

LESSON 19

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

If we wish to determine aspects of a person's personality based on a particular theory, there are specific techniques for assessing those.

Assessing personality traits

There are two ways of assessing personality traits. One method consists of asking a set of questions which a person has to answer about his/her opinions, feelings and actions. For this purpose, a personality inventory is used. In the second approach, some other person makes assessments about a person's traits, based on prior knowledge about that person, or by direct observation of the person. This is called the rating-scale approach.

Personality inventories are questionnaires where a person has to answer many questions about the way she/he reacts to different situations. A personality inventory may be designed to assess a single trait like extroversion-introversion, or it may assess a number of traits. The Sixteen Factor Personality Questionnaire (16 PF) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) are two very well-known inventories which are useful for obtaining information about a person's traits.

Sometimes when a person has to report about his/her reactions, they are biased about their own characteristics. To overcome this, rating scales are used to assess personality traits. An individual can be asked to rate the other person different traits. But for this the rater must fulfil certain conditions, such as -

They must be able to understand the scale.

They should know the person well about whom the rating has to be made.

They should not get biased in his/ her judgment, about the person.

Assessment of Personality

As the unconscious part of person's personality is hidden from one's self-awareness, Psychoanalysts, therefore, use indirect symbolic information and interpret this to uncover the unconscious conflicts and motives. This approach is called projective technique.

In this approach, if the psychoanalyst wants to obtain knowledge of unconscious processes in a person's psyche, she/he presents certain ambiguous material and asks the person to describe what she/he sees. The person starts projecting some meaning to the ambiguous stimuli from personal experience

or fantasy and in this way, unconscious mind is tapped and something is revealed about it. E.g. **Rorschach Ink Blot Test** and **Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)**.

Assessment in Humanistic perspective

The humanistic approach to personality focuses on how a person experiences her/his world. Therefore, assessment here is concerned with understanding the perception of a person about his/her life situation and experience. There are different methods for psychological assessment under humanistic approach. One approach is based on the person selecting, from a number of descriptive sentences, those which describe him/her in an accurate way. Another approach focuses on a person's willingness to express his/her inner nature or self to others. This approach is based on the understanding that the tendencies for very high or very low level of self-disclosure are both an indication of emotional immaturity.

Assessment of Guans

In the Indian approach to personality which emphasises the three Gunas: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in order to assess a person's nature, we need to have an understanding of which Guna is predominant in a person's life, in thought, speech and action, and

then which is less dominant, and finally which is the least.

In order to assess which Guna is predominant in an individual's personality, we have to obtain combined information using questionnaires, observation etc. Some inventories have been developed which gives us some information about the way the Gunas are active in an individual's personality.

Evaluate yourself

1. What are the conditions that a rater must fulfil to use a rating scale?
2. List the different methods to assess personality?
3. How does the humanistic approach assess personality?