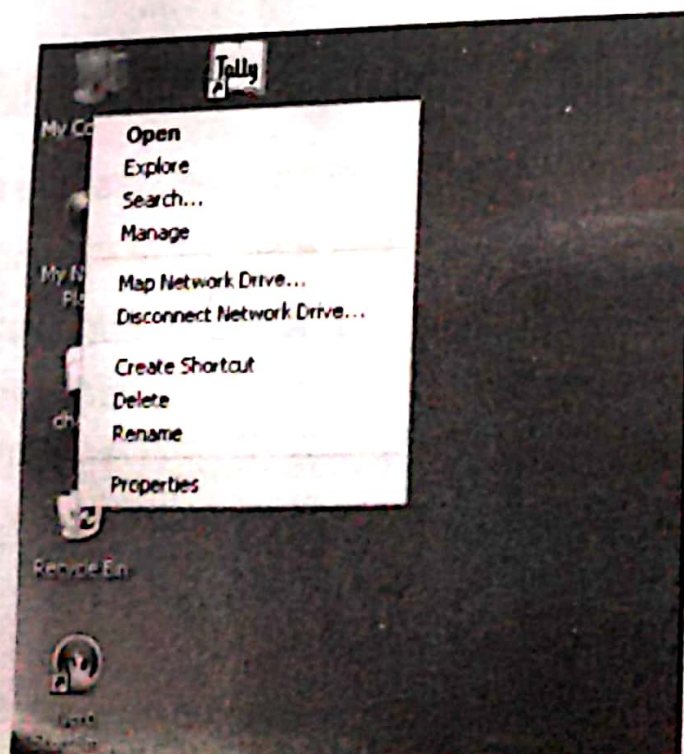Then the CLASSPATH needs to be set location of the package accordingly shown as :

$$C:\triangleright \text{ set CLASSPATH} = .; D:\backslash \text{ mainpack };$$

Now, Java will look for java classes from the current directory instead of the "**D:\mainpack**" directory.

(b) Set the **CLASSPATH** using environment variable in windows.

Steps are :

(i) Right click on **My computer** icon as shown in figure 10.3.

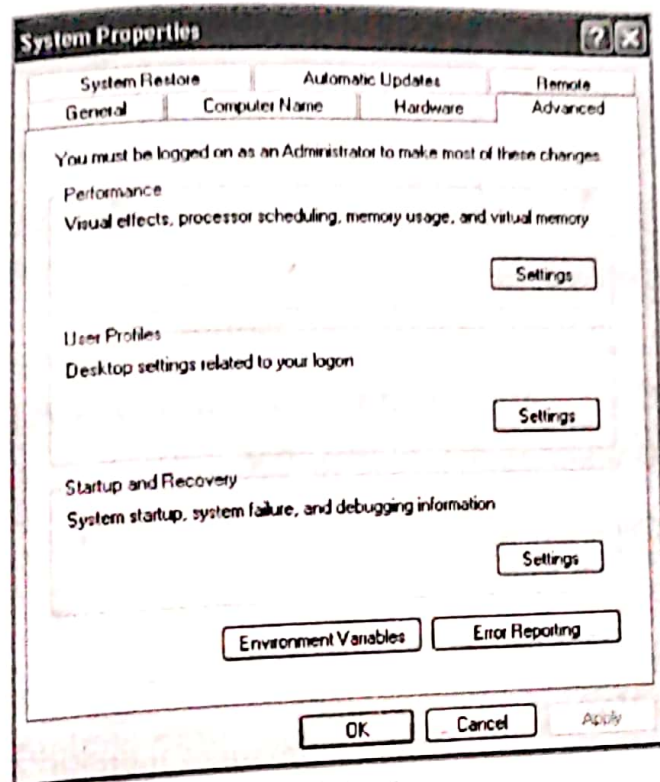(ii) Select **properties**. System properties dialog box appears as shown in figure 10.4.

FIGURE 10.4

(iii) Click on **Advanced** tab. Click on **Environment Variables** button. Environment variables dialog box appears as shown in figure 10.5.
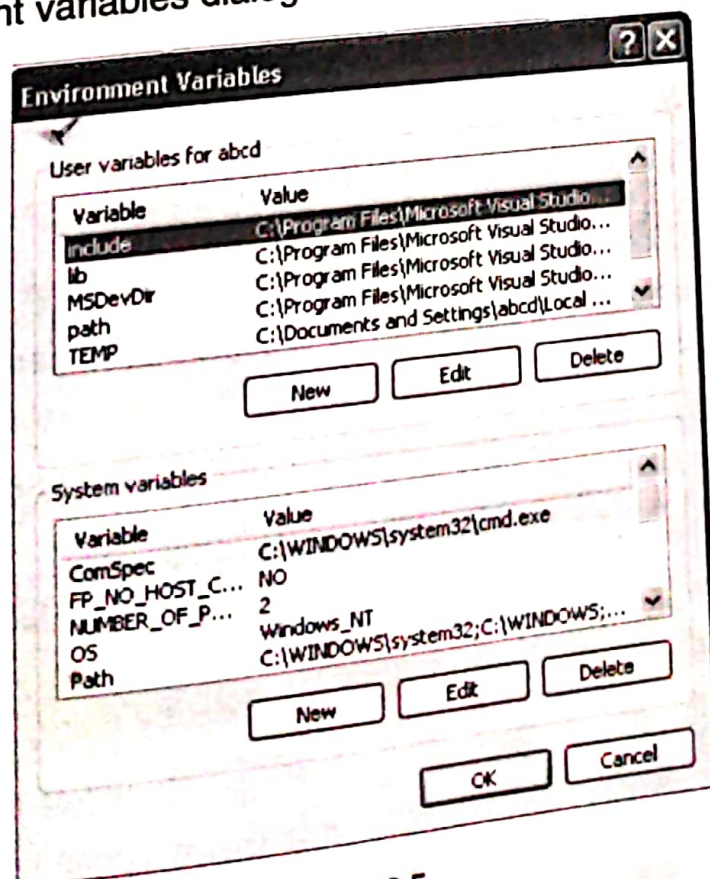

FIGURE 10.5

(iv) Click on **New** button in user variables for owner area. **New User Variable** dialog box appears as shown in figure 10.6.
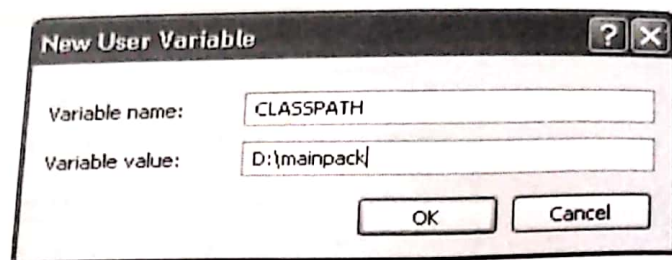
New User Variable		?X
Variable name:	CLASSPATH	
Variable value:	D:\mainpack|	
	OK	Cancel

FIGURE 10.6

(v) Give **Variable name** as CLASSPATH and **Variable value** as D:\mainpack and click **OK**.

(vi) Click **OK** again. Now the CLASSPATH environment variable has been set.

Note : This is permanent method. Command prompt method is temporary.