Unit 2

SELF AND PERSONALITY

After reading this chapter, you will

- *understand the meaning of self concept*
- *understand the meaning and types of personality*
- *know the determinants of personality*
- *understand the methods of personality assessment*

Chapter Outline

When we meet a person, we try to know, understand that person. We also attend to how behaviour of persons differ. When other persons meet us, they also do the same. They also try to know, understand us by attending to different aspects of our behaviour. We also notice that different persons behave differently even if the situations are similar. Individual differences in our behaviour even in similar situations are due to the individual differences in our personality. In this chapter, we will study the concept of self and personality and its interrelationships.

Self Concept

A person's thoughts about his/her self, the abilities, potentialities and feelings form his self concept. A newborn baby does not have any notions with regard to self. But as the child grows up, the self concept starts taking shape. He/she gets to know about self and develops understanding regarding the potentialities, limitations etc. As a result of which, the self concept is formed.

A person's self concept has two aspects: first Personal Identity and second – Social or Cultural Identity. Personal identity refers to those attributes of a person which give him/her different identity than others. It includes

person's name (e.g. my name is Sanjay), the abilities (e.g. I am a swimmer or a writer), and the qualities (e.g. I am punctual and hardworking) etc.

Similarly Social or Cultural identity is formed on the basis of a person's belongingness to a particular social group or his residing in a particular culture. For example, if a person says that he is Hindu or Muslim, he is North Indian our South Indian or he belongs to a particular tribal group, such information forms the social or cultural aspect of one's self concept.

Self concept is formed and gets developed as the person gains more experience. When a person interacts with other persons in the society, he/she gets to know about oneself thereby developing one's self concept.

If we define self concept, it can be said that self concept is our thoughts about our self perceptions, potentialities, characteristics and attributes etc.

Our thoughts/perceptions about self can be positive as well as negative too. It can also happen that we consider ourselves good in one aspect but not so good in some other aspect. This means self concept can be different in different areas. For e.g. if a child is weak in Mathematics but is good in Music, his self concept will be better or positive in Music as compared to his self concept in Mathematics.

Now we will study two other important aspects of our self: Self esteem and Self regulation.

Self Esteem

A person's decisions about one's self, the potentialities, abilities are called self esteem. Self esteem can be high or low. For example, if two students are asked a question as to what extent are the statements 'I am good in studies'

and 'my classmates like me' are true for them. If one student tells that the statements are true for him/her and other student tells that the statements are not true for him/her then the first student's self esteem is better than the second student.

A child's self esteem is formed in four areas: educational, social, sports and physical body. High educational self esteem leads to high educational achievement. High social self esteem helps in maintaining good relationships with classmates and the child is liked by them. Similarly, high self esteem in sports makes a person good sportsperson. If a child's self esteem is low in all these areas, they remain stressed or anxious. They may also get depressed. Such children may also get indulged in antisocial activities. They may have tendencies of alcoholism, smoking, consuming drugs etc. To avoid such tendencies in children, educational institution should emphasize moral values based education. Children should be educated and nurtured in such a way that they identify themselves as competent and able individuals and develop positive self concept in themselves.

Self Regulation

A person faces many such situations in life when one has to exert control on one's own behaviour. It is known as self regulation. A student may delay fulfilment of some desires in order to achieve some other goals of his life. For example, a student controls television viewing behaviour in order to get good marks in examination. When a person controls eating habits due to the harmful effects of junk food on health is also an example of self regulation.

Concept of Personality

We often talk about the concept of personality in our day-to-day conversation. The word 'personality' has been derived from a Latin word 'persona'. Persona refers to the mask which is used in plays.

It is usually thought that a good-looking person has good personality. Here personality is determined only on the basis of physical or outer appearance only which is not completely true. Personality includes both physical and psychological attributes of a person. Some attributes like calmness, solemn nature, shyness, cheerfulness, intelligence, helpfulness etc are considered psychological attributes. Hence personality is a combination of both physical and psychological attributes.

Another important point to understand is that such attributes do not become part of a person's personality, if they are reflected in one particular situation/time. If a person exhibits a particular attribute many times then only it is considered as an attribute of his personality. It means that personality attributes are relatively stable and do not change with time. Some attributes of personality may be dynamic in the sense that they are changeable and adaptive with situation. By understanding the personality of a person, we can know how that person will behave in different situation.

Types of Personality

Different psychologists have tried to understand the concept of personality. Personality is a combination of different attributes belonging to various aspects. Various psychologists have developed many approaches to explain personality by emphasising different aspects. These approaches explain types of personality from its own point of view. We will study Type approach here from among these approaches.

Type approach

Individuals having similar attributes of traits are classified as a type. The persons belonging to similar type exhibit same behaviour pattern. Type approach classifies persons in different types. If a person has a particular type, some expected behaviour of that person can be understood.

According to **Trigunas** theory, there can be three types of personality: Satvik, Rajsik, and Tamsik.

A. **Satvik:** These persons are dominated by Satva guna, such persons are truthful, neat, dutiful and disciplined.

B. **Rajsik:** These persons are dominated by Rajas guna, such persons have tendencies like intense activity, desires for sensory gratification, and are of materialistic nature and envious to others.

C. **Tamsik:** These persons are dominated by Tamas guna, such persons have attributes like anger, arrogance, depression, laziness, and feeling of helplessness.

Similarly, different psychologists like Sheldon, Jung, Friedman and Rosenman have proposed various types of personality. The description of these types is as follows.

Sheldon

Sheldon has proposed the following three types of personality.

Endomorphic: Such persons are fat, round, soft, relaxed, social and friendly in nature.

Mesomorphic: Such persons are energetic, courageous and strong with muscular body build.

Ectomorphic: Such persons are thin, tall and fragile in body build. They are brainy, artistic and introvert.

Jung

Jung has proposed the following two types of personality.

Introvert: Such persons are shy and like to spend their time alone. They feel uncomfortable in interacting and talking to other persons.

Extrovert: Such persons are social, outgoing and are comfortable in talking to other persons.

Friedman and Rosenman

Friedman and Rosenman have proposed two types of personality.

Type-A: Type-A persons have lack of patience, high motivation, feel short of time, and always feel burdened by work. Type-A persons face more health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol etc. due to this nature.

Type-B: Such persons do not have the characteristics of Type-A persons. They do not lack patience and do not feel short of time or overburdened by work. These persons are more related.

Determinants of Personality

Determinants of personality are those factors that affect the development of personality. Such factors are discussed in two categories; biological factors and environmental factors.

Biological factors

These factors are related to genetics and physiological processes of the body. Biological factors include the following factors.

Physical structure and physical health

A person's physical structure and physical health is inherited from the parents. It has been seen that tall parents have tall children. The skin colour of parents also affects the skin colour of their children. It means physical structure is affected by biological factors. If a person is physically strong, it influences the development of mental attributes also.

Endocrine glands

Endocrine glands are ductless glands, the secretions of which are known as hormones. Different endocrine glands present in the body such as pituitary, adrenal, thyroid, parathyroid, pancreas and sex glands control the physical development of a person. If there is an increase or decrease in the level of hormones secreted by these glands, then the person will suffer from different physical and mental deficiencies/problems which will influence one's personality.

Environmental factors

These are the factors which are related to external environment of a person, the society and the culture in which the person lives. Environmental factors include social, cultural and economic factors.

Social factors influence the development of personality. These factors include the effect of the society in which a person lives, the atmosphere of the family to which one belongs, the financial conditions, and a person's nurturing and upbringing etc. If the parents are too strict or too much loving and protecting, if they fulfil every demand of the child, then it will influence the child's personality negatively. Good and happy relation among the family

members instils the attributes of self confidence and trust on others etc. Other factors such as school environment, peer group etc. also play an important role. Other than these factors, the culture in which person has lived, its traditions, customs, religious beliefs etc also have an important influence an individual's personality.

Personality Assessment

We try to understand other persons who come in contact with us in day-to-day life. We do so while meeting and interacting with them. We also understand people on the basis of our previous experiences with them or by the information received from others persons/sources about them. Our efforts to understand their personality are informal which can reduce objectivity in assessment.

The efforts to understand the personality of a person through objective formal efforts is called personality assessment. We will study personality assessment in the following three categories.

1. Self Report Measures
2. Projective Techniques
3. Behavioural Analysis

Self Report Measures

In this method of personality assessment, direct questions are asked to the person about oneself to assess the personality. In this method, person has to respond to different statements/questions. These responses to the questions in the test are scored. The total obtained score by the person are interpreted on the basis of established criteria/norms for that test. Some examples of self report measures used as a personality test are as follow:

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (M.M.P.I.)

This test was developed by Hathaway and Mckinley. This test is very effective in identifying different psychological disorders related to personality. The revised version of this test is MMPI-2. It has 567 statements. This test is divided in 10 subscales.

Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (E.P.Q.)

This test, developed by Eysenck, evaluates two dimensions of personality i.e. introversion-extraversion and emotional stability-instability. Later a third dimension named psychoticism – sociability was added. A person who scores high on this dimension shows aggressiveness, hostility, lack of emotions, antisocial tendencies and egocentrism.

Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16 P.F.)

This test was developed by Raymond Cattell. This test is used on students of senior school level and adults. This test is useful in vocational guidance.

Many other self report measures of personality, other than those discussed above, are used in Psychology. An important requirement of using self report measures is that all such personality tests need knowledge of psychological concepts, training and skills in both using these tests and interpreting the results. That is why these tests can be used only by a psychologist.

Projective techniques

In self report measures, the person whose personality is being assessed clearly understands what types of questions are asked to him. Psychologists have realised that people

sometimes hesitate to give the information regarding them, their personal emotions, thoughts, motives etc. In such situations, a person may give responses to make self image good in the society or for getting social desirability. Hence, personality assessment is not completely accurate through self report measures only. To overcome this problem, projective techniques can be used as an alternative.

Projective techniques are based on psychoanalytic theory of personality. This theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, a major part of human behaviour is determined by the motives of unconscious mind. Unconscious mind stores repressed, unexpressed and immoral desires of a person. Unconscious mind plays an important role in determining personality of an individual and thereby affecting the actions taken by that person. Therefore, psychologists specially Freud was of the opinion that if the unconscious mind is not assessed properly, then personality assessment cannot be true. Direct methods such as self report and psychometric measures are not appropriate to understand unconscious mind. Projective techniques are necessary to understand unconscious mind. Projective techniques come in this category.

Projective techniques are based on projective hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, if unclear, unstructured, semi-structured or meaningless content stimuli//questions are presented to a person, then unconscious desires and feelings play an important role in interpreting this content. If no meaning comes out of the content, then the information stored in unconscious mind is projected on that unstructured content to give it a meaning. Some extensively used and famous projective techniques are described here.

Rorschach Ink-blot test

This test was developed by Hermann Rorschach. It contains 10 cards depicting ink-blot pictures. (See figure 2.1). Each ink blot is printed in the middle of a 7 x 10 sized card. The subject looks at the card and tells what he/she sees in the picture. A detailed scoring procedure has been developed to score the responses given by the person. Rigorous training is necessary for administration of this test and interpretation of results.

Figure 2.1: A card used in Rorschach Ink blot test

Thematic Apperception Test

This test was developed by Morgan and Murray. It consists of 30 cards on which black and white pictures are printed. One card is blank. Total 20 cards can be administered on a subject. Some pictures are printed on the cards. (see figure 2.2) These cards are presented to the subject one by one. The subject is asked to write a story based on the pictures printed on the given card. The subject is also given some questions such as what is happening in this picture, what happened before this, what will happen after this, what the different characters presented in the picture are thinking or experiencing etc. The

subject writes a story on the basis of answers to these questions. The subject's motivation can be understood on the basis of the story, whether the subject has achievement motivation or power motivation etc.

A special scoring system has been developed to assess the story written on the basis of TAT cards. This scoring is done through a standard scoring procedure. Therefore, this test can also be used only by a trained person. This test has been adapted for its use on children and is named Children Apperception Test (CAT).

Figure 2.2: A card used in TAT

Sentence Completion Test

In this test, many incomplete sentences are presented to the subject. The subject has to complete these sentences. Some sentences are given for example.

My father....................................

My biggest fear is........................

My life..

Many projective techniques, other than those described above, are also used. Some examples are word association test, Rosenweig's picture frustration test etc.

Behavioural Analysis

A person's behaviour in different situations provides important information about the personality. Some of the behavioural analysis methods are interview, observation, situations tests etc.

Interview

In this method, the person whose personality is to be assessed is interviewed. Some specific questions and its responses provide necessary information to assess that person's personality.

Observation

The term observations means to see. In this method, a trained person observes an individual's behaviour, gestures, postures, body language to assess the personality.

Situational tests

A person is placed in some specific situations and his behaviour is studied. For example a person is placed in stressful situation to see how a person responds to it. It helps in identifying various aspects of the personality whether the person is of extremely angry nature or has patience etc.

The methods of personality assessment discussed above provide us important information about different dimensions of an individual's personality.

Important Points

- Self concept is our thoughts about our self perceptions, potentialities, characteristics and attributes etc.
- A person's self concept has two aspects: first Personal Identity and second – Social or Cultural Identity.

- A person's decisions about one's self, the potentialities, abilities are called self esteem.
- A person faces many such situations in life when one has to control the behaviour of oneself. It is known as self regulation.
- Personality is a combination of physical and psychological attributes of an individual which make one's behaviour specific in comparison to others. Personality includes relatively stable patterns of behaviour.
- Different types of personality have been explained. According to Trigunas – Satvik, Rajsik and Tamsik personality, according to Sheldon – endomorphic, mesomorphic and ectomorphic personality, according to Jung – introvert and extrovert personality, according to Friedman and Rosenman – Type-A and Type-B personality are the types of personality.
- The efforts to understand the personality of a person through objective formal efforts is called personality assessment. Personality assessment is done through three types of methods: Self Report Measures, Projective Techniques and Behavioural Analysis.
- Major Self Report measures of personality include Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (M.M.P.I.), Eysenck Personality Inventory (E.P.I.), Sixteen Personality Factor questionnaire (16 P.F.).
- Major Projective techniques include Rorschach Ink-blot test, Thematic Apperception Test (T.A.T.), Sentence Completion Test etc. Projective techniques are formed on the basis of psychoanalytic theory of personality.
- Projective techniques are based on the Projective hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, if unclear, unstructured, semi-structured or meaningless content stimuli/questions are presented to a person, then unconscious desire and feelings stored in unconscious mind are projected on that unstructured content for interpreting and giving it some meaning.
- Behaviour Analysis includes methods such as interview, observation and situational tests.

Practice Questions

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following is a self report measure of personality?
   A. Rorschach test
   B. TAT
   C. CAT
   D. MMPI
2. Which of the following techniques is useful in understanding the hidden feelings in unconscious mind?
   A. Situational tests
   B. Interview
   C. 16 PF
   D. Sentence Completion tests
3. A person's thoughts about one's self, the potentialities, abilities are called –
   A. Self Esteem
   B. Self Regulation
   C. Self Concept
   D. All of the above

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4. Rorschach Ink-blot test belongs to which of the following categories?
   A. Behavioural Analysis
   B. Projective techniques
   C. Self report measures
   D. Situational tests
5. Which of the following is NOT a behavioural analysis method of personality assessment?
   A. Interview
   B. Situational test
   C. Sentence Completion test
   D. Observation

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is self concept?
2. What is the difference between self esteem and self regulation?
3. Which are two aspects of self concept?
4. Define personality.
5. Which are self report measures of personality?
6. Explain projective hypothesis.
7. What task is done by a person in TAT?
8. Define unconscious mind.
9. Give examples of questions in Sentence Completion Test.
10. Which methods are included in behavioural analysis?

Long-Answer Questions

1. What is self concept? What are the benefits of positive self concept?
2. Explain self regulation with an example. How is it different from self esteem?
3. Explain different factors that affect personality.
4. Explain projective techniques of personality assessment with examples.
5. Explain self report measures of personality assessment with examples.

Answers to Multiple Choice Questions

1. D   2. D   3. C   4. B   5. C