

SHI JAI NARAYA MISHRA P.G. COLLEGE, LUCKNOW
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
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TOPIC- BASIC PERSONALITY AND MODAL PERSONALITY

The primary aim of culture and personality school of anthropology is to examine the interrelationships between culture and personality. Instead of seeking to analyze culture as it is manifested in material items or non-material items, like social institutions, the scholars of culture and personality school of anthropology or psychological anthropologists, study culture as it is embodied in the character of its member. In other words, they deal with the study of role of culture in formation of character or personality. According to them, as culture is acquired, imitated and learnt, it gives rise to character formation or development of personality traits before the period of adolescence.

The term personality has been used in several senses, both popularly and psychologically, but the comprehensive and satisfactory being the integrated and dynamic organisation of the physical, mental and social qualities of the individual as that manifests itself to the other people, in the give and take of social life. We may define personality as the more or less integrated body of habits, attitudes, traits, ideas of an individual as these are organised externally into specific and general roles and statuses, and internally around self-consciousness and the concept of self, ideas, values and purposes which are related to motives, roles and statuses. To sum-up, the following characteristics of personality may be listed:

- (i) Personality is not related to bodily structure alone.
- (ii) Personality is an indivisible unit.
- (iii) Personality is neither good nor bad.

- (iv) Personality is not a mysterious phenomenon.
- (v) Every personality is unique.
- (vi) Personality refers to persistent qualities of the individual.
- (vii) Personality is acquired.
- (viii) Personality is influenced by social interaction.

DETERMINANTS OF PERSONALITY

The factors or determinants, which affect the personality formation are as follows:

1. Environment: The geographical or physical environment sometimes determines the variation in personality construction of members of a group. The personality of two cultural groups, residing in two geographical areas is found different, because of the fact that both groups have different geographical environments. For example, Eskimos have different cultural personality than American Indians because of the fact that former have a geography different to the latter. The culture and personality of people residing in hills and plain areas of India are different, as they belong to different geographical area. The cultural practices, characters, personalities of tribals inhabiting the hilly and forested area are quite different from the inhabitants of plain area. Thus, to the extent that the physical environment determines cultural development and to the extent that culture in turn determines personality, a relationship between personality and environment becomes clear. Nearly two thousand years ago, Aristotle claimed that the inhabitants of Northern Europe were full of spirit, but lack in intelligence and skill, owing to a cold climate. On the other hand, natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but lack in spirit, and are, therefore, slaves. Thus above-cited examples reveal clearly that climate and topography determine, to a great extent, the physical and mental traits of the people, but they alone do not determine personality.

2. Heredity: Heredity is another factor which determines the traits of human personality. Some of the similarities in man's personality are said to be due to common heredity. Every human group inherits the same general set of biological needs and capacities. These common needs and capacities explain some of our similarities in personalities. Thus, personalities of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian are different. Again among Hindu, personalities of different castes are different.

As an infant inherits biological characteristics from parents, they resemble parents in physical appearance and intelligence. It is due to this factor that the children of white-skinned and intelligent parents are found white and intelligent. A man with good physical structure and health generally possesses an attractive personality. A man of poor health, pigmy size, and ugly physical features develops inferiority complex. The growth of his personality is checked, rejected and hated by society. He may turn out to be a thief, dacoit or drunkard. It is also probable that he may become a leader or a genius like Socrates and Napoleon. It is important to mention here that heredity alone is not solely determinant of personality, but other factors as well such as environment, and culture etc.

3. Culture: Besides, heredity and environment, it is culture which largely determines the types of personality that predominate in particular group. It is the culture, as an important factor in shaping personality of a group, which has attracted the attention of the scholars of culture and personality school of thought, who are also designated as psychological anthropologists. According to them, personality is subjective aspect of culture. They also regard culture and personality as two sides of the same coin. Ruth Benedict's study (1934) reveals that the cultural pattern or personalities of Zuni and Kawakiultl, of south-western and north-west coast of United States respectively, differ because they are reared in two different cultures. Mead's study on Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Society (1935) of New Guinea, reveals that the personalities of Arapesh, Mundugumor and

Tschambuli, the three primitive groups of same geographical region of New Guinea, are different from each other because they differ significantly in their cultural background and behaviour. In India, the influence of culture on personality formation can be seen in different groups. The personality and status of male and female among Toda, Garo and Khasi, who are matrilineal societies, are different from Munda, Oraon etc., who are patrilineal, because both societies have different cultural patterns according to which personalities of their members are shaped. The character and personality of different tribal communities are different due to different cultural processes and practices. The personalities of Tribal, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities differ because they have acquired traits and complexes of their own cultural-religious beliefs and practices. It is because of differences in cultures that different Hindu castes possess different character and personality. From the above examples it is clear that culture plays a valuable part in personality-construction. However, there are other factors as well, which also reveal their considerable influence upon the development of personality.

4. Peculiar Experiences: Personality is also determined by another factor, namely, the particular and unique experiences. There are two types of experiences, one those that stem from continuous association of one's own group, and second, those that arise suddenly and are not likely to recur. The type of people, who meet the child daily, has a major influence upon his or her personality. The personality of parents does more to affect a child's personality. If the parents are kind, tolerant, interested in athletics, and anxious to encourage their child's separate interests, the child will have a different experience, and there shall be different influence on his personality, than one whose parents are unkind, quick tempered and arbitrary. In the home, the style of personality is fashioned that will, by and large, characterise the individual throughout his life. Social rituals, ranging from table manners to

getting along with others, are consciously inculcated in the child by the parents. The child picks up the language of his parents. Problems of psychological and emotional adjustment arise and are solved appropriately by each child in terms of cultural values and the standards of the family. The family set up tends to bring the child into contact with the play-mates and teachers. Who are his play-game members, or his school teachers etc., this also determines his personality development. Group influences are relatively greater in early childhood. This is the period when the relationship of child with his mother, father and siblings affects profoundly the organisation of his drives and emotions, the deeper and unconscious aspects of his personality. A certain degree of maturation is needed before the child can understand the adult norms. The basic personality structure, that is, formed during this period, is difficult to change. Whether a person becomes a leader, a coward, an imitator, whether he feels inferior or superior, whether he becomes altruistic or egoistic, depends upon the kind of interaction he has with others. Thus, group interaction moulds his personality.

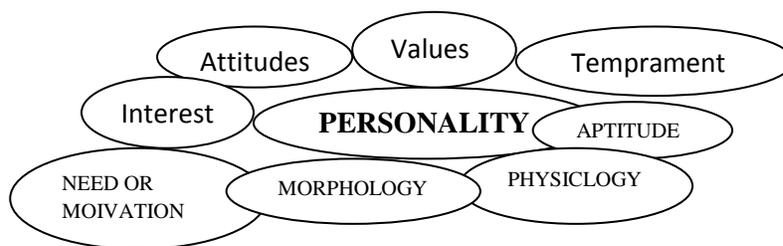
Sometime, a sudden experience leaves an abiding influence personality of an individual. Thus, a small child may get frightened to see a bloody accident, and even after the accident, he may be obsessed by the horror and fear. Sometimes a girl's experiences with a rapist may condemn her to a life of sexual maladjustment. A book may not often change a man to renounce the world and seek God. If a man meets an accident which cripples or weakens him, he may come to entertain the feeling of inadequacy. Lord Buddha is said to have been led to renunciation by the sight of a funeral procession. Thus, experience also determines one's personality.

Thus, it appears clearly that the personality is a result of the combination of four factors, namely, physical environment, heredity, culture and particular experience. These are the factors responsible for personality-its formation,

development and maintenance. However, there is one difficulty that there is no way yet known to measure the effect of each factor or to state how the factor combine to produce a given result. The behaviour of juvenile delinquent is affected by his heredity and by his home life. But how much is contributed by each factor cannot be measured in exact terms. It also appears that personality is a biological, social, cultural and psychological phenomenon.

The terms personality, character, and temperament have been used by the scholars synonymously. In the study of personality, sciences like biology, psychology, sociology and anthropology have taken keen interest. It is because of this fact that the term personality has been used to denote various meanings. A total study of personality can be done by interdisciplinary approaches in which biologist, psychologist, sociologist and anthropologist must joint their hands and extend cooperation. Biologists deal with physiological characteristics of personality of individuals. Sociologists attempt to know the influence of social environment on personality. Psychologists concern is with nature and mental aspects of personality, while anthropologists are concerned with the relationship between culture and personality.

Personality formation is related to mainly three aspects, such as physical, social-cultural and psychological. It will become clear from the diagram given below:-



Physical aspect of personality reveals differences in physical construction, form stature, height, and weight of individual. Seeing the physical appearance of an individual, we say that his or her personality is very attractive.

In socio-cultural aspects of personality, we study and discuss the socio-cultural behaviour of an individual. In this form, each individual represents culture of a special society. The culture and society, in which an individual is born influence his or her personality through tradition, customs, mores, values, religion, art, literature and language. Thus, personality is an expression of culture of the society. The third aspect of personality is psychological. In this we can include interest, sentiment, attitudes, values, temperament, impulse, aptitude, motivation etc.

Basic personality

Examples of Basic Personality Type in Indian Context

Kardiner's theory of basic personality type refers to that the members of each society or culture possess similar personality traits which reveal the basic personality structure or type of that society. However, individual variations are no exception, but the members of a group are characterized by some common characters. This commonness in personality or character of entire members of group, is outcome of common influence of primary and secondary institutions upon the members of a group. The basic personality type is formed in childhood, because all infants are socialized and reared in common manner in a group. The childhood disciplines play significant role in formation of basic personality structure. Thus, the basic personality type expresses itself in group's ideologies, in emotional and cognitive orientation to life and death.

From the above description, it appears that each society or culture has its own basic personality type. Thus, the basic personality type of Toda of Nilgiri area, South India, is different from Munda and Oraon of Central India. In case of former, the basic personality structure is shaped by the socialization processes observing the norms and value of the institution of matriarchal family. In case of latter, the socialization of infants is followed according the rules of the institution of patriarchal family. Even in patriarchal or matriarchal cultural groups, the basic personality type of one group varies from the other. For instance, the basic personality types of Munda, Oraon, Ho, Santal, Kharia etc. are different, though they all are patriarchal. In the same way, the basic personality type of Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh is different from each other. In Hindu culture, the basic personality type is shaped by the institutions of joint family, monogamy, caste system and hierarchical position, jajmani relationship, beliefs in thirty three crores of Gods and Goddesses, but Parmeshwar as the supreme deity, the worship of cow and land as mother. The basic personality of different castes also varies. The Brah- mans are supposed as learned, Rajput as warrior, Gwala as robust and Harijan as submissive and hardy.

Cora-Du-Bois

Cora-Du-Bois, a lady cultural anthropologist of America became a close associate of Abram Kardiner, a psychoanalyst. She was an active participant of interdisciplinary seminar, organised by Kardiner at New York and at Columbia University in the year 1936 and 1939 respectively. Thus, a thorough and systematic attempt to use psychodynamic techniques in anthropology began in 1936, with the participation of Cora-Du-Bois. After a preliminary attempt to work with existing ethnographic data on Trobriand Islands, and Chucchee Zuni, it became clear that these data would not yield the information necessary for a

systematic psychodynamic analysis. It was decided, therefore, to initiate a field expedition designed to meet the methodological specifications of an approach that would furnish information about social adaptation, as effected through the lives of the individual members of society.

In 1937, Cora-Du-Bois departed for the island of Alor in the East Indies. She proceeded for fieldwork with the following general aims in mind:

- (1) To determine and describe the institutional constellations of Alor culture.
- (2) To participate actively in the life of the culture.
- (3) To document the biographies of individual members of the culture, using such psycho-analytic criteria as dreams and fantasies.
- (4) To administer Researcher and intelligence tests to selected individuals.