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# UNIT 1 DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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For laypersons, the term personality is often understood in terms of being good looking, attractive etc. They go by the impression created by the person concerned. The ability to talk and interact with others pleasantly in addition to being good looking, would make others say that the person concerned has a good personality. Persons who do not have good looks or not well dressed or do not interact adequately are considered to have poor personality. But scientifically this is not a true concept of personality. In fact, psychologists consider any attempt to define personality in terms of social attractiveness inadequate because of two reasons, first it limits the number and types of behaviour considered important and worthy for incorporation into the study of personality. Second, such notion carries the absurd implication that some people who have unique abilities and temperament traits are devoid of having a personality. In this unit we will be dealing with the definition of personality as put forward by psychologists. Definition of personality will be presented as given by Gordon Allport and there will be a discussion of the concept of personality development. Under Personality development, various factors contributing to the same will be discussed including the biological, psychological and environmental factors.

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## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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After the reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Define personality and describe the nature of personality;
- Elucidate the concept of personality;
- List the characteristic features of personality;
- Explain the factors that contribute to the development of personality; and
- Identify the environmental factors that influence personality development.

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## 1.2 DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF PERSONALITY

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The term personality is often understood in terms of social attractiveness. A good personality is considered to be one who impresses other people and who has the ability to get on well with others. Those who do not possess such ability are said to have relatively poor personality. However if one considers personality from a scientific point of view, being attractive to others is not a true concept of personality. In fact, psychologists consider any attempt to define personality in terms of social attractiveness as inadequate because of two reasons, (i) it limits the number and types of behaviours considered important and worthy for incorporation into the study of personality and (ii) such a notion implies that some people who have unique abilities, temperament and traits are devoid of having a personality.

Psychologists have attempted to explain the concept of personality in terms of individuality and consistency. We often observe that people differ a great deal in the ways they think, feel and act and that too in different or even same situations. This distinctive pattern of behaviour helps one to define one's identity. Commenting upon the notion of individuality, it has been said that each of us in certain respects is like all other persons, like some other persons and like no other person who has been in the past or will be existing in future (Kluckhohn & Murray, 1953).

Another important notion in defining the concept of personality is consistency. In other words it can be stated that the concept of personality also rests on the observation that a person seems to behave somewhat consistently in different situations over different time. From this observation of perceived consistency comes the notion of personality traits that determine the way of responding to one's world.

Combining these notions of individuality and consistency, personality can be defined as the distinctive and unique ways in which each individual thinks, feels and acts, which characterise a person's response throughout life. In other words, it can be said that personality refers to all those relatively permanent traits, dispositions or characteristics within the person that give some measure of consistency to the person's behaviour. These traits may be unique, common to some groups or shared by the entire species but their pattern will be different from individual to individual.

The thoughts, feelings and actions that are perceived as reflecting an individual's personality typically have three characteristics

- i) Thoughts, feelings and actions are considered as behavioural components of identity that make distinction between individuals
- ii) Behaviours are viewed as being primarily caused by internal rather than environmental factors.
- iii) The behaviours of the person seem to have organisation and structure.

Behaviours of an individual seem to fit together in a meaningful way. It is to be kept in mind that the nature of behaviours is dynamic and there may occur changes in the organisation and structure of behaviours over a period of time. It is in this sense that Allport (1937, 1961), defined personality as the dynamic organisation within the person of the psychophysical systems that determine the unique adjustments to one's environment. This suggests that there is an inner personality that guides and directs individual's behaviour. Allport the man who has done more than anyone to shed light on the myriad meaning of the term personality analysed 50 definitions of personality, and finally put forward his own definition of personality mentioned above.

For better distinct understanding of the term personality, it is essential that it should not be confused with character and temperament. While the term character refers to the value judgements, which are made about a person's moral values or ethical behaviour, the term temperament refers to the inborn enduring characteristics such as adaptability, irritability etc. However, both character and temperament are vital parts of personality.

### **Self Assessment Questions 1**

- 1) Who has said that personality is the dynamic organisation of traits?
  - a) Eysenck
  - b) Allport
  - c) Murray
  - d) None of them.
- 2) Which of the followings are regarded as component of behavioural identity of personality?
  - a) Thoughts
  - b) Feelings
  - c) Actions
  - d) All.
- 3) Human behaviours are largely determined by:
  - a) Internal factors
  - b) Environmental factors
  - c) Both
  - d) Neither.
- 4) Which one is the inborn enduring characteristics of the personality?
  - a) Traits
  - b) Character
  - c) Temperament
  - d) None of these.
- 5) Personality has been understood as largely the combination of:
  - a) Trait and temperament
  - b) Consistency and individuality
  - c) Value and attitude
  - d) Character and temperament.

## 1.3 PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The development of personality has been a topic of interest for the personality psychologists right from the time the term came into existence. Psychologists have tried to identify those factors which directly or indirectly influence the growth and development of personality. Although there are a large number of factors, which influence the development of personality, such factors have been broadly grouped into three general categories and these are given below.

- 1) Biological factors,
- 2) Psychological factors,
- 3) Environmental factors.

Since these factors tend to determine the way personality develops they are also called as determinants of personality. These three sets of factors are discussed here in detail.

### 1.3.1 Biological Factors

Biological determinants also called as physical determinants emphasise that physique and body functioning are directly responsible for personality development. Some of these factors are: (i) Body build (ii) Physical attractiveness (iii) Homeostasis (iv) Physical defects (v) Health conditions.

- i) **Body build:** Body build influences personality directly by determining what an individual can and cannot do, as well as what the individual's reaction will be to all those whose body builds are superior or inferior.

Some of the known body builds are (i) ectomorph (ii) endomorph, and (iii) mesomorph.

Ectomorphs are persons who are tall and thin in their body builds. They have been generally found to be superior to Endomorphs who have round and soft body builds. The superiority is especially in speed and endurance. Likewise, mesomorphs who are strong and muscular in their body builds have been found to be superior to both ectomorphs and endomorphs in activities like speed, endurance and agility.

It has also been reported that body build of an individual affects the person's self-concept, which is an important constituents of personality. This self concept can be favourable or unfavourable. For instance if the body build allows the person to do things that are socially desirable, prestigious and better than others it would contribute to positive self concept about oneself. On the other hand if it allows the person to do things which are not favourable or positive or ends up in failure, it would lead to poor or negative self concept.

- ii) **Physical attractiveness:** Physical attractiveness is another physical component that affects the development of personality. An attractive person of any age is more appealing than a person who is unattractive. Brislin & Lewis (1968) have commented that it is very much rewarding to be with someone who is physically attractive. Generally, it has been found that the people tend to be more tolerant in their attitudes and judgements of an attractive person. That is the reason why a pretty child is less likely to be punished or criticised for troublesome behaviour than a simple looking

homely child. In business circle, an attractive worker may be less efficient and less conscientious than an unattractive worker and yet, the attractive worker is relatively more likely to get promotion sooner than the unattractive one.

- iii) **Homeostasis:** Homeostasis is another important determinant. It refers to the maintenance of a stable internal environment through relatively having normal temperature, normal level of blood sugar, normal level of blood pressure, proper water balance, etc. When any of these conditions is upset, disequilibrium starts and disturbances in homeostatis results. Homeostatis or disturbances in it, has a significant impact upon personality both directly or indirectly.

Directly, the effect of homeostatis is seen in relaxed, controlled and socially acceptable behaviour patterns of the person who is feeling well both physically and psychologically. When the level of homeostasis is disturbed, behaviours like irritability, indigestion, insomnia and other uncomfortable states often result.

#### *Disturbances in homestasis*

Disturbances in homestasis also affects personality indirectly. It affects personality through the way the person reacts to what he thinks and believes to be the attitudes of some significant people in his life. For example, a person who is above average in physical stature in comparison to his age and sex group, because of excessive hormonal discharge will respond to his superior size in one of the two ways. If his superior size is viewed favourably by others, his reaction will be positive and therefore, disturbance in homeostasis will thus have a favourable impact upon the development of personality. But if his size proves to be a social handicap and others ridicule it, his reactions will be negative and the effect in the disturbance of homeostasis will be unfavourable.

Some studies have very clearly shown that development of personality is affected by homeostasis or lack of it. For example, when the blood sugar goes above the normal range, depressive mental states tend to follow. Severe deficiency in vitamin B complex results in increased level of emotionality and depression. High blood pressure frequently produces neuroticism. Anoxia or reduction in the amount of oxygen in the inspired air, as it happens in asthma, causes emotional outbursts, mental confusion and self-criticism.

- iv) **Physical defects:** Physical defects are another determiners. The first scientific study showing the impact of physical defect upon personality has come from Alfred Adler's theory of organ inferiority. Today several studies have been conducted to examine the direct and indirect impact of physical defects upon personality. Obesity is one of the popular physical defect. Obesity proves to be a handicap in social relationship because the obese person is unable to keep up with his contemporaries. Obesity also affects the personality indirectly. Awareness of unfavourable attitude towards obesity makes the person feel not only inferior but also they develop the feeling of being socially scorned. Not only this, some researchers have also pointed out that massively obese individuals become more disturbed perhaps because of less self-satisfaction and cumulative adverse comment from others.



### *Health conditions*

Health conditions also affect the development of personality. At all ages and in both sexes good health is considered as a personality asset and poor health is a liability. There are ample evidences to support it. Many personality changes result from poor health conditions and tend to continue even after the illness has been cured or its severity has been lessened. This is especially true during childhood when the personality is in the formative stages. Many personality changes and disturbances in adolescents and adults have their root in illnesses during the early years of childhood (Martin & Vincent, 1960).

It has also been found that persons having illness like diabetes, etc., experience tension and anxiety which causes frustration in dealing with the demands of social environments. As a result of frustration, they become aggressive and often turn their aggression towards others. Physical disturbances like the female irregular menstrual cycle often lead to emotional instability accompanied by a tendency to be irritable and depressed. This increases their level of emotionality and the heightened emotionality is reflected in poor social adjustment and decrease in social activities, ultimately affecting women's self-concept and the attitudes towards other people.

#### **Self Assessment Questions 2**

- 1) Tall and thin body builds are the characteristics of:
  - a) Mesomorph
  - b) Ectomorph
  - c) Endomorph
  - d) None of these.
- 2) Homeostatis refers to:
  - a) Disturbances in the internal balance of the body
  - b) Maintenance of a stable internal environment
  - c) Maintenance of even rate of oxygen utilisation
  - d) Maintenance of normal level of blood sugar and blood pressure.
- 3) Homeostasis affects the self-concept:
  - a) Only in a positive way
  - b) Only in a negative way
  - c) Both positively and negatively
  - d) Has no effect.
- 4) Which is Not the physical determinants of personality?
  - a) Homeostasis
  - b) Physical attractiveness
  - c) Body builds
  - d) Gender
- 5) High blood pressure is generally associated with causation of:
  - a) Neuroticism
  - b) Depression
  - c) General nervousness
  - d) None of these.

### **1.3.2 Psychological Factors**

Several psychological factors tend to determine the development of personality. Among those factors the following can be specially discussed because of their importance. These include:

- i) Intellectual determinants
- ii) Emotional determinants
- iii) Self disclosure
- iv) Aspiration and achievements

The above are being discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **1.3.2.1 Intellectual Determinants**

These are one of the important factors which influence the development of personality. Researchers are of view that intellectual capacities influence personality through various kinds of adjustments in life and indirectly through the judgments other persons make of the individual on the basis of the person's intellectual achievements.

This judgment in turn affects the evaluation and consequently the development of personality. Intellectually bright men and women make better personal and social adjustments than those of average or below average intelligence.

Several studies bear testimony to the fact that bright men and women are generally introspective, thoughtful, creative, adventuresome and have strong concern with problems, meanings and values. They are found to show a wider interest especially in the theoretical and aesthetic areas. Since they have greater and stronger mental ability, they have better control over themselves.

However, having very superior intelligence affects personality development unfavourably because it creates special problems which are not encountered by those persons who are merely bright. These various problems result in the development of a personality pattern, which is characterised by the traits like negativism, intolerance, habits of chicanery, emotional conflicts, solitary pursuit, self-sufficiency, dominance, etc. Evidences also have provided support to the fact that intellectual capacities also influence development of values, morality and human.

### **1.3.2.2 Emotional Determinants**

These are other important factors that shape the development of personality. Emotions are considered important personality determinants because they affect personal and social adjustment. Research has shown that several aspects of emotions like dominant emotions, emotional balance, emotional deprivation, excessive love and affection, emotional expressions, emotional catharsis and emotional stress directly and indirectly affect the development of personality.

Some people experience a predominance of pleasant emotions while others experience a predominance of unpleasant emotions. This predominance affect the development of personality. The cheerful persons are usually happy and even when they are in a depressive mood they can see the brighter side of things. Likewise, since apprehensive persons are full of fear, they even when there is a happy or enjoyable situation, feel depressed and remain afraid. Emotional balance which is a condition in which pleasant emotions outweigh the unpleasant emotion, is considered essential to good social and personal adjustment.

When the person encounters with obstacles and problems, unpleasant experiences like fear, anger, envy and other negative emotions are aroused. As a consequence,

the person's adjustments are adversely affected. Such conditions in the long run are responsible for development of many pathological traits in the person. Also emotional deprivation of pleasant emotions like love, happiness and curiosity also has an impact, which gradually leads to poor personal and social adjustment.

Research has revealed that impact of emotional deprivation depends upon the extent to which a person is emotionally deprived in addition to the duration of emotional deprivation as well as upon the age at which it occurs. One of the common effects of deprivation of love and affection is the development of emotional insecurity. Much of adolescent and adult rebellion against authority stems from emotional insecurity which has its origin in unstable affectional relationship with parents and other members of family during early childhood years.

### **1.3.2.3 Excessive Love and Affection**

This also has psychologically negative effect. Sigmund Freud had earlier cautioned that too much parental love and affection awakens a disposition for neurotic disorders, spoils the child and makes the individual a problematic adolescent. Strecker (1956) has pointed out that excessive mothering, that is, overprotective mothers turn their sons and daughters into immature and dependent adults. Emotional expression, that is, how the person expresses emotion also affects the development of personality. If the person is able to express emotions in a socially approved manner, that person would be judged favourably and this provides a good mirror image of the self. Such emotional expression produces a better feeling both physically and mentally because homeostasis can be restored.

Sanctions, control over the overt expression of emotions is often necessary to avoid social disapproval. However, repression of emotions like anger, fear, jealousy, and envy makes the individual gloomy and morbid which ultimately produces behaviour like extreme laziness, lack of interest in people, vacillation of mood etc. Emotional Catharsis (release of unexpressed emotions) also contributes to the development of good adjustment. Release of pent up emotions allows for physical and mental homeostasis to be restored. As a consequence, the person can judge oneself in a more realistic way.

### **1.3.2.4 Self-disclosure**

Self disclosure is considered basic to mental health and such disclosure helps to bring about a healthy personality pattern which is a guarantee for a socially desirable and favourable reactions from others. Emotional stress expressed in the form of anxiety, frustration, jealousy and envy also affect the development of personality. A person who suffers from emotional stress makes good personal and social adjustments. Intense emotional stress may motivate the person to go to excesses in hope of being relieved from it. For example, the person may resort to overeating and using drugs to dull the intense feeling of insecurity caused by emotional stress. It has been reported that women who experience greater degree of emotional stress during menstrual period, are found to develop depressive tendencies. Psychologists have shown that people with low self-esteem are more adversely affected by emotional stress than those with high self-esteem.



### 1.3.2.5 Aspiration and Achievements

These also have an effect on the development of personality. Aspiration means a longing for and striving for something higher than one's present status. Thus aspirations are the ego-involved goals that persons set for themselves. The more ego-involved the aspirations are, the more will be the impact upon behaviour and therefore, greater will be the impact upon personality. There may be various forms of aspirations such as positive aspiration (to achieve success), negative aspiration (to avoid failure), realistic aspiration (within the range of the person's capacity), unrealistic aspirations (beyond the capacity of the person), remote aspirations (to achieve a goal in the remote future) or immediate aspirations (to achieve a goal in the near future).

The motivating power of aspiration varies. In general, remote and realistic aspirations do provide stronger motivating forces than immediate and unrealistic aspirations. Negative aspirations are considered weaker in providing motivating strength than positive aspirations.

Level of aspiration, that is, the discrepancy between the goal an individual has achieved and the goal the person hopes to reach, affects the personality in terms of the size of the discrepancy. When the size of discrepancy is large, the person's self-concept is severely damaged especially if the person fails to achieve the goal. Not only the individual will judge self as failure but others will also judge the person as a failure in particular if others know about the person's goal and that goal had not been achieved.

Research studies have also shown that high aspirations are not necessarily a source of damage to the self-concept. They may be a source of motivation and pleasure. They may be a kind of wishful thinking that will not cause any damage to personality so long as it remains a form of fun and play.

### 1.3.2.6 Achievements

These are another related factor that determine the development of personality. Achievement can be evaluated objectively by comparing one's performance with those of one's peers and subjectively, by comparing the person's achievement with the level of aspiration. Success and failure are the two different attitudes of the person towards achievement. If the person is pleased with own achievement, the achievement will be considered a success and this has a favourable impact upon the self-concept. However if the person's attitude towards achievement is negative, then the achievement will not be considered a success but a failure. Such persons will feel dissatisfied and miserable and in turn their self concept will be adversely affected. Persons who feel that they have been successful remain satisfied with themselves and appear to be happy.

Besides building a favourable self-concept, achievement also raises the person's self-esteem and increases the level of self-confidence so that the individual can solve the many new problem of the future successfully. In addition to the personal satisfaction that a person derives from achieving the goal successfully, the achievement ensures that the person is appropriate in all the actions that are taken up, which in turn produce a stabilising impact upon the behaviour. Therefore, a successful person tends to be more relaxed than a person who has experiences of failure.

### 1.3.2.7 Goal Setting

Experimental evidences have shown that one of the most important effect that success has upon the person is that the individual becomes more realistic about goal setting. Such persons would asset their goal to a point where they have reasonable chances of reaching. This behaviour is an obvious characteristic of intelligent, well-adjusted people than of those who are poorly adjusted.

Success enhances self-concept by increasing the person's prestige in the eyes of others. This enhances social acceptance and strengthens the individual's self-concept. But too much success during early years of life may, in fact, weakens the person's motivation to do one's best. It may cause the person to loose some of the new motivations which can be generated by early achievement. Extraordinary achievement even may prove to be more harmful than helpful to social relationship and not only that, it may arouse jealousy and resentment among those persons who are socially related to the person but somehow less successful.

Failure is another constituent of achievement. It is always ego-deflating. Failure undermines the self-confidence and self-esteem. Gradually, it destroys the person's belief that she or he can do something to achieve and this, in effect, weakens the motive to achieve even those things which are within his or her capability. Severe and repeated failure causes stress, anxiety and tension. Sometimes such repeated failures cause so intense stress and anxiety that it produces psychosomatic illness or leads to a defeatist attitude, which strengthens the person's belief in his or her inadequacy and intensifies the poor personal and social adjustment. Research have revealed that one of the most damaging aspects of failure is somehow not achieving the desired goal and social recognition, especially when the person hoped to do so. This sense of dissatisfaction is intensified by the realisation that others with whom the person has competed, have achieved the success much earlier than him or her. Under such conditions, the impact upon the self concept is highly unfavourable.

By contrast, one of the greatest source of satisfaction is to achieve success, recognition and prestige much earlier than anticipated and earlier than one's competitors. This condition has favourable impact upon the self-concept. Sometimes it may be so much favourable that it may lead to the delusion of grandeur and superiority complex and this condition, in the long term, may counteract favourable social judgement and prove damaging to the self-concept.

#### Self Assessment Questions 3

- 1) Markedly superior intelligence leads to a personality pattern which is characterised by :
  - a) negativism
  - b) Intolerance
  - c) emotional conflicts
  - d) All the above.
- 2) Which one of the followings is known as mental health insurance ?
  - a) Emotional balance
  - b) Tolerance
  - c) Envy tolerance
  - d) None of these.
- 3) Emotional starvation occurs due to :
  - a) Emotional deprivation
  - b) Deprivation of love
  - c) Emotional imbalance
  - d) None of these.

- 4) Which one qualifies to be called as emotional stress ?
  - a) a specific state of heightened emotionality
  - b) a generalised state of heightened emotionality
  - c) a generalised state of emotional imbalance
  - d) none of these above condition.
- 5) Who are more adversely affected by stress ?
  - a) people with high self-esteem
  - b) people with high emotional catharsis
  - c) people with low self-esteem
  - d) people with poor emotional catharsis.

### 1.3.3 Environmental Factors

Besides physical and psychological factors, some environmental factors have been isolated and shown to have a significant impact upon the development of personality. Under environmental determinants, the following four sets of factors have been primarily emphasised :

#### 1.3.3.1 Social Acceptance

These are one of the major environmental determinants. Every person lives in a social group, which judges the person's behaviour in terms of the person's conformity to group expectations regarding proper performance behaviour and appropriate role playing. Thus social judgement serve as basis for self-evaluation. In this way, the social group tends to influence the development of self-concept.

The degree of influence the social group has on personality development depends not alone on how well accepted the individual is but also on how much importance social acceptance has for the individual. If the person places more value on group acceptance, that person will be more willing to be influenced by the group. Persons who are widely accepted and liked by the group, are likely to respond in a congenial and friendly spirit than those who experience hostility, disregard and rejection in the group.

In fact, how much influence social acceptance has on behaviour depends upon two conditions: how much security a person has in his/her status in the group and what importance he/she attaches to the social acceptance. If the person feels fully secure in the status, which would make the person free to act as he/she wishes and will not be greatly influenced by suggestions from others. Likewise, if the person attaches more value to the social acceptance, he/she will also be more susceptible to be in line with the group members.

Persons whose social acceptance is very high, they are generally more outgoing, more flexible, more active and daring than those who are only moderately socially accepted or moderately popular. However, such persons often fail to establish close relationship with people. They also fail to show emotional warmth which is considered essential to close and intimate personal relationship. This sense of aloofness usually comes from a feeling of superiority.

One extreme opposite of social acceptance is social isolation. If a person develops the feelings of rejection due to social isolation when in fact they want to be accepted, would develop the feeling of resentment against those who have rejected them. Such people are often depressed, sad and unhappy. They may develop sour-grapes attitude towards social activities. Such social rejection may lead the persons to become juvenile delinquents or criminals in the long run. Researchers have further shown that if early social experiences of the persons are favourable, they are likely to become social and if their experiences are unfavourable, they are likely to develop an unsocial or antisocial personality.

### **1.3.3.2 Social Deprivation**

This is another environmental factor, which is said to influence the development of personality in massive and significant way. Social deprivation means being deprived of opportunities for various types of social contacts including love and affection. Social deprivation causes social isolation which has an adverse effect on personality. Social deprivation has proved most damaging for two age groups—the very young and the elderly. The young children who are deprived of contacts with parents / guardians fail to develop healthy and normal personality. Their behaviour is socially disapproved and they are also unfavourably judged by others.

Social deprivation in elderly people make them self-bound and selfish, which gradually lead to unfavourable social and self judgements. It has also been observed that social deprivation is far more damaging to people who want and also need social contacts for happiness than those who are self-sufficient or who voluntarily withdraw. For example, when elderly persons voluntarily decide on their own to withdraw from social activities, they are far happier and relatively well adjusted in comparison to those whose withdrawal is involuntary. If social deprivation is extensive and prolonged, it gradually leads to unhealthy social attitudes and mental illness.

### **1.3.3.3 Educational Factors**

Another important factor, which influences the development of personality is the educational factors. Schools, colleges and teachers have significant impact upon the individual's development of personality. The impact of educational institution upon personality development is largely determined by the students' attitude towards school and colleges, towards peers, towards teachers and also toward the value of education. When these attitudes are favourable, the students usually enjoy their academic activities and have a warm and friendly relationship with teachers and their peers. This has a very favourable impact upon the development of personality by producing stronger sense of self-confidence and self-esteem.

The reverse is true when there is unfavourable attitudes amongst students towards education and educational institutions, teachers and peers etc. . Research studies have further revealed that if the students are physically and psychologically ready to enter the school or colleges, their attitude tend to be far more favourable. Attitude towards educational institution is greatly influenced by emotional climate of the institution, which affect the level of motivation, students' classroom behaviour and their general emotional reactions. Through these various behavioural patterns, the emotional climate of the educational institution affects the students' self-evaluation and the evaluation others make of them.



Another important factor of educational determinants that affect personality is student-teacher relationship, which is largely dependent upon the teacher's treatment of the students, upon students' attitude toward particular teachers and on their teaching as well as the disciplinary techniques used by the teachers including the cultural stereotypes of teachers as a group. These attitudes, in turn, affect the quality of the student's academic work which becomes the basis of evaluation of self and social evaluation. Teacher student relationship affect the students' personality through its impact upon students' motivation for academic achievement. When the students see that their relationship with the teacher is warm and friendly, their achievements are far better than when they perceive the relationship as hostile, punitive and rejecting. This boosts their self-concept by enhancing self confidence and self esteem.

#### **1.3.3.4 Family Determinants**

This is another important class of factors that influence development of personality. The influence of family on personality development is maximal at all ages. The family affects the development of personality both directly or indirectly. Direct influence of family upon personality comes chiefly through different child-training methods which are used to mould the personality pattern, and the communication of interest, attitude and values between members of the family. Strict, demanding, punitive and inhibiting parents / guardians tend to encourage their children for depending upon external controls to guide their behaviour. As a result, when the children are outside the direct control of their parents/guardian, they tend to show impulsiveness in their behaviour.

Indirectly, through identification with parents, children develop a personality pattern similar to that of their parents. Experimental studies reveal that through imitation also, a certain personality pattern develops. For example, living with parents who are anxious, nervous and lacking the sense of humor produces in the children a sense of nervousness and frequent outburst of temper. Likewise, living with warm, affectionate, loving and interested parents generally produces a social and gregarious persons. Such persons also develop an interest of welfare and affection for persons outside the home as well.

#### **1.3.3.5 Emotional Climate of Home and Ordinal Position**

A very important factor in the development of personality is the emotional climate at home as well as the ordinal position of the individual concerned within his family. Ordinal position refers to the eldest or youngest or middle or 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> child in the family. If the home climate is favourable, the person will react to personal problems and frustrations in a calm way and to people in a tolerant and cooperative way. On the other hand if emotional climate of home is full of friction and conflicts, the person is more likely to develop a sense of hostility and may often tend to react to people in an aggressive way.

Ordinal position also affects the development of personality. Studies have revealed that the firstborns tend to be more conforming and dependent than later borns. They are more affiliative, more susceptible to group pressures and more introverted. Firstborns who achieve greater success than the later born siblings tend to be selfish and self centred. They show their feeling of superiority about their achievements by making criticism of others. Despite the feelings of superiority, they continue to suffer from a feeling of insecurity which had



developed earlier when they were replaced by younger siblings towards which parents started giving more attention, love and affection. This feeling of insecurity is responsible for poor personal and social adjustment of the firstborns.

The major personality characteristics of lastborn, as shown by the various researches, are dependency, affiliative need, lack of self-confidence, lack of frustration tolerance, defiance of authority, etc. In comparison to the firstborns, most lastborns have relatively weak achievement motivation. They are generally not pressed by the members of the family to achieve more nor do most families care to provide them with the opportunities that were provided to the firstborns. So far as the middle born or second borns are concerned, they are found to be generally less family oriented and more peer oriented. From their peer relationship, they develop such personality traits which produce better personal and social adjustment. As a result, they are more popular among the peers in comparison to the first or lastborn.

#### 1.3.3.6 Size of the Family

This factor also affects the development of personality. In larger families parents have little time to protect any child. As such, children learn to be independent and show maturity in their behaviour at an earlier age as compared to children of smaller families. However, larger families encourage certain personality characteristics that may hamper good personal and social adjustments. For keeping the home environment reasonably calm, parents of larger families generally adopt authoritarian method of control, which produces a strong sense of resentment and rebellion among children. In small families since parents devote enough time to care and provide proper guidance to each child, this produces self-confidence, self-assurance and eliminates the feeling of inadequacy which may come when the child is left to meet the problem alone. However, due to strict competition for getting parental attention, affection and approval in small families, jealousy and envy especially against the firstborns who are perceived to be parents' favourite, damages the self-concept of the concerned individual.

We have seen that the development of personality is shaped by a set of three factors, namely, physical or biological factors, psychological factors and environmental factors. There are psychologists like J.B. Watson, father of Behaviourism, who have outright emphasised upon only one factor, that is environmental factor ignoring the role of other two sets of factor in development of personality. He had emphatically proclaimed that give him a child, he will make him either a doctor or a beggar or a engineer or a thief irrespective of his abilities. Today there is little support for such statement and there is almost an unanimity among the personality psychologists regarding the basic view that the physical or biological factors provide a boundary for the development of personality and within this general boundary, personality is developed or shaped under the influence of various psychological and environmental factors. Therefore, it can be concluded that development of personality can be explained in terms of the following equation:

$$\text{Personality Development} = \text{Physical determinants} \times \text{Psychological determinants} \\ \times \text{Environmental determinants}$$

#### Self Assessment Questions 4

- 1) Social deprivation generally leads to :
  - a) Social rejection
  - b) Social discrimination
  - c) Negative self-concept
  - d) None of these.
- 2) Mohan, leader of a group, is more colourful, more flexible, more active in his approach. It all happens because he has :
  - a) Social acceptance
  - b) Social support
  - c) Social status
  - d) All the above.
- 3) Within a group when the person status changes such as from follower to leader or the vice versa, it is termed as :
  - a) Social mobility
  - b) Changes in group status
  - c) Social stereotype
  - d) None of these.
4. Which has the most lasting impact upon the development of personality of a student ?
  - a) Academic success
  - b) Teacher's attitude and behaviour
  - c) Teacher-student relationship
  - d) All of the above.
- 5) Which size of the family is considered ideal for development of personality?
  - a) Small families
  - b) Medium-size families
  - c) Large families
  - d) None.

### 1.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we learnt about personality. We pointed out as to how the term personality is often understood in terms of social attractiveness. We pointed out the scientific approach to personality development which explain the concept of personality in terms of individuality and consistency. Another important notion in defining the concept of personality is consistency. Combining these notions of individuality and consistency, personality can be defined as the distinctive and unique ways in which each individual thinks, feels and acts, which characterise a person's response throughout life. In other words, it can be said that personality refers to all those relatively permanent traits, dispositions or characteristics within the person that give some measure of consistency to the person's behaviour. These traits may be unique, common to some groups or shared by the entire species but their pattern will be different from individual to individual.

Behaviours of an individual seem to fit together in a meaningful way. It is to be kept in mind that the nature of behaviours is dynamic and there may occur changes in the organisation and structure of behaviours over a period of time. It is in this sense that Allport (1937, 1961), defined personality as the dynamic organisation within the person of the psychophysical systems that determine the unique adjustments to one's environment.

Then we took up personality development and pointed out as to how psychologists have tried to identify factors which directly or indirectly influence the growth and development of personality. Although there are a large number of factors,

which influence the development of personality, such factors have been broadly grouped into three general categories and these are given below.

- i) Biological factors
- ii) Psychological factors and
- iii) Environmental factors.

Since these factors tend to determine the way personality develops they are also called as determinants of personality. These were discussed in detail. Biological factors consisted of body build, physical attractiveness, homeostasis, physical defects and health conditions. The psychological factors consisted of intellectual factors, emotional factors including excessive love and affection, self disclosure, aspiration and achievement and goal setting behaviour. and environmental factors consisted of social acceptance, social deprivation, educational factors, family emotional climate, ordinal position of the individual in the family and size of the family. Finally it was concluded that personality development takes place through learning processes including imitation.

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## 1.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Define personality. Citing example, make distinction between temperament and character.
- 2) Discuss the physical or biological determinants of personality development.
- 3) Outline the role of psychological determinants of personality development.
- 4) Discuss the role of environmental determinants in shaping personality development.
- 5) Enumerate the basic formula : Personality Development = Physical determinants  $\times$  Psychological determinants  $\times$  Environmental determinants

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## 1.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Coon, D. (2007). *Introduction to Psychology*: Thompson.

Wood, S.E. & Wood, E.G. (1996). *The World of Psychology*: Allyn & Bacon

Ryckman, R.M (1993). *Theories of Personality*: Brooks / Cole Publishing Company.

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## 1.7 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- |           |        |        |        |        |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1) 1. (b) | 2 (d)  | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (b) |
| 2) 1. (b) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (a) |
| 3) 1. (d) | 2. (b) | 3. (b) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) |
| 4) 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (a) | 4. (c) | 5. (d) |

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## UNIT 2 STATE/TRAIT APPROACHES TO PERSONALITY

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### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Type Approaches to Personality
- 2.3 Trait Approaches/Theories
  - 2.3.1 Allport's Trait Approach
    - 2.3.1.1 Common and Individual Traits
    - 2.3.1.2 Cardinal Traits
    - 2.3.1.3 Central Traits
    - 2.3.1.4 Secondary Traits
  - 2.3.2 Cattell's Trait Approach
  - 2.3.3 Eysenck's Type/Trait Hierarchy
    - 2.3.3.1 Extraversion/Introversion
    - 2.3.3.2 Psychoticism/Impulse Control
    - 2.3.3.3 Inhibition Theory
    - 2.3.3.4 Arousal Theory
  - 2.3.4 Guilford's Trait Theory
    - 2.3.4.1 Physiological and Morphological Traits
    - 2.3.4.2 Needs, Interests, Attitudes
    - 2.3.4.3 Aptitudes
    - 2.3.4.4 Temperament
  - 2.3.5 Five Factor Model
    - 2.3.5.1 Extraversion (E)
    - 2.3.5.2 Neuroticism (N)
    - 2.3.5.3 Conscientiousness (C)
    - 2.3.5.4 Agreeableness (A)
    - 2.3.5.5 Openness (O)
- 2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.5 Unit End Questions
- 2.6 Suggested Readings
- 2.7 Answers to Self Assessment Questions

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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A large number of approaches to studying the personality have been put forward by many theorists. One of these is the type and trait approaches and these have been especially attributed to a few major theorists. In this unit we will take up first of all the Type approaches to personality and herein we will discuss the trait approach by Allport to describe personality. This will be followed by the trait approach by Cattell who gave emphasis on source and surface traits. Following this we will be dealing with Eysenck's trait and type approach to personality. Next will be the discussion of Guilford's theory which again is a trait approach. This is followed by the relatively more recent Five Factor Model of personality.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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After completing this unit, you will be able to:

- Define personality;
- Describe Allport's trait theory approach;
- Elucidate the factors contributing to Allport's theory of personality;
- Describe Cattell's trait theory to understanding personality;
- Explain the factors contributing to Cattell's personality theory;
- Elucidate Eysenck's theory of trait and type approach;
- Explain the factors contributing to Extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism;
- Elucidate the Trait approach of Guilford to personality;
- Analyse the factors contributing to Guilford's idea of personality development;
- Elucidate the Five Factor Model of personality; and
- Describe and analyse OCEAN.

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## 2.2 TYPE APPROACHES TO PERSONALITY

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The earliest effort to explain human behaviour involved the use of personality typologies, which classified behaviour into discrete, all-or-nothing categories. For example, Hippocrates a Greek Physician (and later on Galen, too) classified individuals into four exclusive types according to four basic internal fluids or humors, each associated with a particular temperament. These four basic fluids were : blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. The dominance of any one fluid led to a particular personality temperament. For example, dominance of blood produced Sanguine temperament (cheerful and active), dominance of phlegm produced Phlegmatic temperament (apathetic and sluggish), the dominance of black bile produced Melancholic temperament (sad and brooding) and dominance of yellow bile produced Choleric temperament (irritable and exitable). This is known as four-humor theory and remained popular for centuries although today it is regarded as a baseless theory because it has been established now that personality and moods are not driven by bodily fluids. Later on the basis of observation of patients, Hippocrates pointed out that people with short and thick bodies were prone to stroke and those with tall, thin bodies to tuberculosis.

Another interesting typologies were that of William Sheldon, a U.S.A. Physician. He tried to relate physique to temperament. On the basis of somatotype (body build), he assigned each individual to one of the three categories , viz., (i) ectomorphic (thin, long and fragile), (ii) endomorphic (fat, soft and round) and (iii) mesomorphic (muscular, strong and rectangular). According to Sheldon, ectomorphs are artistic, brainy and introverted, endomorphs are relaxed, fond of eating, sleeping and sociable whereas mesomorphs are affective, dominant, filled with energy and courage.



Sheldon's theory has not been substantiated and has proved of little value in predicting individual behaviour (Tylor, 1965). In addition, people belonged to many different shape and size and not all can be fitted to the Sheldon's three types.

MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) typology is another typology which is modern one and based upon Carl Jung's theory of personality types. Using the MBTI, individual's self-reported preferences are used to assess four dimensions of personality: E or I (Extraversion- Introversion), S or N (Sensing or Intuition), T or F (Thinking-Feeling) and J or P (Judgement-Perception). The MBTI identifies 16 types of personality based on Jung's distinctions between E-I, S-N and T-F, as well as upon Isobel Myer's distinction between J-P. The J-P distinction indicates as to whether an individual's orientation toward the external world comes from rational (judging) or the irrational (perceiving) function pair. If a person takes MBTI, he would be assigned to only one pole of each dimension and the combination of dimensions would determine which of the sixteen types best describes him. For example, a person who receives ESFP (Extraverted-Sensing-Feeling-Perception) classification would be characterised as outgoing, easygoing, accepting, friendly and would be considered best in situations that need sound common sense and practical ability with people as well as with things.

The Myers-Briggs is a very good type system because its categories are distinct or discontinuous and people of any one type are supported to be very much like each other that help them to be distinguished from other types. Critics of MBTI state that while the four dimensions are informative, persons should be described according to their actual scores on each dimension rather than being mixed into types.

Type approach to personality apparently fails in its mission to provide a satisfactory classification system because there are many people who cannot be fitted into prescribed type. Today, psychologists prefer to describe people not in terms of type rather in terms of traits. Types are not descriptive of the persons. In fact, they rob the uniqueness of persons by placing the persons into a preconceived category. Thus type exists in the eye of beholder whereas traits exist within the people.

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## 2.3 TRAIT APPROACHES/THEORIES

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These approaches explain personality in terms of traits, which are defined as relatively stable and consistent personal characteristics. Trait approach attempts to explain personality and differences between people in terms of their personal characteristics, to devise ways of measuring individual differences in personality traits and to use these measures for understanding and predicting a person's behaviour. Type approach assume that there are separate, and discontinuous categories into which persons fit whereas trait approach assumes that there are continuous dimensions such as warmth, extraversion, etc. that vary in quality as well as degree.

Under the trait approach, the viewpoints of Allport, Cattell, Eysenck Guilford, and the Five Factor Model would be discussed in detail.

### 2.3.1 Allport's Trait Approach

Allport is regarded as one of the most important and influential personality theorists. Several years ago, Allport went through the English Dictionary and painstakingly recorded a list of 17,953 words that described personal traits (Allport & Odbert, 1936). Obviously it would be impractical to describe persons in terms of where they fall on roughly 18,000 traits. However, on the basis of these words, attempt was made to propose traits like dominance, friendliness, self-esteem, etc. This is called lexical approach to define personality trait.

For Allport, traits are the building blocks of personality as well as the source of individuality. He is known as idiographic trait theorist who has a strong belief that each person has some unique as well as some common characteristics that together form a unique combination of traits. For Allport, trait is something that exists but remains invisible. It is located somewhere in the nervous system (Ryckman, 1993).

We infer the existence of a trait by observing consistencies in the behaviour of the person. Dissimilar stimuli tend to arouse a trait readiness within the person and then trait manifests itself through the varieties of different responses. All these responses are equivalent in the sense that they serve the function of expression of trait.

To illustrate this, let us take an example of an employee working in the university office. His shyness is inferred from his inability to establish friendship with others, his avoidance of social gatherings of the employees, his enjoyment with solitary entertainment activities and his unwillingness to participate in discussion, etc.

#### 2.3.1.1 Common and Individual Traits

Allport recognised two major categories of traits:

- i) Common traits and
- ii) Individual traits.

Common traits are those traits which we share in common with many others in our culture. For example being quiet, showing due respect to seniors and making polite behaviour to others are the traits we share with others in Indian culture. This illustrates the common traits.

Individual traits or also called personal dispositions are those traits which are unique to the person concerned and Allport regarded individual traits to be more important than common traits.

According to him, there are three types of individual traits

#### 2.3.1.2 Cardinal Traits

A cardinal trait is a trait which is so pervasive, dominant and outstanding in life that every behaviour seems traceable to its influence. Most people do not have cardinal traits but those who have them, are well-known by those traits. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi was having the cardinal traits of peace-loving and strong faith in non-violence for which he is well known.

### 2.3.1.3 Central Traits

Central traits are those traits which are generally listed in a carefully written letter of recommendation. In fact, any trait name like friendliness, dominance, self-centeredness would be the example of central trait. Every person has several central traits and there are five to ten most outstanding traits in each person around which a person's life focuses.

### 2.3.1.4 Secondary Traits

Secondary traits are traits which are less conspicuous, less consistent, less generalised and less relevant to the definition of personality. For example, food habits, hair style, and specific attitudes are examples of secondary traits.

All these traits are dynamic in the sense that they possess motivational power. Those individual traits or dispositions which are intensely experienced are said to be more motivational. Those individual traits which are less intensively experienced though possessing more motivational power are said to be more stylistic.

Whether motivational or stylistics, some individual traits are close to the core of the person's personality whereas some are at the periphery.

According to Allport, all these individual traits form structure of personality which, in turn, determines the behaviour of an individual. In his view only by focussing upon the uniqueness of the individual, a scientific and substantial understanding of personality is possible.

Allport also held that personality is not a mere bundle of unrelated traits, rather it embodies a unity, consistency and integration of traits. This integration work is accomplished by self or 'Proprium' as Allport has named it. In his view the Proprium or self develops continuously from infancy to death and during this period it moves through a series of stages.

#### Self Assessment Questions 1

- 1) Allport was supporter of:
  - a) Nomothetic approach to personality
  - b) Trait approach to personality
  - c) Idiographic approach to personality
  - d) Both b and c
- 2) Your hair style will be the example of:
 

a) Cardinal trait	b) Secondary trait
c) Central trait	d) None of these
- 3) Allport emphasised more upon:
 

a) Common trait	b) Individual traits
c) Proprium	d) None of these.

- 4) Following Allport, the trait which is a defining characteristic of one's personality is :
  - a) Individual trait
  - b) Common trait
  - c) Cardinal trait
  - d) Secondary trait.
- 5) You have just been told by counsellor that on the basis of Myers-Briggs personality test you are an ESTP. Your counsellor apparently favours which of the following approaches to personality :
  - a) Trait approach
  - b) Type approach
  - c) Psychodynamic approach
  - d) Type approach

### 2.3.2 Cattell's Trait Approach

Raymond Cattell (1950) considered personality to be a pattern of traits providing the key to understanding it and predicting a person's behaviour. According to him, traits are relatively permanent and broad reaction tendencies of personality. They serve as the building blocks of personality. He distinguished between (i) surface trait and source trait, (ii) constitutional and environmental-mold traits (iii) ability, temperament and dynamic traits.

#### i) Surface traits and source traits

The observable qualities of a personality like kindness, honesty, helpfulness, generosity, etc. are named as surface traits. Allport has called these qualities or traits as central traits. Using questionnaires and observations, Cattell studied several thousand people and he reported certain cluster of surface traits that appeared together from time to time. He further reported that these were the clear evidence of some deeper, more general underlying personality factors, and he referred to these as source traits.

Source traits make up the most basic structure of personality and are the underlying factors that are responsible for the inter-correlation among surface traits. Although source traits are smaller in number than surface traits, yet they are better predictors of human behaviour. We all possess the same source traits but we do not possess them in the same amount. For example, intelligence is an example of source trait and everyone of us possesses this but we all do not possess intelligence in the same amount.

Cattell found 23 source traits in normal persons and 16 of which he studied in detail. These 16 basic source traits were then used in the construction of the Sixteen Personality (16PF) Questionnaire popularly known as "16 PF test". The sixteen factors identified by Cattell include (i) Reserved vs outgoing, (ii) less intelligent vs more intelligent, (iii) emotional vs. stable (iv) humble vs. assertive, (v) sober vs. happy-go-lucky, (vi) expedient vs. conscientious, (vii) shy vs. venturesome, (viii) tough-minded vs. tender-minded, (ix) trusting vs. suspicious, (x) practical vs. imaginative, (xi) forthright vs. shrewd (xii) placid vs. apprehensive, (xiii) conservative vs. experimenting, (xiv) group-tied vs. self-sufficiency, (xv) casual vs. controlled, and (xvi) relaxed vs. tense.

In addition to these 16 factors measured by personality test, Cattell, on the basis of his subsequent researches proposed seven new factors : excitability, zeppia vs. Coasthenia, boorishness vs. mature socialisation, sanguine casualness, group dedication with sensed inadequacy and social panache vs. explicit expression.

Although the sixteen source traits utilised in 16PF can be used to make distinction between normals and neurotics, they fail to assess all aspects of deviant behaviour as well as the characteristics of psychotics. Using factor analysis to the surface traits of the normal and abnormal personality spheres, Cattell derived 12 new factors that measure psychopathological traits, such as hypochondriasis, zestfulness, brooding discontent, anxious depression, energy euphoria, guilt and resentment, bored depression, paranoia, psychopathic deviation, schizophrenism, psychesthesia and general psychosis. All these traits are in bipolar format. These 12 factors have been combined with 16 PF in the construction of new test called Clinical Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ). With the construction of CAQ, Cattell was of the view that he has identified major source traits of both normal and abnormal personality.

## ii) **Constitutional and environmental traits**

Cattell also distinguished between constitutional traits and environmental mold traits. Constitutional traits are those traits which are determined by nature or biology whereas environmental mold traits are those which are determined by nurture that is by experience gained in interaction with environment.

Most surface traits, for Cattell, reflects a mixture of both heredity (nature) and environment (nurture). However, he further points out that there are some source traits which derive solely from within the individual (biology of the individual) and there are some source traits which derive solely from source derived only from environmental factors. Through a complicated statistical technique called MAVA (Multiple Abstract Variance Analysis), he was able to assess the degree to which various traits are determined either by environmental or genetically determined factors. MAVA is based upon the comparisons between people of the same family either reared together or reared apart or between members of different families reared either together or apart.

## iii) **Ability, temperament and dynamic traits**

Cattell has further subdivided traits into ability traits, temperament traits and dynamic traits.

*Ability traits* refer to the person's skill in dealing with the environment and the goals set therein. Intelligence is an example of ability trait.

*Temperament traits* refer to stylistic tendencies that largely show how a person moves towards a goal. Being moody, irritable, easygoing are examples of temperament trait.

*Dynamic traits* are the person's motivation and interest which set the person in action toward the goal. A person may be characterised as being power-seeking, ambitious or sports-oriented. This reflects the dynamic trait. The important dynamic traits in Cattell's system are of three types, viz. (i) attitudes, (ii) ergs and (iii) sentiments.

Attitudes are dynamic surface traits which display specific manifestations of underlying motives. Ergs are constitutional dynamic source trait. It is through ergs that cattell has given due recognition to innately determined but modifiable impellents of behaviour. Ten ergs like hunger, sex, gregariousness, parental protectiveness, curiosity, escape, pugnacity, acquisitiveness, self-assertion and



narcissistic sex have been recognised by Cattell. Sentiment focusses on social object and it is an environmental mold dynamic source trait. Thus it is more or less parallel to ergs except that it results from experimental or socio-cultural factors.

### Self Assessment Questions 2

- 1) The inter-correlation among surface traits leads to development of an inference about:
  - a) Temperament trait
  - b) Erg
  - c) Source trait
  - d) None of there
- 2) Erg belongs to the category of:
  - a) Temperament trait
  - b) Dynamic trait
  - c) Ability trait
  - d) None.
- 3) Which of the following is not assessed by clinical Analysis questionnaire?
  - a) Energy Euphoria
  - b) Bored dpression
  - c) Schizophrenia
  - d) Shyness.
- 4) Friendliness is an example of:
  - a) Source trait
  - b) Surface trait
  - c) Temperament trait
  - d) None.
- 5) According to Cattell which trait causes behaviour for predictable purposes:
  - a) Surface trait
  - b) Abiity trait
  - c) Source trait
  - d) Dynamic trait.

### 2.3.3 Eysenck's Type/ Trait Hierarchy

British Psychologist Hans Eysenck (1990) had a strong belief that personality is largely determined by genes and that the environmental factors have very little role to play in it. He opined that personality is more or less stable and enduring organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique. In this definition, he has emphasised upon traits (stable and enduring characteristics) which when clustered together, constitutes a type.

Eysenck's viewpoint is personality is hierarchically organised, consisting of types, traits and habits. At the lowest level of Eysenck's hierarchy are the single responses like action or thoughts. Regularly occurring responses form habits and related habits form traits and several traits clustered together constitute a type or also known as super factors.

Thus types are most abstract, followed by traits and then by habits and then finally by responses at the beginning level. In fact, each of the 'type' concepts is based on a set of observed inter correlations among various traits. Each 'trait' is inferred from inter correlations among habitual responses. Habitual responses are, in turn, based upon specific observable responses.

Thus the entire process can be explained through an example. It is known that 'extraversion' is based upon observed inter correlations among the traits like liveliness, sociability, activity, and excitability. Each of these traits is inferred from inter correlations among habitual responses such as for instance going to club, liking to talk with people, taking part in any social activity on the spur of the moment and so forth. These habits are themselves inferred from some observable specific responses like real occasion where the person actually went to club, talked with people, participated in group discussion, etc.

Based upon numerous factor analyses on personality data gathered from different populations, Eysenck derived two major factors or dimensions of personality, viz.,

- i) Extraversion/Introversion
- ii) Neuroticism/stability.

Later, on the basis of other statistical analysis, he postulated a third dimension, viz.,

- iii) Psychoticism/Impulse control.

These three dimensions, according to Eysenck, are the major individual difference types considered most useful in describing personality functioning. To measure these three dimensions of personality, Eysenck developed a paper and pencil test. The latest version of the test has been named as Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ).

### **2.3.3.1 Extraversion/Introversion**

Extraverts are individuals who are sociable and impulsive and who like excitement and oriented toward external reality. Introverts are introspective persons who are more oriented toward inner reality and tend to exhibit preference towards a well-ordered life. Neurotics are emotionally unstable persons. The hallmark of most neurotics is that they exhibit an anxiety level disproportionate to the realities of the situation. Some neurotics may exhibit obsessional or impulsive symptoms and some may show unreasonable fear of objects, persons, places, etc. However, there are neurotics who are free from the burden of anxiety and fear and in this group, psychopaths are placed who fail to assess the consequences of their actions and who behave in antisocial manner regardless of the punishment they get (Eysenck, 1965).

### **2.3.3.2 Psychoticism/Impulse Control**

Psychotics are characterised by traits such as being insensitive to others, hostile, at times cruel and inhuman. Despite all the psychopathological traits, Eysenck believed that psychotics tend to be creative (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). He based his conclusion on his work with schizophrenics who gave many original responses on the Rorschach test.

### **2.3.3.3 Inhibition Theory**

Eysenck developed a theory called inhibition theory to explain why people who differed along the various dimensions should behave differently from one another. According to Eysenck, individual differences along the extraversion/introversion dimension are strongly determined by heredity and have their basic origins in the cerebral Cortex of the central nervous system.

Drawing upon the work of Tephlov (1964) and Pavlov (1927), Eysenck pointed out that extraverts have relatively stronger inhibitory processes and very weak excitatory processes. Besides, their nervous systems are strong which forces them to tolerate a large capacity of stimulation. Introverts, on the other hand, have very strong excitatory processes and weak inhibitory processes. Apart from this, their nervous system is weak which means that they have a small capacity to tolerate stimulation. Thus the brains of extraverts react more slowly and weakly towards stimuli thereby creating a strong desire for strong sensory stimulation which causes them to seek excitement by going to parties, making new friends, and attending to various types of meeting, etc. On the other hand, introverts are more cortically aroused and their brains react quickly and strongly to stimuli. As such, they tolerate relatively small amount of stimulation. Consequently, strong stimulation from the environment proves to be aversive for them and they tend to spend more time in aloof activities like reading, writing, playing chess, etc.

#### **2.3.3.4 Arousal Theory**

Recently, inhibition theory has been replaced by arousal theory by Eysenck because inhibition and excitation although were very useful concepts, were found to be extremely difficult to assess. Arousal theory has the advantage of identifying the physiological systems underlying individual differences in extraversion / introversion and neuroticism / stability. According to arousal theory, differences in the behaviour of introverts and extraverts are due to the various parts of Ascending Reticular Activating System (ARAS) which is a network of fibers going upward from the lower brain stem to the thalamus and cortex. Some other fibers descend from the lower brain stem which influences the activities of bodily muscles and autonomic nervous system. At the same time, such descending fibers can also modulate the activity of the brain stem.

Thus the relation between ARAS and cortex become reciprocal, that is , ARAS activate the cortex, which, in turn, influences ARAS either by increasing or inhibiting the excitability. Eysenck was of view that introverts have innately higher levels of arousal than extraverts. As a result, they are more likely to be sensitive to stimulation. In arousal theory, Eysenck tends to make it explicit that the seat of neuroticism lies in visceral brain or limbic system.

All structures of visceral brain such as hippocampus, amygdala, cingulum, septum and hypothalamus are involved in generating emotionality. Since visceral brain and ARSA are only partially independent from each other, cortical and autonomic arousal can also be produced by activities of the visceral brain. In particular, such activities produce arousal in sympathetic nervous system, causing increase in heart rate, breathing rates and loss of digestion, etc. People showing higher degree of neuroticism generally have lower thresholds for activity in visceral brain and greater responsivity of sympathetic nervous system. That is the reason why neurotics are innately more reactive rather overreacting to even mild forms of stimulation.

#### **Self Assessment Questions 3**

- 1) What is the correct sequence of organisation in Eysenck type-trait hierarchy?
  - a) Trait-Type-Habit-Response
  - b) Response-Habit-Trait-Type

- c) Type-Trait-Response-Habit
- d) Habit-Response-Trait-Type.
- 2) Which of the followings is Not assessed by EPQ?
  - a) Extroversion
  - b) Psychoticism
  - c) Neuroticism
  - d) Pscyhopathic tendencies.
- 3) According to Eysenck, which are is Not the characteristic of Psychotics?
  - a) Psychotics are creative people
  - b) Psychotics are hostile and cruel
  - c) Psychotics are inhumane
  - d) Psychotics are oriented toward inner reality.
- 4) Who claimed that personality can best be understood by assessing people on two dimensions: Extroversion and Neuroticism ?
  - a) Allport
  - b) Cattell
  - c) Eyesenck
  - d) Jung.
- 5) According to arousal theory of Eysenck, which one is regarded as the seat of neuroticism ?

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### 2.3.4 Guilford's Trait Theory

J.P. Guilford is another important psychologist who have tried to analyse and predict about personality on the basis of traits. The importance of trait for Guildford's view about personality can be understood from his definition of personality which states that an individual personality is nothing but the individual's unique pattern of traits. Trait, for him, is any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one person differs from another.

Using factor analysis, Guilford came to the conclusion that there are seven modalities of traits, that is (i) morphological, (ii) physiological, (iii) needs, (iv) interest, (v) attitudes (vi) aptitudes and (vii) temperament. The first two are the somatic traits whereas the last five are behavioural aspects of personality.

Guilford has emphasised that these modalities should not be regarded as seven separate constituent parts of personality but personality must be seen as integrated whole and these seven modalities can be seven different directions from which the whole can be viewed. In other words, personality is not the sum total of seven traits but rather a whole or single entity which can be looked at from at least seven different angles. These seven traits are briefly discussed below.

#### **2.3.4.1 Physiological and Morphological Traits**

Physiological traits and morphological traits together are called somatic traits. Physiological traits refer to physical functions such as heart rate, breathing rate, hormone level, blood sugar and so forth. Morphological traits, on the other hand, refer to physical attributes such as physique, head size, length of hand and leg, size of ear, curvature of spine, etc. Guilford (1959) reported very little substantial relationship between these two types of traits, that is, morphological traits and physiological traits although Sheldon (1942) earlier had reported a high correlation between physique and temperament.

#### **2.3.4.2 Needs, Interests and Attitudes**

Needs, interests and attitudes are regarded as hormetic (adaptive responses) dimensions of personality by Guilford. These hormetic traits, therefore, instigate action because they are more or less directly related to motivation.

Needs are said to be relatively permanent dispositions that motivate the person towards certain condition. For example, prestige is one need and it instigates action towards getting social prestige. Likewise to get food is a need, which motivates a hungry person toward securing a full stomach.

Interests are person's generalised behaviour tendency to be attracted by some stimuli. Thus, for Guilford, interest are general rather than specific traits and valued positively rather than negatively. Besides, interest also refers to liking to perform some activities. All such interests contribute to causation of behaviour.

Attitudes also instigate behaviour and they are defined as a disposition to favour or not to favour a social object or social action. Since attitudes involve belief, feelings and action, therefore, they are cognitive, affective and conative, too. One's view about premarital sex, divorce and equal right to women can be the example of attitudes. Having a particular attitude forces the person to think, feel and act accordingly.

#### **2.3.4.3 Aptitudes**

Aptitudes refer to how well an individual can perform a given activity and they represent a dimension of ability though they are more specific than abilities. It means that all aptitudes are abilities but not all abilities are aptitude. For example, a tall person may have the ability to reach at the highest shelf but this could not be considered his aptitude. On the basis of factor analysis, Guildford (1959) identified three primary aptitudes, viz., (i) Perceptual aptitudes, (ii) Psychomotor aptitudes and (iii) intelligence.

Perceptual aptitudes relate to the various sense modalities and include factors like visual, auditory and kinesthetic sensitivity.

Psychomotor aptitudes are abilities shown by physical educators, dance instructors and athletic coaches. Human engineers also need psychomotor aptitudes because they have to design machine in such a way that they must be operated conveniently.

Intelligence is a general aptitude. Guilford developed his famous Structure-of-intellect model based upon three primary parameters of operations, products and contents. Originally, there were five categories of operation and six categories of



product and four categories of content in this model. The result was  $5 \times 6 \times 4 = 120$  factors or components of intelligence. Shortly before his death, Guilford (1988), however, expanded the total number from 120 to 180 abilities or factors when he raised the categories of operation from five to six by dividing one of the component of operation, that is, memory into two : Memory recording and Memory relation. The total number of categories of contents was also changed from four to five. Thus now the total factors constituting intelligence became  $6 \times 6 \times 5 = 180$ .

#### 2.3.4.4 Temperament

According to Guilford (1959) temperament refers to the manner in which the individual performs a behaviour. Whether a person is impulsive, tolerant, deliberate or critical in his or her behaviour, is all indicative of the person's temperament. Temperament has been assessed by varieties of inventories in which Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey (GZTS) became very popular.

GZTS assesses 10 bipolar traits of temperament : General activity vs. Inactivity (G), Restraint vs. Impulsiveness (R), Ascendancy vs. submissiveness (A), Sociability vs. Shyness (S), Emotional stability vs. Depression (E) Objectivity vs. Subjectivity (O), Friendliness vs. Hostility (F), Thoughtfulness vs. Unreflectiveness (T), Personal relations vs. Criticalness (P) and Masculinity vs. Femininity (M).

Guilford has pointed out that there are three levels of trait generality : hexic level, primary trait level and type level. Hexic trait is displayed by the person only in specific situations. For example, Mohan who is generally shy and reserved person, may show dominance and aggression before his friends for winning the competition. Here dominance and aggression are examples of hexic level trait and determine his specific actions.

Primary traits are manifested in broader range of behaviour than are hexic traits. For example, when Shyam shows dominance and aggression most of the time in his behaviour, it means these two are his primary traits. Guilford further has opined that primary traits are determined to some extent by types. When a person's behaviours generally revolve around any single disposition, he is said to be manifesting a type upon which Guilford did not give as much emphasis as it had been done by Eysenck. Thus types are composed of primary traits which have positive intercorrelations. An extravert type, for example, may be recognised through observation of high correlations among the primary traits of sociability, orientation towards external reality, impulsiveness, love for contacting other people, tolerance for pain, etc.

#### Self Assessment Questions 4

- 1) Which of the followings is Not a hormetic trait ?
  - a) Interest
  - b) Need
  - c) Attitude
  - d) Aptitude
- 2) Physicque is an example of:
  - a) Hormetic trait
  - b) Physiological trait
  - c) Morphological
  - d) None.

- 3) How many abilities have been identified by Structure-of-intellect model?
  - a) 120
  - b) 160
  - c) 180
  - d) 140
- 4) Physical functions like heart rate, breathing rate, brain wave patterns are all covered by :
  - a) Morphological traits
  - b) Physiological traits
  - c) Hormetic traits
  - d) Behavioural traits.
- 5) Which of the followings is not assessed by GZTS?
  - a) Masculinity – femininity
  - b) Friendliness – hostility
  - c) Practical – imaginative
  - d) Sociability – shyness.

### 2.3.5 Five Factor Model

Today, the most talked about trait approach to personality is the Five Factor Model (FFM) also known as the Big Five. As its name implies, according to this model there are five broad personality factors, each of which is composed of constellation of traits. Based on his own researches as well as researches of others in 1981, Goldberg pointed out that it is possible to prepare a model for structuring individual differences among traits of personality. Big Five was meant to refer to the finding that each factor subsumes a large number of specific traits. In fact, the Big Five are almost as broad and abstract as Eysenck's superfactors. Those Big Five dimensions of personality using the names assigned by MC Crae and Costa (1987) are as under :

#### 2.3.5.1 Extraversion (E)

This factor assesses the quality and intensity of interpersonal interaction. High scorer in this factor is characterised by being sociable, active, talkative, person-oriented, optimistic, fun-loving and affectionate, whereas low scorer is characterised by being reserved, sober, aloof, task oriented, retiring and quiet. Thus this factor contrasts extraverted traits with introverted traits.

#### 2.3.5.2 Neuroticism (N)

This factor assesses adjustment vs. emotional instability. Persons high on neuroticism are prone to emotional instability. Such persons tend to experience negative emotion and are characterised by being moody, irritable, nervous, insecure, and hypochondriacal. Low scorers on this dimension are characterised by being calm, relaxed, unemotional, hardy, self-satisfied etc. Thus this factor differentiates people who are emotionally stable from those who are emotionally unstable.

#### 2.3.5.3 Conscientiousness (C)

This factor mainly assesses the person's degree of organisation, persistence and motivation in goal directed behaviour. In other words, this factor describes task and goal directed behaviours and the socially required impulse control behaviour. This factor easily differentiates individuals who are dependable, organised, hard working, responsible, reliable and thorough (high scorers) from those who are undependable, disorganised, unreliable, impulsive, irresponsible, lazy and negligent (low scorers).

### 2.3.5.4 Agreeableness (A)

This factor assesses the person's quality of interpersonal orientation ranging from compassion to antagonism in thinking, feeling and action. High scorer on this factor would be characterised by soft-hearted, good-natured, trusting, helpful, straightforward and forgiving whereas the low scorer would be characterised by cynical, suspicious, uncooperative, vengeful, irritable and manipulative.

### 2.3.5.5 Openness (O)

This factor assesses proactive seeking and appreciation of experience for its own sake as well as tolerance for and exploration for the something new and unfamiliar. High scorers would be characterised by being good-natured, warm, sympathetic and cooperative whereas low scorers would be characterised by being unfriendly, aggressive, unpleasant, argumentative, cold and even hostile.

First letters of the Big Five dimensions can be reordered to spell out the word OCEAN—an easy way to keep them in memory.

For assessing these Big Five dimensions, Goldberg (1992) has developed a questionnaire named Transparent Bipolar Inventory. Still another much more popular questionnaire to assess Big Five has been developed by Costa and McCrae (1992). This questionnaire has been named as the NEO-Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). Originally, this inventory assessed only N, E and O but later on the other two factors such as A and C were also included. In this new inventory each dimension or factor is defined by six facets and each facet is measured by 8 items. Therefore, the latest version of NEO-PI-R consists of a total of 240 items (5 factors  $\times$  6 facets  $\times$  8 items). On the basis of several studies, McCrae and Costa (1990) are convinced that these five factors as measured by NEO-PI-R are sufficient for describing the basic dimensions of personality. In fact, they go beyond this to say that, “no other system is as complete and yet so parsimonious”.

In making a fair evaluation to trait approach, it can be said that longitudinal studies support trait approach. McCrae and Costa (1990) have studied personality traits of persons over time and have found them to be stable for a period of 3 to 30 years. They have opined that stable individual differences in basic dimensions are universal feature of adult personality. Despite this, critics are of view that trait approach, like type approach, don't explain the causes or development of personality. It simply identifies and describes characteristics, which are correlated with behaviour. Moreover, critics of trait perspective further say that the consistency of our behaviour across situations is very low and therefore, not predictable on the basis of personality traits. Initially, one of the severest critics of trait approach was Walter Mischel (1968) who claimed that the situation, and not our traits, determines the behaviour.

Thus his stand initiated person situation debate, that is, question of relative importance of person and situation in determining the behaviour of the persons. Now Mischel has modified his original position and has proclaimed that behaviour is shaped by both the person (traits) and the situation. Other psychologists have also provided support for the view that there are some internal traits which strongly influence behaviour across different situations (Carson, 1989; McAdams, 1992).

### Self Assessment Questions 5

- 1) Which of the followings is not assessed by Five factor model ?
  - a) Neuroticism
  - b) Psychoticism
  - c) Agreeableness
  - d) Conscientiousness.
- 2) The latest version of NEO-PI-R measures the dimensions of personality through :
  - a) Six facets
  - b) Five facets
  - c) Seven facets
  - d) Four facets.
- 3) Who developed Transparent Bipolar Inventory ?
  - a) McCrae and Costa
  - b) Goldbeng
  - c) Eysenck
  - d) None of these.
- 4) Who has been considered as the most severest critics of trait approach?
  - a) Campbell
  - b) Hawley
  - c) Mischel
  - d) None of these.
- 5) High scorers on Agreeableness dimension of Big Five model would be characterised by being :
  - a) good-natured, trusting and soft-hearted
  - b) organised, reliable and hard-working
  - c) curious, creative and untraditional
  - d) active, talkative and fun-loving

## 2.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we learnt that the earliest effort to explain human behaviour involved the use of personality typologies, which classified behaviour into discrete, all-or-nothing categories. The first was the four-humor theory and remained popular for centuries although today it is regarded as a baseless theory because it has been established now that personality and moods are not driven by bodily fluids. This was followed by Sheldon's somatotype (body build) based theory of personality. Sheldon assigned each individual to one of the three categories, viz., (i) ectomorphic (thin, long and fragile), (ii) endomorphic (fat, soft and round) and (iii) mesomorphic (muscular, strong and rectangular). According to Sheldon, ectomorphs are artistic, brainy and introverted, endomorphs are relaxed, fond of eating, sleeping and sociable whereas mesomorphs are affective, dominant, filled with energy and courage.

MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) typology is another typology which is modern one and based upon Carl Jung's theory of personality types. The four dimensions of personality that are assessed here are : E or I (Extraversion-Introversion), S or N (Sensing or Intuition), T or F (Thinking-Feeling) and J or P (Judgment-Perception). The MBTI identifies 16 types of personality based on Jung's distinctions between E-I, S-N and T-F, as well as upon Isobel Myer's distinction between J-P.

Since the type theories robbed the uniqueness of persons by placing the persons into a preconceived category, the trait theories came about. Trait approaches explain personality in terms of traits, which are defined as relatively stable and consistent personal characteristics. Trait approach attempts to explain personality and differences between people in terms of their personal characteristics, to devise ways of measuring individual differences in personality traits and to use these measures for understanding and predicting a person's behaviour. Under the trait approach, we considered the viewpoints of Allport, Cattell, Eysenck, Guilford, and the Five Factor Model would be discussed in detail.

For Allport, traits are the building blocks of personality as well as the source of individuality. For Allport, trait is something that exists but remains invisible. It is located somewhere in the nervous system (Ryckman, 1993). Allport recognised two major categories of traits: Common traits and Individual traits. He classified individual traits further into three types, viz. cardinal traits, central trait and secondary trait.

All these traits are dynamic in the sense that they possess motivational power. Those individual traits or dispositions which are intensely experienced are said to be more motivational. Those individual traits which are less intensely experienced though possessing more motivational power are said to be more stylistic.

According to Allport, all these individual traits form structure of personality which, in turn, determines the behaviour of an individual. In his view only by focussing upon the uniqueness of the individual, a scientific and substantial understanding of personality is possible.

We then learnt about Cattell's Trait theory. Raymond Cattell (1950) considered personality to be a pattern of traits providing the key to understanding it and predicting a person's behaviour. According to him, traits are relatively permanent and broad reaction tendencies of personality. They serve as the building blocks of personality. He distinguished between (i) surface trait and source trait, (ii) constitutional and environmental-mold traits (iii) ability, temperament and dynamic traits.

Cattell found 23 source traits in normal persons and 16 of which he studied in detail. These 16 basic source traits were then used in the construction of the Sixteen Personality (16PF) Questionnaire popularly known as "16 PF test". In addition to these 16 factors measured by personality test, Cattell, on the basis of his subsequent researches proposed seven new factors. Using factor analysis to the surface traits of the normal and abnormal personality spheres, Cattell derived 12 new factors that measure psychopathological traits. Cattell also distinguished between constitutional traits and environmental mold traits. Cattell has further subdivided traits into ability traits, temperament traits and dynamic traits.

Dynamic traits are the person's motivation and interest which set the person in action toward the goal. The important dynamic traits in Cattell's system are of three types, viz. (i) attitudes, (ii) ergs and (iii) sentiments.

We then learnt about Eysenck's Type Trait Hierarchy theory. British Psychologist Hans Eysenck (1990) had a strong belief that personality is largely determined by genes and that the environmental factors have very little role to play in it. He



opined that personality is more or less stable and enduring organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique. In this definition, he has emphasised upon traits (stable and enduring characteristics) which when clustered together, constitutes a type.

Eysenck's viewpoint is personality is hierarchically organised, consisting of types, traits and habits. At the lowest level of Eysenck's hierarchy are the single responses like action or thoughts. Regularly occurring responses form habits and related habits form traits and several traits clustered together constitute a type or also known as super factors. Later, on the basis of other statistical analysis, he postulated a third dimension, viz., Psychoticism/Impulse control. These three dimensions, according to Eysenck, are the major individual difference types considered most useful in describing personality functioning. To measure these three dimensions of personality, Eysenck developed a paper and pencil test. The latest version of the test has been named as Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ).

Recently, inhibition theory has been replaced by arousal theory by Eysenck because inhibition and excitation although were very useful concepts, were found to be extremely difficult to assess. According to arousal theory, differences in the behaviour of introverts and extraverts are due to the various parts of Ascending Reticular Activating System (ARAS) in the nervous system.

Eysenck's theory was followed by learning about Guilford's trait theory. Guilford defined personality as the individual's unique pattern of traits. Trait, for him, is any distinguishable, relatively enduring way in which one person differs from another. Using factor analysis, Guilford came to the conclusion that there are seven modalities of traits, that is (i) morphological, (ii) physiological, (iii) needs, (iv) interest, (v) attitudes (vi) aptitudes and (vii) temperament. The first two are the somatic traits whereas the last five are behavioural aspects of personality. Guilford emphasised that these modalities should not be regarded as seven separate constituent parts of personality but personality must be seen as integrated whole and these seven modalities can be seven different directions from which the whole can be viewed. Guilford also pointed out three levels of trait generality: hexic level, primary trait level and type level.

Today, the most talked about trait approach to personality is the Five Factor Model (FFM) also known as the Big Five. As its name implies, according to this model there are five broad personality factors, each of which is composed of constellation of traits. Based on his own researches as well as researches of others Goldberg pointed out that it is possible to prepare a model for structuring individual differences among traits of personality. Big Five was meant to refer to the finding that each factor subsumes a large number of specific traits. In fact, the Big Five are almost as broad and abstract as Eysenck's superfactors. Those Big Five dimensions of personality using the names assigned by MC Crae and Costa (1987) are *Extraversion* (E), *Neuroticism* (N), *Conscientiousness* (C), *Agreeableness* (A), *Openness* (O)

First letters of the Big Five dimensions can be reordered to spell out the word OCEAN—an easy way to keep them in memory.

For assessing these Big Five dimensions, Goldberg (1992) has developed a questionnaire named Transparent Bipolar Inventory. Still another much more

popular questionnaire to assess Big Five has been developed by Costa and McCrae (1992) named as the NEO-Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). Originally, this inventory assessed only N, E and O but later on the other two factors such as A and C were also included.

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## 2.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Make distinction between individual traits and common traits. Following Allport, discuss the different types of individual traits and their importance in predicting human behaviour.
- 2) Explain viewpoints of Cattell regarding traits as being one of the determiners of human behaviour.
- 3) Do you find Eysenck's type-trait hierarchy a satisfactory explanation for making prediction about human behaviour ?
- 4) Discuss the different trait modalities as outlined by J.P. Guilford for understanding and predicting human behaviour.
- 5) Discuss the role of five-factor model in understanding human behaviour.
- 6) Do you find trait perspective a satisfactory explanation for explaining personality. Give reasons.

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## 2.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Zimbardo, P.G. & Weber, A.L. (1994). *Psychology*: Harper Collins

Baron, R.A. (2005). *Psychology*: Pearson Education

Santrock, J.W. (2006). *Psychology: Essentials*: Tata McGraw-Hill

Wade, G. & Tavis, C. *Psychology*: Pearson Education.

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## 2.7 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1) | 1. (d) | 2. (b) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (b) |
| 2) | 1. (c) | 2. (b) | 3. (d) | 4. (a) | 5. (c) |
| 3) | 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (d) | 4. (c) | 5. (c) |
| 4) | 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (c) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) |
| 5) | 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (a) |

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## UNIT 3 ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY

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### Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Needs and Aims of Assessment
- 3.3 Methods of Personality Assessment
  - 3.3.1 Interviews
  - 3.3.2 Projective Techniques
  - 3.3.3 Classification of Projective Techniques
  - 3.3.4 Association Technique
- 3.4 Ink Blot Technique
  - 3.4.1 Construction Technique
  - 3.4.2 Completion Technique
  - 3.4.3 Expressive Techniques
  - 3.4.4 The Rorschach Inkblot Technique
  - 3.4.5 The Holtzman Inkblot Test
  - 3.4.6 The TAT
  - 3.4.7 The Sentence Completion Tests
  - 3.4.8 Limitations of the Projective Tests
- 3.5 Behavioural Assessment
  - 3.5.1 Limitations of Behavioural Assessment
- 3.6 Personality Inventories
  - 3.6.1 The Mmpi – 2
  - 3.6.2 Limitations of Personality Inventories
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Unit End Questions
- 3.9 Glossary
- 3.10 Suggested Readings and References

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### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

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Personality assessment refers to the estimation of one's personality make up, that is the person's characteristic behaviour patterns and salient and stable characteristics. As there are different theoretical accounts of personality, and the question is how do people find out what kind of personality they have? The methods of estimating or measuring or assessing personality vary according to the theory of personality used to develop those methods.

However, most of the psychological professionals doing personality assessment do not necessarily tie themselves to one theoretical view point only, rather they prefer to take an eclectic view of personality. The eclectic view is a way of choosing the parts of different theories that seem to best fit a particular situation, rather than using only one theory to explain a phenomenon.

In fact, looking at behaviour from different perspectives can often bring insights into a person's behaviour that would not easily come from taking only one

perspective (Ciccarelli and Meyer, 2006). Therefore, many of the professional doing personality assessment use different perspectives and also take on different techniques for its assessment.

It is also important to note here that personality assessment may also differ with respect to the purposes for which it is done. For example, if the purpose is self-understanding, the person may select different tests/inventories, if the purpose is to classify person's as per their personality traits a different set of tests may be useful. Finally, if the purpose is diagnostic (clinical psychologist, counselors etc.) an entirely different set of tests may be more useful.

There are several tests/inventories which are available for the assessment of personality. Broadly, these can be grasped into one of the three categories. These are the subjective, objective and projective methods. The subjective approach incorporates the assessment of one's personality taking his/her work into account e.g. what he or she had done throughout his/her life. It may also consider his/her autobiographical accounts and biographies etc. But there is a major limitation of it that there are possibilities that the person may exaggerate his/her strengths and may minimise the account of his/her limitations and therefore we may be devoid of the true picture of personality. In personality assessment the effort is to make the assessment free from bias of any sort both from the subject/participant (whose personality is to be assessed) and from that of the assessor. It presents that there are so many such test/inventories whereby we can assess personality of a person objectively and these are the important tools for the purpose. While some tests assess the surface characteristics, others uncover the underlying aspects of personality. Among the major procedures that are in use currently, the important ones are those based on content relevance, empirical criterion keying, factor analyses, and personality theory. Personality assessment may differ in the purposes for which they are conducted. Personality assessment is used in the diagnosis of personality disorders by clinical and counseling psychologists, psychiatrists; and other psychological professionals.

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### **3.1 OBJECTIVES**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Define personality assessment;
- Explain the prominent features of personality assessment;
- Explain the aims of personality assessment;
- Explain the various methods used in the assessment of personality;
- Differentiate between different types of tools of personality assessment;
- Explain projective techniques in detail; and
- Explain objective techniques in detail.

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### **3.2 NEEDS AND AIMS OF ASSESSMENT**

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Testing is becoming more and more important with each growing area of psychology. Traditionally, tests were employed only to measure individual differences or intraindividual reactions under different circumstances. The nature and extent of individual differences, their possessed psychological traits,

differences among various groups etc. are becoming some of the major components demanding assessment as an aid of measurement.

Personality testing is an essential pre-requisite for identifying the various constituents of personality. Testing in personality provides measures of emotional and motivational traits of personality.

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### **3.3 METHODS OF PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT**

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Some of the important tests and techniques measuring personality include (i) Interviews (ii) Projective techniques (iii) Association techniques (iv) Expressive techniques

#### **3.3.1 Interviews**

Interview is a method of personality assessment in which the interviewee has to answer the questions asked by the professional, in a structured or unstructured fashion. Some therapists note down the answers of the interviewee in a survey process. This type of interview is unstructured in manner and moves naturally.

##### **Limitations of Interviews**

Interview by the psychologist demands the report of innermost feeling, concerns and urges on the part of client. This is something that can be known directly by the client/interviewee and thus, the problems encountered with self report data like survey are faced with interviewing also. Interviewees/Clients can misinform, lie, distort the actual facts or reality and hide the true information for social desirability. Also, biases can occur on the part of the interviewers as their personal belief system or prejudices may put obstacles in the interpretation of the information given by the interviewee.

Halo effect is the other problem with interviews. Halo effect is a tendency to form a favorable or unfavorable impression of someone at the first meeting and after that first impression all of the comments and behaviour of that person are interpreted in agreement with the impression. Those who make a good first impression due to clothing, physical appearance or some other characteristic seem to have a “halo” for everything they do in a positive light.

#### **3.3.2 Projective Techniques**

These techniques are assumed to reveal those central aspects of personality that lie in the unconscious mind of an individual. Unconscious motivations, hidden desires, inner fears and complexes are presumed to be elicited by their unstructured nature that affect the client’s conscious behaviour. The assignment of a relatively unstructured task is a major distinguishing feature of projective techniques.

An unstructured task is one that permits an endless range of possible responses. The underlying hypothesis of projective techniques is that the way the test material or “structures” are perceived and interpreted by the individual, reflects the fundamental aspects of her or his psychological functioning. In other words, the test material serves as a sort of screen on which respondents “project” their characteristic thought processes, anxieties, conflicts and needs .



Clients are shown ambiguous visual stimuli by the psychologist and are asked to tell what they see in that stimuli. It is presumed that the client will project the unconscious concerns and fears onto the visual stimulus and thus the psychologist can interpret the responses and understand the psychodynamic underlying the problem of the client. Tests that utilise this method are called projective tests. These tests, besides their function of exploring one's personality, also serve as a diagnostic tool to uncover the hidden personality issues.

The history of projective techniques began in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Leonardo da Vinci selected pupils on the basis of their attempt to find shapes and patterns in ambiguous form (Piotrowski, 1972). In 1879, a Word association test was constructed by Gallon. Similar tests were used in clinical settings by Carl Jung. Later, Frank (1939, 1948) introduced the term projective method to describe a range of tests which could be used to study personality with unstructured stimuli.

This way, the individual has enough opportunity to project his own personality attributes which in the course of normal interview or conversation the person would not reveal. More specifically, projective instruments also represent disguised testing procedures in the sense that the test takers are not aware of the psychological interpretation to be made of their responses.

Rather than measuring the traits separately the attention is focused on the composite picture. Finally, projective techniques are an effective tool to reveal the latent or hidden aspects of personality that remain embedded in the unconscious until uncovered. These techniques are based on the assumption that if the stimulus structure is weak in nature, it allows the individual to project his/her feelings, desires and needs that are further interpreted by the experts.

### Self Assessment Questions

1) What is the need for Personality Assessment?

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2) How can personality assessment prove to be an aid in understanding human behaviour?

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3) What is the underlying approach behind personality testing?

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4) What is projective technique?

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### 3.3.3 Classification of Projective Techniques

Various types of projective techniques have been classified into several categories by psychologists.

- i) **Constructive:** It includes all those tests and situations where the construction of some specific task is to be done by the examinee. The subject needs to frame a structure upon the situation presented by the examiner, and be asked to draw a human figure allowing the person to freely express the examiner's inclination.
- ii) **Constitutive:** This category includes those tests which require the examinee to constitute structures upon some given unstructured materials, as for example, The Rorschach Ink Blot technique. In this test the examinee imposes own structure upon the unstructured ink blots (Zubin, Eros and Schumer, 1965) and the subject's responses are scored and interpreted.
- iii) **Cathartic:** It includes those situations where the examinee can release his wishes, inner demands, conflicts etc. through some manipulative tasks.
- iv) **Interpretative:** It includes those test situations where the examinee has to add a detailed meaning to the given situation. For example, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and the Word Association Test.
- v) **Refractive:** This category includes all those techniques through which the examinee gets the opportunity to depict his personality in the form of drawing, painting etc. Frank cited that graphology is the best example of this category.

If we evaluate Frank's classification, it is obvious that it consists of several limitations. The biggest one is that according to his classification, same test can be included in two or more categories, causing considerable overlap. This way, Frank's classification is not a popular classification of projective methods.

### 3.3.4 Association Techniques

This category includes all those situations where responses are to be given by the examinee in the form of associations which he makes after seeing or listening to the stimulus material. E.g. The Word Association Test etc. In the Word-Association test, the examinee is provided with a number of words in the form of a list and he is required to utter the very first word that comes to his mind on listening the stimulus word. The responses in accordance with the reaction time are used for the analysis of personality of the individual.

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## 3.4 INK BLOT TECHNIQUES

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The Ink blot techniques consist of two popular techniques, that is, The Rorschach Test and The Holtzman Ink blot test. In these tests the examinee has to respond to an unstructured situation composed of some ink blots.

### 3.4.1 Construction Techniques

All those situations are included here in which a story is constructed by the examinee on seeing the stimulus material within some given time limit. The themes and mode of responding are considered relevant in such tests. The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), the Object Relations Test are some of the examples of construction techniques. Some other tests like Draw-A-Person test are also included in this category. In all these tests, the examinee constructs or produces simple/complex statements in a story form or draws some picture or person.

### 3.4.2 Completion Techniques

These include the situations where some incomplete sentences are presented to the examinee and he can complete them in the form he desires. For example

I want .....

I feel excited about.....

The subject has to fill up the blanks and the responses given by the examinee are recorded and analysed to get a picture of the individual's personality. For example, Rotter's Incomplete Sentences Blank. Some people consider it as a semi projective technique.

### 3.4.3 Expressive Techniques

These include those tests where some manipulative tasks are used by the examinee to depict his or her personality. Some interaction with the given material is the theme of these techniques. Some of the common expressive techniques include role playing, finger painting, play, drawing etc. The characteristic feature of expressive techniques is that the examiner pays much attention to the manner in which the given materials are manipulated by the examinee.

### 3.4.4 The Rorschach Inkblot Test

Rorschach inkblot test was developed in 1921 by Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach. It consists of 10 inkblots, five in black ink on a white background and five in colored inks on a white background. The Rorschach test is a measure of both the intellectual and non intellectual personality traits. While developing

this technique, Rorschach experimented with a large number of ink blots which were administered to different psychiatric groups. On the basis of such clinical observations various psychiatric syndromes that differentiate response characteristics were taken up in the scoring system.

In the test, the subjects are asked to simply state whatever each inkblot looks like to them. Responses are scored by the psychologists using predetermined categories, on key factors such as color and shape, movement, whether the whole or part blot has been seen, and whether the response is given in content to the whole or to peculiar details in the blot.

These blots are frequently used for personality description, diagnosis of mental disorders and for behaviour predictions (Watkins et al, 1995; Wiener, 1997). The whole procedure of The Rorschach Test is a combined set of three components, viz., performance proper, inquiry, and scoring. Let us deal with each of these one by one.

### **Administration of Rorschach test**

The administration of the Rorschach test can be put up in two stages as given below.

#### **a) Performance proper**

The examinee is asked to get seated and rapport is established with him. First plate is then handled to the client with the question “What do you think this could be?” During the process the examinee needs to be careful about the following things:

- 1) Reaction time which means the time gap between the card presentation and examinee’s response. Exclamations and comments are excluded from scoring.
- 2) The position of the card is also taken account of while examinee is responding and are scored as v, ^, <, >. depending on the direction in which the card is turned.
- 3) The responses are recorded verbatim for the reason that the examiner can read it and analyse the same effectively.
- 4) The total time for which the card is kept by the subject is also recorded. The time lapsed between the presentation of the card and the first response the subject gives is called the reaction time.

On completion of the first plate, the second plate is given to the examinee and similarly all the 10 plates are presented in a sequential manner. The total number of responses is also termed as response productivity ratio and is coded as R. On a Rorschach protocol, for most adults the score varies from 15 to 30. Vague and uncertain response by the examinee is noted down to be clarified in the second stage of administration, that is, the inquiry stage.

### **Inquiry**

It is the second stage of administration of the Rorschach test. It is taken up after obtaining responses on all the ten cards during “performance proper”. The basic purpose of conducting inquiry is to collect all the necessary information for the accurate scoring of the responses. Here, a location sheet is presented before the

examinee and he is asked to locate the part on the basis of which he has responded, so as to maintain a permanent record of the area of the blot used by the subject in responding. The questions framed for the inquiry stage are based on the examiner's skill and expertise.

### Scoring of Rorschach test

The major differences among the various scoring systems of the Rorschach test flourished in 1930s to the 1960s. There is also the focus of concern for Rorschach interpretation based either on the content of the responses or on their formal characteristics, such as location, determinants, form quality, and the various quantitative summaries derived from the responses, that is, the content.

Scoring of location is important. *Location* refers to that part of the plot with which each response of the subject is associated. For example, whether the whole blot or a common detail or a usual detail has been used by the respondent and are scored as *W, D, d, Dd etc.* The determinants of the response include form, color shading and "movement" and are coded as *F, C, S, M etc.* The respondent's perception of the blot as a moving object is scored in context of "movement". The various types of movement include human movement, animal movement etc.

The form quality of responses may depict the precision with which the response match the location used, to their originality.

The treatment of content also varies from one Rorschach system to another except some major regularly employed categories. Some of the main categories are human figures, human details, animal details etc. and are coded as *H, A, Hd, Ad etc.* Some other broad scoring categories may include art objects, plants, maps, landscapes, clothing etc. For each of the 10 cards, certain specific responses are scored as popular because of their common occurrence and thus, constitute the popularity score.

Qualitative interpretations of the Rorschach scores include the association of "whole" responses with conceptual thinking. The colour responses given by the subject are indicative of the subject's emotionality and fantasy life. The entire response for all the 10 cards including the enquiry are integrated together to interpret the psychodynamics underlying the problem and also decide upon the diagnostic issues.

However, after a prolonged use of the Rorschach test as a psychometric instrument, some of the researchers found a number of difficulties inherent in the method itself, such as the variability in the total number of responses, examiner effects and interdependence of scores etc. The five major Rorschach systems in use developed in the United States show vast differences which were documented by John E. Exner, Jr. (1969). He, with his extensive investigations of clinical use of the Rorschach Test came up with a single, distilled system encompassing all the useful features being possessed by the method. Questions are also asked about the reliability and validity of the assessment done through the Rorschach Test.

In this context, it is pertinent to mention here that the Rorschach Ink blot test was never developed as a psychometric tool, rather, it was developed as an instrument to aid in the clinical diagnosis.



To briefly state about this test, it can be concluded that more research still needs to be conducted to invent a standard method of administration and scoring of the Rorschach. Test.

### 3.4.5 The Holtzman Inkblot Test

Holtzman et. Al. (1961) developed an inkblot test known as the Holtzman Inkblot Test (HIT). This test was developed by Holtzman in order to remove the inherent technical difficulties of the Rorschach like unlimited number of responses, poor scorer reliability etc. There are two parallel forms (A and B) having 45 cards, both colored and achromatic and markedly asymmetric. One response per card is taken by the respondent. Each response is followed by a two fold simple question : where was the percept represented in the blot and what the percept suggests about the blot ? All the responses are then classified under 22 response variables.

It has been found by many researchers that Holtzman test appears to be better standardised than the Rorschach test. Also the scorer reliability of the HIT is highly satisfactory validity data on HIT have also yielded satisfactory results. It has also overcome the problem of productivity ratio by specifying the number of responses.

Recently, Holtzman (1988) has also developed a variant of HIT called HIT 25. Consisting of 25 cards. It has been found to be successful in diagnosing schizophrenia.

### 3.4.6 The TAT

This test was developed by Henry Murray and his colleagues (Morgan and Murray, 1935). The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) consists of 20 pictures which are all black and white. The people depicted in the picture are deliberately drawn in ambiguous situations. After showing the picture, a story is to be told by the client about the person or people in the picture. They have to say what is happening in the picture, what has caused the event and what could have taken place in the past and what would happen in the future. The story narrated by the client is interpreted by the psychologist, who tries to look for revealing statements and projection of the client's hidden emotions onto the characters in the pictures. In the original interpretation method of TAT scores, the examiner first determines who is the "hero", the character of either sex with whom the respondent presumably identifies himself or herself. The content of the stories is then analysed in reference to Murray's list of "needs" and "press". Achievement, affiliation and aggression are the examples of needs whereas "press" refers to environmental forces that may facilitate or interfere with need satisfaction.

However, TAT has been used extensively in the research of personality but the high variations in administration and scoring procedures associated with TAT has made it quite difficult to investigate the psychometric properties of the TAT. Nevertheless, the value of Thematic Apperception Techniques has been confirmed and also the clinical utility of various versions of the TAT both for traditional and specific applications have been established.

### 3.4.7 The Sentence Completion Tests

Other than these two well-known projective tests, there are some other types of projective tests which include Sentence Completion test, Draw-A-Person test,

and House-Tree-Person Test. In the sentence completion test, verbal material is used. Various incomplete sentences are given to the subject to complete them. Some of the incomplete sentences are like example given below:

I feel very .....,

I wish my mother....

The subject is asked to complete the sentence the way he/she desires. In the Draw-A-Person and House-Tree-Person, the client is supposed to draw the named items on a white sheet.

### 3.4.8 Limitations of the Projective Tests

Projective tests are basically subjective in nature and the interpretation of the answers of clients needs deep analytic and artistic traits. Reliability and validity related problems always exist in projective tests. There are no standard grading scales for projective tests. Person's varying mood may decide the person's answer which may vary considerably from one day to another.

Some situational variables like the examiner's physical characteristics are likely to influence the responses on projective techniques. It has also been seen that the changed instructions on the part of examiner also influence the examinee's scores on projective techniques to a great extent.

Finally, in the words of Eysenck (1959), projective techniques can be summarised as those in which the relationship between projective indicators and personality traits have not been demonstrated by any empirical evidences.

A number of evidences show that most studies of projective techniques are guided by methodological flaws and are ill designed.

Projective techniques are not guided by any consistent, meaningful and testable theories.

There is no evidence showing a relationship between global interpretation of projective techniques by experts and psychiatrists.

Generally, projective techniques have poor predictive ability regarding failure or success in various walks of life.

#### Self Assessment Questions

- 1) Define Projective techniques as a tool of assessment.

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2) Explain various projective techniques in detail.

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3) Discuss the classification of projective techniques according to various researchers.

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4) Critically evaluate various personality testing procedures.

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### **3.5 BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT**

Behaviorists assume that personality is a composite set of learned responses to stimuli in the environment, they undertake to watch such behaviour as a preferred method to study.

One of the methods is direct observation, that requires the psychologist to observe the client while engaged in ordinary, daily-routine behaviour, at home, school, workplace or any other natural setting.

Among other methods often used by behavioural therapists are rating scales and frequency counts. In a rating scale, either the psychologist or the client assigns a numeric rating or some specific behaviour. On the other hand, in a frequency count, the frequency of certain behaviours in a specified time limit is counted.

Both rating scales and frequency counts are being used by educators in the diagnosis of various behavioural problems like attention deficit disorder etc.

#### **3.5.1 Limitations of Behavioural Assessment**

Observer bias is the major limitation of behavioural assessments.

In observational method, there is no control over the external environment and this may lead to interpret the events in fruitless direction.

## 3.6 PERSONALITY INVENTORIES

Personality inventory is a printed form that consists of a set of statements or questions applying to human behaviour. The list of questions is a standard one and requires specific answers such as “yes”, “no” and “cannot decide”. As the questions demand close-ended answers, these assessments are quite objective in nature.

Cattell’s 16PF is one such personality inventory. NEO-PI by Costa and McCrae (2000) has been revised, which is based on the five factor model of personality traits. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is another commonly used inventory.

Introversion, Extraversion (I/E) is a classic dimension that began with Jung and is represented in nearly every personality theory, including the Big Five. The sensing / intuition (S/I), thinking / feeling (T/P), Introversion / Extroversion (I/E) and Perceiving/Judging (P/J) are the four dimensions that can differ for each individual resulting in ISTJ, ISTP, ISFP, ISFJ personality types possibly (Briggs and Myers, 1998). For example, an ESTJ is an organiser, practical in nature and energetic in activity, an ESTJ is also a good school administrator.

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1993), the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1995) and the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell, 1994) are some other common personality tests.

### 3.6.1 The MMPI-2

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Version-II or MMPI-2 is the most common personality inventory. It tests specifically, the abnormality inventory. It tests specifically, the abnormal behaviour patterns in personality MMPI-2 consists of 567 statements such as “I believe I am being plotted against”. The answers to the statements must be in “true”, “false”, or “cannot say”. It has 10 clinical scales and eight validity scales besides various subscales. Each scale tests a particular kind of behaviour. Ranging from mild to more serious disorders such as schizophrenia and depression, are assessed using this inventory.

Validity scales ascertain that whether the person taking the inventory is responding honestly or not. For example, if one of the statements is “I am contended with whatever I have” and a person responds “true” to that statement, gets into suspicion that the person is lying. If several of validity scale questions are answered in this manner, it clearly depicts that the person is not being honest.

### 3.6.2 Limitations of Personality Inventories

Personality inventories have certain advantages over projective tests and interviews in the sense that inventories are standardised. Also, observer bias and interpretation bias are not possible due to their objective frame. Inventories are also superior to projective tests in terms of validity and reliability (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997).

However, there are some problems with inventories too. Even though, good at validity end, some people still fake their answers and respond in socially acceptable ways. Also, some people follow a regular course of answering the statements without actually considering them, there as others may pick statements to answer at random rather than answering each and every statement.

Though, the tasks of personality assessment and measurement is a skilled and sophisticated one, today predictions of behaviour are based on measurement of personality.

### Self Assessment Questions

- 1) Explain the meaning of personality inventories.

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- 2) Discuss the nature of personality inventories.

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- 3) Critically evaluate different personality inventories.

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- 4) Critically evaluate behavioural assessment method.

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### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

All types of personality tests available possess certain difficulties which are both of theoretical and practical in nature. Every approach comes up with certain advantages and disadvantages. However, personality measurement research has gained enough importance. Still various devices are in the process of improvement.



Some upcoming trends in personality testing include increasing evidence of mutual influence between emotional and cognitive traits. Second, development of a comprehensive model relating to human activity subsuming all sorts of basic research on both emotional and cognitive traits.

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### 3.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) What are the advantages and limitations of using interviews as a tool of personality assessment?
- 2) How can projective tests be used to explore personality?
- 3) What are the problems encountered in using projective tests?
- 4) How can behavioural assessments be used in personality testing?
- 5) What are the different kinds of personality inventories used in personality assessment?
- 5) How can further research in personality testing prove useful in enriching the existing personality assessment procedures?

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### 3.9 GLOSSARY

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<b>Method</b>	: Procedures of gathering information in any field of study.
<b>Interview</b>	: A method of personality assessment in which the interviewer asks questions to the clients and the client is allowed to answer either in a structured or an unstructured fashion.
<b>Halo effect</b>	: Tendency of an interviewer to allow positive characteristics of a client to influence the assessments of client behaviour and statements.
<b>Projective tests</b>	: Assessment of personality that presents ambiguous visual stimuli to the client and ask the client to respond with whatever comes to his mind.
<b>Rorschach ink blot test</b>	: Projective test that uses 10 ink blots as the ambiguous stimuli.
<b>Thematic Apperception test</b>	: Projective test that uses 20 pictures of persons in ambiguous situations as the visual stimuli.
<b>Personality Inventory</b>	: Paper and pencil tests that consist of statements requiring a specific and standardised response from the person taking the test.

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### 3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## UNIT 4 KEY ISSUES IN PERSONALITY

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### Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Genes and Personality
  - 4.2.1 Nature vs. Nurture Debate
  - 4.2.2 The Nature Theory – Heredity
  - 4.2.3 The Nurture Theory – Environment
  - 4.2.4 Twin Studies
  - 4.2.5 Infant Shyness
  - 4.2.6 Anti-social Personality Disorder
  - 4.2.7 Family Studies
- 4.3 The Person-Situation Controversy
  - 4.3.1 The Behavioural Consistency Controversy
- 4.4 Interactionist Approach to Situation versus Person Debate
- 4.5 Nomothetic Approach versus Idiographic Approach to Personality
  - 4.5.1 Nomothetic Approach
  - 4.5.2 Idiographic Approach
- 4.6 Cross Cultural Issue
- 4.7 Personality Traits and Five Factor Model
  - 4.7.1 The Five Factor Model Across Cultures
- 4.8 Issues Relating to Theoretical Models
- 4.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.10 Unit End Questions
- 4.11 Glossary
- 4.12 Suggested Readings and References

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### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

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Besides the grand theories in personality, there is much more to be incorporated in the study of personality. There are several issues in the study of personality that have either remained unresolved or are still in the process of resolution. In this unit you will learn about the impact of heredity on personality and the various research studies that have been conducted to ascertain the relationship between these two factors. The unit also gives a glimpse of the heredity versus environment debate and points out the many research work in regard to this area and the conclusions that have been arrived at based on the research. An attempt has also been made in this unit to present the person versus situation controversy wherein it has been pointed out as to how the consistency in behaviour across situations is questioned. The interactionist approach in regard to this issue has been elaborated. This unit also presents the idiographic versus nomothetic approach to personality in which context the cross cultural issues have also been dealt with. The research in the five factor model's explanation of personality have been listed and it has been pointed out as how this theory has been more popular and the reasons for the same.

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## 4.1 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the various issues in personality;
- Explain the controversies in the study of personality;
- Analyse the various sub-issues still unanswered in the field of personality; and
- List out the ways to fill up the lacunae existing in personality research.

Some of the major issues in personality research are being discussed in the following sections:

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## 4.2 GENES AND PERSONALITY

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Nature versus nurture is probably the oldest issue in psychology. This is an age old dispute among behavioural psychologists, philosophers, theologians, and theorists of consciousness. “Nature versus nurture” is a term coined by the English Victorian Polymath Francis Galton regarding the influence of heredity and environment on the development of personality. .

### 4.2.1 Nature versus Nurture Debate

The nature versus nurture debate basically relates to the relative importance of an individual’s inherent traits versus the personal experiences that lead to individual differences in physical and behavioural traits.

Some scientists are of the view that genetic predispositions or even animal instincts are the push factors behind people’s behaviour. Others believe that the way one behaves is directly dependent upon the manner in which the person has been taught to behave. The former is known as the “nature” theory of human behaviour whereas the latter is termed as the “nurture” theory of human behaviour. Sir Francis Galton was fascinated by the idea of genetic pre-programming and tried to uncover the predestined ways of human beings. However, many of his experiments proved ill-conceived but yet his contribution has been vital to the study of personality issues. The technique of finger printing and the Word Association Test are the end products of Galton’s contribution.

It has been stated that at the time of birth the child has no specific traits except that it functions through its reflexes. As the child grows day by day, and in the process of socialisation it learns many things in regard to the environment. It is said that the child thus at birth is in a blank state of mind or ‘tabula rasa’, and whatever one wants to put into it, the same would be absorbed and the child’s behaviour accordingly will change. This view which holds that “nurture” yields all or almost all the behavioural traits in the individual child. Thus the environment (nurture) plays a significant role in the development of the child’s personality.

However, the fast growing understanding of the human genome has come up with the information that both the sides are right in their own part. Whereas nature provides us with inherent abilities and traits, nurture reshapes these genetic tendencies and molds them with progressive learning and maturity. This view

point which agrees that both nature and nurture play crucial roles in human personality development has come to be known as interactionism.

### 4.2.2 The Nature Theory – Heredity

It has been demonstrated by scientists that traits such as eye color and hair color are decided by specific genes that are embedded and encoded in each human cell. The things have been taken a step further by the nature theory that formulates in more recent times it has also been shown that the more abstract traits such as intelligence, personality, aggression and sexual orientation are also encoded in an individual's DNA. This has led to the concept of behavioural genes which can justify criminal acts or criminal behaviours.

Another debated issue in context of nature theory is the occurrence of “gay gene” that points to a genetic component to sexual orientation.

If there is no role of genetics, then fraternal twins brought up under the same environmental conditions, would be alike, even though differences exist in their genetic make up. But, according to the studies, they closely resemble each other as compared to non-twin brothers and sisters.

### 4.2.3 The Nurture Theory – Environment

The proponents of the nurture theory are of the view that genetic tendencies ultimately do not matter. They believe that our behavioural aspects originate only from the environmental forces in our upbringing.

American psychologist John Watson, a strong proponent of environmental learning, demonstrated that disorders like phobia could also be explained by classical conditioning.

Today, known as the Father of Behavioral Science, B.F. Skinner proved that human behaviour could be conditioned in much the same way as animals.

Even if reared apart, identical twins should have been exactly the same in all respects if environment had no role to play.

### 4.2.4 Twin Studies

Twin studies are an important tool in resolving the nature versus nurture argument. Identical twins or Monozygotic twins, are siblings who have exact duplicates of their genotypes. They best indicate that whether biological dispositions affect traits and psychopathology in human beings.

Fraternal twins, dizygotic twins share exactly half the number of genes with each other. They are a very good basis for comparison of identical twins. Twin studies usually rely on samples of identical and fraternal twins. Some of the important studies on twins and related findings are presented below.

A study was conducted to determine the heritability of attitudes among twins, as well as the genetic variables, such as intelligence, that can play a role in affecting the attitudes among pairs of twins. The results of the study showed partial correlation between the attitudes of the participants with their genetic factors. Also, correlation existed between the attitudes related to self-reported perspectives or to activities. For example, the subjects were asked to rate themselves on the



trait of sociability through a survey. The trait was correlated with 5 out of 6 attitudes factors that the subjects had towards sociability.

It was also found that non-shared environment experiences between pairs are the strongest cause of attitude variances that overshadowed genetic predispositions as well as shared environment experiences (Olson et al., 2001). Non-shared environment refers to a condition in which something in the environment directly affects one twin but no impact occurs on the other at all (Van denOord, 2000).

A Swedish study was conducted to measure personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism among the twin pairs, impulsivity trait and family environment and socio-economic status. The findings showed that the genotypes and the environment interaction is an important concept in twin studies as it can also be applied to the way people with the same genotypes might respond to similar environment.

Our particular genotype environment, labeled Type I, indicates that the environment plays a more significant role with a genotype for low scores on a specific personality trait. It means that individuals with low genotypes for extraversion would also score low on extraversion. Type-II genotype that is, the environment interaction, on the other hand, is exactly the opposite of Type-I.

#### **4.2.5 Infant Shyness**

An adoption study was conducted to uncover the reasons behind why some infants are open and responsive to attention, some take a bit longer to open up while some others are withdrawn. It is difficult to tell whether babies are shy because of the environment in which they are brought up as their mothers are shy or because they inherit the shyness traits from their mothers.

Adoptive parents were given questionnaires that asked them to rate their infants on the measure of shyness. The results revealed that in non-adoptive families, the parents with high shyness rates also had shy infants. One significant conclusion revealed that those biological mothers who rated high on shyness, had their adopted babies as also shy. This shows some evidence of the effect of a genetic link on family environment (Daniels & Plomin, 1985).

#### **4.2.6 Anti-social Personality Disorder**

Attempts have been made to see whether children who are at risk for antisocial personality disorder develop symptoms in an adoptive family or gets protection against the disorder in such environment. Results have revealed that anti-social personality disorder is more prevalent in adopted children having biological risk factors. Results further revealed that if both the biological parents and adoptive parents come from criminal background, there is high incidence of an element of criminal tendencies in the offspring.

For various reasons the interpretation of the results of adoption studies is very difficult and valid conclusions cannot be made. Genetic factors are “simulated” when the adoptive family environment is similar to the biological environment.

#### **4.2.7 Family Studies**

However, not as valid as twin and adoption studies, but still family studies play an important role in resolving the heredity versus environment debate. These are

mainly used to identify the degree of risk of developing mental disorders by relatives and other family members. Such studies are mainly used to determine the risk of inheritance of mental disorders to offspring within families. These types of studies are performed using molecular genetic studies where the DNA from the participant's blood samples is taken and the observed behaviour is projected.

### Self Assessment Questions

- 1) What role does heredity play in the shaping of one's personality?

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- 2) What role does environment play in the constitution of one's personality?

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- 3) Discuss the nature-nurture debate in the study of personality.

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- 4) How do genes affect the psychopathology of behaviour?

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- 5) What does the genotype – environment interaction convey regarding personality?

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## 4.3 THE PERSON-SITUATION CONTROVERSY

The person situation debate was sparked off by a prominent book by Mischel in 1968, in which the trait approach to personality was targeted. According to Mischel, the traits when rated, do not predict the actual behaviour. Opposed to Mischel's view, Epstein, in 1983, argued that although traits do not predict single behaviour, they are good at predicting aggregates of such behaviours.

Broady and Ehrlichman (1998) devised the following hypothetical study to test whether traits are good at predicting behaviour across not only in the same situation, but also across different situations. For this, the following steps were taken:

Step 1: Obtained measures of behaviour for a group of individuals in each of twenty situations that were assumed to be relevant to the trait of conscientiousness.

Step 2: Assumed further that each individual has been observed several times in a situation and that the measure of behaviour in a situation for each individual is based on an aggregate index of behaviour.

Step 3: The set of situations was divided into two arbitrary groups of ten each.

Step 4: Obtained two aggregated indices of conscientiousness for each individual by averaging the person's score for each of the two groups of ten situations.

Step 5: Obtained a correlation between the two indices.

Step 6: Obtained an overall index of conscientiousness for each individual by averaging the aggregated behavioural measures for each of the twenty situations studied.

The findings showed that the person situation debate was an extended disagreement, originally between social psychologists and personality psychologists, on whether the "situation" or the personality traits are more predictive of people's behaviour.

Mischel argued that (1) literature review shows that personality traits only have a correlation of about .30 with how people behave in a given situation, and (2) the cross-situational consistency of behaviour is also just .20-.30. So, he concluded that situations, rather than personality traits are better predictors of behaviour.

These arguments further generated a lot of response from personality psychologists using trait questionnaires for several decades. Those on the side of personality argued that the low personality-behaviour correlations do not prove that situational variables are more valuable.

The actual relationship between personality and behaviour was found to be higher than .40.

Personality is a stronger predictor of behaviour across all situations but not a strong predictor of an individual's behaviour at a specific time in a specific situation.

Personality traits are the most useful psychological tools that predict behaviour most strongly.

### 4.3.1 The Behavioural Consistency Controversy

Departing from the trait approaches view that internal relatively stable forces of personality exert a consistent effect on behaviour, another view proposes that no consistent traits are reflected by an individual's responses to any situation, rather traits vary according to the situation.

Hartshorne and May (1928) conducted a classic study on honesty in children. Children were exposed to situations where they could get a chance to behave dishonestly and that too without getting detected. The results showed that the children were not consistent on either of the ends (honestly or dishonesty), but they behaved specific to the situation. It was proposed by Walter Mischel (1968, 1978) that people can learn to make quite different responses to similar stimuli as per past reinforcements provided to them. So, before deciding a person's response to any specific stimuli, the perceptual and cognitive process should be taken into account.

According to Mischel, the significance of situational variables or personality variables should be determined while conducting research in personality. It is basically determined by the strength and weakness of the situation. If everyone makes the same interpretation and draws uniform expectancies to a situation presented to them, then situational variables stand more important. On the other hand, ambiguity in situations represents greater influence of personality variables in behaviour.

Later on Mischel (1985) also proposed that people exhibit consistent modes of responding, implying that consistency appears in situations where people behave inadequately. Researchers like Magnusson and Endler (1977) also believe that prediction of behaviour is done not only in terms of traits or situations alone, rather some combination (interaction) of the two must be attended and referred to. Various theories are now being developed that follow the interactionist approach.

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## 4.4 INTERACTIONIST APPROACH TO SITUATION VS. PERSON DEBATE

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If one formulates that traits and situations interact to influence behaviour, then the formula for this could be as given below:

$$\text{Behavior} = \text{personality} \times \text{appraisal of the situation.}$$

It is an important fact that individual differences exist in personality-situation relationship. High self monitors try to adapt more to the situation and thus, display less consistency across situations in their behaviour.

Thus one may state that some individuals show more consistent behaviour and that traits do not influence behaviour consistently and emerge only in some situations. Another aspect is that whatever people do, it exhibits their traits. e.g. choice of careers, choice of lifestyle etc.

Almost all researches have demonstrated that personality traits exist and are predictive of behaviour. Some research has shown the correlation between situations and behavioural outcomes to be ranging from 0.36 to 0.42 which is

almost identical to predictive power of personality traits. How far situations determine behaviour even against one's value system is an important issue here.

In this context, one of the studies was on the obedience factor carried out by Stanley Milgram in which he used fake electric shock to study how people react when they cause harm to others. Given in the box below is the experiment:

The psychologist Stanley Milgram created an electric 'shock generator' with 30 switches. The switch was marked clearly in 15 volt increments, ranging from 15 to 450 volts.

He also placed labels indicating the shock level, such as 'Moderate' (75-120 Volts) and 'Strong' (135-180 Volts). The switches 375-420 Volts were marked 'Danger: Severe Shock' and the two highest levels 435-450, was marked 'XXX'.

**The 'shock generator' was in fact phony and would only produce sound when the switches were pressed.**

40 subjects participated all males. They thought they were going to participate in an experiment about 'memory and learning'. Next, the subject met an 'experimenter', the person leading the experiment, and another person told to be another subject. The other subject was in fact a confederate(experimenter's man) acting as a subject. He was a 47 year old male accountant.

The two subjects (the real subject and the confederate subject) drew slips of paper to indicate who was going to be a 'teacher' and who was going to be a 'learner'. The lottery was in fact a set-up, and the real subject would always get the role of 'the teacher'.

The teacher saw that the learner was strapped to a chair and electrodes were attached. The subject was then seated in another room in front of the shock generator, unable to see the learner.

The Stanley Milgram Experiment aimed at getting an answer to the question: *"For how long will someone continue to give shocks to another person if they are told to do so, even if they thought they could be seriously hurt?"* (the dependent variable)

Remember that they had met the other person, a likable stranger, and that they thought that it could very well be them who were in the learner-position receiving shocks.

The subject was instructed to teach word-pairs to the learner. When the learner made a mistake, the subject was instructed to punish the learner by giving him a shock, 15 volts higher for each mistake.

The learner never received the shocks, but pre-taped audio was triggered when a shock-switch was pressed.

If the experimenter, seated in the same room, was contacted, the experimenter would answer with predefined 'prods' ("Please continue", "Please go on", "The experiment requires that you go on", "It is absolutely essential that you continue", "You have no other choice, you must go on"), starting with the mild prods, and making it more authoritarian for each time the subject contacted the experimenter.



If the subject asked who was responsible if anything would happen to the learner, the experimenter answered “I am responsible”. This gave the subject a relief and many continued.

During the Stanley Milgram Experiment, many subjects showed signs of tension. 3 subjects had “full-blown, uncontrollable seizures”.

Although most subjects were uncomfortable doing it, all 40 subjects obeyed up to 300 volts.

25 of the 40 subjects continued to complete to give shocks until the maximum level of 375 volts was reached.

Before the Stanley Milgram Experiment, experts thought that about 1-3 % of the subjects would not stop giving shocks. They thought that you’d have to be pathological or a psychopath to do so.

Still, 65 % never stopped giving shocks. None stopped when the learner said he had heart-trouble. How could that be?

**We now believe that it has to do with our almost innate behaviour that we should do as told, especially from authority persons.**

*Source:* <http://www.experiment-resources.com/stanley-milgram-experiment.html#ixzz13wADcJx9>

However, the end of the debate was not completely one sided. It has also been argued that trait psychologists could still not explain why behaviour has low consistency over short periods, remaining at 0.30 ranges. On the other hand, situations could also no longer take a stand that traits are not as important as situations. This state of affairs made out a resolution that changed the conceptions of psychologists of both traits and situations.

Regarding traits, psychologists learned that they do not have cross cultural consistency for individual behaviours, but over time, they create consistency for wide behaviour distributions. For situations, psychologists learned that situations are not the only thing that matters.

On the basis of these formulations, a new definition of personality can be framed which states that personality is one’s pattern of behavioural stability and change due to the unique combination of having certain traits and being in certain situations. Therefore, the current requirement in the area of personality is to understand which of the person and situation forces account for patterns of stability and change in behaviour.

The person-situation debate was a challenging task yet ultimately constructive argument for personality psychology (Fleeson, 2004). By forcing psychologists to think carefully about the links between behaviour, personality and situations, the person-situation debate acted as a catalyst for a deeper appreciation of the importance of personality and for a more sophisticated understanding of why people do what they do.

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## 4.5 NOMOTHETIC APPROACH VERSUS IDIOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PERSONALITY

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Personality related psychological research and studies are grouped in three main groups, viz., (i) nomothetic, (ii) idiographic and (iii) complementary approaches to personality.

### 4.5.1 Nomothetic Approach

Nomothetic approaches are based on the tendency to see one's personality as constant, hereditary and resistant to change, whereas the influence of the environment is minimal. This way, nomothetic approaches state that the way in which a person will act under certain circumstances can be calculated and anticipated, foreseen. Gordon Allport (1934) identified this approach to personality testing. The nomothetic approach relies on quantitative research methods such as self report and questionnaires to establish universal behaviours. He understood that scientific progress for trait psychology was rooted in a nomothetic approach.

Thus, nomothetically derived traits were employed by Allport to describe people. Allport (1937, 1961) employed traits as the primary basis which can be used to describe people. Accordingly, he described a trait as a “neuropsychic structure that possesses the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent. Allport also assumed that traits are real. He formulated that traits are distinct and particular to each person and their assessment shall be done uniquely.

### 4.5.2 Idiographic Approach

Allport also promoted another approach named as idiographic approach to the study of personality. Here every individual is regarded as a combined system that can be independently analysed scientifically. It means that each individual is examined deeply and no general laws are considered important that are beyond the individual to be studied.

Under the idiographic process, he believed that a person's traits can be put into various compartments according to their pervasiveness in an individual's personality. The most pervasive traits were referred to as “cardinal” dispositions by Allport. If present, cardinal traits dominate the behaviour of an individual aggressiveness, calmness etc. may be taken as examples. Another set of traits, known as “central dispositions” comprise those that are pervasive for a given individual. For example, the traits talked about while writing a letter of recommendation. More situational specific traits are termed as “Secondary dispositions”. Allport argued that each person possesses a unique pattern of cardinal, central and secondary traits and to understand a person, the unique-pattern examination is required.

Thus, the above discussion explains that the differences between a nomothetic and an idiographic approach is not just a question of discovering on the part of the psychologist, but also the methods employed are considered useful.

The nomothetic point of view has experiments, correlation, psychometric testing and other quantitative methods as its examples. On the other hand, the idiographic methods include case studies, informal interviews, unstructured observation and other qualitative methods.

#### Self Assessment Questions

- 1) What is the person-situation controversy?

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- 2) What- the person or the environment exert more influence in structuring a person's personality?

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- 3) How does the interactionist approach handle the person-situation debate?

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- 4) Discuss the nomothetic view to personality.

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- 5) Discuss the idiographic view to personality.

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## 4.6 CROSS CULTURAL ISSUES

Personality and culture are interwoven and still their relationship cannot be comprehended well. But it is also true that the culture of an individual is not the sole determiner of an individual's personality. The framework of individualism versus collectivism can be utilised to observe this as it predisposes individualism or collectivism. It is one of basic differences that have been described in varying national cultures. Factors such as personal achievement, egalitarian relationships, role flexibility team and familial connections etc. are used to describe personality traits and differences between individuals of various cultures (Hofstede, 2001). However, it is not possible to attribute all the factors under individualism-collectivism web only to the cultural influence. The framework of individualism

collectivism is mainly used to describe personality characteristics traits and habits generating from within cultures where certain individualist or collectivist traits occur.

An element of doubt gets raised up while applying the principles of this framework in personality perception of an individual as it may lead to stereotyping and misinterpreting of an individual's personality and his characteristic of behaviour. The individualism framework can be of more use in describing cultural tendencies as a whole rather than describing individual characteristics and traits. However, this does not imply that the individualism collectivism paradigm is naïve and can be excluded in studying the domain of personality. It can be easily inferred from the above discussion that the interplay between personality and culture is quite complex. It is also clear that even in adulthood, personality can be affected by cultural expectations. Simultaneously, this is also to be acknowledged that this individualism -collectivism orientation is not the only determining factor of personality.

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## **4.7 PERSONALITY TRAITS AND FIVE FACTOR MODEL**

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As defined by McCrae & Costa in 1990, "Personality traits are the dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts feelings and actions." Psychologists working in the area of personality like Raymond Cattell, Eysenck have noted that organisation of traits can be done in much smaller clusters of similar trait rather than studying each of the 4,000 traits as identified by Allport and Odbert. Thus, a parsimonious structure of traits can help a great deal in personality research.

Ending the decades long dispute about the most suitable personality structure, the Five Factor Model developed by McCrae & John, 1992 came up with five factors or dimensions viz. Neuroticism (N), Extroversion (E), Openness to Experience (O), Agreeableness (A) and conscientiousness (C). Individuals high in neuroticism are likely to be anxious, irritable and low at emotional end and those low in neuroticism are calm and emotionally stable. Extroverts are sociable, cheerful and outgoing; introverts are shy and sober. Open men and women are curious whereas closed people are run by conventions. Agreeable people are compassionate, modest whereas conscientious are mainly driven by punctuality and purposefulness.

Originally, the five factor model was discovered by analysing the English language trait names and individuals standing on each of the five factors could be measured by asking them to rate themselves on a series of adjectives (Goldberg, 1992). The most widely used measure of the Five Factor Model is the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R, Costa & McCrae, 1992). It assesses 30 specific traits, six for each of the five factors.

### **4.7.1 The Five Factor Model Across Cultures**

Personality factors in trait adjectives from different languages have been examined with lexical studies and mixed results have surfaced from these studies which show that E, A and C factors almost always appear but N and O disappear from the picture sometimes. It is not clear whether these factors are not there in the culture itself or are missing from the set of adjectives studied.

Thus, great caution should be used while comparing the personality scores across cultures. Personality traits are expressed differently in different cultures and a single set of questionnaire items does not suffice in every culture.

### Self Assessment Questions

- 1) Discuss the cross- cultural issue in personality.

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- 2) What does the Five- Factor Model propose regarding personality?

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- 3) Discuss the characteristic issue underlying Five- Factor Model across cultures.

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## 4.8 ISSUES RELATING TO THEORETICAL MODELS

For the understanding and explanation of personality, various theoretical models have been proposed. The different models have explained personality with respect to their theoretical propositions e.g. the Psychoanalytic theory explains personality taking intra-psychic and conscious-unconscious mind into account whereas the Behaviorist model totally rejects this approach and emphasises the role of learning and environment in the shaping and development of personality. The Humanistic Model takes a different approach. It is true that every model seems to be correct from its own perspective but when we consider the other models, many of their features become redundant, irrelevant and may be invalid. Therefore, one, who is interested in understanding the phenomenon of personality by going through various theoretical accounts, may not be able to have a clear view of the personality as construct. Therefore, there is a need of an eclectic model which incorporates the features of various models into it and aids in shaping of personality.



Some other issues in personality that need to be attended to at length are:

- 1) *Free will vs determinism*. Means that whether our behaviour is directed by freedom intrinsic to our nature or by the ultimately determined forces.
- 2) *Uniqueness vs Universality*. Implies that whether each person is unique in his own existence or is driven by some universal behaviour patterns.
- 3) *Physiological vs purposive motivation*. Some researchers assume that we are pushed by basic physiological needs like food, water etc. while others are of the view that we are pulled by our purpose, goals, values, principles etc.
- 4) *Conscious vs Unconscious motivation*. Some researchers believe that our behaviour and experience are determined by conscious forces whereas others say that we are not aware of the forces driving our behaviour, i.e. the unconscious element.
- 5) *Stage vs Non-stage theories of development*. It is an extension of the nature nurture issue that whether or not we all pass through predetermined stages of development like fetal, childhood, puberty, adulthood, senescence-controlled basically by genetics.
- 6) *Cultural determinism vs Cultural transcendence*. To what extent our personality is molded by our cultures is the issue here. If not determined by culture, our transcendence is some other kind of determinism.
- 7) *Early Vs Late Personality Formation*. This issue deals with if our personality characteristics are established in early childhood or it is quite flexible in adulthood. This question relates to the issues of genetics, external determination etc. Here, the major limitation resolution is the confusion in defining personality characteristics.
- 8) *Optimism Vs Pessimism*. Whether humans are basically good or bad is the central issue here. The attitude determines what we see when we look at humanity.

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## 4.9 LET US SUM UP

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To sum up, it can be said that the issues in personality consider classic and more recent issues that are fundamental to the field of personality psychology. However, various theorists have contributed to our understanding of personality but their varying view points have led to various controversies that are still posing a challenge to the area of personality. These issues need a timely resolution so that the research in personality could be more refined and stable and the core areas could be dealt with more precision and flawlessly.

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## 4.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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- 1) Discuss the Nature- Nurture debate in the study of personality.
- 2) Discuss with examples what role does the environment play in molding an individual's personality.
- 3) What does the person-situation controversy depict about personality structure of a person?

- 4) “The interactionist approach gives a mid-way to person- situation controversy” . Discuss.
- 5) “The cross-cultural issue in personality is difficult to be resolved” . Why?
- 6) What are the theoretical and methodological flaws in personality research?
- 7) What does the nomothetic versus idiographic debate in personality present?
- 8) What role can the Five- Factor Model play in resolving the Theoretical controversy in personality research?

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## 4.11 GLOSSARY

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<b>Idiographic approach</b>	: The psychological study of the single case/ individual.
<b>Genes</b>	: The essential elements in the transmission of hereditary characteristics.
<b>Nature</b>	: The genetic factors contributing to behaviour and perception.
<b>Nature vs Nurture controversy</b>	: The argument concerning the relative roles of the contributions of nature and nurture in the development of organisms.
<b>Nomothetic approach</b>	: Attempts to discover personality principles that apply to people in general.
<b>Nurture</b>	: Environmental factors contributing to behaviour and perception.
<b>Personality</b>	: The various enduring and distinctive patterns of behaviour and thought that are characteristic of a particular person.

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