UNIT-5
PERSONALITY

Meaning of Personality:

Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychosocial systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment. It is the total quality of an individual's behaviour as it is shown in his habits, thinking, attitude, interests, manner of acting and personal philosophy of life.

Personality is more than the sum total of an individual's traits and characteristics. It is expressed through his behaviour. The characteristic combinations of behaviour distinguish one individual from another giving each a unique personality and identity.

The term personality is derived from the Latin word persona meaning the mask used by the actors when they come on the stage. Thus the term means the social mask people wear as they assume the roles that societal conventions and traditions impose on them.

Definitions of Personality:

1. Gordan Allport:

Defines "Personality" as "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment".

2. RS Woodworth:

ADVERTISEMENTS:

"Personality is the total quality of the individuals behaviour".

3. Cattel:

"Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation".

4. NL Munn:

"Personality is the most characteristic integration of an individual structure, mode of behaviour, interests, attitudes, capacities, abilities and aptitudes".

5. Eysenck:

"Personality is more or less stable and enduring organization of the person's characters, temperament, intellect and physique which determine his unique adjustment to the environment".

No single definition of personality is acceptable to all psychologists. However, they agree that personality includes the behaviour pattern of person shows across situations or the psychological characteristics of the persons that lead to those behavioural patterns.

Development of Personality:
1. Influences of Biological Factors, Culture and Family:

Man is a product of hereditary influence and his learning experiences. Research, especially that involving twins, has uncovered evidence for a genetic contribution to personality is also determined by the situations people find in themselves.

Personality depends partly on inherited predispositions and abilities. It is shaped through classical conditioning, and operant conditioning in life. The family is the most important influence in teaching responses, later other social influences become more prominent.

2. Inherited Predisposition:

Everyone has noticed that striking differences exist among infants in the early days of life. One baby comes into the world extremely active, another sluggish, one cries and fuses most of the times another is so lucid that its mother consults the paediatrician to see if anything is wrong.

Sometimes, these differences in the "personality" of infants had to do with diet or temporarily physical conditions, but sometimes they do not. They seem to indicate strong genetic influences. Role of inheritance shows up

strongly in the incidence of certain behaviour disorders such as schizophrenia—a personality disorder for which people are frequently hospitalized.

Schizophrenia is marked by some combination of confused, bizarre, big and rigid patterns of thought, inappropriate emotional responses, a deficiency in feeling pleasure or displeasure and sometimes suspiciousness of people. Schizophrenic patients sometimes though not always, have hallucinations and delusions.

3. Abilities:

A person's abilities are also important traits of his personality; being "brought up", for example, is a personality characteristics. In-fact intelligence is a trait that can be measured when other traits are in doubt.

Abilities are not only traits of personality but an important influence in the shaping of people to make better adjustments in handling conflicts.

A person's abilities also influence his personality by providing him with a means of gaining recognition. Intelligence and special abilities permit children and adults as well to develop competence from which they acquire confidence and self-esteem.

Abilities provide motivation since a person with a special talent usually has strong motive to exercise, if he has a kind of competence need.

4. Social Learning:

Social behaviour theory simply applies the principles of learning to the learning of habits that make up personality. The theory recognizes classical conditioning and operant conditioning as two basic kinds of learning. It also tells of observational learning or modelling in which a person acquires a response to a situation simply by observing others making the response.

5. Classical Conditioning:

The responses most often conditioned are emotional responses. Conditional fears are often characteristic ways of behaving in certain situations. Human beings can also be "conditioned" indirectly through

language. Many words carry negative unpleasant meaning for example "dirty", "nasty" and "terrible".

When such words are paired with certain events, the emotional attitudes connected with the words become attached to the events. This is one way that prejudice is taught.

The mother says to her child "Negroes are dirty" which repeated a few times, conditions the child to have aversive/negative responses to blacks. Another indirect way of acquiring "conditioned" responses is through observational learning. A person sees someone reacting emotionally to a situation and learns to react the same way.

6. Operant Conditioning:
Many personality characteristics are acquired through operant conditioning. A familiar case is a child who throws temper tantrums with attention or with a lollypop. The behaviour tends to be learned and later in life the child is likely to show signs of temper tantrums whenever he wants something.

If on the other hand, he receives no reward for his temper tantrums he will abandon this kind of operant response. Operant responses like classically conditional ones, can be acquired indirectly through observational learning or modelling.

7. Modelling:
Human beings learn their characteristic ways of behaving not only through classical and operant conditioning but also through essentially human means of modelling and observational learning.

8. Family Influences:
The family is the most important of all environmental influences in shaping of personality. The family administers the rewards and punishments through which characteristic responses are acquired. It also especially in the early years, provides models for observational training.

Learning in the family, normally a child's parents are the first teachers he has. They reinforce some kinds of behaviours and discourage others, thus

helping to determine his habits, goals and values and also to learn responses and interests appropriate to one sex.

9. Parental Attitudes and the Self-concept:
Parents who are themselves well-adjusted of, who love and respect their child, give him a feeling of self-worth and self-confidence; with their praise and love they help him to regard himself as a desirable person.

10. Modelling in the Family:
A child's parents are his first models as well as his first teachers. Children learn both general attitudes and specific responses by using their parents as models. In the process of modelling, children copy many of the personality characteristics of their parents and take over their moral and cultural standards as well.

11. Social Influences:
Our culture and subculture vary according to atmosphere we live in the city or in a village, in an upper or a lower economic class whenever each culture has its distinctive values, morals and ways of behaving. It lays down rules for child training and the relationships within the family. Thus culture influences personality through a process called socialization.

It indicates many of the characteristics a person will acquire. The parents are the first agents of socialization. Later playmates, teacher, television and peer groups become important forces in personality developments.

Assessment of Personality:
Assessment of personality involves the following, viz. case studies, interviews, rating scale, inventories, projective test. A personality characteristics is the way in which a person normally or usually behaves. A personality test aims to find out what a person typically does.

Personality tests help us to know more about the nature of personality. Most of the personality tests are designed to reveal outward manifestations on the individual's social stimulus value. Others are intended to reveal the more covert aspects of personality such as unconscious motives and conflicts.

Commonly employed assessment technique may be classified as follows:

A. Observational method:
In general, it is used to assess personality from the point of view of its overt manifestation. The three primary techniques involve the use of rating scales, interviews and behavioural techniques.

Behavioural Tests or Situational Tests:
The most direct way to predict an individual's behaviour in a natural situation is to place him in a test situation that closely resembles a natural one. In behavioural tests the examiner actually observes the person's behaviour in atypical situation subject is unaware that he is being watched the subject behaves as he normally does; for example, to test the honesty of an individual some situations can be created and his reactions can be evaluated in terms of honesty or dishonesty.

Some other tests of this kind are Brook test, putting real or imaginary fine, saving somebody from welfare. Brook test is designed to test the group participating in problem- solving and reveals nature leaders.

Interviews:
It is a technique of eliciting information directly from the subject about his personality in face-to-face contacts. It gives an opportunity for mental exchange of ideas and information between the subject and the psychologist. The face-to-face interactions in the interview is of 2 types.

1. Structured interview:
This technique adopts a systematic and predetermined approach. Here, the interviewer is definite about the personality traits or behaviour he has to assess and plans accordingly.

Usually, a list of questions are prepared for this purpose and after taking the subject into confidence the psychologist tries to seek answers to their preplanned questions. He does not only attend the content of the responses but also the poor behaviour and other similar favors.

The limitations of this technique are that it calls for a well-used competent interviewer and is only in terms of above time and money also suffers from the disadvantage in that the subject may hidden his feeling or give subjective responses.

2. Unstructured interview:
It is an open interrogation. Hence the interviewer asks the interviewee any question on any subject relevant to the situation. The interviewer here is not restricted to a particular set of predetermined questions. He is at fuel liberty to ask any question and any number of questions on the issue for which the interview is held.

3. Stress interview:
This is one of the important types of interview held to assess the personality for the selection of any personnel. This interview is held to discover the subject's capacity to get some emotional and intellectual sterain. Stars interviews are the examples of situational techniques.

The interviewer deliberately tries to make anxious in the subject to determine how he or she behaves under stress.

B. Questionnaire:
It refers to a drive for securing answers to questions by using a form which respondent fills in. In collecting information from the subject himself about his personality characteristics, a form consists of a series of printed or written questions is used and the subject responds to these questions in the space provided in columns of Yes, No or Cannot say, e.g.

1. Do you enjoy being alone? Yes, No, cannot say.

2. Do you enjoy seeing others succeed? Yes, No, Cannot say.

C. Projective Techniques:
1. Sentence Completion Test:
This test was originally developed by Ebbing Hans to test intellectual ability. The tests consist of a list of incomplete sentences generally open-ended, which require completion by the subject in one or more words, e.g.

I am worried over_____

My hope in_____

I feel proud when_____

The sentence completion tests are considered superior to word association because the subject can respond in more than one words. It becomes possible to have great flexibility and variety of responses as a result of which a wider area of personality and experiences may be revealed.

In addition to above-mentioned projective techniques there are play techniques and drawing tests, which are useful in assessing the personality of young ones.

Although these projective techniques are being criticized as being difficult and subjective they are while useful in assessing the personality.

2. Interviews and Rating Scales:

The interview is one of the older methods for attempting to evaluate personality. It is regularly used in two different settings. The employment interview on which the interviewer attempts to determine the suitability of a person for employment and the counselling interview where the purpose is to assess personality as a proportion for counselling or psychotherapy.

In a counselling interview a clinician tries to sample as wide range as possible of the person's feelings and attitudes by getting him to talk about his personal experiences. The interviewer notes not only what things the person talks about but the way he talks about them.

He observes whether some topics appear to make the person uncomfortable and whether he avoids some subjects altogether. From observations in the interview and from other facts of the case, the clinician attempts to construct a picture of the person's major motives, his sources of conflict and the areas of poor adjustment. Sometimes, he goes a step further and uses a set of rating scales to put his conclusion into a more

quantitative form.

3. Rating Scale:

Rating scale comes in several forms. One of the simplest is a 7-point scale that rates the person on such characteristics as honesty, sociability and emotionality. Another scale provides the rate with a number of alternative descriptions so that he can check the alternative that seems most appropriate.

Interviews and rating scales are so simple that anyone can use them to record his impressions of almost any aspects of personality. Their simplicity should not supply only crude measurements that can be unreliable and invalid. Rating scale techniques need to be subjected to the same, vigorous analysis that validity, standard administration and norms used with the more objective test.

D. Inventories or Questionnaires:

Self-report measure is a method of gathering data about people by asking them questions about the sample of their behaviour. This sampling of self-report data in them is used to infer the presence of particular personality characteristics.

One of the best examples of this type is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.

Although the original purpose of the measure was to differentiate people with specific sorts of psychological difficulties from those without disturbances, it has been found to predict a variety of other behaviours. This MMPI test was constructed by comparing the responses of normal subjects with those of abnormal individual classified into several diagnostic categories.

Items were given different weights depending on how well they distinguish normal subjects from individuals in a category. In this way 8 different scales were built. In addition a scale for masculinity / femininity was constructed by scoring items that differentiate men from women. Finally a tenth scale was derived by using items that distinguish socially introverted

from socially extroverted people.

The other scales and what they measure are as follows:
1. Hypochondriasis (HS)—exaggerated anxiety about one's health and pessi¬mistic interpretation and exaggerations of minor symptoms.

2. Depression (D)—feeling of pessimism, worthlessness.

3. Hysteria (Hy)—various ailments such as headaches and paralyses which have no physical basis.

4. Psychopathic deviation (PD)—antisocial and immoral conduct.

5. Masculinity/femininity (MF)—measure of masculine and feminine interests: especially a measure of feminine values and emotional expression in men.

6. Paranoia (PA)—extreme suspiciousness of other people's motives frequently resulting in elaborate beliefs that certain people are plotting against one.

7. Psychoasthneia (PT)—irrational thoughts that recur and or strong compulsions to repeat seemingly meaningless acts.

8. Schizophrenia (SC)—withdrawal into a private world of one's own often accompanied by hallucination and bizarre behaviours.

9. Hypomania (HA)—mild elation and excitement without any clear reason.

10. Social introversion (ST)—avoidance of other people and removal of oneself from social group.

Edwards Personal Preference Schedule:
The EPPS does not measure abnormal traits as does the MMPI. Rather it is designed to characterize the dominant needs or motives of a person as given by Murray's list of needs (like abasement, achievement, affiliation, autonomy, etc.).

In constructing his inventory Edwards wanted to avoid a basis found in many personality inventories, the tendency for a subject to make what he considers to be socially desirable responses whether they are true or not. Edwards presents items in parts both equally desirable, that require the person to choose between them. The resulting test has proved a useful one for personality counselling.

Projective Methods or Projective Tests:

Projective personality test is a test in which a person is shown an ambiguous stimulus and asked to describe it or tell a story about it. The projective test induces a person to project his own feelings and needs through his responses. The responses are then considered to be projections of what the person is like. The most widely used projective test are Rorschach test and the thematic apperception test (TAT).

Rorschach test:

This test consists of 10 inkblots and psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach in 1924 designed this test. The test consists of showing a series of symmetrical stimuli to people who are then asked what the figures represent to them.

Their responses are recorded and through a complex set of clinical judgments on the part of the examiner, people are classified into different personality types. For instance, respondents who saw a bear in one inkblot are thought to have a strong degree of emotional control according to the rules developed by Rorschach.

Thematic apperception test (TAT):

The TAT is another well-known projective test. It consists of a series of 20 pictures about which a person is asked to write a story about what is happening in the picture. In doing so he usually identifies with one of the characters of the picture and his story becomes a thinly disguised autobiographical sketch or a scene, from his own life.

In this way he reveals feelings and desires that he would hesitate to

discuss openly or would be unwilling to admit to himself. The stories are then used to draw inferences about the writer's personality characteristics. The TAT has no standardized scoring. The tester simply notes recurring themes in the stories and from these decides on what is being revealed. The emphasis in the interpretation is on the dominant needs of the person.

Clinical uses of projective tests are as one way of discovering what may be bothering a person. Their judgments from such tests are put together with other data from interviews and objective tests to form a profile of the personality.