

Personality

(Harish Handa)

The major problem in attempting to define personality is the vast array of perspectives that exist e.g. an anatomist thinks of personality in a quite different than a psychologist and a philosopher has a different notion of personality. For our present purpose preference will be given to the psychological definition, on the ground that it seems to be the most valid and comprehensive.

However, personality is a complex subject. Although all persons differ in personality structure, it is still possible to examine the basic dimension of human personality in order to develop a better understanding of how people think and behave. In the casual usage personality has a good connotation, to have personality is not a bad thing. The truth, however, is that personality has broader and deeper connotation than its popular usage would indicate. One author says that personality is "the inner organisation of the person". This type of definition says that personality is a summation of the whole person. It focuses on the internal self. Another definition of the personality focuses on differences "personality refers to all characteristics which make one individual different from another.

Just so there can be no misunderstanding about the term we want to make clear, what personality is not. It is increasingly recognised that personality is a social product. The way a person tells and thinks, acts and talks as even what the person dreams or wishes results from a person experiences with other persons. Gordon Allport defines as—"personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical system that determines his unique adjustment to the environment." It will be observed that Allport not only links personality to behaviour, he also recognises that covert or inward elements which can't be observed may contribute importantly to personality. Furthermore he captures an extremely important element of personality very succinctly when he speaks of his unique adjustment.

It may be worthwhile, in the interest of balances, to digress briefly from the psychological aspect of personality. If personality is every thing that differentiates one person from

other, physiological characteristics should also be considered. Further more, even if two person were identical at birth, how long would he remain identical. Personality is not solely a function of genetic structure. External forces as well as heredity help to shape it. From what has been said, it is quite clear that personality means individuality in the sense that not two person have identical personality.

It was left to 'Sigmond Frued' at the beginning of the 20th century to develop a view of personality which was to become a major contribution to psychological thought. Freud pointed out that personality is controlled by the 'psyche' (mind) which exist on three levels called id, igo and superego.

Id:—is the unconscious part of the psyche from which institnctual impulses and demand for the satisfaction of primitive need arise. The demands of the Id are unlimited. A new born child is practically all id since it has not learned consious behaviour. However man can express these basic impulses, this animalistic nature in society, he would quickly run afoul of its rules morals regulations and values.

Ego :- derives from the mind, ruled by reason and mediating the unlimited demands of the id and bringing them in accord with every day reality in the interest of self preservation. It resolves the conflict between id and super ego, said to obey the reality principal. The ego is planner, the decider, the thinker, the executive of the personality because it controls the gate way to action.

Super ego:—is mostly unconscious, though partly concious. It develops out of the ego through a process of internalization and interaction of influences and disciplinary action of parents especially, but also other authority figure. Thus super ego is the persons moreal law, that directly guide his behaviour and keep him in line with the rule of society.

In the life time several member of Freuds inner ring became disillusioned with his insistence on the biological basis of persona/ity and began to develop their own views and their own followers. Alfred Adler for example, felt that the basic drive of a man is not the channelization of the Iibidio but rather striving for the sup riority. The basic aim of the life, he reasoned, to prefect oneself, i. e., to overcome the feelings of inferiority imposed during childhood. All other motives and all other drives stem from this striving for superiority. Fric Fromm stressed man's loneliness in society. Man's goal is to escape from the bonds of freedom and seek love, brotherliness and security. Karen Horney, also one of the social theorists much like Alder reacted to the biological Iibido of Freud but unlike Alder and his emphasis on striving the superiority felt that the basic drive of man is coping with anxiety. She felt that the insecurities of childhood stemming from parent child relation create basic anxiety.

Although the neo Freudian have had little direct influence, one does see a number of advertisements indicating how use of a deodorant soap or a tooth paste reduces the feeling of inferiority and creates confidence or how loneliness can be minimized. By the use of hair sprays, dyes or playtex bras. Horney views have best been represented in a reserach project by Joel Cohen, who developed a psychological instrument that purports to measure Horney's three basic orientation toward coping with anxiety.

Compliant orientation :- Compliant oriented people want to be the part of the activities of others. They wished to be loved, wanted, appreciated and needed. They see in other people a solution for many problem of life and wish to be protected, helped and guided, because of the importance given to the companionship and love of other, complaint oriented people become oversensitive to other needs, overgenerous, over grateful and over-considerate. Such people tend to avoid conflict and subordinate themselves to the wishes of other. They are inhibited in criticism and apoligetec and willing to blame themselves rather than others if things go wrong. Among the most important associated with a complaint tendency are goodness, sympathy love, unselfishness and humility. The compliant person dislike egoiltism, aggression, assertiveness and power seeking.

Aggesive orientation :- Aggressive oriented people want to excel, to achieve success prestige and admiration, other people are seen as competitors. Aggressive people strive to be superior strategists, to control their emotion and to bring their fear under control. Strength, power and unemotional realism are seen as necessary qualities. People are valued if useful to one's goal. Every one is thought to be motivated by self interest with feelings simply a cover for hidden objectives. The aggressive person seeks to manipulate other by achieving power over them.

Detached Orientation :- Detached oriented people want to put unemotional 'distance' between themselves and others. Freedom from obligation, independence and self sufficiency are highly valued Such people don't want to be influenced or to share experience. Conformity is repellent, intelligence and reasoning are valued instead of feeling. Detached people consider themselves more or less unique, possessing certain gifts and adilities that should be recognized without having any need to go out of their way to show them to other. Horney suggested that people frustrated in their compliant or aggressive tendencies or both, may well adopt this response trait.

Cohen found that compliant people in general prefer brand name and use more mouth wash and toilet soaps. Aggressive types tend to use a manual razor than an electric one, use more cologne and aftershave lotion and show preference for old spice deodorant and 'van huesen' shirts The detached types seem to be least aware of brand.

It has been pointed out that personality is a complex subject, but one way to deal with its complexity is to break the totality of personality down into simpler constructs. The personality trait is one of the simpler construct of personality. In the simpler form trent

theory is based on the idea that people have power or quality that are located in the mind and these power determine behaviour. Trent acted as regulators and person with similar trent were believed to behave in a similar fashion.

Just as what degree of influences trent and factor theories have had on consumer behaviour emerged best perhaps in a study by Evans in 1959. Prior to that time the contention was 'ford' owner were presumed to be impulsive masculine and self confident while 'chevrolet' owner were described as conservative thrifty, prestige conscious and along with 'plymouth' owner more feminine.

In attempt to relate people 'type', one other concept the social character typology of David Riesman, has led to numerous studies. In brief, the Riesman thesis is that human being in general can be grouped into three major types of social character

Tradition direction:— is prevalent in society characterized by general slowness of change dependence on family and kin, organisation low social mobility and a tight web of values.

Inner Direction :— Society found in Western society, emerging from the Renaissance and reformation until today is fostered by industrialisation greater social mobility, and less security for the individual. An inner directed person gains a feeling of control over his own life and sees himself as an individual with a career to make. However he goes through life less independent than he seems, for is obeying and confirming to an internal piloting based on the values of principles he has incorporated. Education, training, child rearing practices, occupational opportunities, reaction, are so closely correlated in inner direction society, that the inner directed person is prepared to live in rather unstable, unreliable world by finding stability within himself. The inner directed man does not consume for the sake of consumption but because of status and prestige, as a path way to success and has a passionate desire to make thing his.

The Other Directed:—lives in a different world one in which there is social mobility, but also a world of abundance, in which the individual must learn to live not as a producer but must be carefully taught to live as a consumer. Getting along with other is the magic key to accomplishment depending less on what he is and what he does than on what other thinks of him and how competent he is in the art of manipulated as well as in the art of manipulating other. The home is no longer the agent of greatest influence in implenting social values in a child. Instead the peer group has become all important.

It can be seen however, the discrepancy between the promise of personality theory and findings of resercher. This is due to the assumptions, which leads to several fallacies like attribute dominance—a person may be shy but have a strong urge to excel or a

person may be aggressive and dislike conflict, but be highly sociable, or attribute consistency the notion that if a person is dominant and oriented in one situation he is dominant in all situation but a man may be Tiger at the office but meek as a lamb when with the 'little-women'. Thirdly there is fallacy of time consistency—that a person personality does not undergo change over time. Walter C. Glen's experience is that a person who is shy and intimidated by clerks tend to become more aggressive as his income increases over time.

In conclusion it can be said, that personality attributes whether traits or type are just one variable of human nature. The environment, needs, motives, perception and attitudes also enter into. A shy person may turn aggressive when his kids are hungry and he is out of work A sociable person may become belligerent if a sales clerk ignore him or is discourteous.