

# CHAPTER

## I

## C H A P T E R - I

### RELEVANCE OF WORK

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION :

Natural sciences such as Medicine, Engineering, Space Technology, Electronics etc. have progressed with amazingly fast speed and are at new heights. Most of scientific principles here are accepted unanimously. In contrast, though, social sciences have also progressed at relatively high speed, they have brought up more diversity in opinions, theories and approaches. One such example in psychology is personality. Despite considerable scientific progress in understanding personality, more divergent views have come up and no single theory is comprehensively accepted by psychologists.

Understanding of human nature was one of the key objectives of early thinkers. Astrology, Theology, Philosophy and the life sciences are but a few of the many directions that the quest to understand human nature has taken. Systematic conceptions of the nature of man and his individuality in the form of personality, character, human-dispositions or habit have in general come from two sources : Philosophy and Science. Greek philosopher Plato<sup>1</sup> classified individuals into three categories : intellectuals, soldiers and labourers. Hippocrates and Galen<sup>2</sup> differentiated four temperamental types : sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic, which were popularly used for a long time. Temperament derives primarily from the medical writings of the ancients.

In India the Samkhya philosophy<sup>3</sup> which dates back to 3000 BC described individual differences in terms of the predominance of "Sattva", "Rajas" and "Tamas" factors. These factors are called 'Gunas' in Samkhya philosophy. Gunas are not seen or

perceived directly, but are inferred from their effect. Their effects are experienced in the form of joy, sorrow and doubts. All objects sentient and non-sentient, are an aggregate of all these three, with one predominating, which imparts to the objects its distinctive character.

Thus, the fact of individual differences in personality is not a new idea. It has always been there. However, it has been greatly substantiated and elaborated in the present century. When psychology gained its independence from philosophy and became a science in the second half of the nineteenth century, its goal was to use a laboratory based introspection to discover the basic elements of mental life in the human adult. Known as the structural school and developed primarily by Wundt, this approach emphasized the analysis of conscious processes into their fundamental elements.

#### 1.1 CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO PERSONALITY :

First comprehensive theory of personality was developed by Freud. He attacked upon the traditional psychology of consciousness. He likened the mind to an iceberg in which the smaller part showing above the surface of the water represents the region of consciousness while the much larger mass below the water level represents the region of unconsciousness. In this vast domain of the unconscious are to be found the urges, the passions, the repressed ideas and feelings - a great underworld of vital, unseen forces that exercise an imperious control over the conscious thoughts and deeds of individuals.

Fundamental to the psychoanalytic model of Freud is the concept that behaviour results from the interaction of three key sub-systems within the personality : The id, the ego and the superego. The id contains the innate, primitive, biological drives of man, such as hunger, thirst and aggression. The id operates in terms

of the pleasure principle and is concerned only with immediate gratification. It is completely selfish and unconcerned with reality or moral considerations. It cannot undertake direct action towards meeting its needs. Thus a second key sub-system - the ego - develops for the purpose of facilitating reality principle functioning through secondary process - thinking. The major function of ego is defensive in that it permits only the forms and portions of instinct unlikely to engender punishment and guilt to remain in consciousness. Superego, according to Freud, is also a portion of the mind, differentiated from the ego, which contains the traditional values and taboos of society as interpreted to the child by its parents. It is the superego that makes guilt possible, which is the internal version of punishment.

The interplay of these intrapsychic forces of id, ego and superego is of crucial significance. Often the instinctual desires and demands of the id are in conflict with superego demands or with the demands of the external world. The adequate resolution of such conflicts by the ego is considered essential to personality adjustment. Neurotics are viewed as persons unable to resolve such inner conflicts.

There have been mild to strong variations from the main psychoanalytic thinking in the ideologies subscribed by Jung, Adler and neo-psychoanalysts.

With the rise of natural science, Watson in 1919 tried to define and study psychology as a branch of natural science on strictly objective, observable criteria. He said that psychology is a science of behaviour, and behaviour means physical-behavioural response to a physical stimuli. This behaviouristic approach

was anathema to mentalism. For Watson psychology was almost synonymous to physiology and neurology. But then there were many radical derivatives and revolts among the behaviourists against the muscle twitchism of Watson. The whole band of new-behaviourists accepted the importance and necessity of study of cognitive processes distinguishing it from traditional mentalism. First time William James<sup>4</sup> interpreted cognition as 'knowing'. Cognition includes all mental activities involved in knowing, like perception, attention, memory, images, problem solving, language function etc. In his book on cognitive psychology Neisser<sup>5</sup> emphasized that cognition refers to all the processes by which the sensory input is transferred, reduced, stored, recovered and used and that every psychological phenomena is a cognitive phenomena. Most cognitive psychologists agree that explanation of how the mind works need not be behaviourally observable but can include the studies of underlying events.

There was a feeling among the psychologists that neither the two versions, psychoanalysis and behaviourism dealt with human beings as human, nor did they deal with the problems of real life. The concepts of humanistic psychology implies a contrast with psychology of psychoanalysis and behaviourism, a scientific psychology which seems to deny the validity of human experience, values, intentions and meaning. Humanistic psychology stresses the inherent goodness and worth of the individual and the potential for worth and fulfilment. Rogers, Maslow, May were initial leaders of humanistic psychology. Maslow said that humans are unique in animal kingdom because they have meta-needs i.e. psychological needs beyond biological needs emerging in a hierarchical order in which the ultimate motive is the need for self-actualization. Self-actualization is an empirical principle and an ethical ideal.

There is still an out-growth of humanistic psychology known as Transpersonal Psychology. Transpersonal Psychology is seen as an integration of ancient wisdom and modern science, and a reproachment between eastern mysticism and Western rationalism.

Transpersonal literally means beyond the individual person or psyche. It refers to an expansion of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries and beyond limitations of time and space. Transpersonal psychology is related to ultimate human capabilities or potentialities that have no systematic place in psychoanalytic theory, in behaviouristic theory or in humanistic psychology.

Transpersonal psychology is an empirical study of variety of topics such as value, unitive consciousness, mysticism, cosmic awareness, cosmic play, the spiritual path, theory and practice of meditation etc. Transpersonal psychology starts with a questioning of the basis for orthodox scientific psychology. It maintains that there are several ways to obtain and prove knowledge and there are many states of consciousness. It goes beyond the experience that are observed by senses and measured by physical instruments. It includes in its study all types of paranormal phenomena.

The logic to present the historical stages in development of psychology is to show that inspite of spectacular development of the subject in the last four to five decades, western psychology is still not able to answer some pertinent questions concerning emotions, personality integration, mental health and the like. Many eminent psychologists have started to be increasingly conscious of the inadequacies of behaviouristic theories and methodology in studying these psychological processes.

Scholars like Allport, Murphy, Maslow and many others feel the lopsidedness of contemporary Western psychology, and have begun to turn to oriental intellectual heritage for inspiration and insight for the simple reason of its emphasis on transpersonal aspects of psychology. Psychologists witness the resurgence in psychology of spiritual and religious concerns, humanistic, existential and phenomenological interests, concerns for values and social morality and strong interest in consciousness and levels of awareness. Modern Western Psychology indicates that the purely materialistic emphasis has left out quite a significant aspects of man's life and experience. This feeling of inadequacy has led to the growth of new lines of thinking represented by the humanistic perspective and the dawn of transpersonal psychology - which tries to encompass within its purview certain experiences and aspects of man so far ignored by modern psychology but so prominent in Indian approaches.

This change of thinking can also be seen in psychosomatic medicine. In the early days, its main theories and treatment modalities were those of hypnosis, psychoanalysis and classical conditioning. Over the years, however, these highly directive treatment modalities have been changing in the direction of more patient-oriented non-directive approaches. As an example, hypnosis has in many cases been replaced by autogenic training, psychoanalysis seems to be steadily losing ground to transactional analysis and operant conditioning seems to be now favoured over classical conditioning by many of the world's physicians (Burrow 1953<sup>6</sup>, Jacobson 1938<sup>7</sup>, Lower 1967<sup>8</sup>, Reich 1971<sup>9</sup>). These changes reflect a common tendency of a shift from responsibility and control of the patient by therapist to responsibility and control of the patient by patient himself. So, historically we can say that the treatment of psychosomatic medicine is shifting from outer-control to self-control. With this shifting of control

from therapist to patient, the need has arisen for a theory to account for change within each individual patient. That is, we need to find the principles of self-control within each individual. Here, Indian psychology provides techniques for controlling mind and body, relaxation, meditational techniques for self-control. Swami Akhilananda's<sup>10</sup> remark "Indian psychology is not merely conceptual or theoretical. Its therapeutic value is in its teaching various methods of mental integration. It prescribes systems of physical and mental discipline which gradually stabilize the mind and integrate the emotions", also strengthens our logic to look backward.

## 1.2 INDIAN CONCEPTS :

Indian literature is rich in knowledge. Ancient Indian thinkers viewed life and its philosophy as one whole and included different sciences in its vast canvass. They did not develop independent sciences of psychology, logic, ethics, medicines etc. Nevertheless we can collect ample material from the ancient literature. Psychology and other social sciences can be individually treated in the modern context, by extracting the pertinent material without disturbing its relation to philosophy. Psychology in general and personality in particular extends back to the time of the Vedas. In Upanishads also we find some basic concepts of personality. Gita incorporates almost a complete psychological theory of personality.

The six systems - Darsanas of Hindu philosophy are concerned with the ultimate goal of human life, that is liberation, but as a means to that goal they seek to give a complete intellectual grasp of the self, God and the universe in which we live. The six systems of Hindu thought are the Vaishesika (differentiation) of Kanada, the Nyaya (logic) of Gautama, the Samkhya (knowledge)



of Kapila, the Yoga (concentration) of Patanjali, the Mimamsa (inquiry) (also called Purva Mimamsa) of Jaimini and the Vedanta (vedic import) (also called Uttara Mimamsa) of Vyasa. Because of certain metaphysical similarities, these six systems are for the sake of convenience grouped into three : Nyaya - Vaishesika, Samkhya - Yoga, Mimamsa - Vedanta. The six systems of philosophy, practically reduced to three distinct groups, are not contradictory, though in some of their theories they would seem to be so. They really represent not conflicting schools of thought but a progressive development from truth to higher truth to the highest truth. Nyaya and Vaishesika prepare the mind for philosophic thought and are therefore called the ground work of philosophy; but passing beyond them through evolving ideas as expressed successively in Samkhya, Yoga and Mimamsa, we at last arrive at the flower of Indian philosophy in Vedanta. Almost without exception, critics of Indian philosophy perceive the harmony behind the apparent discord and so would reconcile the systems as a perception of the same truth from different angles.

Above six systems are regarded as 'astika' or orthodox because, unlike Buddhism and Jainism, they accept the authority of the Vedas on all questions pertaining to the nature of the universe.

#### **1.2.1 PERSONALITY THEORIES IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY :**

Since there are so many systems in Indian philosophy, it would be naive to assume that there is only one theory of personality in Indian philosophy, and all systems of Indian philosophy unanimously agree with that. The case is altogether different. Each system has its own theory of self and personality which is coloured by its Metaphysics. Indra Sen<sup>11</sup> has listed some principle perspectives from which personality can be viewed in

Indian thought. It reflects the rich Indian background for the study of personality :

- i) The Veda, The Upanishad and Human Personality
- ii) The Epics and Human Personality
- iii) The six systems of Philosophy and Human Personality
- iv) Ayurveda and Human Personality
- v) Yogic System and Human Personality
- vi) Jain and Buddhistic Thought and Human Personality
- vii) Dharam Sastras and Human Personality
- viii) Traditional Indian Life and Culture and Human Personality
- ix) Recent and Contemporary Indian Thought and Life and Human Personality
- x) Indian Psychology and Modern Scientific Psychology

Though above philosophical systems have their own concepts of self and theory of metaphysics and religion, they generally, except Buddhist, accept psychology and cosmology of Samkhya System.<sup>12</sup> Researchers have, therefore, rightly termed to psychological concepts derived from Samkhya as the Indian psychology. It is, thus, imperative to briefly understand Samkhya theory of Guna on which Indian theory of personality is based.

#### 1.2.2 SAMKHYA THEORY OF GUNAS :

Samkhya - Yoga philosophy propounds that everything in universe, physical or psychological has originated from Mula-Prakrti, which is tri-dimensional. The three dimensions are known as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Samkhya Karika defines Sattva as illuminating light, knowledge, peace etc. Rajas is defined as the principle

of activity and pain. Tamas is the principle of darkness, delusion and inertia. All these three gunas are universally present everywhere. But in the state of creation one always dominates the other two, with the result that at any particular time anything is either Sattva dominated or Rajas dominated or Tamas dominated. Samkhya, while working out the inter-relationship of three gunas, also says that the three gunas are dynamic in nature. They are always changing and fluctuating. When a particular guna is dominated, the other two gunas are subdued. At that instant they constantly apply their force to emerge as dominant. Everything in the universe keeps changing. Nothing has a permanent fixed nature.

These gunas are not perceived, but are inferred from their effects, and this conception is undoubtedly psychological, since the kind of feeling-tone are made the basis of the distinction of these gunas.

Beginning with Prakriti as the root of all existence, Samkhya traces the various stages of development just as the modern scientist would describe the evolution of the world process in terms of matter and energy without importing the idea of God. Similarly, Samkhya does not find it necessary to assume God's existence as a factor in the evolution of the world process. It accounts the whole world process in terms of the inherent tendency already present in Prakriti which guides its development along the prescribed lines. The main constituents of Prakriti - three gunas, take different courses of evolution, according to their preponderance. Samkhya is very much concerned with the description of the evolution of these principles.

Application of Samkhya concept to personality gives rise to tri-dimensional approach. Depending on predominance of Guna,

personality could be described as Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic. Human personality is product of inter-mingling of these three Gunas.

As mentioned earlier, not only the cosmology of Samkhya is accepted to all philosophical systems, but there is a general acceptance of some relevant concepts<sup>13</sup> important for personality theory and human nature. These concepts are :

1) Self or Atman :

This is the essence of human personality and is the principle of consciousness. Although different systems have their own concepts about the nature of self, all agree that it is characterised by consciousness and is the essence of human personality.

2) Mind :

In Indian philosophy, mind is quite distinct from Atman or self. All systems agree that mind is non-self, non-consciousness, yet it is the principal cause of bondage (Bandhan) or liberation (Moksha).

3) Ethical Principles of Life :

Ethics of all the Indian philosophers have been almost identical. Pure ethical life is the foundation of spiritual progress.

4) Law of Karma :

Although the process and fructification of Karma is different for different thoughts but they all accept that in 'Law of

Karma', man evolves himself exactly according to his actions, and process is being unbroken by death and passes on to the next life.

5) Sanskaras :

This theory is corollary of the Law of Karma. All systems agree that Sanskaras contain the impressions of experiences including that of the previous birth and these impressions determine the direction of the man in life.

6) Liberation :

The ultimate goal of life, according to all the Indian philosophies is liberation, self realisation. Although they describe it by different terminologies. They all accept that it is the state of destruction of bondage, cessation of transmigration and complete cessation of suffering.

The rationale of introducing above concepts here is to bring forth the fact that almost all philosophies have same conceptions about the nature and goal of human beings though they have differences on metaphysics - the nature of ultimate existence. Hence, instead of developing personality theories on these metaphysical concepts, it would be appropriate to develop a personality theory based on cosmology, which would be accepted to all since they all accept the Samkhya's notion of cosmology.

Any socio-psychological theory develops in the existing socio-cultural status of that era. As the time passes, new social theories come up or old ones are modified. This is amply clear when we study any social science, surprisingly Samkhyan concept

of personality was never questioned. At the same time abundant work is available on personality modification through Yoga, Bhakti and other means. This could be due to the fact that psychology did not develop in India as an independent social science, but it is a part of philosophy wherein more emphasis was laid down on human alleviation, achieving super-consciousness, Nirvan and like.

Though, as mentioned earlier, Samkhyan concept of personality is unaltered for centuries, and many schools and philosophical and spiritual missions are applying it to study and modify the individual's behaviour, it is an irony that the contemporary scholars have not attempted to develop and present it in such a manner that it can stand against the current scientific materialistic band of field of personality. Present thesis is a quest in this direction.

The author in this thesis has endeavoured to present Samkhya's concept of personality by collecting information available in Indian philosophy. She has tried her best to present it systematically so that it could answer some pertinent questions related to field of psychology. Since constructs of personality are present in theory, author has developed a test-measure of these particular constructs only by application of modern psychological testing tools. The factors or characteristics, which are no longer important in classification have been identified.

It is author's firm belief that Indian concept of personality would not be out of place in modern personality theories, since it also deals with pertinent questions related to human nature and integration of personality. Rather it shows definite

pathways which help in understanding the integration of personality and the ways to reach ideal Mental Health, which according to Western thinkers, can be approached, but never completely attained.

Indian thinkers share some basic conceptions related to personality with their Western counterparts. These are :

- 1) Personality is an integrated psychological structure which is relatively stable and determines the adult's behaviour in specific situations.
- 2) A man is not fully aware of his complete personality structure, because part of it is embedded in the unconscious. Therefore, all the behaviour can not be explained at a conscious level.
- 3) Like Western thinkers, Indian thinkers also emphasize that the personality structure is constantly undergoing change. New behaviour patterns emerge and become functionally autonomous.
- 4) The specific behaviour is determined by interaction among the personality structure as well as the environment surrounding the individual at that particular moment.
- 5) Like most Western psychologists, Indian thinkers also described personality in "types" comprised of different traits.

### 1.3 INDIAN TRI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO PERSONALITY :

The Samkhyan thinkers distinguish human nature into two aspects which corresponds to 'Purush' and 'Prakrti' - consciousness and nature. Man is, thus, a complex organization in which both these aspects play their role and interact. The consciousness aspect is the ideal one, it guides and controls the material aspect of human nature, but all activities and behaviour including mind and intellect belongs to the realm of Prakrti, which has nothing but the nature of three gunas and the entire human behaviour is the result of the identification of the self with nature. Personality, therefore, can be considered as having three dimensions of Prakrti and can be classified accordingly.

According to this theory, personality springs from the intermingling of three gunas. The predominance and consistency of attitude determines the dominance of one of the three gunas. The three dimensions of personality are as under :

#### Sattva Type :

In Sattva type personality, the Sattva Vritti dominates and overpowers Rajas and Tamas vritties, which exist subordinated. In other words, persons having Sattva guna in dominance are called Sattva type. The Sattva guna stands for purity, stainlessness and healthy habits. So, the persons with more positive and healthy qualities are called Sattvic type. In short, consistency in knowledge, self-control, firmness, non-attachment, absence of egoism, unaffected by success and failure are the characteristics of Sattva guna and the persons having these qualities are called Sattvic type.



**Rajasic Type :**

In Rajas type personality, the Rajas Vritti dominates and Sattva and Tamas vritties remain as subordinates. Rajas stands for activity and pain, it gives rise to greed and desire. In the process of fulfilling his greed, person becomes passionate, harmful, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, cruel and aggressive. If these characteristics exhibit predominantly in a person, he is called Rajasic type.

**Tamasic Type :**

In Tamas type personality, the Tamas Vritti dominates and Sattva and Rajas vritties remain as subordinates. Tamas stands for darkness, delusion and inertia. In the dominance of Tamas, person becomes unsteady, unbending, desponding, lazy, vulgar and malicious. Person showing these characteristics is called Tamasic type.

Having defined the attributes of personality dimensions to be measured, it would be logical to present some assumptions implicit in the theory :

- 1) Though, the gunas have been considered as dynamic and are reported to fluctuate to some extent, this can be considered as short term variant. Hence, the attributes do exist and they are measurable.
- 2) The gunas are not equally distributed in an individual. One of the gunas namely Sattva, Rajas or Tamas dominates in a larger or lesser degree and personalities can, therefore, be described in terms of the Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic personality.

- 3) The three types do not display a bimodel distribution. As three gunas are present in every person, we try to place each individual at the appropriate place along the continuum. Hence, distribution is very nearly normal and not bimodel. Thus, majority of persons lie in the middle of each dimension with few cases at either extremes.
- 4) The three dimensions are supposed to be independent and orthogonal. Philosophers have discussed the relationship among these different factors and have evaluated them critically.
- 5) The measurement of the gunas is relative rather than absolute. Almost, without exception, philosophers compare the extent of gunas of one individual with that of other individuals, not with an absolute standard. Thus, division into three types i.e. Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic is rather comparative only.

#### 1.4 OBJECTIVES :

Discussion in earlier sections brings out following facts :

- 1) Western psychology though advanced in many areas, still finds inadequate to fully answer questions relating to personality, integration and ideal mental health.
- 2) Many contemporary Western scholars have begun to turn to oriental intellectual heritage for inspiration and insight.
- 3) Indian psychology has its roots in philosophy.
- 4) Personality classification on Samkhya theory can be accepted as Indian theory of personality.

- 5) Indian personality theory has not been presented in a systematic way, but has been accepted by all Indian thinkers.
- 6) No testing tool is available for measurement of gunas.

Thus the objectives of author are very clear :

- 1) To present Indian theory of personality.
- 2) Quantitative measurement of personality through construction of tool.
- 3) To find if there is any systematic pattern in traits of sub-groups in society.

#### 1.5 HYPOTHESES :

- 1) The aim of present work is to classify people into three types of personality mentioned in Indian philosophy, so it is hypothesized that Sattva, Rajas and Tamas dimensions represent independent personality factors.
- 2) It is hypothesized that different sections of society will show difference in personality type.

#### 1.6 SUMMARY :

A historical review on development of psychology in general and personality theories in particular indicates that though Western theories have made remarkable progress in the study of man's reactions in various situations and the accompanying mental process, our understanding of the nature and mode of

functioning of human personality is still very imperfect. Western psychology comes largely from philosophical and scientific tradition. In contrast, Indian psychology came from a tradition that is largely not only philosophical but also religious and metaphysical and is based on experience - an experience at super-conscious level. Indian philosophical texts, notably Samkhya provides an overview of personality classification. Persons are classified as Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic. This classification has been generally accepted by later thinkers and thus can be considered as Indian theory of personality. The theory, however, has not been comprehensively developed and presented using modern psychometric means. It is the sincere objective of author in this thesis to take up this work.

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