

## INTRODUCTION

With the changing time the attention of the psychologists has shifted from ability to motivational factors. It is felt that the achievement of a person depends upon the motivation to a great extent. Unfortunately, research on motivation is still inadequate because of the complex nature of the motivational process underlying human activities. Although motivation and interest are related to each other, interest appears to be a crystalized form of motivation. It is more a process than a product, while interest is a consolidated expression of one's motivation in a particular direction. Hence, definition of motivation has been attempted in terms of interest because of feasibility of its measurement on an objective basis. Both have been regarded as prime movers of human action. So, along with other personality factors interest has also found a place in the list of variables belonging to personality area. It has also been considered to have a close relationship with the functioning of personality. Super (1) says that the role of interest is significant and the importance which may be attached to expressions of specific interest clearly varies with the maturity of

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1 Super, D.E.: Appraising Vocational Fitness", (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, p. 378).

the individual. This points out the relationship between specific interest and the maturity of a person. In other words, interest as a developmental process has been hinted at in several places.

It is rather difficult to account for all the factors influencing the development of interest; nor is it feasible to classify them on a rigid basis. That is why so many classifications have emerged and no definite categories have been admitted on all hands. In the present investigation a number of considerations has influenced the classification of interests for further exploration. Most of the considerations are of course guided by the previous researches and the Indian socio-economic background.

### Interest and its Importance

The role of interest in the entire functioning of human beings in various contexts has been recognized by many. It has been rightly described as the key to the life adjustment, and source of stimulation. Either in day-to-day life or in specific fields of operation, interest has a marked contribution.

Glen Gardner (2) speaks appealing to the man's self-interests which <sup>forms</sup> ~~is~~ "a very convenient handle by means of which he can be effectively manipulated..... It is probably true that nine out of ten men can be handled if the appeal is made to the right self-interests".

Fryer (3) says, "The real value of the examination of interests lies in its measure of development. A knowledge of the individual's interests facilitates an adjustment of the individual with respect to his feeling life, just as knowledge of the individual's abilities assists an adjustment of the individual in educational and vocational efficiency."

Success in establishment according to Super (4) may be somewhat related to interests, "since, as was just mentioned in connection with entry, men and women tend to enter occupations which are appropriate to their interests, and tend to leave inappropriate occupations if they do enter such."

Satisfaction in work is what might be expected to be the outcome of having appropriate interests.

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2 Gardner, G.L.: "Handling Men Through Their Self-Interests", Indus. Psychol., 1926, I, pp. 9-13.

3 Fryer, D.: Measurement of Interests, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, p. 437).

4 Super, D.E.: The Psychology of Careers, (New York and Evanson: Harper and Row Publishers, p. 223).

Other factors would be likely to affect satisfaction but liking for the work activities would also seem to be a major contributing factor. Thus, success or advancement in an occupation might be expected to be partly a function of interest.

### Interest and its Bearing on Education

Psychologists and educators look upon interest as an important psychological factor, by which a pupil can be guided into a better adjustment. The role of interest in education has also been acknowledged by Rousseau (5). He says that education comes through the workings of natural instincts and interests, and not through response to external force. According to Herbart (6), interest may be viewed as a product of education and education as the process of stimulating the spontaneous interest, of the individual. In the words of Monroe (7), "Interest is essential as the starting point of the educative process; effort is essential as its outcome. The purpose of appealing to the interest of the child is to lead him to the point

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5 Monroe, P.: History of Education, Macmillan, 1909, p. 566.

6 Herbart, J.F.: Outlines of Educational Doctrine, (trans. by A.F.Lange, and annotated by Charles De Garmo), New York: 1901, p. 334.

7 Monroe, P.: op. cit., p. 752.

where he will put forth effort to master the unsolved problems, the undetermined relationships of his environment." Thus, interest and education have mutual bearing on each other; one stimulates the other.

William James (8) speaks of interest as a selective agent in all experience. "My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind - without selective interest, experience is utter chaos. Interest alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade, background and foreground - intelligible perspective in a word."

Thorndike (9) considers interest to be a pleasurable feeling which aids learning. According to him interest is the result of past experience. As pointed out by Strong (10) interest is an indeterminate indicator of success.

Burt (11) while discussing the problem of

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8 James William: The Principles of Psychology, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1908), 1, p. 402.

9 Thorndike, E.L.: Educational Problems, (New York: Columbia University Press, Vol.I, 1913, p. 327).

10 Strong, E.K.: Vocational Interests of Men and Women, (Stanford University Press, p. 14).

11 Burt, Cyril: "Symposium on the Selection of Pupils for Different Types of Secondary Schools", British Journal of Educational Psychology, 17, 1947, pp. 57-71.

selection of pupils for different types of secondary schools stresses the need for taking into account interest and personality.

Dewey (12) in 1915 has also laid emphasis on the need to recognize the importance of interest in education. He pointed out that this would lead to a consideration of an individual, his specific capabilities, need and preferences.

Thorndike (13) also found out a close correlation between the pupils' estimates of their own interest in their school subjects and their ability in them. This bespeaks the importance of interest for selection purpose.

Interest has also invited the attention of the consultative committee on the education of the adolescent. In 1927, this committee included interest among the requirements which should be kept in mind while planning curricula. That interest has a special position in educational planning has been endorsed by the study of

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12 Dewey, John: Interest and Effort in Education, (New York: Riverside Educational Monograph, 1913, p.16).

13 Thorndike, E.L.: Early Interests - Their Performance and Relation to Abilities, School and Society, 1917, V, 178-179.

Berdie (14). Similarly, the study by Hartley (15) suggests the value of interest and interest assessment for the purpose of allocation. Hamilton (16) in 1956 found out a significant correlation between his interest test and achievement in technical and science course. Very recently Lambert (17) has admitted that it is possible to increase prognosis for the different sections of the curriculum by the use of interest assessment.

Rodger (18) expressed his optimism over interest assessment for the purpose of allocation.

On a critical review of the past studies on the importance of interest for educational purposes, it appears that motivation goes a long way in one's achievement. The importance of interest for prognostic purposes has been admitted by many and some light has been thrown

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14 Berdie, R.F.: "The Prediction of College Achievement and Satisfaction", Journal of Applied Psychology, 1944, 28, pp. 239-245.

15 Hartley, E.A.: A Study of Interests of Second Year School Pupils and Their Possible use in Reallocation to Different Types of Schools, M.A.Thesis, University of Hudson, 1955.

16 Hamilton, R.C.S.: Interests Tests for Technical Subjects - B.Litt. Thesis, 1956-57, Glasgow University.

17 Lambert, C.M.: A Study of the Ability and Interest of a Group of School Boys, Unpublished Ph.D.Thesis, 1952, University of London, p. 321.

18 Rodger, A.: "Vocational Guidance- a Review of Some Doubts", Occ. Psychol., Vol.XII, No.3, Summer, 1938, pp. 187-196.

on how interest contributes to success.

### Interest and Adjustment

Regarding the role of interest in one's adjustment to life, there is enough evidence that interest is a strong factor determining much of the behaviour patterns in the field of education or occupation. As a personality variable interest has found a significant place in recent psychology. The theory of interest is still inadequate because of the complex processes underlying the formation of interest. In the opinion of Super (19) interests are the product of interaction between inherited, neutral, and endocrine factors on the one hand and opportunity and social evaluation on the other. It is related to one's needs and mode of adjustment. There is a controversy as to how interest patterns begin to crystallize, yet there is very little doubt about the role of environmental factors in the development of interest.

Vernon (20) has included interest as an important variable related to personality and has described interest as complex as amalgam of subjective

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19 Super, D.E.: op. cit., p. 410.

20 Vernon, P.E.: Personality Tests and Assessments, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., p. 161).



feelings and objective behaviour tendencies. He has also pointed out that interest is at least as meaningful and as difficult to reduce to a few unidimensional variables.

The complexity of interest and its relationship with personality adjustment have received the attention from quite a few psychologists. Carter (21) says, "In this process of trying to adjust to a complex culture, the individual finds experiences which offer some basis for the integration of personality. The pattern of vocational interests which gradually forms, becomes closely identified with the self..... The pattern of interests is in the nature of a set of values which can find expression in one family of occupations but not in others".

It has always proved difficult for the psychologists to come to an agreed proposition on interest patterns with reference to their psychological dimensions. This is partly because of the fact that interest expresses itself in various forms. If we take into account the various modes of expressions of interests there would be hundred and one classifications at the surface level. It has, therefore, been considered desirable to come to

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21 Carter, H.D.: "The Development of Vocational Attitudes" J. of Consult. Psychology, 4, 1940, 185-191.

certain fundamental classification of interest for practical purposes. The need for differentiation in terms of interest has been felt strongly in recent years as interest has been considered as a very important variable determining one's achievement.

In view of the immense possibilities for explorations on interests, the present study has its two main objectives: (a) to make an objective approach to interests assessment for finding out the various levels at which interest is manifest, (b) to analyse interest patterns and their relationship with some of the environmental factors. The need for such a study was felt because of the importance of interest in the field of allocation and guidance. No scientific basis appears to have been evolved as yet for vocational counselling in Indian contexts. In most of the cases the students show utter confusion about their area of interest and also the lack of conviction in self-concept. This unfortunate state of affairs prompted the writer to undertake the present investigation in the hope that it will help the young generation to have a definite knowledge of their own inclinations and propensities. This knowledge is supposed to contribute much to one's future adjustment to the vocational world and is thus essential for a careful planning.

It is a fact that a disharmony prevails between the educational and vocational opportunities on one hand and one's abilities and interest on the other. It is helpful to observe whether interest is a product of environment or environmental stimulation for an effective human engineering. Hence, this study of the relationship between interests and environment has been envisaged in the investigation. This would not only contribute to the theory of interest, it would also serve some practical purpose of educational planning.

#### Summary

Interest is receiving greater attention of psychologists and educators in recent years. The importance of interest is being realized in the field of educational and vocational adjustment. The concept of interest requires clarification. Attempt has been made to define interest from psychological standpoint. It has been regarded as a variable related to personality and particularly to motivation. The complex nature of interest and its development has also been admitted. The bearing of interest has proved significant. There is adequate evidence that motivational factors have definite roles in one's educational<sup>and</sup> vocational achievements. The relationship between interest and personality

has been stressed by a number of psychologists. It is also regarded as a product of one's interaction with the environment. This points out the needs for an investigation into the sociological determinants of interest.