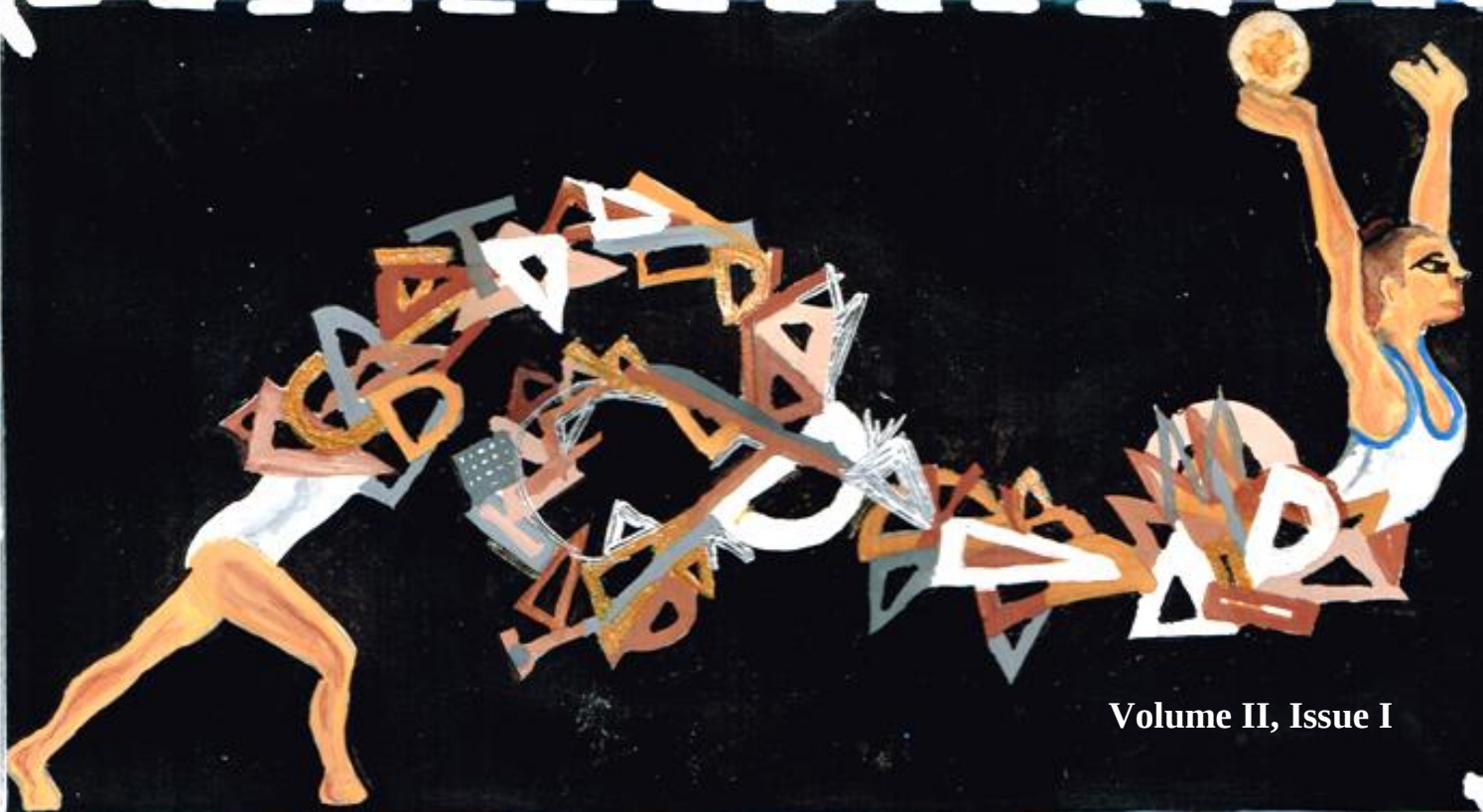


The Learning Curve

Annual Academic Journal,
Psychology Department,
Lady Shri Ram College for Women,
University of Delhi



Volume II, Issue I



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Note from the Head of the Psychology Department

Dr. Parul Bansal

This academic journal offers an exciting space to the students and faculty to share their writings on various psychological issues and concerns of importance. I take this opportunity to reflect on themes of two events that are a part of Psychology Department association calendar—The Mental Health Week and Zeitgeist (The Annual Academic Meet). This year the themes were ‘Gender and Mental Health’ and ‘Popular Culture – A Psycho-Social Investigation’.

Let us first look at what are few of the questions that Psychology can help raise and answer vis-a-vis the gender and mental health theme. What are the standards of mental health for males and what are the corresponding standards for females? How do these ideals impact and in turn get reinforced by the way girls and boys are reared and socialized? How can the sufferings of male and female patients be reflective of dialectical relationship (resistance as

well as longing) with the culturally encoded ideas and images of normality?

Study of popular culture also requires psychological analysis. Psychology offers answers to questions like - How advertising help creates needs and goals in people that propel them to splurge? What are the effects of being a netizen? What are the contours of self emerging in response to the postmodern realities?

Psychology is integral to understand how individual subjectivity is constituted. As Psychologists, one of the foremost challenges before us is to develop our theoretical and methodological skills to capture the interface between individual and society. We also need to extend our thinking into the study of social problems like violence, prejudice and discrimination, terrorism, poverty etc.

Note from the Editors’ Desk

The purpose of *The Learning Curve* is to acknowledge the diversity of academic work produced by the undergraduate students in University of Delhi. Our aim was not just to screen the methodologically strong and scientific research and review papers contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge, but also to recognize the articles with underlying psychological understandings.

Since psychology is a research intensive subject and students of all three years, esp. the third year students conduct independent primary research studies under department professors, the academic journal was initiated last year to appreciate the young budding psychologists, inviting submissions from all over University of Delhi.

To escalate the quality of academic work, external and internal blind peer-review process was initiated this year. Nine experts in the field of psychology reviewed forty original papers submitted from across the Delhi University. The reviewers evaluated the methodological rigor, exhaustion of the review of literature, relevance of and engagement with the research question, authenticity and contribution to the advancement of knowledge as well as the coherence of the reports. Although a firm acceptance or rejection wasn't be indicated, reviewers commented on the likelihood of publication.

The editorial board members underwent training in editing which included grammatical and maximal editing, formatting which included and referencing papers in APA 6th edition. For the final publication however the norms of APA 6th edition were adopted flexibility so as to reduce space utilization and adapt to publication requirements. The training course material can be availed from the editors. A five-stage editing procedure was adopted for refining papers, with each editor working closely with the author and the reviewer. (Figure1). Personal academic engagements were encouraged. Few papers in the journal are uncompleted undergraduate dissertations. For the latest copies of the manuscripts the author may be contacted.

The editors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the faculty members as well as Dr. Aruna Khasigwala, Dr. Purnima Singh and Dr. Rachana Bhargava for assessing students' standing as a scholar in psychology, evaluating the quality of study conduction and contribution. The editorial board is grateful to Ms. Megha Dhillon, Dr. Priti Dhawan and Dr. Matthew Whoolery for taking out time to write for the journal.

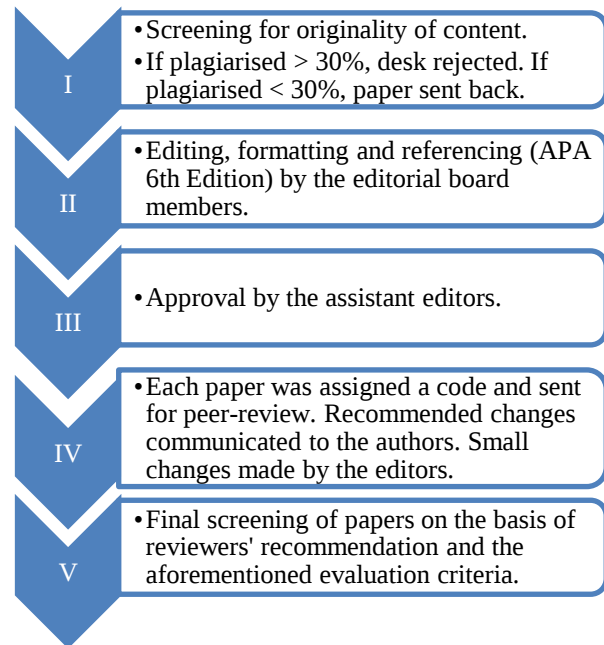


Figure 1. The stages of processing

As editors, we would like to express thanks to all contributors who submitted for the journal as well as for the paper presentation competition in *Zeitgeist*, annual academic meet of the department of psychology. Without the genuine and authentic inter-subjective and critical engagement with psychology, this venture wouldn't have been possible. We feel immense gratitude towards each and every member of the editorial board who enthusiastically participated in the procedures of the journal publication, contributing to the best of their ability. We sincerely extend our gratefulness to the union members, Ms. Diana Cherian, association-in-charge, Dr. Parul Bansal, head of the department and Dr. Priti Dhawan, vice principal for supporting the editorial board in their endeavor of publishing the second edition of psychology department's annual academic journal, *The Learning Curve*.

The Editorial Board

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Reviewers



Dr. Aruna Khasgiwala is retired professor and the former dean & head of faculty of social work at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (MSU Baroda). Her fields of interests are mental health, counseling, human development, children and families. Her doctoral dissertation was on family dynamics.



Ms. Diana Cherian is an assistant professor in the department of psychology, Lady Shri Ram College for Women. She is also the association-in-charge of the psychology association. She has previously worked as a clinical psychologist at Fortis Health Institute. She is pursuing her Phd. from IIT, Delhi.



Ms. Megha Dhillon is an assistant professor at the department of psychology, Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Her fields of interest are gender, child and adolescent development.



Dr. Matthew Whoolery is a psychology professor at Brigham Young University, Idaho. Dr. Whoolery is on a Fulbright scholarship to India and is a visiting professor at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. He has had significant international experience including work as an anthropologist in rural Namibia with the Himba tribe and three years as a psychology professor at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.



Dr. Purnima Singh is a professor of psychology at IIT Delhi in 2005. In 1986 she was awarded the Young Scientist Award by the Indian Science Congress Association. She went to University of Bristol, U.K. on a Commonwealth Academic Staff Fellowship during 1991-1992. She is the associate editor of *Psychology and Developing Societies*. She is the treasurer at National Academy of Psychology, India.



Dr. Parul Bansal is the head of psychology department at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Her PhD research focuses on psycho-social processes of identity development in urban Indian youth using biographical and narrative method. She has recently authored a book titled 'Youth in contemporary India: Images of Identity and Social Change' published by Springer, India. Her academic and research interests are in subfields of psychology of self, personality and identity, social and cultural psychology, psychology of human development, qualitative research methodology, psychoanalysis and mental health, critical psychology.



Dr. Priti Dhawan is the vice-principal and an associate professor, (department of psychology) Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Her fields of interest are gender issues and cultural psychology, developmental psychology and cultural issues in psychology. She has previously served as the student counselor in the counseling cell of the college.



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Health

Dr. Rachna Bhargava is the assistant professor of Clinical Psychology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. She has been involved with many projects of the World Organization, India.



The Learning Curve

Annual Academic Journal

Psychology Department, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

There are More Important Things:

Questioning American Psychology's Commitment to Personal Happiness and Self-esteem

Dr. Matthew Whoolery

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Manuscript received on March 22, 2013. Correspondence may be sent to the author at matthew@whoolery.com.

There are More Important Things: Questioning American Psychology's Commitment to Personal Happiness and Self-esteem

While I hope I am still too young to write a retrospective of my career, I find myself reflecting on recurring themes in both my professional career as a practicing and teaching psychologist and my personal life. I hope that the reader will indulge a certain personal focus and use of the personal "I" pronoun even though this is a voice not used much in academic psychology. My focus in this article is on the commitment in American psychology to the ideal of personal happiness and Self-esteem. While for most Americans these aims seem self-evident, I have grown increasingly uncomfortable with and skeptical of these mostly unquestioned assumptions in my field. I hope that what I have to say can influence the reader both professionally and personally in their pursuit of academic goals and the right kind of life. I will focus on three primary assumptions made by modern American psychology: first, that human beings should or ought to be happy; second, that we should seek to be free of suffering; and third, that human beings should (and deserve to) feel good about themselves.

Unhappiness is not a Disease

Whether we focus on research or psychotherapy, American psychology's commitment to the ideal of personal happiness is overwhelming. This focus is not new and is based on a long history of European and British

philosophies claiming this as the primary aim of human existence. Since this focus on happiness is evident to any casual observer or experienced psychologist, I will not spend a great deal of time hammering out the history or details of this commitment (that is for another venue and paper) to personal happiness, but instead put my efforts into questioning the familiar assumptions. This goes for the other assumptions as well: it is well established that American psychology seeks to end human suffering and to help others feel good about themselves. Indeed, these assumptions for most people are unquestionable and form the basis for an ethical and effective psychotherapeutic intervention. My argument is that these assumptions are not as self-evident or universally true as we usually accept them to be. And I genuinely believe that they lead us away from, rather than toward, the right kind of life.

As a freshman at university, I grew to enjoy the experience of watching international films in my university's International Cinema program. It was refreshing and fascinating to see the stories and landscapes of other people and cultures. One particular Russian film had a profound impact on me. The film was directed by the critically acclaimed but largely obscure Andrei Tarkovsky. In his film *Nostalghia*, one character says to the other "You want to be happy. There are more important things." I actually returned the next day to see the film again (this was before Google and YouTube) just to see if I had gotten this idea and quote right. It at once struck me as true and I found myself morally disturbed by its simplicity. Disturbed primarily because it seemed to be so true but in

all my years as a student and an American I had never heard this truth before. When I have shared this quote over the years with my students, many of them have been similarly disturbed by it. Not all have agreed with it, but all have found it to provoke some questioning about what they have been striving for in their personal lives. I have even heard from students, years later, still mulling over this question: “Is personal happiness the right end goal to strive for in life?” Psychology, I believe, answers the question affirmatively. While there are notable exceptions (Frankl, 1992 for example), most psychologists and psychotherapists focus on the increasing of personal happiness as a primary goal. But is Tarkovsky right? Are there more important things?

I firmly believe that there are more important things, both personally and professionally. One of these is the search for meaning and purpose in life. By this I do not mean the search for personal meaning independent of others around us, but to find our purpose in what we can and should do in benefitting those around us. In a great story by Tolstoy, he tells of a king who is seeking to know the answer to three questions: Who is the most important person to know and consult? What is the most important thing to do? When is the most important time to act? In his parable, Tolstoy answers that the most important time is now. The most important person is the one in front of us. And the most important thing to do is to do good to that person. In working with clients and students struggling with depression, one of the questions I always ask them is what they are doing to benefit those around them. Some describe their feelings that they don’t feel like there is any reason for them to wake up in the morning. And the reality may be that in the way they are living their lives, there is not much reason for them to wake up and get out of bed. I encourage them to seek out ways to use their particular abilities or talents to benefit others. Even if it is just that they have an hour a day to spare to sit with elderly patients in an assisted living facility.

Part of this push comes from my own experience. In my late adolescence I found myself in this ‘dark’ time and couldn’t seem to find a way out. I had read the books on self-love and self-esteem and had found them ultimately lacking. No matter how much I examined myself or tried to convince myself that I was a good person I still was left with feelings of gloom. Maybe it was Tarkovsky’s film- I don’t remember- but one day I decided to seek out ways to serve in my community. I didn’t have any specialized skill to offer, but I ended up spending some hours each week working with children with physical and mental challenges. It’s not that in doing this community service I thought “I am a good person because I am helping others.” The change that took place in me was that I started to lose the self-consciousness and concern for my own well-being. Being with these children who approached me with simple love and affection just left me to not be worried about whether I was happy, good, or experiencing meaning in my life. The self-forgetfulness that came from working with these children was exhilarating. I finally didn’t care anymore about my problems and as a result “found” others around me. The relief from myself was wonderful.

This is the meaning I am referring to: the meaning found in the engagement in doing good in the moment we are in and for the person we are with. This is more important than being happy. Happiness may come (sometimes but not always) from living this way, but need not be pursued as a goal. Indeed, happiness as a goal is unattainable—for as long as we seek personal happiness we find ourselves always falling short because suffering and sorrow are inevitable parts of the human condition.

Healthy People Suffer

Much of modern psychotherapy sets the goal for a healthy individual to be free of suffering. Measures of mental health are almost always organized as “symptom checklists” which add up negative symptoms (like feelings of unhappiness or anxiety) to give you a score reflecting the “amount” of suffering you are

experiencing. In other words, each symptom of suffering is counted against your mental health. This is universal enough that it must seem to most psychologists to be self-evident that suffering is bad and a sign of poor mental health. I myself helped create one of these measures and also worked in a clinic that used such a checklist to track the progress of psychotherapy. I was certainly committed to ending the suffering of my clients and believed that problems needed to be fixed so that a person would be free of suffering and problems.

As an example of this in modern psychology and psychiatry, take the controversy over the so-called bereavement exclusion in the diagnosis of major depression. Until recently, the DSM-IV-TR (the diagnostic manual used by American psychiatrists and psychologists) gave an exclusion from the diagnosis of depression to those who were in bereavement for the death of a loved one. It was thought that it was normal to have sorrow, difficulties in eating and sleeping, and other symptoms when a loved one passed away (by the way, the exclusion was for only two months). Recently the controversy became more important as American psychiatrists and psychologists began the revision of the DSM for the fifth version. Members of the committee were psychiatrists and psychologists in good standing in the field, even if also in close relationships with pharmaceutical companies. The final decision was to remove the exclusion altogether! Now a person who is only two weeks away from the death of a loved one (since the diagnosis of depression requires 2 weeks of symptoms regardless of cause) can be diagnosed with a so-called mental disorder. The reasoning was that since people in bereavement are “suffering,” to not diagnose them with depression would unnecessarily leave them to suffer.

In the years since I began practicing and teaching psychology, I have continued in greater earnest to question the assumption that suffering is bad or avoidable. In other words, I have come to believe that suffering is an important part of being a human being. While most or all human beings prefer times of ease and happiness over times of stress and suffering, these latter states

still play an important part in a normal human life. Existential philosophers like Søren Kierkegaard (1969) argue that anxiety is essential to the meaningful human life. A human being free of anxiety would have no motivation to do anything, be happy to sit still. Anxiety and suffering move us in ways that moments of satisfaction and happiness cannot. Suffering in the case of bereavement, rather than being seen as a symptom of disorder to be fixed, may be seen as a healthy and normal way to deal with significant loss. These are not symptoms to fix, but meanings waiting to be fulfilled. More and more frequently I find myself advising others to refrain from trying to “fix their problems” and instead find ways to have a meaningful life accepting these parts of themselves.

One example is of a friend who talked with me a few years ago about the sorrow he and his wife were experiencing as they struggled to have children without success. The reality that they would not be able to have children of their own was a great source of suffering to them and their families. Interestingly, they went to seek help from a psychologist and were told that they were both “suffering from depression” which led to a prescription for an anti-depressant. There seemed to be no room for the idea that this suffering was genuine and an outgrowth of their love for one another that they had hoped would be expressed in having children together. Instead, their genuine suffering was interpreted as a disease that needed to be cured. While I certainly did not hope for their continued suffering and sorrow, I believe that it was a necessary and healthy mourning of loss rather than a problem to be fixed. The fact of the matter is this: life has times of unavoidable suffering. It seems to me that learning to find meaning in these times of sorrow is far superior to a frantic avoidance of pain. Psychology has done great harm in presenting human suffering as simply a disease to cure.

Feeling Good about Oneself is to Encourage Illusory Thinking

Perhaps the most provocative of my professional disagreements has to do with the

way that we should think of ourselves. American psychology has long had an obsession with positive Self-esteem and working to help psychotherapy patients “feel good about themselves.” This kind of positive self-image is encouraged regardless of the kind of lifestyle or decisions the person is making in their lives. People are encouraged to think positively of themselves even if they are failing miserably in their relationships, career, and personal lives. One of my colleagues worked at a mental hospital where they treated youth who were convicted of violent sexual assault. Even these youth were taught to love themselves more, disregarding or separating themselves from their horrific behavior. I believe that this focus in psychology is counter-productive and I have a feeling that most of us know that it is ultimately wrong. I will explain.

While I have known a few truly exceptional individuals in my life who I might think should esteem themselves quite highly (though I find they rarely do), most of us are quite aware that we are fundamentally flawed in one way or the other. And not just in ways that we can blame on our parents or society, but in ways that we know very well are due to our own poor choices. We are taught to repeat self-affirmative mantras when deep down we know that we really aren’t that wonderful. The problem isn’t that we find ourselves lacking in important ways, but that we are told by psychologists (and sometimes our mothers) that we should think that we are wonderful. Self-criticism is seen as a problematic behavior and something that should be avoided. We are taught by psychologists like Carl Rogers that our problems are fundamentally due to the inputs of others who teach us that we are only conditionally worthy. The goal of these kinds of therapies is to have us have unconditional positive regard for ourselves (Rogers, 1947). It was no surprise that a blockbuster hit in the 1980’s (and the song that became the theme song for the Atlanta Olympics) claimed that loving yourself was the “greatest love of all.”

When I say that I think most of us see through the illusion I mean that most of us feel

the conflict in this. We are told by psychologists that we should feel good about ourselves in every way but we recognize, quite acutely at times, that we really aren’t that great. We see in ourselves character flaws and behaviors for which we feel embarrassment, shame, and guilt no matter how much our society says that these things are okay. We tend toward self-criticism not because we are experiencing emotional problems, but because we are being honest with ourselves. While most all of us have some traits that are admirable, we are all aware of the many ways in which we fail to meet up to standards of the right kind of life—even if we define that personally. When we find ourselves honestly evaluating our lives, we are frequently faced with ways in which we know we are failing. What are we to do with these feelings? Are we to avoid them and drown them out in self-affirmations or should we face up to them and accept ourselves fully as flawed people?

In my own life I have found great peace in accepting that I am simply not a great human being. I don’t feel self-pity about this, but feel that an honest look at myself leaves me with the truth that I am lacking in significant ways. This self-criticism does not have to lead to a kind of wallowing in our faults, but can be an important way to move ourselves closer to the life that we want to live. Self-criticism is an essential part of being an excellent scholar and scientist. A willingness to admit one’s own scientific and moral fallibility helps us to be more careful in what we believe and more able to see our own mistakes. The famous psychologist Alfred Binet spent a significant portion of his career staking his reputation on the idea that the volume of a person’s cranium is the determiner of his/her intelligence. He even said that this “truth” was scientifically proven and irrefutable. In an act of scientific and personal humility, he later admitted that he was wrong. Binet went on to make significant and long-lasting contributions to the field of psychology while many of his compatriots never recanted and have faded into history as examples of pseudo-scientists.

I believe honest self-criticism is also important for experiencing personal growth. If we are really so wonderful and amazing as the Self-

esteem psychologists attempt to convince us, there is not much more for us to do. But if we are what we often fear, flawed and bruised human beings, there is a work to be done. Realistic expectations are fostered when we recognize as well that being less than stellar is to be human. Following from the example I gave earlier, when I realized that my personal feelings of doom and gloom were largely of my own self-ish creation, I was able to find a way out. As long as I kept trying to tell myself that in reality I was a great person I could not find the solution. The fact of the matter is that many of my own problems come from short-sightedness, selfishness, and willful disregard of the things I know and believe to be true and right. This is not self-pity, this is simply the truth.

Permit me one last example. One of my daughters was talking with me on the sidelines of her football (soccer) game about how she felt like she wasn't a good player. I simply agreed with her, not to be unkind but to be honest with her and encourage her ability to be self-critical. The fact is that she wasn't really very good at that sport even though she excelled in other parts of her life. I told her that the teammates and opponents that were better at football than she was had worked very hard to get that way. They had spent hours every day playing and practicing in order to feel confident and succeed on the playing field. I asked her "Do you want to be good if it requires that kind of work? If so, I will help you to achieve it." Her answer somewhat surprised me. She said "No." I asked her how good she *wanted* to be and she replied "Good enough to have fun." From that we decided to practice some more in order to help her feel more confident and to enjoy her games more. As you might imagine, when I recounted this conversation with some of my American friends, they were horrified that I would tell my daughter (or at least agree with her own conclusion) that she wasn't good at playing football. They felt

that I should have told her that she was "good" or "improving" even though neither of those were necessarily true at that time. This is the problem, we teach our children the same self-affirming and self-deceptive practices that lead us to the paradox of trying to feel all good about ourselves with the recognition that we realize it just is not true. Honest recognition of our faults is an important aspect of a healthy and mature human being.

While I believe that American psychology has good intentions and that most practitioners are acting in good faith to help others, I believe that our enterprise is fundamentally flawed. Indeed, I believe that psychology may be doing more to further unrealistic expectations of happiness that leads to feelings of shame about unavoidable unhappiness that is natural to the human condition. By perpetuating the idea that we can be free of suffering, people flock to their doctors and psychotherapists to help them fix what in reality are normal parts of the human condition. And by pushing the notion that we should feel good about ourselves we are leaving people unable to be self-critical in ways that will help them toward genuine self-improvement. Maybe accepting life as something more than self, sprinkled (sometimes heavily) with suffering, and ourselves as the incomplete creatures we are will lead to something like an improvement of individuals and society. Consider it, maybe there really are more important things.

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The Learning Curve

Annual Academic Journal

Psychology Department, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

A Qualitative Investigation of Weight Dissatisfaction among Indian Female Adolescents and Young Women

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Although definitions of female beauty have changed over time, the emphasis placed on women's physical attractiveness has endured. Beauty does not always lie in the eyes of the individual beholder. Rather people within a given culture, often share conceptions of what they consider to be beautiful in women. The socio-cultural perspective on physical attractiveness states that culture defines what constitutes beautiful and self-perceptions of attractiveness depend on these definitions. Travis & Meginnis-Payne (2001) have discussed the paradoxes inherent in the beauty messages given to women. For example while one beauty myth is that "one must labor to be beautiful", the counter myth is that "beauty knows no pain." Such messages are confusing and restrictive as they provide space for only one kind of beauty that each woman has to attain to be considered attractive. Moreover although the definitions of physical attractiveness are arbitrary and unrealistic, they are presented as if they are a universal truth.

An aspect of appearance considered significant for attractiveness in present times is a slender body. Though weight dissatisfaction has been understood as a Western phenomenon, recent research has shown it to be common even in those cultures where conventional notions of beauty have differed from the West and have not been about being slim. For example Mousa et al (2010) found body dissatisfaction and negative eating attitudes among adolescent schoolgirls in

Jordan while Jung et al, (2006) found that Korean women exhibited greater body dissatisfaction and more disordered eating than American women.

In discussing the weight concerns of Indian women, it is important to note that the earlier Indian beauty ideal presumed a figure with rounded curves. Even today, food continues to be the main symbol of hospitality. Despite this, many urban Indian girls and women are accepting the notion of *thinness as ideal* (Thapan, 2009). Phrases such as 'size zero' and 'six pack' have become a part of everyday discourse. The number of gymnasiums has escalated and diet foods have become easily available. Some research has revealed young women in India to show levels of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating that are similar to those found in the West (Rubin et al, 2008; Kayano et al, 2008).

The reasons for growing concerns with weight in urban India may lie in an intricate interaction of several factors. Munshi (2001) notes that there has been a shift in the way Indian women are presented towards an emphasis on glamour, sexuality and appearance. This trend becomes extremely clear by looking at the media content available to the urban Indian consumer. In addition, young city-dwelling women may be vulnerable to weight dissatisfaction due to the increased social acceptance of dating and certain professions such as stewarding and modeling which place great emphasis on physical appearance. While

mainly patriarchal, urban India is transforming into a society where more and more women are stepping out of their homes and competing with men for coveted positions. The feminist perspective predicts that as these changes take place in women's roles, parallel attempts at maintaining the hegemony of patriarchy can be expected that include telling women how they must look and behave in these newly available roles.

The studies done on body image and weight dissatisfaction in India are relatively recent and have mainly been quantitative in nature. We decided to conduct a qualitative investigation examining the individual and personal experiences of weight dissatisfaction in Indian adolescent girls and young women. More specifically the objectives of our research were to identify the factors recognized by young women as contributing to weight dissatisfaction, its perceived physical, psychological and interpersonal implications and the desired supports and services. The participants ($n = 10$) were selected from a larger sample of adolescent girls and young women (ages 15- 21 years) contacted through visits to various schools and colleges in New Delhi. Every participant from the larger sample completed the Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (Mendelson, White, & Mendelson 1997), an instrument that assesses persons' feelings about their appearance. After the questionnaires had been scored, 11 participants who reported a high sense of weight dissatisfaction were contacted for interviews. 10 young women- 3 high school students, 6 undergraduate students and 1 post graduate student -gave their consent and were interviewed. All the participants belonged to upper middle class families and were living with their parents. None reported any history of eating disorders. The interviews were semi-structured, ranging in length from 60 to 90 minutes. Each was audio-taped and transcribed. The data was analyzed through the interpretive phenomenological approach (Smith & Eatough, 2007). In what follows, we present the results that emerged.

One of the important themes we found in the data was "*role of the family*". The family emerged as playing three distinct roles in the participants' lives with respect to weight dissatisfaction-criticizing the participants for their weight, supporting them in attempting to lose weight and being concerned about their own weights. Several participants said that their family members, in particular parents, criticized their weights. The need to lose weight was communicated by close relatives in diverse ways. For example, Sonam said that her father would tell her younger sister to exercise, or else she would "*end up like her elder sister*" while Carol said that her father would compare her body to those of thinner women. Despite acknowledging that comments were hurtful, many participants believed that parents had their children's best interests in mind. Sonam said, "*When my parents say these things, it's for my good. I want to look good. My parents also want me to look good. So why shouldn't they say it then? It's just that they should not tell me again and again.*" Whereas some family members were considered disapproving, others were perceived to be supportive. Four participants reported that their mothers assisted them in their weight reducing efforts by accompanying them to the gym, motivating them to exercise, taking them to dieticians and providing them a low-fat diet.

Many participants said that their parents were concerned about their own weight and exercised regularly. The social learning theory suggests that parents influence their children's body image through modeling, feedback and instruction (Kearney-Cooke 2002). The present findings support this view. The results also showed that members within the same family were perceived as playing contrasting roles ranging from supportive to critical. However, it appears that even when family members were being supportive, the message being given to the participants was that losing weight was important. Within the Indian setting, the significant role played by the family in monitoring young women's weights may be partly linked to the larger social practice of parents arranging marriages for children.

Matrimonial advertisements often used for findings matches state a preference for brides who are slim. However it is likely that the tradition of arranged marriages only partly explains parents' involvement in their daughters' weight management. Some parents may be motivated by a different set of reasons. For example, parents may feel that people who meet cultural ideals of beauty are better accepted, in society. They may also feel concerned about their daughters' health and stamina. The rhetoric against obesity is on the rise on Indian television and in the print media. This is likely to shape older and younger persons' attitudes towards weight.

Another theme in the data was the **influence of peers**. All the participants regarded their friends to be sensitive to their weight concerns. Many said that close friends helped them by telling the participants that they looked good, avoiding discussions on weight, and talking optimistically about losing weight. Like Vibha said *"(Friends) know if they discuss (weight issues), I will feel bad... They are quite supportive...If they want to talk about it, they tell me "You will (lose weight)." Although friends were supportive, some participants said that they felt the need to be thinner because their friends also wanted to be thinner. The participants also said that they felt pressurized to lose weight when they and their friends compared their bodies to each other or to those of thinner female peers. Once again, there appeared to be a dichotomy in the role played by friends. Although the outward message was one of support, the implicit message was of thinness being appreciated. Apart from friends, certain peers were perceived to be inconsiderate as they ignored the participants and excluded them from their groups. In addition some participants said that they had been teased about their weights in school,. Rodin & Striegel-Moore (1984) coined the term 'normative discontent' to describe the prevalence of weight dissatisfaction amongst Western women. Although we can make no such generalizations, it appears that the adolescents and young women saw themselves as belonging to a peer environment where thinness was highly valued and that they found it*

difficult to escape these messages. This may have pushed the participants to want to lose weight, though their friends tried to ease their distress.

We also asked participants about the role of **media** in the development of weight dissatisfaction. Many participants said they paid close attention to the bodies of models in magazines and actresses on television and in movies. For instance Nysa said she compared herself to an actress from a popular American show. She said *"Have you seen Gossip Girl? There is this one girl on it, Blake Lively, so I Googled her weight coz you're always looking for comparison...and I know it sounds really stupid but I had no one else to compare myself with. So I go online & she's like 55kgs & I was like that's not too bad coz I am 3-4 kgs off the mark & she's a celebrity & I am normal. So I'm fine."* Interestingly, all the participants disapproved of the 'size zero' concept. Again Nysa said *"When (media) put a stupid bracket of size zero, you are expecting people to meet a standard which they biologically cannot meet. I think what the media does is perverse."* The criticism of 'size zero' and of the media hype around weight makes it appear as if some adolescents and young women were making choices about the weight-related goals they wanted to pursue and those they found unrealistic. However criticizing the media does not necessarily mean that women were insusceptible to its effects. For example although Nysa found what the media was doing highly disturbing, she also found it important to judge her body as *"not too bad"* after comparing it to an actress. The effect of media exposure on women's body image is well proven. Yet Keller (2011) found that teen magazine editors dismissed the view that the images in their magazines could negatively affect the girls reading them. The editors believed that making beauty "fun" would negate the possibly harmful effects of beauty pages. The participants' narratives clearly indicate that this is not the case, creating a need for editors to re-assess the impact their magazines have on women.

The participants believed that there was much they could **gain from losing weight**. They saw their weights as interfering with several things that they wanted in life. These included being able to eat certain kinds of food and getting attention from the opposite sex. Several adolescents and young women spoke about not being able to fit into the clothes of their choice and found shopping for clothes to be tedious. They believed that either the clothes were not available in their sizes and or did not look good on them. While there was a sense of missing out on things, there was also the belief that much would be gained by reducing weight in terms of social acceptance, feeling confident, looking prettier, and having more opportunities. For example, Sonam said that if she lost weight she could be able to fulfill her desire of becoming a compere. Shobha expressed that looking good was an important requirement for the corporate life that she wanted to enter. Chin Evans (2003) has suggested that thinness may not be the only reason for which women want to lose weight. Rather it is also the belief that thin women have perfect lives. In line with the feminist perspective, we feel that it is important to help Indian women deconstruct the idea that fitting into a prescribed definition of beauty results in a better life. It is common for women who do not feel attractive, to judge themselves as unworthy. However women who know that they are attractive may have it no better, with their self-image being dependent their physical appearance and the responses it draws from others.

The participants **battled their weight** in both physical and psychological ways. The physical struggle was about losing the pounds through changing eating patterns and or exercising. Six participants said they were currently exercising and watching what they ate. However none of them believed that they were 'dieting'. For example Nysa stressed that her eating and exercising were not 'abnormal'. She said *"I never deny myself anything like if I want to eat a muffin I'll have a bite. I'll make sure that I won't eat the whole thing coz I will like die of guilt. I eat properly, I eat 5 meals a day. But no sugar, no white carbs. My exercise.....I am not mental. I know what my limits are. I don't*

push myself beyond a point." None of the participants reported attempting any health-endangering means of weight loss such as diet pills or extreme measures like liposuction. Neither did they report disturbed eating pathology. Though previous research has indicated a relationship between body dissatisfaction and eating disordered behavior, the participants here said that they would not use such means of weight loss. These results can be explained in two very different ways. One explanation could be that, the involvement of families in the participants' lives, in the form of monitoring their food intake, exercising with them and providing support protected them from eating disorders. However another possibility could be that some participants did not report their disturbed eating patterns. We had no way of verifying how much they actually ate. The participants' psychological struggles were about protecting themselves from feelings of hurt and distress. Several respondents reported a sense of frustration, fear of gaining weight and guilt over breaking diet and exercise rules. The adolescents and young women adopted various strategies to deal with their feelings. Several spoke of how they had stopped caring about others' opinions of their bodies. Some adolescents and young women protected themselves moving away when others discussed weight or by staying away from situations in which they felt vulnerable to scrutiny. Aruna & Taruna said that they hid their bodies by wearing loose fitting clothes. Vibha said that whatever confidence she lost out on because of her body, she gained by playing great tennis. The participants tried to stay optimistic about their weight loss attempts and constantly motivated themselves.

When asked about the kinds of **supports** they desired all the participants stated that they wanted more family and peer support to deal with their sense of weight dissatisfaction. When asked if they had ever thought of consulting a counselor, most participants felt that they did not require such interventions. The perception was that counseling was required for 'severe' problems and their own weight concerns were not serious enough to warrant it. Although body

dissatisfaction and eating disorders are known to occur on a continuum, the participants believed there to be only two possibilities- either that of having a full blown eating disorder or that of being 'normal'. Taruna said "*(The need for counseling) depends on how extreme the situation is. There was one girl in school. She was made fun of. Then she just turned anorexic. May be cases like her need counseling.*" The participants' responses were not surprising, considering that counseling is still a developing field in India and there are several myths that surround the role of mental health professionals. Also, family ties continue to remain strong reducing the need to seek help outside. Although the participants denied needing the assistance of psychologists, we feel that the role of counselors and psychologists is very important here. The participants did report feeling a great deal of pressure to lose weight and found themselves struggling with feelings of frustration, guilt and self-doubt. They believed that losing weight was something they *had* to do and felt responsible for it. Although eating disorder symptomatology was not observed, they could develop in the future, a possibility that the participants themselves denied. Counselors who work with women experiencing weight dissatisfaction need to include family members and peers, identify the different roles played by them and take into account India's changing social, cultural and economic scenarios. So far Western influences have been considered responsible for the many recent changes seen in India's youth. Now academic discourse now needs to move towards understanding how we can address these issues in a way that empowers women.

In conclusion, we found that although body weight is visible and physical, because of the meanings invested in the women's bodies, weight dissatisfaction seemed to be as much a psychological experience for the participants as it was a physical one. For all the choices that the adolescents and young women may have felt that they had, being 'fat' was not one of them. It is clear that oppressive standards of body and beauty are as pervasive today as they have ever been. Jung & Forbes (2010) have suggested that

East Asian societies with their strong patriarchal traditions, rigid gender roles, and rapid social changes are particularly likely to adopt unrealistic standards of appearance and have high levels of body dissatisfaction. We suggest that this reasoning can be extended to certain Indian settings as well.

Like any qualitative research, this study has certain limitations. Firstly, the study is intended to elucidate women's experiences; however, it does not endeavor generalizability. Women's experiences of weight dissatisfaction may vary in accordance to socio-economic status, age, level of education, and exposure to Western conceptions of beauty. In addition, there are several sub-cultures within the Indian culture, and each may have different conceptions about women's beauty and bodies (Naidu, 1979). Secondly, we cannot ignore the possibility that there may have been aspects of their lives that the girls did not reveal and there may be more to their experiences than the present interviews captured. Finally, the possibility of researcher's bias cannot be ignored in a qualitative study. However reflexivity was an on-going part of the on the research process

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Women's Education: Bait and Switch Marketing Tool in Indian Soap

Operas

An Inquiry into Women's Educational Outcomes and Marriage in Indian Soap Operas

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to trace the goal of female protagonist and antagonist's education and analyze their professional lives in relation to marriage in Indian soap operas. The study sample included 51 daily serials: a) 25 daily serials (in Hindi) with the highest television viewers' ratings from May 25, 2012 to June 2, 2012 were sampled to examine the current soap operas; b) 33 soap operas that were nominated for the award of Best Daily Serial (Popular) by Indian Telly Awards (since 2001) were sampled to record the temporal trends in the past one decade. Content analysis was performed: the specific characteristics of 51 Indian daily soaps were identified, recorded in the predetermined categories, and coded. The major findings were: a) Female protagonist's education and working outside home is uncorrelated. b) Marriage affects the protagonist's professional life negatively, even in serials that explicitly focus on the young unmarried female protagonist's education. c) Marriage doesn't play as significant a role in the female antagonist's professional life; nonetheless it does. d) The female antagonists are often shown as financially independent. e) In the past one decade, focus on protagonist's education has been recurring. Using Cantor (2004)'s empathy hypothesis, the paper contends that the serials use bait-and-switch strategy: daily serials that explicitly focus on the theme of girl's education lure the young females; as the serials progress, the focus switches from education to universally and culturally relevant themes like love, romance and marriage. No non-parametric test has been conducted and the thematic analysis hasn't been included in the report.

Women's Education: A Bait and Switch Strategy in Indian Soap Operas

Scheming mothers-in-law and innocent daughters-in-law seem to be going out of the frame. The popularity of the *saas-bahu* saga is partially on the wane. But even as scriptwriters turn a full circle and focus on the 'empowered' female protagonist, the themes of daily soaps are still constructed around women and family. With the popularity of Indian soap operas amidst women of all classes, castes, and in different settings (Krishnamurthy 2003), it is worthwhile

to question the nature of women empowerment: education and its outcomes in the context of patriarchal, monogamous, patrilocal and patrilineal family-systems as depicted in these soap operas. This is imperative as, in reality as well concern for 'marriageability' still plays a central role in women's educational choices and outcomes in contemporary India (Tamakuwala, 2011; Mukhopadhyay and Seymour, 2005).

The relevant previous studies about women's educational status in India have studied themes like women's educational choices and

outcomes and adolescents' gender identity and media. The literature on Indian soap operas have explored the complexities of women and culture, social interaction, portrayal of women, impact on the viewers, influence on students and also, the effect of the introduction of cable television on gender attitudes in rural India. However, the literature doesn't focus on women's education and its outcomes within soap operas, especially as anchored around marriage.

Impact of soap operas

Currently as many as 40 out of the top 50 programs on television are daily soaps. Krishnamurthy quotes 'Since 1990's women have become an inseparable part of television soaps, both as consumers and as protagonists of television fiction, especially of those daily soaps which get the highest ratings.' Their data reveal a very high percentage of regular women viewers than men. It is reported that prime television is dominated by women-oriented family soaps: major viewers of which are either young girls between 15 to 25 years or middle aged housewives aged 35–45 years. Tamakuwala (2011) notes that soaps make up the brick of most people's media fare and strongly influence cultural change among rural as well as urban masses. The impact of daily soaps on the viewers and of viewers on the daily soaps can't be undermined, given the following factors:

Empathy. Joanne Cantor (2004) suggested that "humans are naturally inclined to empathize with the emotions of protagonist." This suggests that the critical factor to the success of soap operas is that the target audience is able to empathize with the protagonist and that empathy retains the allegiance of the viewer as the viewer sees her own life play out through the protagonist's reel life. It can be speculated that this vast majority who watches soaps regularly, or are exposed to them to any extent, must also be empathizing with their characters. The protagonists in Indian soap operas are women, and so are the primary viewers. Thus, an image of the viewer may be said to be reflected in the characters of the daily soaps and at the same time, characteristics as embodied by the

protagonists and antagonists can be said to reflect the Indian norms in an idealized fashion.

Demand. Daily soaps compete to achieve the highest television viewers' ratings to deliver what the masses demand i.e. what they want to see. In this sense, they are reflective of the complex understandings of women's education by the masses, and its conception in relation to caste, class, values, marriage and livelihood.

Socialization. Gerbner and Gross (1976) argue that television is the central cultural arm of society, serving to socialize most people into standardized roles and behaviors. They suggest that television cultivates people's beliefs about how the world works more through interactions, behaviors, and values present in television content than through finite attempts to persuade.

Representation. According to the representation theory, the contemporary media does not represent reality, but constitutes it (Harms & Dickens 1996). Grossberg et al (1998) further said that media representations involve making claims on and about reality. Woodward (1997) remarks that representations (in media) establish identities and provide possible answers to the questions like "who am I?", "what could I be?" or "who do I want to be?". Hall (1997) describes that representation involves stereotyping. Thus, soaps represent and constitute reality and may potentially lead to identity-formation and stereotyping.

Literature Review Themes

The following are themes extracted from the review of literature Tamakuwala, about portrayal of women in soap operas: a) The institution is a male construct; the families of the leading female character are absent (Tamakuwala, 2011). b) A woman's identity is woven around her husband's family (Tamakuwala). c) A conspicuous culture code exists for the married woman: *mangal sutra*, *saaree*, *sindoor* etc (Tamakuwala). d) Often the negative character is an economically independent woman (Tamakuwala). e) Soaps

project largely one community i.e., Hindu, north Indian, upper caste and dominant group generally depicting business as a family profession (Tamakuwala). f) Women are portrayed as docile, easily manageable and submissive (Varghese, 2005), and rarely as intelligent, confident and emancipated. (Kaul and Sahni, 2010). g) Most (Jammu) women respondents agreed that serials had great impact on their thought (Kaul and Sahni, 2010). h) There has been a decisive shift in the representation of women in the TV serials of the 1980s and 1990s with their portrayals of more emancipated women characters glaringly different from the contemporary Saas Bahu sagas (Waheeda Sultana, 2005). i) Female antagonists are being looked upon as role models by students (Centre for Media Studies, 2004). j) Young middle-class school and college going women's perceptions of their identities are grounded in the prevailing media images (Meenakshi Thapn, 2001). k) Characters are constructed primarily through patriarchal and nationalist interests (Sheena Malhotra, 2000).

While Jensen et al (2007) show evidence that watching daily soaps leads to advancement in girl's education, measured in terms of school enrolment rates, the literature doesn't speak about the educational outcomes and the economic independence as projected in the soaps: its content and impact.

Aims of the study

Through this research, the following research questions were addressed about women, i.e. female protagonist and female antagonist as portrayed in Indian soap operas:

1. Does education lead women to work outside home, before and after marriage?
2. Does marriage effect women's education and work?
3. Is there an increasing temporal trend in daily soaps with explicit focus on the protagonist in the past one decade?
4. Does the focus shift from the protagonist's education in the soaps that explicitly begin

around the theme of the female protagonist's education to marriage?

Method

An Indian soap opera is an ongoing work of fiction (written, filmed, enacted and produced mostly by Indians for an Indian audience), with episodes broadcasted on a daily or semi-weekly basis on national Indian television channels/channel chains (like Star Network, Sony Entertainment). It is telecasted four to five days a week. The study defines the female protagonist as the female lead actress according to Channel's official site and female antagonist as the youngest of the prominent female actresses in the negative role. This is so as to control for the age factor as well as effectively compare the education portrayal of the female protagonist with that of the female antagonist. In soaps where the lead female antagonist was an older woman, attempts were made to include the youngest possible female antagonist. In the daily serials, where there were multiple female antagonists, the antagonist competing against the female protagonist was considered for the study.

Sample

To include the most popular daily serials, two criteria were employed, as demonstrated below:

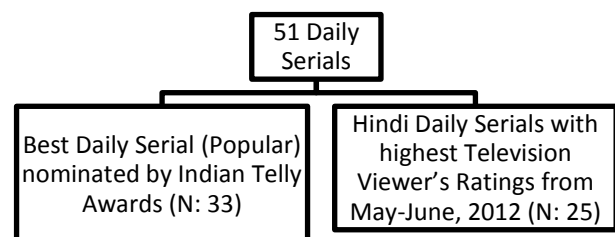


Figure 2: Sample considered for the study.

Seven daily serials overlapped in the two selection criteria, and thus the total number of Indian soap operas (in Hindi) that was a part of the study turned out to be 51.¹

Data Collection and Analysis Method

Content analysis Kerlinger defines content analysis as a method of studying and

¹ Nominees for 2010 are not mentioned on the official website of Indian Telly Awards, thus not included.

analyzing communication in an objective, systematic and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. For each of the 51 daily serials, an analysis form recorded the following:

1. Name
2. TVR (Television viewer's rating) rank and/or year of nomination for 'Best Daily Serial'
3. Channel and production house
4. Whether there was a focus on female protagonist's education (Focus on education' has been conceived in a broad sense, which conceptually includes focus on the lead actress' aspirations to achieve education, academic or non-academic).
5. Information about the lead actress (protagonist and antagonist):
 - Class,
 - Marital status, for most part of the serial
 - Level of education
 - less than +2, till +2, graduation, post graduation and doctorate
6. Nature of job: service as an employee, service as a boss, small time business, family business empire, self established business, politician, or a social worker.

The serials were tracked in order to record whether the antagonists and protagonists were working and educated, before marriage, after marriage and after separation.

The aforementioned categories were employed to record women's education and work in relation to marriage. The above categories were used to find out if education was leading the woman to work outside home and if working outside home was related to marriage, especially in the serials that overtly claimed to focus on lead actress' education, at least in the start.

To ensure reliability of the data collected, the data was independently coded by three coders, and integrated after discussion on the serials for which the coded data didn't match. In long running serials, like *Uttaran* and *Woh Rehne Waali Mehloan Ki*, the first generation characters have been considered for analysis. In serials where there are two turning points: when the

serial takes a stark turn in terms of the dynamics of the woman's professional life; the serial's data has been recorded twice. For instance, in *Kasauti Zindagi Ki*, the dynamics changed in relation to love and arranged marriages. The lead actress, *Prerna* was shown as working after the arranged marriage, but is shown as a housewife after love marriage.

After coding, frequency and relative frequency (%) distributions were constructed to compare and contrast the serials with focus on education with those that didn't have any focus on the protagonist's education. In addition to recording the data for the female protagonist and antagonist on various variables; the temporal trends since 2001 in daily soaps were also recorded.

The two aforementioned sub-samples were combined for data analysis. For looking at the temporal trend, only Indian Telly Award's nominees for 'Best Daily Serial' were looked at.

In addition to content analysis of 51 serials, a detailed thematic analysis of four randomly chosen serials was also conducted. These serials were: *Uttaran*, *Ballika Vadhu*, *Kya Hua Tera Vaada* and *Diya Aur Baati Hum*. Although, in the present report no section has been devoted to the same, the themes extracted from the case analysis of these four serials would be used to substantiate the findings from the quantitative content analysis

Results and Discussions

The Protagonist

85.9% of the protagonists were found to be representing middle and upper socioeconomic class as well as caste whereas the majority i.e. 59.26% belonged to the middle class. 25.93% belonged to the upper class and merely 14.81% to the lower class. This substantiates Tamakuwala (2011), who writes, "Television successfully projects a uni-marginal hegemonic picture of society where only dominant class and dominant culture exist."

Table 1
The Educated Protagonists: Education
in Relation to Work

	Unmarried	Married	Separated
Working	45.10%	20.41%	63.64%

If we look at Table 1, we see that the percentage of working women decreases after marriage, despite being educated.

Merely 20.41% of the educated women were shown as working after marriage. One implicitly recurring theme was extracted: '*Ache ghar ki auratien bahar kaam karne nahi jaati*'. This might be one of the possible explanations for the apparent decline in working women after marriage given that most daily serials are representative of one segment of the society i.e. upper class Hindus. In many serials, for instance *Kasauti Zindagi Ki*, *Kuch Toh Log Kahenge*, *Sasural Simar Ka* and *Uttaran*, the protagonist herself fitted into the social expectation of centring her life about husband and family after marriage, without rebellion. This theme may be said to be a reflection of reality; NK Singhi in his essay on Gender theme: Issues and Perspectives writes "In upper classes, wealthy women don't work and enjoy the luxuries provided by the male family members". Additionally he draws out that this makes the woman a loser on two accounts: her creative potentials are curbed and she is denied power.

In *Ballika Vadhu*, *Maa Saa* attempted at forbidding Anandi, the child bride from studying because '*Achi Bindniyaan (wives) apni pati ki seva karti hain, na ki padhaai-likhaai*'. Although her attempts are shown in a negative light, after marriage as a grown up there wasn't a faint consideration for the possibility of Anandi's 'education'. This possibility only comes once her husband leaves her for another woman.

Though majority of the actresses aren't shown working after marriage, it will be unfair to not give importance to the exception to this general norm. One of the exceptions is *Parichay*, in which the female protagonist, *Ridhi*, keeps working after marriage as well as during pregnancy. During pregnancy when she receives a call for a job interview, her mother-in-law

firmly opposes. At his mother's disagreement, *Kunal*, her husband takes a stand for his wife. *Ridhi* doesn't speak for herself and later in her defence tells *Kunal* that 'she didn't apply for the job, but the job was offered to her.' Here the motive to work was denied by the woman and the man had to intervene to defend his wife's job offer whereas the woman, his wife, was shown not to have or express an opinion of her own. Later in the serial *Ridhi*'s profession is constructed around her husband.

Another exception to the case is *Hitler Didi* aired on Zee TV, which focuses on the struggles of a 25-year-old working girl, Indira Sharma who makes relentless effort to manage her family and her profession together. In the serial, she is well known as *Hitler didi* in her locality. She works to provide for her whole family. Currently in the story, she has brain tumour and is about to die within a month. Three important observations can be made about this case: the protagonist is a working woman and is called *Hitler*; the serial tends towards changing the focus from its central theme, that of a struggling working woman; she works because she is the only one who provides for her family.

Table 2
The Protagonists: Relation of Work and
Marriage to Education

	Before Marriage (Work)	After Marriage (Work)	After Separation (Work)
Educated	47.50%	25.64%	70%
Not Educated	44.44%	0%	0% (n=1)

As we see in Table 2, all the 44.44% of the non-educated working women left their jobs after marriage.² In most serials, marriage was a product of financial crisis in the family, especially in the lower classes (55.55%).

The Antagonist

87.88% of the young female antagonists were shown as educated in popular daily serials.

² 55.56% of the uneducated women belonged to the lower class, and 33.33% belonged to the middle class, whereas only 11.11% belonged to the upper class (In absolute terms, 1 serial).

Antagonists belonged to middle and high class as well as caste in most serials. In only two of the serials the negative actress belonged to low socioeconomic class.

Table 3 <i>The Female Antagonist: Relation of Marriage to Work</i>			
	Before Marriage	After Marriage	After Separation
Working	35.48%	32.14%	40%

Interestingly, unlike the case of the female protagonists, there isn't a sharp decrease in the number of working women antagonists after marriage or a sudden increase after separation. The percentages in all three cases: before marriage, after marriage and after separation vary relatively lesser.

By far we've discovered that 'not working', especially after marriage, is a norm for women in Indian soap operas. In this light, it is imperative to interpret this 32.14% of the antagonists who are shown as working after marriage carefully. This may be seen as potentially creating associations between 'negative characters and work' for the audiences. An example could be Sony TV's *Kya Hua Tera Vaada*. Here the antagonist is a financially independent stalwart of a corporate. She works out of her own will rather than a consequence of dire circumstance. She is the boss of the male protagonist and hasn't attained her top-level position by support of a man, but by fraud and competitive and shrewd attitude.

Table 4 <i>The Female Antagonist: Relation of Work and Marriage to Education</i>			
	Before Marriage (Work)	After Marriage (Work)	After Separation (Work)
Educated	37.03%	36.36%	50%
Uneducated	25%	25%	0% (n=1)

In most cases, as compared to the uneducated working protagonists who left their job post marriage, uneducated working female antagonists didn't. Very few of these women, who didn't work before marriage, started working after marriage. The negative character,

often shown to engage in power manipulation, is bestowed independence and scope to manipulate power through the male-dominated professional sphere.

Temporal Trends

The Protagonist since 2001

Table 5 <i>Education, Work and the Protagonist (2001-2011)</i>						
Year	Serials with focus on education		Serials with single working protagonists		Serials with married working protagonists	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
2001-04	3/8	37.5	3/11	27.27	3/9	33.33
2005-08	8/13	61.5	6/15	40	1/11	9.09
2009-2012	12/29	41.3	10/30	33.33	6/29	20.68

No observable increasing trend in the daily serials which focused on women's education is apparent in the table above. But if we look at the data carefully, we observe that in 2007, six out of six serials that were nominated for the Indian Telly Awards' Best Daily Serial category were focused on protagonist's education. Thus, looking at the data, excluding 2007, we see an increase in focus on women's education. Nevertheless, to generalize and say that the focus on education in Indian daily soap operas has increased would be misleading and inappropriate. The most appropriate way to look at the table may be to understand women's education as a recurring theme in the past one decade in the popular daily serials.

In the time period 2005-08, there was a drastic rise in focus on education and working lead actresses albeit only when they were single, in fact there was a drastic fall in the married working protagonists.

Interestingly, the percentage of educated women has remained above 85% throughout the decade. Most of these characters represent upper-middle class/caste, are educated, but paradoxically don't earn a livelihood. Applying Cantor's empathy hypothesis and representation

theory, it may be said that the audience may not associate women's education with work and especially women may self-represent themselves as educated or aspiring to be educated, but not an economically independent individual.

The Antagonist since 2001

Table 6 <i>Education, Work and the Antagonist (2001-11)</i>				
Year	Serials with single antagonist working		Serials with married antagonist working	
	n	%	n	%
2001-04	1/6	16.66	2/6	33.33
2005-08	4/8	50	3/7	42.85
2009-12	6/17	35.29	5/16	31.25

For the working antagonists, the temporal trend is similar to the one found for the female protagonists. A greater percentage of women were shown working between 2005-08, and particularly in 2007. If we exclude 2007, we find an increase in the number of working women antagonists. Although, it must not be generalized that women are increasingly being shown as working outside their homes.

Serials with Explicit Focus on Female Protagonist's Education

Female protagonists in serials with explicit focus on the protagonist's education were mostly shown as housewives after marriage. 34.69% of the daily serials were focused on the lead actress' education in the beginning of the serial, out of which in only 8% of the serials the protagonists were shown as 'working' after marriage.

Although more women are shown working before marriage in serials with focus on education, but, as we can see in Chart 1, the percentage drastically fell after marriage, but increased again after separation.

Let us look at serials that didn't have focus on women's education. As is evident in Chart 1, percentage of working women fell after marriage, and rose to a 100% after separation. Although there is not as much a sharp decrease in

number of working women after marriage as was in the case of the serials with focus on education, the parabolic trend is replicated. Thus, initial focus on the protagonist's education can be said to be short lived. In both cases, lead actress is shown as a housewife after marriage.

In the serials where the focus didn't shift from the protagonist's education to her marriage, the protagonist's education or professional aspirations were found to be side-tracked. In fact, in all such cases in the sample, the serials ended with the female protagonist's marriage with the love of her life, not showing the life after marriage. An example could be *Dil Mil Gaye*, in which the show ends at *Ridhima* and Dr. *Karan's* marriage.

Let us also look at the professional lives of the antagonists in the serials where the focus was on protagonist's education. Whether the focus was on education or not, in contrast with

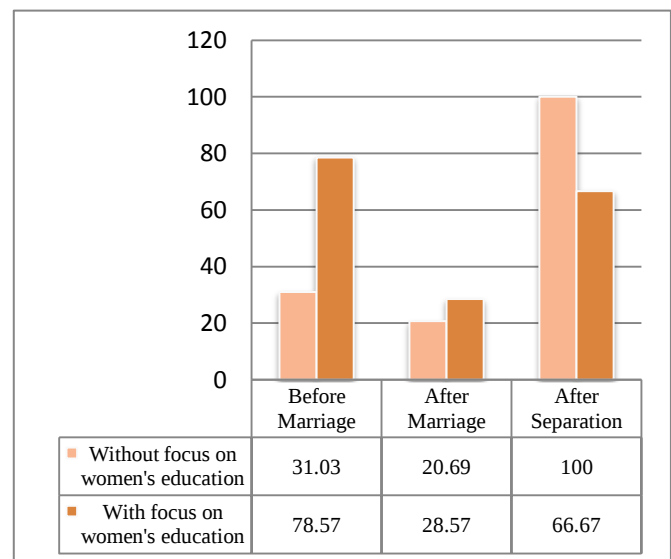


Figure 2. Percentage of female protagonists shown as working women, in soaps with and without focus on protagonists' education

the protagonists (Refer: Figure 2), the fall in the percentage of female antagonists working after marriage isn't as sharp. In the former case, since these serials focused explicitly on lead actress' education, a substantial percentage of protagonists were shown working before marriage.

Relative to the protagonists, lesser antagonists left work after marriage in the serials that focused on lead actresses' education or even in fact in the serials that didn't (Refer Chart 2). Thus, it can be said that marriage doesn't have that substantial an effect on the professional lives of negative actresses in the lead roles.

To summarize, there was a difference in

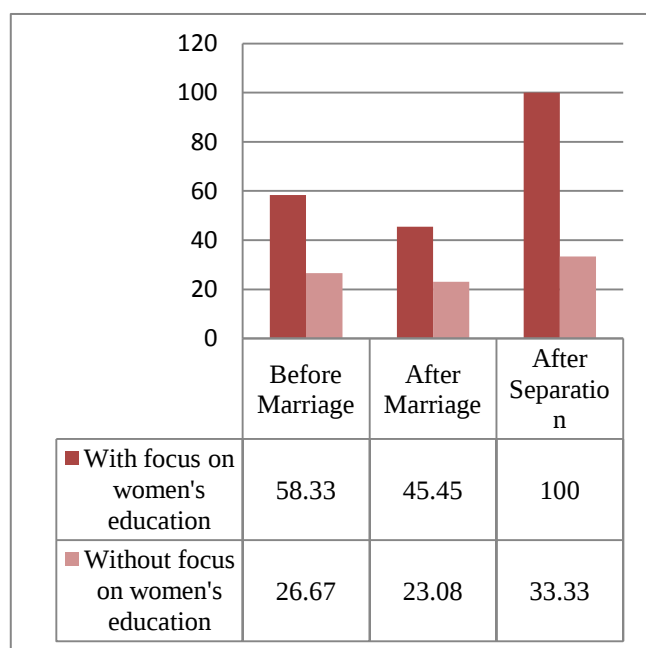


Figure 3. Percentage of female antagonists shown as working women, in soaps with and without focus on protagonists' education

the serials with focus on female protagonist's education and the ones without the focus: a lesser number of women, both protagonists and antagonists were shown as working after marriage than before. In neither case the majority of the women were working after marriage. Thus, ironically, even in serials with the focus on women's education, show women leaving their jobs after marriage.

Summary and Conclusion

While 85% of the protagonists were found educated in the daily serials, most of them weren't found to be economically independent. The first objective of the paper was to empirically find out if marriage affects women's

work outside homes (professional lives) in Indian soap operas. I found that the number of working women decreased after marriage in the daily serials. The personal life, which is predominately focused around marriage, doesn't go hand in hand with professional lives for women in daily serials. Within the broader theoretical framework of representation theory that states that representation establishes individual and collective identities and provide possible answers to the question: who am I?; what could I be?; who do I want to be? , it is highly imperative a finding for the broader conception of woman's identity in contemporary India, where "marriageability" still remains the focus of women's education (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour). Besides social construction and women's identity formation, women's representation may lead to stereotyping among the viewers, who may deploy the strategy of splitting and thereby creating a black and white between the female protagonist and female antagonist, as well as housewives and working women.

Lesser antagonists were found to leave work in the professional sphere after marriage. Nonetheless, marriage did seem to have an effect even on antagonist's life. In many a cases, her focus in life diverts to "seduce" the man in the lead actress' life. She symbolizes deception, professionally or personally.

The second objective of the paper was to empirically find out if there exists an increasing temporal trend in daily serials with explicit focus on protagonist in the past one decade. The theme of focus on female protagonist's education recurred time and again in the past decade, especially in the year 2007 where all six of the serials that were nominated for Indian Telly Awards focused on the protagonist's education. This trend may be reflective of the growing need of the masses for entertainment- education. However, as we have seen this focus gradually shifts thus also pointing to an existence of complex social norms and realities that the serials try to mirror.

The third objective of the paper was to find whether the focus shifts from the female protagonist's education. This was found to be the case in most serials. There was a decrease in the number of working women after marriage, in both cases: serials with explicit focus on the female protagonist's education and without, although the decrease in number was sharper for serials with an explicit focus on protagonist's education. The representation that education doesn't lead to an outcome grounded in work, may thus create an associationistic disjoint amidst these women, failing to connect education and work.

The paper's contention, thus, is that the focus on the protagonist's education is a bait-and-switch marketing strategy to lure a wider audience base. As this strategy is employed, young protagonist's struggle for education acts as a bait for young women able to *empathize* with the protagonist. As the serial progresses and the audiences' commitment to watching serials escalates, the serials switch to more universal themes like love and marriage. In other words, in the beginning, the young women may get lured to watch serials with focus on the young protagonist's education since they're able to see themselves in the protagonist (Cantor's empathy hypothesis) but later as the serial progresses, the focus from protagonist's education seem to get lost and more universal themes like love and marriage sustains the young female audience's interest. Many a time, the serials digress and ultimately ends up being a daily serial weaved around the marriage and family. When the focus doesn't shift completely, the reality is operated around marriage and family. Thus, the serials can also be said to be using foot-in-the-door compliance tactic, especially for younger women to *comply* to watch daily serials. Intentional or unintentional, the shift acts as a compliance tactic, escalating audience's commitment.

The young educated (or aspiring to be educated) girls are better able to empathize with protagonists struggling for education or employment. Thus, focus on female protagonist's education may be said to creating a wider audience base for the serial makers.

protagonist's education in the serials that explicitly begin around the theme of the female

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The Psychology and Physiology of Love

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The Psychology and Physiology of Love

Throughout human history, the phenomenon called “love” has been studied and contemplated upon generally, as well as a philosophical and scientific study. The oldest surviving expressions of love are in the form of art – as cave paintings and sculptures, depicting sexual relations. Such depictions gradually fell in disfavor in the western world, as many theologians and religious philosophers of subsequent periods criticized sexual love. The phenomenon of love was taken away from its primal, animalistic sexual form – it was glorified as love for “God” – for a higher entity that was free of bodily passion. The conception of love emerges as a multifaceted one. Ordinary people recognize different types and forms of love. In recent decades, love has become of scientific interest and researchers from various areas of study have tried to understand its nature and expression using different methodologies of study. A fundamental question emerges here about the nature of love – is it a biological drive or need, as some researchers emphasize, or is it largely culturally constructed? Researchers from various fields are attempting to understand what biological and psychological bases it builds upon and what changes occur in an individual experiencing love.

A general definition of love, taken from the Oxford English Dictionary, defines love as “an emotion of strong affection and personal attachment.” The word love can be used as an emotion, a feeling, an experience or a behavioral expression. Scientific study of love has recognized the interplay of biological and

psychosocial factors in the experience of love – while these factors have been identified and studied in detail, a wide array of definitions of love have been offered by psychologists, with no clear consensus.

Erich Fromm (The Art of Loving, 1956) was one of the first psychologists to suggest a definition of love, as being “...possible only if a person achieves a secure sense of self-identity. When people are in love, they become one yet remain two individuals.” Another relatively recent definition of love defines it as being “...characterized by exclusiveness, fascination, and sexual desire.” (Davis, K. E.; Todd, M. J.; 1982)

While it is difficult to summarize love in a definition, some common elements in love and romantic relationships have been identified – love involves the *idealization* of another person (holding a largely positive attitude towards the partner) and *caring* for the partner along with trust, respect, commitment, companionship and sexual attraction (Fehr & Russell, 1991).

Some anthropologists and social psychologists maintain that love is a “cultural universal” – at least one variety of love, romantic love, is likely to have appeared in all human groups at all times in human history (Hatfield & Rapson 2002). In a survey of 166 varied cultures, anthropologists have found evidence of love in 147 (Fisher & Jankowiak, 1992). According to Fisher, in the remaining 19 societies scholars simply failed to identify and examine this phenomenon.

Despite the plethora of research on love, a comprehensive model accounting for its cognitive, affective, behavioral, neurological, physiological and evolutionary aspects is absent. Love has proven to be a complicated emotion, defying easy classification – it is virtually present in every culture and is a basic human emotion, and yet it varies enormously cross-culturally in its experience and expression, making it difficult to identify specific psychosocial aspects linked to it.

The Psychology of Love

All major theories of love in the field of psychology provide taxonomies of love. As early as 1886, the German physician and pioneering sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886) identified five types of love, namely, true love, sentimental love, platonic love, friendship, and sensual love. The psychotherapist Albert Ellis in 1954 proposed additional love varieties: “Love itself . . . includes many different types and degrees of affection, such as conjugal love, parental love, familial love, religious love, love of humanity, love of animals, love of things, self-love, sexual love, obsessive-compulsive love, etc.”

Erich Fromm, in his book *The Art of Loving* (1956), stated that love is something that an individual *does* rather than a state the individual is in. His belief was that loving is an art than an individual must learn about and practice. He rejected the idea of love as magical or mysterious, an unexplained phenomenon that cannot be analyzed. The experience of “true love” (which is characterized by care, responsibility, respect and knowledge), according to Fromm, is only possible with the total development of an individual’s personality.

Several modern theorists have identified love as an emotion – either as a feeling resulting from several emotions or as an emotion in itself. Ortony and Turner (1990) collated the various types of “basic emotions” identified by several influential psychologists – of these at least three identified love as a basic human emotion (James, William, 1884; Watson, John B., 1930 and

Arnold, Magda B., 1960). These psychologists identify love as being a fundamental aspect of the human psyche or human behavior. Parrott (2001) has presented another categorization of emotions, in which he identifies love as a primary emotion associated with *affection*, *lust* and *longing* (secondary emotions) – therefore sexual arousal and internal disposition towards the loved one (affection and longing) are constituent secondary aspects of love. Affection is further associated with the tertiary emotions adoration, fondness, attraction, caring, tenderness, compassion, etc and lust with infatuation, arousal, desire, etc.

Robert Plutchik, in his book *Emotion: a Psychoevolutionary Synthesis* (1980), categorizes love as a feeling resulting from emotions. In his “Wheel of Emotions”, he identifies eight basic emotions (trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation and joy) and eight advanced emotions each composed of two basic ones. According to Plutchik, all emotions except for the basic or primary ones occur in combinations. Thus, love is a *feeling* consisting of the joy-trust dyad – it is a combination of two basic emotions, joy and trust. Plutchik further explains that joy serves the evolutionary function of seeking positive stimuli, and trust serves the evolutionary function of enabling sharing, cooperation and collaboration.

Other theorists have attempted to devise taxonomy of love. An attempt in this approach has been to identify the various categories people fit it, depending on how they love—this attempt has come up with love styles.

An influential theorist in this regard is the sociologist John Lee. In his book *The Colors of Love* (1973), he compared styles of love to the colour wheel. Based on the ancient Greek conceptualizations of love, John Lee identified six basic modes or styles (“colors”) of love used by people in interpersonal relationships—the first three being primary styles and the next three being secondary styles. Just as there are three primary colors, he suggested that there are three primary styles of love: Eros (physically and emotionally passionate love), Ludos (love that is perceived as a conquest and experienced as a game, often involving multiple partners) and

Storge (love that develops from friendship and involves feelings of fondness and affection for the partner).

The next three secondary styles of love are combinations of two primary styles. These are: Pragma, a combination of Ludos and Storge (practical, pragmatic and calculative love, involving practical considerations and not just purely emotional ones); Mania, a combination of Eros and Ludos (it is highly emotional, involving obsessive love, and jealousy and possessiveness for the partner); and Agape, a combination of Eros and Storge (defined as selfless love, which is altruistic in nature).

John Lee's love styles model was further expanded by Clyde and Susan Hendrick (1983), with six distinct varieties of love, namely: Passionate love (akin to Eros), Game-playing love (akin to Ludos), Friendship love (akin to Storge), Logical/Pragmatic love (akin to Pragma), Possessive love (akin to Mania, and Selfless/Altruistic love (akin to Agape). They further found gender differences in love styles- men tend to be driven more by Ludos (game-playing uncommitted love) whereas women tend to be driven more by Storge (friendship love) and Pragma (calculative love) styles.

Hendrick and Hendrick also attempted to identify unhealthy or neurotic types of love. Possessive love was identified as unhealthy as a co-dependent person cannot become part of a successful relationship. Altruistic love is another type of love identified as neurotic and unhealthy. Two problems were identified as inherent to altruistic love- in the first problem situation, only one partner possesses altruistic love – he or she gives and enjoys the giving while the other enjoys being given to – the giver would ultimately feel he or she is being taken advantage of, creating resentment for the partner. In the second situation, altruism is possibly a cover for a compulsive need to give-giving to be noticed, to be loved, to be appreciated rather than from a desire to help the other which may lead to maladaptive attention-seeking behavior.

Berscheid and Walster (1978) have proposed another classification of love, namely passionate love and companionate love. Passionate Love refers to a state of intense longing for union with another (reciprocated love), which is associated with fulfilment and ecstasy. It is also a state of intense physiological arousal. Passionate love has been shown to have elements of both pain and pleasure. Unrequited passionate love, or separation, is associated with emptiness, anxiety and despair. *Companionate Love* refers to a feeling of deep attachment and commitment to a person with whom one has an intimate relationship. It refers to affection felt for those individuals with whom one's life is deeply intertwined, such as love for one's significant others. It has been associated with "liking", which refers to feelings of affection for one's casual acquaintances.

Zick Rubin's contribution to the study of love is his distinction between *liking* and *loving* – according to him, these two feelings exist on a scale of love. His conclusion was that any scale of love must take into account certain elements of *passionate love*, namely idealization of the other, tenderness, responsibility, longing to serve and to be served by the loved one, the desire to share emotions and experiences, sexual attraction, the exclusive nature of the relationship and the couple's lack of concern with social norms and constraints. *Liking*, on the other hand, involved appreciation of the other person, respect and a feeling that one has similar social characteristics.

Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver (1987) have extended theories of early attachment of infants with their care-givers to adult romantic relationship styles. They identified three styles of romantic relationships, namely *secure lovers or secure attachment* (these individuals find it easy to get close to others and are comfortable having others feel close to others, they do not fear abandonment by the partner and find mutual dependency to be an inevitable aspect of close relationships), *fearful/avoidant lovers or insecure attachment* (these individuals are uncomfortable feeling close to another person or having the other person feel close to them and find it difficult to trust or depend on a partner), and

preoccupied/anxious-ambivalent lovers or insecure attachment (these individuals desperately want to get close to a partner but often find the partner does not reciprocate the feeling, they are insecure in the relationship, constantly worrying and fearing that the partner does not really love them).

Hazan and Shaver's research found that an individual's adult attachment style was predicted by the perception of the *quality* of the relationship with each parent in childhood. Thus the past life-experiences of an individual affect the quality of romantic relationships they will enjoy as adults and their style of attachment in these romantic relationships.

Another categorization of love comes from Robert Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (1986), one of the most influential approaches to love. Sternberg (1986, 1998) conceptualized love in terms of three basic components that form the vertices of a triangle: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The triangle also indicates the various types of love that develop through combinations of the three components. These components are: *Intimacy* refers to a sense of emotional closeness between partners – the emotional bonding and attachment. It is primarily emotional or affective in nature and involves feelings of warmth, closeness, connection, and togetherness in the love relationship. *Commitment* refers to the extent to which a relationship is permanent and long-lasting, as perceived by the partners – also including shared achievement and plans in the long-term. It is largely a cognitive component, representing both the short-term and the longer term decisions of maintaining love. *Passion* refers to arousal, which may be sexual. It is primarily a motivational component consisting of the drives that are involved in romantic and physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena.

The intensity of love experienced depends on the strength of these three components and the type of love experienced depends on the relative strength of the three. They combine to form different types of love, of which Sternberg has

identified eight: Nonlove, Liking, Infatuation, Empty Love, Romantic Love, Companionate Love, Fatuous Love and Consummate Love.

Sternberg also proposes that romantic love develops over time and its different stages are determined by the change in emphasis on each component. A romantic relationship consisting of all three components is relatively more enduring than one consisting of only one. These three components of love differ from each other over three dimensions, namely *stability* (intimacy and commitment are relatively enduring and usually quite stable in close relationships while passion tends to be less stable and predictable), *conscious controllability* (there is a great deal of conscious controllability over commitment and some degree of controllability over feelings of emotional intimacy, whereas there is very little control over the passion experienced for partners), and *experiential salience* (individuals in close romantic relationships may not consciously realize the full extent of their commitment or experience feelings of intimacy without being able to consciously identify them, however there may be higher level of awareness of the passion component). Most love relationships do not fit clearly in any one category of love as the three components of love occur in varying degrees in a relationship.

The Socio-biology of Love: Sexual Strategies Theory

For many theorists, love has been closely linked to the sexuality of individuals, which in turn has been linked to reproduction. Reproduction is a major goal for most adults in every society. In such a situation, *successful reproduction* is viewed as a reinforcer. Socio-biologists have proposed that sexual strategies are inherited, due to their success in previous generations and following the sexual strategies that we have inherited is likely to lead to such reinforcement. Sexual behavior is viewed within an evolutionary perspective: the primary function of mating is reproduction. Successful reproduction requires not just mating but also pair-bonding to ensure parental care of offspring.

Due to the reinforcing capabilities of successful reproduction, the feelings associated with mating and mate-selection has been categorized as “love”. This perspective views attraction and mate-selection processes as being essentially *evolutionary advantageous* – and propose that the reinforcing value of the same lead to the development of feelings between partners which may be collectively known as love.

Men and women are likely to face different adaptive problems in the process of reproduction (Buss & Schmitt, 1993). Since women bear the offspring, men need to identify “reproductively valuable women” – younger women are more likely to be viewed as more fertile than older women, leading to a preference for youth, which results in young men choosing young women. A physically attractive person is more likely to be perceived as healthy and fertile than someone who isn’t, thus the preference for good-looking partners. Since women must make a much greater investment than men in order to reproduce, during pregnancy and nursing, researchers propose that women want to select those men as mates who are reproductively valuable, leading to the preference for good-looking mates. They also select mates who are able and willing to invest material, social and emotional resources in them and their children.

The criticism of this perspective has come from further research on romantic relationships. Sexual desire and romantic love may often be independent processes (Diamond, 2003). Diamond, in her bio-behavioral model of love, proposes that sexual desire and romantic love are functionally independent – romantic love is not intrinsically oriented to the mating process; and that the links between love and desire are bidirectional (not sexual desire eventually leading to love). Sexual desire is a motivational state initiating a search for opportunities for sexual activity, and responds to reproductive cues such as physical attractiveness – it may lead to passionate love. Romantic love is a motivational state leading to attachment, intimacy and commitment. Thus, viewing love as a concept that merely arises from the process of mating fails to explain companionate love.

Biological Basis of Love

The biological approach to love consists of various perspectives; it explores the physiology of love and its evolutionary function. The physiological perspective has attempted to monitor brain activity (in which the experience of love has been linked to the limbic system and right hemisphere of the brain, which are involved in the perception and expression of emotion) and hormonal activity (such as that of oxytocin) of people in love. Not only do brain processes influence love, love also has influences on the structure of the brain. The Limbic Resonance hypothesis suggests that our nervous systems are not self-contained, but attuned to those around us and those with whom we are most close. Thus love relationships may have an effect on the structural elements and functions of the human brain.

According to Arthur Aron, Helen Fisher and Lucy Brown, love is a *biological or motivational drive* in humans as opposed to love being an emotion. Aron contends that love is not an emotion; it is instead, a motivational state, perhaps one as fundamental as hunger and thirst. While the fulfilment of a love relationship leads to pleasure, rejection in love leads to a completely different set of feelings of pain. The wide variety of intense feelings experienced in love suggests that it's closer to being a drive than an emotion.

Research on the *neurochemical bases of love* suggests that bodily chemistry (physiological changes) and neural activity in the brain are the causes of the experience of love. Investigations into the neurochemical bases have yielded three main chemicals released by the brain that produce the feeling of love. These are dopamine, vasopressin and oxytocin.

The hormone *dopamine* is associated with the intense desire of early-stage love and with euphoria; craving has been shown to be released during mating process in both male and female members of various species of mammals including humans. Its release appears to enhance the likelihood of pair-bonding in the initial stages

of romantic relationships among humans. A surge of dopamine in the human body can produce increased energy, focused attention, and reduced need for food and sleep, which are also the common physical experiences of individuals in the early stages of love.

Research with humans using fMRI studied brain activity related to love on young men and women who were in love (Bartels & Zeki, 2004). While their brain activity was being measured, each participant was shown photos of the romantic partner and of a close friend. The picture of the partner activated specific areas of the brain which were rich in dopamine. Dopamine pathways were excited, lending weight to the neurochemical findings that suggest dopamine is important in the experience of love. These dopamine-rich regions have also been identified as brain areas responsible for motivation and reward-seeking behavior – lending weight to Aron's argument that love is not an emotion but a motivational state.

The hormone *oxytocin* is associated with long-term, monogamous love that may last beyond reproductive years. Thus, it may contribute to long-term relationships. It has been shown to play an important role in pair bonding in some animals, including humans (McEwen, 1997). In humans it is stimulated by touch, including sexual touching and orgasm, and it produces feelings of pleasure and satisfaction. Research indicates that levels of interpersonal trust correlate positively with oxytocin levels (Zak et al., 2003). Oxytocin is also released in mothers and infants during childbirth, and has been shown to create feelings of attachment. Studies have shown that oxytocin may help people be more comfortable socializing as it may potentially reduce anxiety – which seems to tone down the brain's fear response and increase a person's feelings of trust. Oxytocin, thus, plays an important role in various behaviors including orgasms, social recognition, bonding, and maternal behaviors.

The third major hormone involved in the experience of love is *vasopressin*. It is involved in love in long-term pair-bonding. It has been

found to foster visual recognition of others and feelings of attachment.

These three chemicals combined are believed to provide the neurochemical basis for intense attraction and lasting love in human beings.

Evolutionary Perspectives

The evolutionary perspectives on love have tried to understand why such a phenomenon would occur and how it evolved over time. Love has also been shown to have practical benefits to human beings which could possibly be of survival value. The cognitive evaluation of affectionate behavior is largely positive to an individual giving or receiving affection. Thus, affectionate and caring behavior has health benefits for both partners as it provides emotional support and optimism in dealing with life's challenges implying positive coping to stressful situations. These perspectives highlight the belief that love is a feeling that has essentially evolved from the process of reproduction, to solve the problems of reproduction and ensure the success of parenting.

Helen Fisher has studied the *Neural Mechanisms for Mate Selection* – since successful reproduction requires mating and the establishment of a pair-bond to ensure parental care of offspring, three internal inter-related motivational systems involved in the process of *successful reproduction* have been proposed (Fisher and colleagues; 2006). These three internal processes are: the desire to mate or the sex drive, pairing/mating or attraction (romantic love) and attachment or parenting. Each internal system involves reward pathways in the brain and is associated hormonal changes.

The sex drive (the desire to mate) motivates a person to seek a partner. It is associated with the desire to have sexual contact with others and may be directed towards a number of potential partners. The processes of attraction to pairing and a focus of energies on a specific partner – it may be labelled as passionate love in human societies. The focus on a particular

mate involves displaying one's affiliation towards him or her. The processes of attachment (which may be collated with "companionate love") lead to long-term relationships which facilitate parenting. It consists of feelings of security and comfort along with seeking proximity to the partner.

These three systems are correlated with neural mechanisms of the body. The sex drive involves the secretion of testosterone; attraction involves norepinephrine and serotonin and attachment involves the production of oxytocin and vasopressin. There may be a general arousal component underlying all three systems producing motivation. Activation of specific areas of the brain correlate with the thoughts, feelings and behaviors related to every biological need related to love. Thus romantic love is identified as a basic (biological) drive in humans that exists in the process of mating.

Another major evolutionary approach to love is the *Dynamical Evolutionary View of love*, proposed by psychologist Douglas Kenrick. Love is a set of cognitive decision biases that have evolved to serve the genetic interests of facilitating reproduction and passing on genes – these biases affect individuals' attention, memory and decision making, which go on to influence problem-solving behavior of individuals in social situations. The decision biases are involved in the attainment of each kind of problem encountered by an individual related to survival and reproduction – such as mate-seeking, mate-retention and parental care.

The "dynamic" aspect of love arises from bi-directional interactions between partners – these shape each person's actions and subsequent reactions. These interactions are also related to the different kinds of love experienced by an individual – such as the distinction between love felt for one's partner and love felt for one's offspring. While viewing romantic love to be an instinctive part of human nature, Kenrick also acknowledges the existence of cultural differences in love and related behaviors. He believes these differences arise out social variations (cultural environment) and variations in the physical ecology (physical environment) –

since behaviors that are adaptive in one environment may not be so in another. Therefore love is a basic universal experience, but is also monitored and influenced by individuals' social environment and ecology.

The psychologist David M. Buss attempts to explain the *evolution of love* in his studies. He proposes that love is an adaptation that evolved to solve problems of reproduction. Love provides sexual access, sexual fidelity and indicates commitment. While love is a universal phenomenon among human beings, its experience differs. Buss views love to be a mechanism for achieving commitment, appearing primarily in long-term mating. He also associates love with various developments in human evolution – males cannot detect female ovulation therefore they would tend to mate with one female throughout her menstrual cycle; this would eventually lead the males to intensely invest in their offspring and guard their partners from rivals. Females, on the other hand, would have to invest more resources in the process of reproduction and nurturing and therefore would concentrate their reproductive resources only on one male. This focusing on one mate, according to Buss, is perceived as "love".

Buss (1989) also studied the role of culture in love and attraction, by conducting a large-scale survey of 10,000 men and women from 37 societies (four cultures of Africa, eight cultures of Asia, four cultures of Eastern Europe, twelve cultures of Western Europe and four cultures of North America). Each respondent was given a list of 18 characteristics an individual may value in a potential mate (characteristics of *companionate love*) and was asked to rate how important each characteristic was to him or her personally. Regardless of which society they lived in or gender, most respondents rated intelligence, kindness and understanding with the highest priority value. Irrespective of the culture they belonged to, men placed more weight on cues of reproductive capacity, such as physical attractiveness while women rated cues of resources as more important. These findings support the sociobiological perspective of mate selection criteria in males and females and point

at similarities in the mate-selection process across cultures. While standards of beauty may vary across culture, physical attractiveness as defined by that particular culture holds as an important criterion in the process of mate-selection.

Cultural Values and the Meaning of Love

Cross-cultural psychologists have identified two dimensions on which cultures vary (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993). The first dimension is *individualism-collectivism*. This basic distinction is made between *collectivist cultures* (found in many Asian countries, an individual's identity is tied to his or her social group) and *individualistic cultures* (such as the cultures of United States and Canada and some European countries, the individual's independent identity is prioritized) in cross-cultural studies. Research has shown that individuals from collectivist cultures expect love to grow as the marriage unfolds over time. There is less emphasis on romance and infatuation, instead, practical concerns (such as income potential and compatibility with the extended family) may be emphasized more. In societies where marriages are arranged, the primary criterion for marriage is that the two families have the similarity in social status of the two families. The individual finds intimacy in relationships with other family members, not just the spouse.

In contrast, people from individualist countries emphasize the passionate side of love when looking for a long-term romantic relationship, focusing on feelings of passionate excitement and physical attraction (Dion & Dion, 1993). Individuals select mates on the basis of such characteristics as physical attractiveness, similarity (compatibility), and wealth or resources.

The second dimension on which cultures vary is *independence-interdependence*. Many Western cultures view each individual in society as independent, valuing individuality and uniqueness. Many other interdependent cultures view the person to be interdependent with those around him or her, in the social group. The self is

defined in relation to others, and harmony and conformity are valued in society.

The collectivist-interdependent orientation of many Asian and African cultures results in individuals from such cultures to view love as companionate-friendship love, in contrast to individuals from individualist-independent cultures.

Therefore love seems to have significant cross-cultural similarities, as well as differences, indicating its dynamic nature.

Conclusion

The various perspectives of love highlight the dynamic phenomenon that love is. Love consists of biological, psychosocial as well as cultural factors. The biological level can be considered the foundational basis of love – without inherited biological structures and functions of the human body, experiencing love would be impossible. Love emerges as a motivational drive which is closely linked to emotions and behaviors that accompany it. As a motivational drive, it is associated with certain internal structures and mechanisms and the behaviors they activate – including affective behaviors such as joy or trust that are associated with love. It is a complex motivational process that is accompanied by a dynamic interplay of activation of various regions of the brain and neurochemical secretion in the body. Love is a phenomenon in which no clear distinction can be made between external stimuli and internal behaviors – the external (social) and internal (biological) processes of an individual in love are bi-directional in nature. These bi-directional interactions of the body and the external/social environment give rise to psychological experiences or mental states in an individual – love is consciously experienced by an individual and categorized or labeled as such, depending on his or her past experiences in the context of his or her culture. The cultural context of an individual also defines complex behaviors expected from an individual in love, once the cognitive label of love has been established. Love emerges as a complex phenomenon which has cognitive,

affective and behavioral aspects, and arises from certain biological processes that are given meaning to in a cultural context.

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Role of Self-esteem in the Reporting of Sexual Assault

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Role of Self-esteem in the Reporting of Sexual Assault

Sexual assault in adults is an assault of a sexual nature on a person, or any sexual act committed without consent. This includes rape (such as forced vaginal, anal or oral penetration), or the torture of the victim in a sexual manner. Wyatt's (1992) definition of sexual assault includes "(a) complete rape-unwanted sexual intercourse. More specifically, rape is involuntary penetration of the vagina or anus by the penis or another object against the victim's will and consent; and (b) attempted rape-attempted penetration of the vagina or anus by the penis or another object against the victim's will and consent."

In the United States, there are about 207,754 victims of sexual assault (RAINN). In Mexico, 14,993 rape cases were reported in 2010. In the United Kingdom, 15,934 cases of rape were reported in 2010. With 24,206 cases in 2011, rape cases jumped to an incredible increase in India of 873 % from 1971 when the oldest case of rape was first recorded by NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau, 2012). Over 414 cases of rape were reported in the national capital Delhi itself in 2010 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2011), while Mumbai followed it with 194 such incidents. In 2011, Delhi reported 568 such cases, while Mumbai reported 218 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2012). The State of World Population Report suggests that in India, a rape is committed every 54 minutes.

Sexual assault is one of the least-reported of all violent crimes in the world. The term 'reporting' is used to refer to the act of discussing sexual assault with the police, or another formal agency, to formally record the experience (Fisher et al., 2003). In the United States, nearly 54% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police (RAINN). The Pentagon estimates that 80% to 90% of sexual assaults go unreported in the United States. One study estimates that only one to four rapes in every 10 committed are actually reported to the police (Clark and Lewis, 1977), though most studies estimate that between 25 percent (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1972) and 50 percent (Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1974) of actual and attempted rapes are reported. A 2007 government report in England says "Estimates from research suggest that between 75 and 95 percent of rape crimes are never reported to the police". Estimates for India are that only 1 in 69 cases is actually reported.

Thus, the problem is clearly not limited to a particular country or city, but rather rape is one of the most common forms of violent crime prevalent across the world, and if the statistics are to be believed, one of the most underreported as well. There is a vast hidden population of women who never reveal their victimization to the police. Since 1970, social scientists have inquired into a number of possible causes for women's lack of reporting, ranging from the fears, beliefs, and characteristics of the women themselves, to the nature of the relationship

between the victim and the rapist, and the characteristics of the particular rape (Williams, 1984). A number of possible reasons have been systematically investigated. Some rape victims fear retaliation from their rapist. Some wish to avoid the stigma attached to rape prosecution (Amir, 1971). Victims may be reluctant to report because they feel embarrassed and ashamed (Macdonald, 1971) or because they fear rejection from their spouse and/or family (Eg., Katz and Mazur, 1979). There may also be practical issues involved. As mentioned in Williams (1984), a victim may not have the time to participate in criminal prosecution, especially if she is employed (Amir, 1971), or she may lack confidence in the ability of the criminal justice system to apprehend or punish her rapist (McDermott, 1979).

However, there might be a systematic variation in the personal factors associated with victims that lead to them not reporting sexual assault against them. Research has found that victims might blame themselves for being raped, or fear they will be blamed by family, friends, and especially the police (Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974; Weis and Borges, 1973). The victim's race, age, marital status, and relationship to the rapist are the factors believed to most strongly influence feelings of self-blame and the resulting decision not to report (Williams, 1984). However, studies investigating these factors have produced many results that are in contrast with each other. For instance, McDermott (1979) found that married or previously married victims were more likely to report rape by a stranger, while Russell (1980) found that married women were least likely to report in all types of rape. In addition, there are several additional factors that also have a role to play in whether or not the victim reports the sexual assault. The relationship between the victim and the rapist has been found to be an important factor in the decision to report (Amir, 1971). A woman who knows her rapist, which is the case in a number of such incidents, may feel that she provoked the attack by encouraging the rapist in some way or that no crime occurred in the first place. She may fear that others will not believe she was raped if she knew the man

(Weis and Borges, 1973). Studies have also established that characteristics of both the victims and the perpetrator may influence reporting, while this may also be influenced by the characteristics of the assault itself.

Reporting sexual assault to the police is also associated with high levels of anger toward the assailant (Ruch & Coyne, 1990), low levels of fear that the police will respond in a negative way (Fisher et al., 2000), sustaining an assault-related injury (Felson, Messner, & Hoskin, 1999), use of force by the perpetrator, the use of a weapon by the perpetrator (Koss & Harvey, 1991), the presence of multiple perpetrators (Gidycz & Koss, 1987), use of active resistance (Ruch et al., 2000), and less familiarity with the attacker (Greenfeld et al., 1998). (See Orkowski and Gidycz, 2012)

For instance, Linda S. Williams collected data from 246 female rape victims about the details of the assault, whether the victim reported or not, whether she obtained assistance and other information such as victim's resistance, feelings and social support. Based on cross-tabular analysis and test of significance (chi square), she found that of all the factors under investigation in a classic rape situation, defined by her as one in which (1) the victim is raped in public, abducted from a public place, or raped by an assailant who entered her home by force or without her consent. (2) The assailant is a stranger to the victim. (3) The victim is threatened with, or subjected to, a high degree of force. (4) The victim is seriously injured. (5) The victim resists physically and verbally, the most important factor influencing reporting was the relationship between the rapist and the victim. According to her, a close relationship usually results in a less violent assault, which in turn means less likelihood of injury and medical treatment. Thus women who are raped by someone they know are more likely to lack the evidence which allows them to perceive themselves as true victims of a violent crime. Sex-role socialization encourages this type of rape victim to see herself as a possible contributor to her own victimization.

Another study by Neville and Pugh (1997) on factors influencing reporting of sexual assault by African-American women found that 3 kinds of barriers emerged to reporting behaviours: (a) negative consequences/social influences (Eg., "I believe I would suffer embarrassment if I report") (b) police concerns (Eg., "I thought the police would think it was my fault") and (c) culture-specific factors (Eg., "I felt the police was insensitive to the needs of Black women"). Amongst those who didn't report, social consequences had a significant role to play along with personal perceptions.

In a study by Anders and Christopher (2011), data were constructed from the police reports of 440 adult women who reported a rape to a police department located in a southwestern U.S. city between 1998 and 2004. The study variables were coded based on the rape survivors' and the other involved parties' (e.g., witnesses) descriptions of the assault. Survivors' final prosecution decisions were related to overall support from social ecologies. As hypothesized, rape survivors' final decisions to aid in case prosecution were predicted by support from the three social ecologies: family, friends, social service providers, and police.

Smith and Cook (2008) discovered that the behaviors and attitudes of parents around discussing sexuality create a powerful climate that may influence what, if anything, young women reveal to their parents about their sexual experiences, including rape. Women who received inhibiting messages generally did not disclose to parents.

Considering the fact that underreporting of sexual assault is extremely common, and myriad of factors are involved in determining the reporting behavior of victims, it becomes important both from a legal and well-being based perspective that the factors that may function as barriers to reporting need to be investigated. Three common factors that have been found to emerge in recent research and theoretical considerations are that of victims' Self-esteem, self-blame or feeling of guilt and perceived social

stigma. While the influence of self-blame and social-stigma on reporting behavior has been studied in some detail, research has been somewhat lacking when it comes to Self-esteem. However, all three have been recognized as important indicators a victims decision to report

The term Self-esteem comes from a Greek word meaning "reverence for self." The term 'Self-esteem' was coined by William James. Self-esteem is defined as the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness (Nathaniel Branden, 1969). According to Branden, Self-esteem is the sum of self-confidence (a feeling of personal capacity) and self-respect (a feeling of personal worth).

However, the construct of Self-esteem (or self-concept) dates back to William James, in the late 19th century, who, in his work *Principles of Psychology*, studied the splitting of our "global self" into "knower self" and "known self". According to James (1890), from this splitting, Self-esteem is born. James conducted studies of Self-esteem based on introspection. According to him, Self-esteem is an affective phenomenon. He saw Self-esteem as a dynamic process affected by successes and failures and thus open to enhancement, and investigated the connection between Self-esteem, values, success and competence. In 1963, Robert White developed a psychodynamic approach to the study of Self-esteem. Like James, White sees Self-esteem as a developmental phenomenon, but more so in that Self-esteem develops gradually being affected by and in turn effecting experience and behavior.

Morris Rosenberg took a socio-cultural approach to the study of Self-esteem in 1965. According to him, Self-esteem is defined as "an attitude (either positive or negative) that we have about ourselves". In this view, Self-esteem is a product of the influences of culture, society, family and interpersonal relationships (Rosenberg, 1979). The amount of Self-esteem an individual has is proportional to the degree to which they positively measure up to a core set of self values. Rosenberg links Self-esteem to anxiety and depression. This theory is based on

the analysis of data taken from large sample group of 5000 subjects. Feelings/beliefs about worthiness are central to this approach. Carl Rogers, the greatest exponent of humanistic psychology, postulated that his principles about unconditional positive regard and self-acceptance as the best way to improve Self-esteem.

Self-esteem has been included as one of the four dimensions that comprise core self-evaluations, one's fundamental appraisal of oneself, along with locus of control, neuroticism, and self-efficacy. The concept of core self-evaluations was analysed by Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), several work outcomes, specifically, job satisfaction and job performance have been discovered to be predicted by it. Self-esteem may, in fact, be one of the most essential core self-evaluation dimensions because it is the overall value one feels about oneself as a person.

Research has shown that experience of sexual assault can result in a decline in the victim's Self-esteem. The trauma of sexual assault and the resultant victimization can produce feelings of being weak and unworthy (Coates and Winston, 1983) and totally helpless, powerless and out of control (Peterson and Seligman, 1983). It follows that lowered Self-esteem might result from feelings of helplessness and loss of control (Murphy et al, 1988).

Murphy et al (1988) conducted a longitudinal research wherein they studied Self-esteem in a group of 204 rape victims. They were administered the Self-Report Inventory which assesses Self-esteem as one of the components and also administered different self-report tests over different time intervals (1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 18 months, 2 years). Data analyses using t tests and ANOVA over the 7 time intervals indicated that a rape experience has a significant impact on a victim's Self-esteem. In addition, a clear time course was also found-in the first weeks after the assault, victims have lower Self-esteem as compared to non-victims. Most of these differences decrease over time so that there appear to be few differences between and non-victims after 1 year.

Sexual assault can typically lead to the violation of safety, belongingness and esteem needs. Therefore, it is possible that the individual's Self-esteem is diminished. Since social conditions provide support and opportunity to fulfill basic needs, it is possible that the social stigma and blame directed towards the victim may impede his/her Self-esteem.

An integration of Terror Management Theory and Attachment Theory hypothesizes that Self-esteem develops as a child realizes that anxiety reduces as its needs are met by the caregiver, resulting in the evolution of their 'worldview' and the inextricable correlation between Self-esteem and good relationships (Mikulincer, Florian, & Hirschberger, 2003). When Self-esteem is weak, this underlying anxiety can instigate defensive behavior to threats in contingent domains. Thus, a sexual assault victim is likely to experience poor Self-esteem due to the decline in the quality of social relations often experienced as a result of stigma, self-blame and blame assigned by society to the victim as a consequence of sexual assault. Also, after the occurrence of assault, positive regard is hardly ever experienced by the victim. The victim's notions of self-worth are also affected as a consequence of sexual assault which may result in a decline in Self-esteem

There has been surprisingly little research focusing on the impact of sexual assault on Self-esteem of victims. However, there have been a few studies that compare victims to matched samples of non-victims and find substantial negative effects of rape on various aspects of women's lives, including work life, family life, Self-esteem, sexual functioning, and romantic relationships (Campbell & Soeken, 1999; Resick, 1981).

Katz (1991) studied victims of rape who were referred by rape crisis centers or who responded to an advertisement for participants. Women raped by non-strangers blamed themselves more, had lower self-concepts and had higher levels of psychological distress. It has also been found that women who were date raped displayed lower

levels of sexual and other Self-esteem (Shapiro & Shwartz, 1997).

There could be many causes to this decline in Self-esteem and self-concept. Damage to a woman's reputation may also serve as input to recalibrate victims' self-perceptions of attractiveness and mate value (Perilloux et al, 2011). Another could be the lack of control and helplessness experienced by victims during the incident and afterwards. Still further, feeling of self-blame and feeling stupid or having made bad choices and even social stigma could lead to a decline in Self-esteem.

Thus, it has been found that victims' Self-esteem tends to decline after experiencing sexual assault. This decline in Self-esteem has been shown to be linked to underreporting of assault (Amir, 1971; Williams, 1984). Thus, it is possible to infer that Self-esteem tends to influence reporting behavior of victims. A victim with low Self-esteem would likely possess less confidence and thus, would be less likely to report. At the same time, there might be feelings of low self-worth leading to victims not reporting since they don't see themselves as 'worth it' or don't think there is much point in pursuing this. All of this could contribute to underreporting.

While specific theories postulate different origins of the process of decline in Self-esteem in victims, there is an understanding that this decline regardless of its origin does have a role to play in underreporting of sexual assault.

However, much more research is required to establish the exact role and the extent of the role played by the victim's Self-esteem in the reporting of assault.

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The Learning Curve

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The Light at the End of the Tunnel

A Critical Review of Clinical Depression

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The Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Critical Review of Clinical Depression

Depression represents a group of troublesome affective and psychophysical changes in motor activity and social state and interaction that is emotionally painful, affects concentration, and reduces the pleasure derivable from activities such as eating and sex (anhedonia). We constantly hear how depression is blighting our lives, but some experts have an interesting, though controversial, theory—depression can actually do some good in our lives.

The fact that it has survived so long and not been eradicated by evolution indicates that it has helped the human race. The Old Testament (Book of Job, 4th century B.C.) gives us the evidence that depression occurred even in the ancient period.

Depression is very prevalent and the capacity for it may be cross culturally universal (Nesse and Williams 1994). According to WHO's Standardized Assessment of Depressive Disorders (SADD), it was discovered that there were certain core symptoms of depression that were present in at least 79 per cent of the total sample of patients from different cultures.

Evolutionary minded psychiatrists have tried to elucidate depression as a maladaptive expression of other adaptive emotional traits such as a response to severe

trauma or abuse by harbouring the adaptive human capacity to empathize profoundly with the suffering of others (Ness, 2000; Akiskal, 2001)

P.J. Watson and P.W. Andrew, 2001 reviewed research on the adaptationist analysis of depression and proposed social navigation hypothesis (SNH) that accounts for depression based on the standard evolutionary theories. The SNH is rooted in the modern evolutionary theory of psychological pain (Thornhill and Thornhill, 1989). Psychological pain is somewhat analogous to physical pain. In physical pain if an individual stepped barefoot on hot coals, he would feel physical pain, an adaptive response. This pain has two main adaptive functions: first, to focus awareness of the physically threatening or damaging features of the environment, and second, to motivate the individual to do something that lessens the pain, thereby resolving the harmful problem. Like physiological pain, psychological pain works by directing attention and cognitive resources towards potentially harmful fitness circumstances in the environment and helps resolve the problem by motivating specifically designed behavioral solutions.

The SNH suggests that depression evolved to perform two complimentary social problem solving functions. First, depression induces cognitive changes that focus and enhance capacities for the accurate analysis and solution of key social problems and second, motivating

close social partners to provide problem solving help, thus serving a social motivation function.

During depression, a problem may be so important to solve that it pays to shut down hedonic interest until a problem is solved. Consistent anhedonia is a hallmark of depression and may reflect the importance of resisting the hedonic distractions.

Physical activity also requires the use of cognitive resources and may lead to encounters with predators to which further cognitive resources must then be devoted. The reduced activity and sociality that accompany depression may cause the depressive to avoid events that reduce the focus on the crucial problem. Supporting this view is a fact that psychomotor retardation in depression is positively correlated with anhedonia (Lemke et al., 1999).

Depressives often outperform non-depressives on difficult tasks that tap social problem solving skills (Yost and Wearay, 1996) and are more accurate than non-depressives in judging the control they have over contingent outcomes (Eackermann and DeRubeis, 1991). Supporting this view is the Netherland Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study, NEMESIS (1996, 1997, 1999). It analysed the depression on 165 people by looking at how well they coped with life's stresses and strains before and after their mental breakdown. The researchers had expected to find patients left chronically disabled by their experience, struggling to cope in their domestic and working lives. In fact, majority of them had more vitality, improved social lives and were performing better at work.

Strong evidence for the rumination function comes from studies indicating that the changes in cognitive and activity patterns associated with depression are modulated by serotonin (5-HT) (Brewerton, 1995). Low serotonin retards physical activity (Jacobs and Fornal, 1997) and enhances the performance on cognitively demanding tasks (Behot, 1997).

Aristotle and many other psychologists have pointed out that leading philosophers, poets, politicians, artists have tendencies towards melancholia (Ludwig, 1995). Creativity is often linked with depression. According to Dr. Keedwell, psychological unease can generate creative work and the rebirth after depression brings a new love affair with life.

The social situation that puts one at the greatest risk of depression should place great cognitive demand on the depressive. Likewise in the Banda tribe in Uganda, people who are suffering from depression are allowed a 'time-out' from the group.

The depressives' close social partner will experience costs to the extent that ruminative depression interferes with activities in which they have positive fitness interest, drawing the attention towards their social partner and providing responsiveness in social partners necessary for motivational depression to evolve. Recovery from depression is hastened by improvements in social relationships and strong social support (Brown et al., 1988; Andrews and Brown, 1995; Brugha et al., 1997). Depression could function as an honest signal for need-motivating people with a pre-existing interest in helping an individual who honestly signals the need for help. Depression as an honest 'cry for help' could motivate social partners to help by virtue of the cost that it imposes on the depressive.

There is a great deal of evidence linking depression to the suppression of the immune system but researchers are beginning to pay attention to the possibility that depression may actually enhance certain immune system response. Depression may trigger the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as interleukin - 6 (IL-6). One study showed that women who were caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease had higher level of IL-6 than women who were anticipating the stress of relocation or neither of these stressors. (Lutgendorf, 1999).

SNH assumes that no matter what the level of depression, conscious and unconscious

analysis goes on and the relative cost and benefit of depressive strategy are continually revised and updated. Thus depression remains environmentally responsive and major depressive disorder may go into temporary or permanent remission at any time.

Conclusion

Through this paper, we attempted to present the other side of depression which is the most mental disorder. But it does not mean it is abnormal, it is part of 'being alive'. It is because of depression that we can reflect on the choices and mistakes that we have made and can come out of it with a different sense of motivation. We need this evolutionary system to cope with rejections and disappointments and our normal ups and downs of life. Although not everyone can feel benefitted from depression, it can depend on the length and severity. Some people may not respond to treatment, but for some people depression can be a wakeup call. There are a number of positives to depression, keying in on the unique skills you learn in order to deal with depression. A person becomes a better problem solver and learns how to cope with stressors. It makes us apply the brakes every now and then, reassess our goals and strategies, and have greater sensitivity towards social dynamics. People who have experienced depression go on to be more empathetic as they become more aware of other dimensions to their lives and come out of it, victorious with better psychological

health and occupational performance in general health, contrary to what most people believe. Though depression is horrible and no one would choose to go through it, it can help us be more realistic and because it is so painful, we dig deeper to know how to not to go through it again. Though antidepressants may provide a quick fix solution, but if you carry on doing the same thing that you did to get depressed, these antidepressants aren't going to work. Thus, further research should be carried out and new treatments should be devised that encourage self-discovery and are more effective in treating the cause and not the consequence.

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The Learning Curve

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Psychology Department, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

The Good, the Bad, and the Not-so-ugly

A Qualitative, Exploratory study of Morality in Religious Leaders and Convicted Criminals

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to explore and compare, using qualitative and quantitative methods, moral judgment and moral reasoning in religious leaders and convicted criminals. Two men and two women in each group were identified using non probability sampling. Each respondent participated in a semi structured interview and reverted to moral dilemmas as elucidated in the Defining Issues Test. The DIT revealed each respondent's preferred moral schema amongst Personal-Interest, Maintaining Norms & Post Conventional; whereas the narratives revealed other schemes and reasoning principles used in making moral judgments. The quantitative and qualitative analysis for between gender and between group differences revealed that the two groups differed significantly on the DIT score of P-score with religious leaders scoring higher than convicted criminals, but did not display striking differences in the themes generated from narratives. The narratives also revealed the need to propose new schemas of moral reasoning like 'God/ religion as the basis of universal ethical principles' and 'post conventional moral thought as subservient to divinity'. The female respondents differed from the male respondents in the nature of moral reasoning rather than stages of moral development. Other significant themes have been discussed with DIT scores as supplementary data for an exhaustive understanding of morality in the two groups. Limitations and future directions for research are also noted.

The Good, the Bad, and the Not-so-ugly: A Qualitative, Exploratory Study of Morality in Religious Leaders and Convicted Criminals

Morality has always been a very important domain of life in every society. The judgment of morality is often done on the basis of overt behavior. Certain people are categorized as "moral" and "immoral", such as religious leaders and criminals respectively. However, people belonging to each category have often acted against such popular notions. By exploring the pattern of moral reasoning that people engage in, one can explore whether these popularly held beliefs and notions are really true. The legal implications of the findings would indicate whether persons convicted for committing crime

need interventions for reformation at the level of thinking and reasoning.

Major Theories on Morality

According to Freud's psychosexual theory of personality development, moral development was seen as an outcome of the resolution of the Oedipus complex and identification of the child with the same sex parent, wherein the child adopts the rules that guide the parents' behaviors, their attitudes and morality. In his learning theory, Mowrer (1951, 1956) states that internalized rules and morals can be seen as a set of learned avoidance reactions. Piaget propounded the stages of moral development – heteronomous and autonomous morality, whereby children begin by an

unquestioned obedience to authority figures and later learn to imagine different perspectives about right and wrong. James Rest developed a four component model of moral behavior which includes: moral sensitivity (an individual's concern for the needs and well-being of another individual), moral judgment (choosing course of action on the basis of what is thought to be morally right or wrong, taking into account the consequences it might have on the welfare of others), moral motivation (the intention to engage in morally correct behavior driven by the genuine desire to choose that which is just), and moral character (having courage and implementing skills to carry out a line of action even under pressure). All four components are determinants of moral action and moral failure can occur because of deficiency in any component.

Psychological perspectives on religion.

Freud saw religion as an illusion, emanating from the oedipal complex. According to him, the belief in religion is strengthened because our primal ancestors believed in them. Adler proposed that humans perceive a lot of inferiorities in them and try to cope with these through their belief in the omnipotent, superior and perfect picture of God. Jung identified God as an archetype in the collective unconscious. Maslow propounded transpersonal psychology which acknowledges the spiritual aspect of human experience and self-transcendence as a state of consciousness in which the self expands beyond the ordinary definitions of individual personality, ensuing into a fundamental connection with others and the world.

Psychological theories of criminal behavior. Various theories have been postulated to explain criminal behavior. According to Bowlby's attachment theory, delinquents are "affectionless" and hence unable to relate with others. He stated that a number of events that may occur in the lives of people and cause a hindrance in the development of a secure attachment with the caregiver. According to neo-Freudian August Aichorn, an underdeveloped superego leads to the commitment of crime. The lack of guilt leading to overwhelming desire for need gratification leads to criminal activities.

Cornish and Clarke, in the Rational Choice Theory suggest that criminal behavior emerges from a rational choice on the part of offenders, based upon a cost-benefit analysis. Thus, if offenders stand to gain more than they lose, then it's rational for them to commit the crime. Labeling theorists state that by labeling a deviant individual as "criminal" in a very straitjacket fashion, the individual concerned is in a way encouraged to act in that deviant manner. These theorists have also redefined crime by suggesting that it is not the actor who commits a crime but the audience that confers the label upon the act.

Review of Literature

Studies on morality in criminals. An agglomeration of experimental evidence suggests that offenders reason at lower stages than non-offenders (Blasi, 1980; Jennings, Kilkenney & Kohlberg, 1983; Jurkovic, 1980; Nelson, Smith & Dodd, 1990). Studies done on samples of violent and theft offenders have revealed that their moral reasoning development levels were less mature than those of non-violent and non-theft controls, respectively, (e.g. Arbuthnot, Gordon, & Jurkovic, 1987; Judy & Nelson, 2000). Bartek, Krebs and Taylor (1993) conducted one of the few studies available on female juvenile delinquents. Results indicated that female juvenile delinquents with poor coping revealed lowest levels of moral judgment when asked to respond to a prostitution based dilemma. The authors concluded that prescriptive judgments of what is ascribed as a right vs. wrong action is not necessarily related to moral maturity, i.e. actual moral behavior engaged in may not be in accordance with level of moral judgement. A previous research has largely revealed that criminal offenders reason at a lower stage of morality, their reasoning characterised by a delay in development.

Studies on morality in religious/spiritual leaders. Several researchers have looked at the effect of religion on the moral judgement and morality of an individual. Findings indicate that in Europe and the United States individuals who are less likely to describe themselves as religious or engage in religious

practice have a greater tendency to have a permissive moral outlook toward actions involving pecuniary dishonesty (Halman, 1991; Harding, Phillips and Fogarty, 1986; Hoge and De Zulueta, 1985; Phillips and Harding, 1985). Harding, Phillips and Fogarty (1986) explained the phenomenon by suggesting the fact that religion carries a set of absolute moral values. Scheepers and Slik's (1998) study carried out on a Dutch population revealed that the effects of traditional beliefs and religious involvement on moral attitudes outweighed the effects of educational level and personal income. Moreover, the moral attitudes of males were found to be influenced by extrinsic religious aspects such as public interaction within their religious community, while females were affected more by private contemplation or intrinsic religion (Watson, Hood, Morris, and Hall 1984; Watson, Hood, and Morris 1985).

Education has also been found to influence moral reasoning. Halman (1991) reported that respondents with a higher level of education found behavior involving self-interest and illegality to be unacceptable somewhat more than those with lower levels of education. In a study carried out with individuals from India and United States showed that in both countries progressivists reasoned more in terms of Shweder's Ethic of Autonomy - which defines the moral agent as an autonomous individual who is free to make choices, being restricted primarily by concerns with inflicting harm on others and encroaching on the rights of others - than orthodox participants. Orthodox participants reasoned more in terms of Ethic of Divinity which defines the moral agent as a spiritual entity. Thus, previous literature generally indicates that religious affiliation creates a major impact upon the moral development and judgement of individuals.

Method

The aim of the study was to explore and compare moral judgment in convicted criminals and religious leaders using qualitative and quantitative measures. The objectives of the study included: Firstly, to explore the principals

of moral judgment in convicted criminals using an objective measurement tool and a qualitative interview; secondly, to explore the principles of moral judgment in individuals who are devoted to a spiritual/ religious group using an objective measurement tool and a qualitative interview; thirdly, to compare conceptions of moral judgment in individuals who are convicted criminals vs. individuals who are devoted followers of a spiritual/ religious group on the basis of responses to an objective measurement tool and qualitative interview.

Sample

The sample included two male and two female respondents in both the groups of convicted criminals and religious leaders.

Inclusion criteria for convicted criminals. age twenty one to sixty years; Indian origin; currently serving sentence for an action declared as crime by an Indian court; absence of clinical psychiatric syndrome or debilitating physical condition.

Inclusion criteria for religious leaders. age twenty on to sixty years; Indian origin; unmarried, living within the residential settings of the religious sect, with a clear dominance of roles and duties towards the sect/ group, with almost exclusivity from other social roles within family/ extended family; absence of clinical psychiatric syndrome or debilitating physical condition.

Procedure

Data collection from the convicted criminals was carried out in the Tihar jail premises. That with the religious leaders was done wherever convenient to the participants. In both cases, after rapport formation, the DIT was administered followed by the semi-structured interview.

Data Collection

Non-probability purposive sampling, which involves selection of a sample on the basis of easy availability; and snowball technique were

used. The study adopts a case study format which involves an in-depth study of a single person or group or any other entity. By gathering data using a variety of tools and sources, the method allows the researcher to study the case in great detail.

Tools

A semi-structured interview schedule was used with the main points of inquiry being: personal history of what brought the individual to prison/ religious sect; exploration of real life dilemmas faced by the individual; reasoning of actions/decisions taken by self as right or wrong; presence of any universal principles of moral reasoning and what principles are used to judge an action as right or wrong. The Defining Issues Test by James Rest was used, which presents 6 dilemmas to its takers, who are then supposed to provide an answer to a question following each dilemma. The three schemas that DIT measures are Maintaining Norms Schema (MNS), Post Conventional Schema (PCS) and Personal Interest Schema (PIS). The rationale for choosing DIT was that the research has been based on morality as conceptualized by James Rest, who is also the author of DIT, and Kohlberg, whose theory Rest derives his own conceptualization from. Moreover, the Indian adaptation of DIT was also available which was well-suited to the concerned sample.

Data Analysis

Both inter and intra group analyses were done under the quantitative analysis of DIT. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith and Osborn, 1996) was employed which explores the individual's life, world, and his /her own perceptions of any object, situation or event. The method acknowledges that it is very difficult to understand the participant's world directly. Hence, through the researcher's own perspective and the nature of the interaction between the researcher and the subject, the former tries to interpret the latter's experience. Themes were culled out in each transcript and then compared with the narratives of respondents belonging to the two different groups.

Results and Discussion

Superordinate themes (convicted criminals). Several themes emerged in the narratives of the convicted criminals: moral sensitivity, moral motivation, moral character, pre-conventional stage, morality of care, belief in metaphysical, consideration of circumstances for morality judgment, autonomous morality/social order maintaining, heteronomous morality among others.

Moral sensitivity, moral motivation and moral character fit into Rest's theory. Thus, the respondents depict a concern for the welfare of others in a situation where their needs are in conflict with others'; show the readiness to take a moral course of action and also take responsibility for outcomes; readiness to follow one's own moral course of action even under pressure. Pre-conventional stage, according to Kohlberg, reflects that morality is externally determined. This finding is corroborated by researches that assessed criminal and delinquent behavior using Kohlberg's theory and found that offenders reason at lower stages than non-offenders (Blasi, 1980; Jennings, Kilkenny & Kohlberg, 1983; Jurkovic, 1980; Nelson, Smith & Dodd, 1990). Morality of care, found in a female respondent is consistent with Gilligan's postulation that women's morality is characterized by care and non-violence. The discovery of the belief in metaphysical and karma as an important schema used for reasoning in moral dilemmas is proof of the deficits in applying 'universal' theories to culturally sensitive and culturally determined phenomena like morality.

Both males and female participant depicted autonomous morality, stating that conceptions of right and wrong can differ from person to person, and that one is responsible for the circumstances one faces, indicating a strong internal locus of control. This finding clearly negates previous researches, using Kohlberg's theory, which claim that criminal offenders reason at lower stages than non-offenders (Blasi 1980; Kohlberg et al. 1983).

A between gender comparison of themes revealed that the female participants' morality was indeed characterized by the sentiment of care, as suggested by Gilligan. The strong belief in 'karma' and the interdependence between karma and morality cannot be corroborated by any of the prime theories of morality. This being culturally specific to the Indian context, it is a critical finding, when looking at morality in the Indian populace. This can probably explain the contradictory presence of both internal and external locus of control found to be characteristic in the respondents of the category - the belief that karma determines who we are to some extent makes the possibility of having an external locus of control; the fact that one can also determine one's fate by modifying one's karma, provides the scope for having an internal locus of control as well. Such a conceptualization of morality cannot be explained using the leading theories in the field, such as Kohlberg's, which would suggest the presence of contradicting levels of moral reasoning, rendered impossible within its framework. The other novel schema emerged from the narratives of the males who believed that traumatic experiences can lead to a positive transformation in one's moral system.

The DIT scores indicate that females have a more micro-moral perspective, perceiving fairness in terms of an equal exchange of favors. Other scores indicate that the individual is concerned with moral issues more on an individual level rather than being society-wide. However, the presence of moral sensitivity and motivation in the same respondents does not seem to corroborate with the DIT scores. This can possibly be evidence to the fact that presence of culture specific moral schemas undermines the universality of morality, claimed by certain theories. Overall, the results of both qualitative and quantitative analyses show that criminals do not necessarily function at lower levels of morality.

Superordinate themes (religious leaders). 'Karma', a culture-specific moral reasoning was found in one male participant who stressed upon the importance of past life deeds or 'karma' on our present situation. Similar to its

mention in the narratives of convicted criminals, 'karma' here poses as a framework of the Indian mind's worldview- it's a principle of cause and effect in the Hindu thought, which dominates the Indian culture.

Moral motivation emerged in the female participants who emphasized the importance of being just and the rejection of gender and social roles to pursue the goal of social welfare, thus depicting an internal locus of control. The themes are consonant with the concept of moral motivation as proposed by Rest i.e. the intention to engage in morally correct behavior should be driven from the genuine desire to do so. It also found to be consistent with empirical studies which state that religious characteristics are the strongest predictors of moral attitudes (Ebaugh and Haney 1978; Jelen 1984; Woodrum 1988). This was corroborated by their DIT scores.

The male participants saw religious teaching and divinity as the basis of morality. This is consistent with previous research in the field which claims that orthodox religious groups define moral agent as a spiritual entity or deriving from the divine. However the female participants allowed for a more cohesive existence of the personal elements in moral reasoning as well as the divine elements. This is in accordance with the findings of Scheepers and Slik (1998) who found that the moral attitudes of males were found to be influenced by extrinsic religious aspects such as public interaction within their religious community, while females were affected more by private contemplation or intrinsic religion.

There was the presence of post-conventional thought indicating the highest stage of moral reasoning as per the theory of moral development advanced by Kohlberg. Individuals operating at this stage define right actions by self-chosen principles conscience valid universally. Respondents believed that universal texts, from which these actions were derived, made them universal, confirming that morality can have varied dimensions coexisting in the individual rather than being completely stage-like as suggested by Kohlberg. Autonomous morality

was also found in the narratives, in line with Piaget's definition of autonomous morality, whereby rules are seen as flexible, agreed upon concepts and thought is characterized by concern for welfare of others.

In the between gender comparison both male and female religious leaders have been found to be on the higher levels of moral reasoning, in terms of both Kohlberg and Piaget. The finding is backed by the DIT scores and previous research which suggests that religious affiliation has a significant impact upon the morality of individuals (Voert et. al. 1994). Males showed some degree of extrinsic religious inclination and DIT scores show a higher tendency to conform to societal norms than females.

Comparison of themes (convicted criminals and religious leaders). The themes that have been found to be common across the two groups include: moral sensitivity, moral motivation, moral character, belief in metaphysical, autonomous morality and heteronomous morality.

Moral sensitivity was expressed in the convicts through and awareness of the social code and intention for the well-being of other; the religious leaders expressed the same through a concern for the larger good prior to the individual good and the ability to be morally sound comes from devotion to God. However, the intention to do good for others as well as sensitivity towards needs of others is a common thread across the two groups. Moral motivation was conveyed by the convicts by talking about the positive work that he was doing in the prison, and a genuine desire to help. The religious leaders emphasized the importance of being just and rejected social roles to pursue social welfare. The fact that such an important element of moral judgment is found to occur with equal frequency in both the convicted criminals as well as religious leaders throws to wind commonly held misconceptions about lack of morality in criminals.

A female convicted criminal spoke about 'karma' being an important determinant to life

outcomes, conveying her belief in metaphysical, while, the male religious leader stated the moral judgment should derive from the metaphysical because humans are imperfect. Moreover, he also spoke about 'bad karma' which leads to one engaging in amoral acts. Hence this was a similarity in their conceptualizations of who is the authority on morality. It appears then that both groups, with the religious leaders more often, utilize the belief in 'karma' to evaluate moral dilemmas and guide their decisions/actions.

Autonomous morality has also been found to be common across the two groups, with both groups stressing the fact that right and wrong can differ across individuals and intentions behind an act is very critical in determining whether it is right or wrong and may be more important than the act itself. Theoretically contradicting the presence of the earlier schema, heteronomous morality has also been found to exist in both the groups. While the convicted criminal believed that rules laid down by parents and elders are unquestionable, the religious leaders believed that adherence to spiritual guides will lead one to take morally right decisions. Thus, although the authority figures are different about the source of authority, both the groups maintain that adherence is essential. However, this must also be understood within the cultural context of the Indian society wherein obedience to elders/authority is a desirable virtue under all circumstances.

Considering these schemas, there seems to be little difference in the nature of moral reasoning between the convicted criminals and spiritual leaders, with both depicting almost similar conceptualization of the construct.

Considering the implications of the DIT scores, the participants in both the groups have depicted a macro-moral concern with the importance placed on justice and fairness to all, individual good being subservient to common good etc, corroborating the finding. As for the scores on MNS, it has been found to be the highest contributing scheme in the moral reasoning of the convicts while being the second

highest in the case of religious leaders, the latter being less than the former. This may have emerged from the autonomous morality seen to be present to some extent in both the groups.

The religious leaders scored significantly higher than the convicted criminals (35.83 and 22.07 respectively) on the post-conventional schema, the former lying within the average range, while the latter falling below it. This is corroborated by the qualitative finding that reveals a presence of post-conventional morality in religious leaders and pre-conventional in the convicted criminals. However, the qualitative findings are not in complete accordance with the objective results. Several explanations are possible for what appears to be a contradiction. Firstly, the criminal respondents belonged to a lower educational status, with the exception of one, which is bound to have influenced their comprehension of dilemmas in DIT and hence, there is reason to believe that their scores might not be truly representative of their capacity for moral judgment. The fact that there is presence of post conventional thought in the narratives of convicted criminals along with important elements of moral reasoning like moral motivation and moral character further substantiates this claim. The interview which was conducted in the language found comfortable by the respondent (Hindi or English) perhaps allowed them to verbalize the vicissitudes of his/her moral reasoning with better accuracy.

Morality of care was evident in one of the female convicts, consistent with Gilligan's postulation that morality in women is characterized by the sentiment of care arising through the bond between the mother and the child, while for men it is morality of justice and rights based on equality. However, in the female religious leaders a very high level of moral motivation revealed that they placed a high degree of importance on being just and moral, emphasizing the importance of seeking the common good. This finding seems to negate Gilligan's theory and reveals morality may not be very gender-specific, with different conceptualization present in different individuals.

A point of difference that emerged was the fact that religious leaders reported a high degree of internal locus of control, while a poor internal locus of control was evident in the convicts. This can probably be accounted for by the fact that the latter have a poor sense of self-efficacy, as all of them, except for one, see themselves to have been trapped and in a way wrongfully imprisoned (evident in the theme: 'rejects status of offender'). While the former have a high degree of self-efficacy, having chosen the path of spirituality themselves, depicting a high degree of responsibility.

Another line of divergence was evident in how the two groups described the source of high moral functioning. The religious leaders stated that morality emerged majorly from affiliation to religion, suggesting for instance that autonomous morality is subservient to religion. One of the convicts, on the other hand suggested that traumatic and negative experiences can bring about a positive change in oneself and enhance one's moral capabilities. This is also evident in the respondent suggesting that his constructive work undertaken in the prison is more significant now than the crime committed by him earlier.

Overall, the study reveals that morality may not be a construct that necessarily proceeds through stages and can be defined in terms of levels of high and low. It is dynamic, multi-dimensional, influenced by culturally specific factors, and an individual is capable of functioning across the dimensions at any point in time.

Conclusion

The over-arching result of the study is that spiritual leaders function on a higher moral plane than the convicts when viewed through the lens of theoretical perspectives such as Kohlberg's and Piaget's. However, the presence of common themes and schemas of moral reasoning in the two categories of respondents points to the fact that the above finding cannot be accepted at face value. The presence of different levels of moral reasoning and contradicting schemes of morality also challenges the stage-like conceptualization

of morality and indicates that an individual may function at different levels of morality simultaneously. This also might question the commonly held notions of the superiority and inferiority of morality in certain categories of individuals like spiritual leaders and convicted criminals.

Limitations

This study, while proposing brand new schemas of moral reasoning and posing critical questions on stage conceptualization of morality, also suffers from some limitations. Though the intent of this study was exploratory and qualitative in nature with no overt objective of proposing theory or drawing generalizations, the small sample size of four convicted criminals and four religious leaders is a cause of concern.

Incidental, purposive sampling and snow ball sampling methods were used to identify and collect sample for the study. The use of non-probability sampling methods hence also raises questions about representativeness and exhaustiveness of the presented results. While gender was controlled for, other relevant socio-demographic details like the educational background, socio-economic status, marital status and religion was not controlled for. However, it is important to note that given the unique nature of the population of interest, these methods of sampling were perhaps most feasible.

The present study is a cross sectional design which involved one-time assessment of each respondent. As mentioned in the section on gaps of previous literature, a cross sectional assessment is bound to provide a circumscribed version of the person's moral reasoning rather than its development, its fluctuations and its transformations. The paucity of time and the inaccessibility of the target populations however, did not allow addressing this limitation.

The Defining Issues Test (DIT) was used to supplement information obtained from the qualitative interviews. However, conduction of DIT proved to be difficult with the convicted criminals as majority of them hailed from below

average educational status. Hence, their comprehension of the DIT dilemmas and issues related to them was perhaps not very accurate.

Implications and Future Directions

The present study offers many insights and criticisms into the conceptualization of morality. As mentioned in the discussion, the study revealed the presence of unique, culture specific worldviews like the belief in karma and the attribution of morality to divinity in the thinking patterns of both convicts and religious leaders. This has serious implications for the current utilization of theories of morality as being universally applicable and points out the deficits of imposing structured assessment tools on complex phenomena like moral judgment. The study also dispels commonly held misconceptions about convicts and religious leaders, the two often perceived to be at two polar ends of moral reasoning. By drawing parallels between the patterns of moral sensitivity, moral motivation and moral character of the two groups, this study extends to providing valuable information to the legal/ judicial systems of convicting criminals and planning their rehabilitation. Future research may address the drawbacks of the present study in order to provide for more robust, conclusive findings. For e.g. further study of moral reasoning in the general population as well and attempt to evaluate moral judgment on a longitudinal basis. Research could also endeavor to operationalize culture into research based, accessible to assessment terms in order to better appreciate the role of culture in building and shaping morality.

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The Learning Curve

Annual Academic Journal

Psychology Department, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

Ma, What About Me?

A Study of the Mother – Child Relationship of Adolescents Having Siblings with Autism

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of the mother-child relationship of adolescents having siblings with autism. Adolescents having siblings with autism (n = 40) were compared with adolescents having typically developing siblings (n = 40) on how they perceived their mothers on ten dimensions. Further, an in-depth, semi structured interview was conducted on adolescents having siblings with autism (n = 10) to obtain a more detailed understanding of these adolescents' experiences and relationships with others, in light of having a sibling with autism. Preliminary analysis of the interviews has shown that adolescents having siblings with autism shared a healthy relationship with both their mothers and their autistic siblings, although some challenges were also mentioned. The joys of having an autistic sibling were also stressed upon. Analysis of the quantitative phase of the study is still underway. Future directions for research were also discussed.

Ma, What About Me?—A Study of Mother-Child Relationship of Adolescents Having Siblings with Autism

The present paper investigates the perceptions of the mother – child relationship of adolescents having siblings with autism. In this study, the adolescent's relationship with the mother was focused upon mainly because even today mothers are the primary caregivers in most Indian families (Ball, Fatima & Chakma, 2012). During adolescence, one's relationship with one's parents undergoes certain changes. Adolescents give up their child like dependency on their parents for a more mature and responsible relationship (Berk, 2009). It is due to this unique nature of the adolescent phase that the present study looks at this particular age range. Having a sibling, whether older or younger, can influence many aspects of oneself, including self-

esteem, level of life satisfaction and even one's relationship with one's mother (Gfroerer, Gfroerer, Curlette, White & Kern 2003; Suitor & Pillemer, 2007). When one's sibling has a disability, it has been shown to further alter family dynamics (Kaminsky & Dewey, 2001). For this study, the experiences of adolescents having siblings with autism were focused upon in particular because autistic individuals have been found to have a greater impact on the family than individuals with any other developmental disability. A significant amount of research has been carried out on the families of children with developmental disabilities, although most of these studies focus more on the mother and the disabled child and not on anyone else in the family. The sibling relationships have been the focus of research only recently. Petalas et al (2009) concluded that siblings of children with autism were at a higher risk of developing emotional and behavioral problems as compared

to siblings of children with other disabilities or siblings of typically developing children. Another study, by McHale and Gamble (1989) found that siblings of children with developmental disabilities perceived that their mother treated them more negatively as compared to the perceptions of children without developmental disabilities. In fact, Macks and Reeve (2007) have suggested that the reason siblings face the problems they do, is because of the increased amount of parental time, attention and energy the autistic child requires. Howlin (1988) found that the non autistic children often felt that they did not receive as much attention as their autistic sibling and that, at times, they were treated unfairly. Gupta and Singhal (2005) have stated that many siblings tend to feel that their needs are secondary and less important due to the increased time and attention parents give to the autistic child. Rivers and Stoneman (2008) examined the association between sibling temperament, differential parenting and quality of relationships between autistic children and their non autistic siblings. The study concluded that non autistic siblings who reported greater satisfaction with differential parenting also reported better sibling relationships. From the researches quoted above, it seems likely that the parent-child relationships of non autistic siblings are affected by their autistic sibling. The present paper looks into the experiences of the adolescents in terms of their relationships with their mothers, their siblings, and other aspects of their lives.

Method

Participants

The qualitative phase of the study comprised of interviews with 10 adolescents (males = 5, females = 5) all of whom had siblings with autism. These adolescents were selected through the convenience sampling technique from amongst those who had filled out the questionnaires in the first phase of the study. The participants were in the age range of 13 to 18 years of age.

Procedure

The present study followed a mixed method approach and was carried out in two phases – quantitative and qualitative. However, this paper has focused on only the second phase of the study, the qualitative one, as analysis of the quantitative phase is still underway. The qualitative phase involved in-depth, semi structured interviews that were carried out with 10 participants who had siblings with autism. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. The range of the length of the interviews was from 15 minutes to 35 minutes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the ten interviews. The six phases of thematic analysis were duly followed in order to come up with the qualitative results – familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The rigor of this study was assured through the application of three criteria – credibility, fittingness and auditability (Sandelowski, 1986).

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data gathered through the interviews brought out a number of themes through which the adolescents' perceptions about their relationship with their mothers and their autistic siblings can be understood.

Perceptions of the Mother-Child Relationship

Certain aspects of the adolescent-mother child relationship emerged clearly. The subthemes below deal with how much time the adolescents spent with their mothers, how close they were to their mothers and their relationships with their mothers as compared to their siblings' and friends' mother – child relationships. This section also illuminates how the mothers enabled the participants to deal with fact that they had a sibling with autism.

Time. Most participants said that they spent a significant amount of time with their mothers. The estimates provided by the

adolescents ranged from seven to fifteen hours in a week, generally after they returned from school. While all the participants said that some of their mother-child quality time was spent in the company of their sibling, a few mentioned that they had specific days assigned where the participant and the mother went out by themselves.

When asked if they were satisfied with the amount of time they spent with their mothers, most said they were and would not like to change it in anyway. However, three out of the ten participants did say that they would like to spend more time with their mothers. Lack of time was blamed on the adolescents having to focus most of their time on academics or on mothers being busy and working long hours. However, none of the participants cited the sibling as a reason behind the inadequate amount of quality time with their mothers. This contradicts what Satterwhite(1998) found – that adolescent siblings of children with developmental disabilities feel that there need are put behind those of their disabled sibling.

Appreciation. Each participant was asked what they appreciated most about their mother. The respondents spoke of a number of qualities such as their mothers being practical, independent, strong, caring, alert, being good listeners, understanding their children and being a source of encouragement. As one seventeen year old boy eloquently put it, “...she never made us feel like we were a dysfunctional family. My brother and I have got the best, when it comes to education, when it comes to anything. ..She’s just always been there for us.” Several participants mentioned that they appreciated their mother for how much she cared for their autistic sibling. The fact that their mothers helped, understood and accepted their siblings was a source of great pride, respect and appreciation towards their mothers. One thirteen year old girl, talking about both her parents, said, “My parents are very nice and they’ve taken such good care of my brother. Most parents would have found a boarding school for my brother and dumped him there and not cared any more. But my parents aren’t like that.” Some participants expressed that having an

autistic child had enabled their parents to better raise their children. A fourteen year old boy said, “I think mothers of children with autism have higher values and instill these values in their non autistic children, that they need people to have if they want a stable environment for their autistic child.”

Relationship vis-a-vis sibling. The participants were asked about how their relationship with their mother was different from their siblings’ relationships with her. Four out of ten participants said that there was no difference at all between their mothers’ relationships with them and with their siblings. They said their mothers loved them both equally and reacted the same way to the achievements of both the siblings. Several said that the relationships differed because their siblings were given a lot more attention and care than they were. As one thirteen year old participant put it “...She (mother) is with him (brother) a lot and knows a lot about him...She knows what’s going on in his school and things like that.” However, most of these participants were quick to clarify that they knew that being autistic, their sibling required more attention and therefore they did not feel negatively about it or pay too much heed to these differences. A seventeen year old participant was able to aptly express the differences between the relationships and his feelings towards it. He said, “The fact that he (brother) is autistic obviously means that he needs a little more attention than I do and he’s more dependent on my mother than I am. ...And obviously, she can have an intelligent conversation with me and not with my brother. So that slightly affects our equation with each other. But the obvious differences that are supposed to be there are there and nothing out of the ordinary.”

In terms of their mothers’ reactions to their achievements as well, most participants expressed that achievements were defined differently for them than their siblings. While what would be considered an achievement for their autistic sibling, the same would not necessarily be considered an achievement for them. The adolescents were quite accepting of this difference. This has been more clearly

verbalized in the following thirteen year old girl's response, "...Though I don't know if I had done the same thing that my brother gets praised for, I don't know if I'd get so much praise. But then he's autistic and I'm not, so it makes sense. I've come to terms with it."

These findings were in line with previous literature which clearly stated that adolescents acknowledged their parents attempts to treat all children equally, even though they were not always able to do so (Cate & Loots, 1999)

Perceptions of Sibling with Autism

The interviews were also analyzed with regard to how the participants perceived their siblings, how close they felt to them and how much time they spent with them. Each of the subthemes below looks at a different aspect of the sibling relationship. It also looks into the reactions the participants get from those around them when they are with their siblings.

Dynamics of relationship. Saxena and Sharma(2000) found that the relationship between the two siblings was quite comfortable and that the adolescents appeared to be well adjusted in their sibling role, accepting the disabled child as an integral part of their lives. The present study echoed the same. Half of the participants said they spent a significant amount of time with their siblings. The other half said that they did not spend a great deal of time with their siblings. Explaining why, a thirteen year old girl said, "I don't really spend much time with him. I can't possibly tell him what happened to me in school. And we don't play any games together. It was never like that. ...The most I can do is smile at him." However, some participants said that their siblings were more comfortable with them than with anyone else. Quoting one fifteen year old female participant, "...Even though I sometimes get annoyed with him and scream at him, he won't go complain to my mother. He'll come complaining to me. And sometimes, when my parents are out, I babysit him so he's all over the house. He's better with me than he is with my parents. With my parents, he tries to get a lot of attention and says stuff he's

not supposed to say, but with me he's fine." A few participants said that they did not generally tell people about their siblings' autism. The participants said that their close friends knew that their siblings had autism and got along well with their siblings. When asked how they tell their friends about their siblings' autism, one fifteen year old participant put it quite simply, "I say, 'He's a little different, that's all.'"

Gains and losses. The participants were asked about what they liked and disliked about having a sibling with autism. In terms of the benefits or the joys, a lot of responses revolved around how, because they weren't 'normal' siblings, they did not engage in normal sibling rivalry or fights. They shared a relatively peaceful relationship with their siblings. One 13 year old girl said, "Well, I've heard from my friends who have brothers without autism, whether they are older than them or younger than them, that brothers are a menace and that they have a cat-dog relationship and they keep fighting and punching and kicking and arguing. They make life hell for each other. That never happens with my brother." One of the benefits that one of the thirteen year old participants was able to verbalize very clearly has been quoted as well. She said, "...Because my parents are already there to make most of my decisions, but if I had a normal brother, being much older than me, would become like a third parent. Considering that I am allowing my friends to become the centre of my life now, I don't think I'd want a third parent." Another benefit of having a sibling with autism seemed to be that it changed the lives of the participants for the better. Most of them said that they were better human beings because of their siblings. They said it made them more responsible, caring, understanding and perceptive about the world around them. In the words of one seventeen year old, male participant, "Because I have someone like him (brother) at home, who is a little offbeat, to say the least, it makes it a lot easier for me to accept people's oddities, people's weird little habits and accept them for the people they are, and I find it a lot easier than others do." This was in line with what Grossman (1972) found, where about 45% of the

participants reported that they had benefited from having a disabled sibling.

The challenges the participants faced revolved around the unpredictability of their siblings' temper tantrums, the need to look after the minute details of their lives and not being able to share 'normal' sibling moments. About sharing 'normal' sibling moments, a thirteen year old girl said, "There are some things I can't tell my parents, that I could probably ask my brother, having more experience and being a sort of go-between between my parents and me. Acting as somebody to make the peace between me and my parents." Another sixteen year old girl talked about how taking her autistic brother out of the house posed a problem, saying, "Sometimes controlling him in a public place is difficult when he gets hyper. I still can't take him anywhere alone, without Mom or Dad. Because if he gets hyper, I won't be able to handle it."

Expectations

Previous research had cited that because a lot of the parents' time is spent with the autistic child, the siblings are often expected to take on more household responsibilities and physically care for their autistic sibling (Randal & Parker, 1999). However, most participants in the present study had few responsibilities when it came to household duties which mainly involved keeping their room clean and doing what their mothers would tell them to do. Some had no household duties at all. Listing out the household duties he was expected to do, one seventeen year old participant said, "I'm supposed to do what she asks me to do. So, if she asks me to make her a cup of coffee, I'm supposed to do it; if she asks me to clean up my room or clean up my closet, clean up my table, I'm supposed to do it. ..But, yeah I mean, household duties, she pretty much takes care of everything. The little little things that every child is supposed to do, I'm supposed to do. That's all." The pressure and expectations with regard to academics seemed to be significantly higher. Most participants said their mothers tell them to do the best they can while a few said their mothers tell them to get the top grades.

With regard to sibling related duties, most participants said that the main things were left to their parents. The only duty they had was keeping their sibling company or keeping them entertained. One fifteen year old participant spoke of her duties saying, "I have to entertain him, because my parents don't want him to get bored, though he doesn't get bored when I'm at home. So, I have to make him sit and watch TV or do something with him and if he's feeling bad, I just have to talk him out of it and stuff. Usually, he likes to be by himself so he just lies around and if he's too stressed, I just put on music for him." When asked how they felt about these duties, most of them said they did not see them as duties and liked spending time with their siblings. When asked how they felt about the other expectations their mothers had, they said they seemed reasonable most of the time. One sixteen year old boy, however, said, "I think that she is, kind of, never satisfied. No matter what you do, there is some shortcoming that she finds and likes to point out."

Concerns and Worries

The participants were asked whether they had any concerns and worries regarding the future. Three categories were found – worries about self, worries about sibling and worries about mother. In terms of worries about self, participants were concerned about their academics, getting into a good college and eventually getting a good job, mainly so that they would be able to care for their siblings. Explaining her concerns, one thirteen year old said, "The only thing is I haven't decided what I'll be when I grow up. I need to decide that. When there are two siblings, both of them can earn a livelihood and care for their parents in their old age. My brother earning a living is out of the question. He needs to be cared for. So, looks like I'm the only one who is going to grow up and have a job and earn money. And I better be good at it because I now have to look after my mother and my father and also my brother. That thought might have scared me earlier on but I don't worry about it anymore." Concerns regarding the sibling centered on worrying about

how they would manage once they grew up. Some said their siblings were still children and so could be controlled but that it would be very difficult to handle them after they had grown up. One sixteen year old girl said, "It's just that my brother's getting bigger by the day. I worry about what will happen if he gets too hyper or out of control. He's almost as big as my dad now. I don't know what will happen when he gets so big that they can't control him." They were also concerned about what would happen after their parents were no more. Vocalising this thought, one seventeen year old male participant said, "Obviously, whether my brother will be able to sustain himself after mom's gone, because she's not going to be there forever. And my immediate concern is what after mom?" Participants were also asked if they worried about their mothers. Most of them said that they did, the reason for their worry being that their mothers seemed to have too much on their plate and were very busy or stressed out. One of the participants, a sixteen year old girl said, "Mom's always worrying about my brother and what will happen to him in the future, how will he survive and face the world. So, I tend to worry about her, hoping she doesn't take on too much stress and that nothing serious will happen because of all her stress." Another participant, an eighteen year old male said, "Sometimes when my brother gets violent, it's been two and a half years since he last fought with Mom, but when he did, he punched and broke her nose. The only thing that concerns me is that nothing like that should happen which may turn fatal."

Conclusion

Hastings (2003) suggested that the effects on the non autistic sibling were moderated by the severity of the child's autism and the availability of a formal social support system. Therefore, the researcher must admit that the results of the current study cannot be generalized to all adolescent siblings of children with autism, as severity of the autism was not controlled for. It is possible that the adolescents interviewed for this study appeared to be behaviorally and emotionally well adjusted because of the social support their family receives. Due to the fact that

the sample was taken from special schools and early intervention centers, the assumption is that these families have reached out for assistance and have received it. The researcher accepts that there is a possibility that, if families that have not enrolled their autistic children in special schools or have not sought out therapy for their children, had been approached; the findings may have been different. Such a step would be a useful direction towards future research.

Through the findings of the present study, the researcher is careful not to imply that all is well in the lives of such adolescents and that they do not require assistance, intervention or social support. The researcher is reiterating that it is possible that social support and early intervention (either by the parents or external sources) is what led to these adolescents being as understanding as they are. However, further research will have to be undertaken before one can concretely identify the benefits of having a sibling intervention programme.

The current findings may also be explained by considering the age range that is being studied. Adolescents are known to move away from their families and be more involved in their own lives and the lives of their peers. It is possible that, because of the lowered importance issued to their own families, the presence of an autistic sibling does not affect them much. They may be spending more of their time worrying about friend related and school related problems as opposed to problems at home.

To conclude, the study has found, that on a whole, adolescents having autistic siblings are quite satisfied with their relationships, with both their mothers and their siblings. As previous literature has suggested, their siblings are an integral part of their lives and they have learnt to accept their sibling, and their family, the way it is.

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About the Author



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The Learning Curve

Annual Academic Journal

Psychology Department, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi

Ability or Experience– What Matters (more)?

An Experimental Investigation of the Factors that Contribute in Building Spatial Representations

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ABSTRACT

The present research used a between-group experimental design to investigate spatial representations of female undergraduates with different levels of exposure (none, less than a year, or more than two years) to the building of Lady Shri Ram College (LSR). 60 participants selected through convenient sampling were divided into subgroups based on driving experience and navigating tendency. Each participant traversed through a pre-decided route in LSR and completed three experimental tasks (mapping, landmark-recognition, and orientation task) based on the route. Two tests were administered to measure object- and spatial-visualization. Preliminary statistical analysis (t-test and one-way ANOVA) indicated significant ($\alpha=0.05$) difference in the mapping and orientation tasks (but not for landmark-recognition task) between active- and passive-navigators. No such difference was found based on driving experience. A significant group difference based on exposure to LSR was also found. Object and spatial visualization ability correlated significantly with landmark-recognition and orientation task, respectively. This suggested that both individual differences as well as experience contribute to building spatial representation. Implications of present results were discussed, especially in the context of current cognitive psychology literature.

Ability or Experience: What Matters (more)?—An Experimental Investigation of Factors that Contribute in Building Spatial Representations

Spatial representations

The term “spatial representations” is most often used in psychological research to label an individual’s mental representation of space (Blades & Spencer, 1994). The concept of a spatial representation or a “cognitive map” was first developed and used by Tolman (1948) to refer to the internally represented spatial models of the environment. These maps include knowledge of landmarks, route connections, and distance and direction relations; non-spatial

attributes and emotional associations may be stored as well.

Development of Spatial Representations

According to Siegel and White (1975), adult representations of space develop sequentially, depending on their level of exposure to the space. They distinguish three kinds of representations. The first is a landmark-based representation (where a person has knowledge of visually distinct objects and scenes in the environment, but does not represent any relations between the landmarks); the second is a route-based representation (where a person sequentially organizes landmarks along the route traversed); the third is a survey representation (where a person

spatially organizes the landmarks and routes). The theory proposes that the development of spatial representations follows a particular course of stages:

1. landmarks are first remembered,
2. actions are associated with landmarks,
3. landmark-action sequence pairings are organized to form routes,
4. an objective frame of reference is established, and
5. the routes are remembered within the objective frame of reference as survey representations (Siegel & White, 1975, as quoted from Blajenkova, et al, 2005)

Several studies support this sequential experience-based spatial learning. One study that tested four groups of participants with different levels of experience in a building, and found that accurate performance on all experimental tasks designed to study spatial representation correlated with greater experience of the building (Thorndyke & Hayes-Roth, 1982). Another study found age differences in tasks of spatial knowledge: younger participants, who have had lesser time to learn and represent the area around their neighborhoods, gave more landmark-based directions while older participants (independent of sex) tended to use more abstract directions indicative of survey representations of the space (Dabbs, Chang, Strong, & Milun, 1998). A third study found that the greater the experience with a particular area or route-segment, the greater was the likelihood of representing it correctly and anchoring strong relevant landmarks on the same (Presson, 1987).

Despite such evidence to support the Siegel and White's theory, several other researches point to the importance of individual differences and to the relative unimportance of experience as an explanatory variable. For example, one researcher found that several participants could draw survey maps, supposed indications of the highest level of spatial representation, following only a 3-week exposure (Devlin, 1976) and after only one exposure (Blajenkova, Motes, & Kozhevnikov, 2005). Another researcher found that despite high levels of exposure to a building, participants did not

develop survey representations of the same (Moeser, 1988). These results are at odds with the sequential theory because they imply that experience is neither necessary nor sufficient to develop accurate and abstract survey-type representations. The following sections review research that has been done to identify some of the possible variables that may play a role in determining the individual differences in spatial representations. The variables that will be considered are: visuospatial abilities, driving experience and natural navigating tendency.

Individual Differences in Spatial Representations

Visuospatial ability. Visuospatial cognition refers to the internalized reflection and reconstruction of objects and space in thought. Visualizers tend to have the ability or mental skill to solve spatial problems of navigation, visualize objects from different angles and space, recognize objects, faces or scenes or notice fine details. Maria Kozhevnikov and colleagues show that two distinct groups exist within the umbrella term of visualizers: the spatial visualizers and the object visualizers (Kozhevnikov, Kosslyn, & Shephard, 2005). Spatial visualizers, as the name suggests, tend to focus on spatial aspects of the environment, such as spatial relations, metric distances, directions, locations, orientations, etc. of objects. Object visualizers, on the other hand, tend to focus on the details of the objects in the environment, such as colors, shapes, sizes, and are involved in the identification of the objects.

Blajenkova, et al. (2005) reported the higher the spatial visualization ability (measure in terms of mental rotation), the greater complexity in the spatial representations and accuracy in the orientation ability. However, other studies show that psychometric tests tend not to measure individual differences in spatial representations and way-finding very well (Allen, et al, 1996 as quoted in Smelser & Baltes, 2001). It is possible that using different psychometric tests of the same construct leads to disparate results.

Driving experience and navigating tendency. Research shows that the type of navigation that a person engages might explain some of the differences in landmark memory and spatial learning. One study differentiated between active navigators, i.e. those individuals who self-space themselves when traversing routes and control their own navigation, and passive navigators, i.e. those individuals who tend not to be in control of the route they traverse, and found that active navigators showed better spatial cognition and learning than passive navigators (Hahm, et al., 2007).

Another study compared the relative role played by driving and navigation in determining spatial representations. Participants were asked to either play the role of a driver or a passenger. Each participant was also given different levels of detail using maps, i.e. different levels of navigational control, of the route to be taken. Results showed that active navigation contributed to better route memory, while driving led to better landmark memory (Stülpnagel & Steffens, 2012).

The objective of the present study was to investigate the relative importance of experience and individual differences with respect to spatial representations. The present study also attempted to identify the variables that might lead to individual differences. Previous research showed some disparate results, as was discussed, and the present study attempted to address at least some of these issues.

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be no significant difference in the spatial representations of participants with different levels of exposure to the place of administration.
2. There will be no significant difference in the spatial representation of drivers and non-drivers.
3. There will be no significant difference in the spatial representation between passive navigators and active navigators.

4. There will be no significant correlation between visualization ability and spatial representation.

Method

Participants

	Table 1 <i>Organization of participants based on different variables</i>		
	Levels of exposure to LSR college building		
	LSR0 (Non-LSR students) n	LSR1 (1 st year students) n	LSR3 (3 rd year students) n
Driver (3 times a week For more than a year)	10	10	10
Non-driver (no driving experience)	10	10	10

A total of 60 participants were selected using convenient and snowball sampling technique. Care was taken to meet exact pre-set inclusion and exclusion criteria while selection. Participants were divided into six groups of students, based on the level of exposure they had of the main building of Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR) and their driving experience (see Table 1). A participant was considered a driver only if she had been driving regularly (three or more times a week) for more than a year. Three different levels of exposure to the college building were used- non-LSR students with no exposure, first year students of LSR with less than a year's exposure, and third year students of LSR with more than two years' exposure. As LSR is a girls' college, two-thirds of the sample was necessarily female undergraduates. To maintain matching between the groups, the sample was limited to female undergraduates only, although the course and college of study was flexible for all groups.

Research Design

A between-subjects quasi-experimental design was used for the present study. *The independent variables that were measured for each participant were as follows: level of exposure to the college building, driving experience, and navigating tendency.* The dependent variables that were measured for each participant were as follows: performance on psychometric tests of spatial visualization (paper folding test) and object visualization (vividness of visual imagery questionnaire) and performance on experimental tasks (sketch-mapping, orientation, and landmark-recognition task).

The experimental tasks were designed to measure spatial knowledge of participants. The mapping task required the participants to sketch a map of the route they had traversed as accurately as they could, without focusing on artistic abilities. In the orientation task, the participants were asked to point to five unseen target locations in the college building from their present location. These locations had been previously pointed out to them during route traversing. In the landmark recognition task, the participants were shown fifteen stimuli in a randomized order (pictures of handmade colorful posters, see Figure 1), ten of which had been part of the route that they participants traversed and the remaining five were controls. They were required to respond with a “yes/no” to each based on whether they had seen it during the route tracing. These tasks were designed based on the tasks used by Blajenkova and colleagues in their study in 2005.

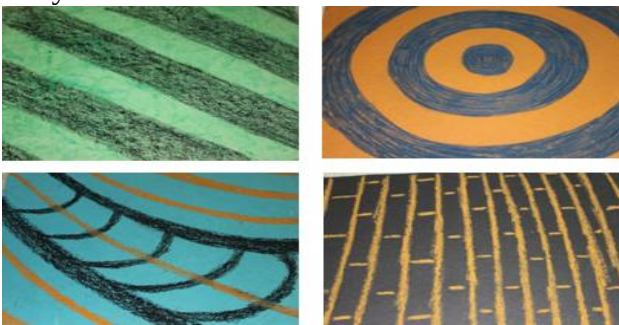


Figure 3. Examples of some of the posters used for the landmark recognition task.

Measures

Two psychometric tests were employed- Paper Folding Test (PFT) and Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire (VVIQ). Paper folding test was a speeded test developed by Educational Testing Service (1962, 1976) measured spatial visualization ability, where the participants were given 6 minutes to go through 20 trials. Each trial involved a square piece of folded paper which was then punched through at different points, and participants had to visualize the result in each trial. The reliability of this instrument ranged from 0.75 to 0.84 as reported by Ekstrom et al (1976). Scoring of the test was done in accordance with the test manual for administrator; the higher the score (maximum was 20); the better was the spatial visualization of the participant. The second test that was used was called the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire, developed by David Marks (1973) to measure object visualization. As the name suggests, this test measured the ability to visualize, that is, the ability to form mental pictures, or to “see in the mind’s eye”. Its reliability ranged from 0.74 to 0.88 as reported by McKelvie (1995). The participant was given sixteen images to consider and asked to rate the vividness of each image based on a 5-point scale, where 1 was “perfectly clear and as vivid as normal vision” and 5 was “no image at all”. The rating of each was added to make a final vividness score; the higher this score, the lower was the object visualization ability.

Procedure

The study was conducted at Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR), New Delhi. The time spent for each participant was approximately 45 minutes. First the participants completed a consent form, a socio-demographic questionnaire, and two paper-and-pencil tests (PFT and VVIQ). Next, they were led through a pre-decided route through the building. The participants were then asked to complete the three experimental tasks (Landmark recognition, mapping, and orientation task). Finally, an interview was conducted with each participant,

about the particular cues that they may have employed to learn and represent the route, with specific emphasis on landmarks, directions, spatial relations, and distances, and the difficulties that they may have encountered on the way.

Results³

Map Classification. The maps drawn by all participants were analysed independently and classified into three categories: one-dimensional (1D), two dimensional (2D), and three-dimensional (3D) based on the classification criteria used by Blajenkova, et al. in their 2005 paper.

1D Sketch Maps (16 out of 44).

Participants might have incorporate some turns and aligned a few corridors, but the overall accuracy of the spatial relations (such as directions, distance, perpendicular and parallel corridors, floor separation, etc.) between different segments of the route were not accurately depicted.

2D Sketch Maps (10 out of 44).

Participants showed relatively higher levels of accurate representations of the spatial relations among the various locations, and the overall shape of the route was preserved. They did depict the route segments on both the floors, but failed to separate these segments onto different planes.

3D sketch maps (17 out of 44).

Participants showed most of the characteristics of the 2D sketch maps, but also included an additional property of floor separation. The route segments on the ground- and the first-floor were distinctly separate and aligned vertically.

Based on the classification system used by Siegel and White (1975), 1D maps showed properties of both landmark-based and route-based spatial representation, where relations were not integrated into a larger picture, while both 2D- as well as 3D- maps showed properties of

survey-type spatial representation, where global structure was preserved. Refer to Figure 2 for an illustration of the three types of maps.

When the sketch maps were compared between the groups based on driving experience and navigating tendency, results indicated that drivers and active navigators had a much greater tendency to represent the route in 3D-maps as compared to the non-drivers and passive navigators, while the latter two groups used the 1D-maps more than the former. The use of 2D-map was similar across all groups (see Figure 3).

A comparison of the maps based on levels of exposure indicates that the non-LSR students drew 1D-maps significantly more than LSR students and the latter drew 3D-maps more significantly than the former. Another important result was that no significant difference based on the mapping task was found between the two groups of LSR students, i.e. 1st year and 3rd year students (see Figure 4).

Other Experimental Tasks

A comparison was made between the groups for their performance on the landmark recognition task (i.e. the number of landmarks correctly recognized) and the orientation task (i.e. the average orientation error measured in degrees, quantifying the discrepancy between the actual direction of a target location and the direction marked by the participants). An independent samples t-test was done to compare between drivers and non-drivers, and between active- and passive-navigators. Results (see Table 2) indicated that there was no significant difference between the performances of drivers versus non-drivers on either the landmark recognition task or the orientation task. A significant difference (at 0.01 level of significance) was found between the performances of active- and passive- navigators on the orientation task, but not the landmark recognition task (see Table 3).

³ Please note the following is based on a preliminary data analysis of 44 participants.

Figure 2: Illustration of three types of maps classified in this paper

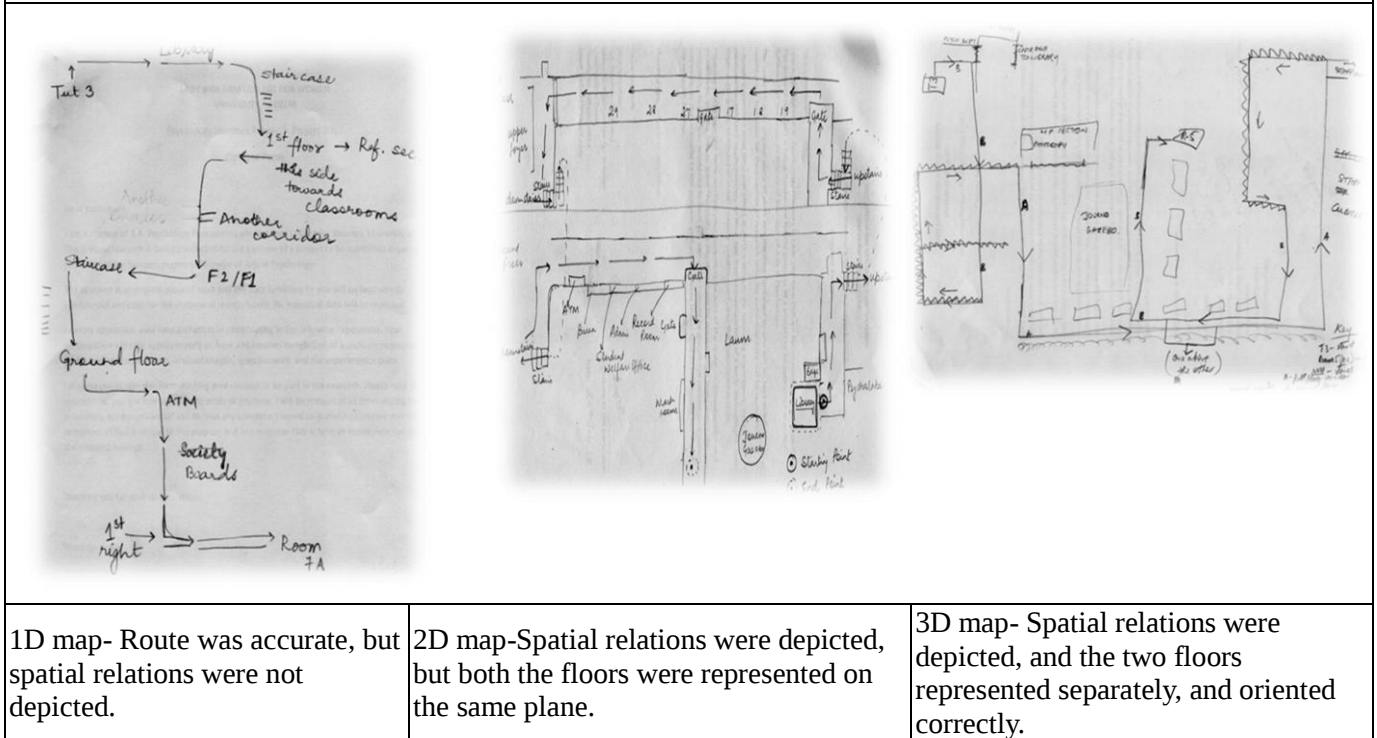
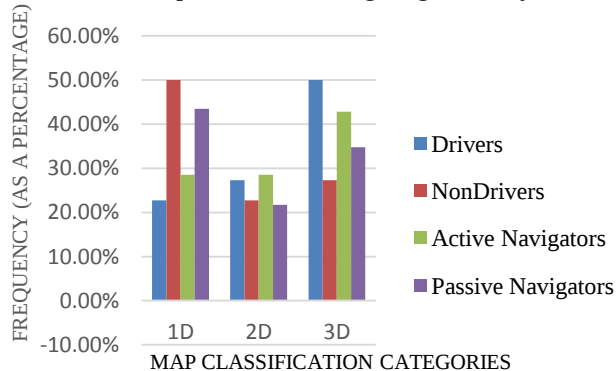


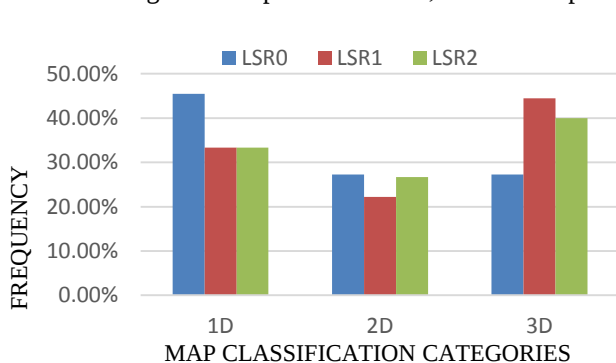
Figure 3. Map classification, based on driving experience and navigating tendency



When performance on the tasks is compared based on exposure level using a one-way ANOVA, results (see Table 4) indicate a significant level of difference on both the landmark recognition (at 0.05 level of significance) and the orientation task (at 0.01 level of significance).

Visualization Ability.

Figure 4: Map Classification, based on exposure



A Pearson's correlational analysis was made to investigate the relationship between object and spatial visualization ability and performance on experimental tasks. Results (see Table 5) indicated that object visualization ability (measured by the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire, VVIQ) significantly correlated with performance on the landmark recognition task, and spatial visualization ability (measured by the Paper Folding Test, PFT) significantly correlated with performance on the orientation task.

Table 2
Results of a t-test Comparison of Means between Drivers and Non-Drivers

t-test for Equality of Means (Drivers vs. Non-drivers)			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Landmark Recognition	.323	42	.748
Orientation Task	1.159	42	.253

Table 3
Results of a t-test Comparison of Means between Passive- and Active-Navigators

t-test for Equality of Means (Passive and Active Navigators)			
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Landmark Recognition	-.026	42	.979
Orientation Task	2.873	42	.006**
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4: Results of a one-way ANOVA between three levels of exposure

One-way ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Landmark	Between Groups	31.09	2	15.547	3.21	.050*
	Within Groups	198.06	41	4.831		
	Total	229.15	43			
Orientation	Between Groups	4916.53	2	2458.26	3.86	.029**
	Within Groups	26093.98	41	636.43		
	Total	31010.51	43			
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Table 5
Pearson' Correlational Analysis between VVIQ and Landmark Recognition

		Landmark Recognition
VVIQ	Pearson Correlation	-.320*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034
	N	44
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).		

In summary, results indicated that exposure to the LSR building, visualization ability, and navigating tendency contributing to the building of spatial representations. No differences based on driving experience were found. Based on these results, hypotheses (1), (3), and (4), were rejected at either 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance, as the case may be. Hypothesis (2) was retained. These results are discussed in the next section.

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to quantify some of the variables that might contribute to building mental spatial representations. The variables that were studied were as follows: exposure, driving experience, navigating tendency, and visuospatial ability. Previous research has revealed some inconsistent results about the role of some of these variables. The present results will be discussed in relation to relevant previous literature.

Table 6
Pearson's Correlational Analysis between PFT and Orientation Task

		Orientation
PFT	Pearson Correlation	-.310*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041
	N	44
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).		

Role of Exposure

Exposure or experience with a particular area was suggested by Siegel and White (1975) as the primary variable that determines spatial representation in their sequential theory. Other researches (Dabbs et al, 1998; Presson, 1988) also reveal the importance of experience. However, these results are contradicted by studies where a few, or even a single exposure, to an environment can lead to extensive survey –type spatial representations (Blajenkova, et al, 2005; Delvin, 1976, etc.). The present study supports both the positions. It was found that there was a significant difference between the performances of non-LSR students who had zero exposure to the LSR building and LSR students who have had at least a few months of exposure to the building. This indicated that exposure was definitely an important criteria in determining spatial abilities. However, it was also found that within the non-LSR students, more than 50% did in fact draw survey-type spatial representations of the building. This shows that even after a single exposure it is possible to make complex representations of space. Further, it was seen that there was not much difference between the 3rd year students of LSR, who have greater exposure to the building, and the 1st year students of LSR. Thus, this paper argues that after a certain level of exposure, there is a ceiling effect, i.e. further experience does not contribute to further gains in spatial representations.

Role of Visualization Ability

Some of the other variables that have been deemed important in determining spatial representations were visuospatial abilities, driving experience, and navigating tendency. Present results support previous studies such as Blajenkova, et al (2005) in that a direct significant correlation has been found between different visuospatial abilities and different experimental tasks. Spatial visualization ability was seen to correlate with performance on the orientation task- i.e. the greater the ability, the greater the accuracy in pointing to unseen locations in the building. Object visualization was seen to correlate significantly with

performance on the landmark recognition task- i.e. the greater object visualization ability, the greater the landmark memory of objects seen along the route. There are some researches that do not show similar conclusions (Allen, et al, 1996 as quoted in Smelser & Baltes, 2001) but this could be due to the use of different psychometric tests of the same constructs. The present paper shows that indeed, there is a positive correlation between innate visualization ability and spatial representations.

Further, the present research found that the extent of control that participants tend to have over their day-to-day route traversing had a significant role to play in the orientation task i.e. individuals who reported themselves to be active navigators and exerted high control over their navigation showed greater accuracy in the orientation task. No effect was found based on the level of driving experience, which is consistent with previous research (Hahm, et al, 2007; Stülpmagel & Steffens, 2012).

Role (or lack thereof) of Driving Experience

The present study did not find any difference between regular drivers and non-drivers. There may be several reasons for this. It is possible that the methodology to test the role of driving experience was inappropriate, and perhaps would show a greater group-difference when participants are asked to drive (or are driven) through a route, instead of walking through a building. This methodology has been used in previous research (Stülpmagel & Steffens, 2012); results indicated that whether the participant is driving or not had an impact on the spatial representation. The difference based on the level of driving experience was not investigated.

Further, it is possible that instead of actual driving experience, the increasing exposure that drivers gain of the roads leads to the usual view in people's minds that drivers have a better spatial sense. This is supported in several studies conducted by Maguire and colleagues (2006) in which the researchers found that taxi drivers showed a difference in their

hippocampal structures (which was associated with greater spatial knowledge and experience) while bus drivers with a matched level of driving experience showed no such difference. From this study we learn that it is possible that increasing exposure with different routes (that may or may not arise out of driving experience) has a greater role to play in increasing spatial knowledge and representation ability as compared to mere driving experience.

Interactional Perspective-Recommendations for Future Research

Previous research has tended to qualify itself in simplistic binary terms of nature versus nurture (innate individual differences versus experience), and the present study argues for an interactional perspective in determining spatial skills and representations. Present results show that neither is exposure/experience a sufficient variable to understand spatial representations, and neither are individual differences. This paper agrees with Newcombe's statement: "Rather than endlessly replaying the empiricist-nativist debate, researchers need to get on with the detailed work of proposing exactly how starting points...are transformed into mature competence...in interactional ways." (Newcombe, 2002)

This paper recommends further research on similar lines to be taken up on a larger scale, using random sampling. It is also recommended that future research should incorporate sex differences as an important variable. It is hoped that future research would reveal how innate and experiential differences interact with each other to lead to different ways of representing space.

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About the Author



Shraddha Kaur is a student in BA (Hons) Psychology Year III student at Lady Shri Ram College for Women. She is keenly interested in unraveling the mysteries of the mind. She is interested in biological underpinnings of behavior, thought, and consciousness, and is looking to continue her further studies and research in neuroscience. She has been a consistent academic performer and successfully participated in the exchange programme with National University of Singapore for a year.



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An Olive Branch: Materialism, Life Satisfaction and Self-esteem

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ABSTRACT

The present research aims to examine the relationship between materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction among 17-21 year old undergraduates (75 female, 30 males) pursuing non-commerce courses from Delhi University. The research was divided into two studies. In Study 1, relationship between materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction was examined by administering Richins and Dawson's Material Values Scale (Short form), Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale and Deiner's Satisfaction With Life Scale on 105 undergraduates from Delhi University selected using convenience sampling. Statistical analysis using Pearson's correlation technique demonstrated a significant negative relationship between Materialism and Life Satisfaction and a significant positive relationship between Self-esteem and Life Satisfaction. In Study 2, a one hour intervention session was conducted on convenience sample of 8 females from Study 1 to prime self-esteem. The instruments used in the first study were re-administered following the intervention session. The analysis of the intervention session is still underway and will not be discussed in this paper.

An Olive Branch: Materialism, Life Satisfaction and Self-esteem

Materialism

Richins and Dawson (1992, p. 308) define materialism as a "set of centrally held beliefs about the importance of possessions in one's life."

Perspectives on materialism. The following are the perspectives on materialism:

Political perspective. Inglehart suggests that materialism is palpable by the degree to which nations place an emphasis on values involving material things. Inglehart claims that there has been a shift in post-industrial society from materialist to "postmaterialist" values.

Anthropological/sociological

perspective. University Of Chicago Sociologists Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) have developed an influential notion of materialism: "If things attract our attention excessively, there is not enough psychic energy left to cultivate the interaction with the rest of the world. The danger of focusing attention excessively on the goal of physical consumption - or materialism - is that one does not attend enough to the cultivation of self, to the relationship with others, or to the broader purposes that affect life" (p. 53).

Marketing perspective. In the marketing literature, Ward and Wackman (1971, p. 422) have defined materialism as "an orientation which views material goods and

money as important for personal happiness and social progress."

The psychological perspective. The psychological perspective began with Belk's work which viewed materialism as a trait and defined it in the following words: "Materialism reflects the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in life." However, in the past few decades the values approach propounded by Richins which views materialism as a value that guides behavior, has gained prominence and this approach will be adopted in the present study.

Previous research on materialism. Developmental trends in materialism with regard to age have not been the focus of much research in the past. Only a couple of researches have focused on whether the level of materialism in children and adolescents varies with age (Achenreiner, 1997; Goldberg et al., 2003).

Research appeared in the 1970s demonstrating that materialism in adolescents may be correlated with factors such as ineffective family communication patterns, greater peer communication, and higher levels of television viewing (Churchill and Moschis, 1978, 1979 and 1981). Higher levels of materialism have been observed in young consumers with materialistic parents (Goldberg et al. 2003), disrupted families (Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Denton, 1997; Roberts, Tanner, and Manolis, 2005), less affluent households (Goldberg et al. 2003), and greater susceptibility to influence from peers and marketing promotions (Achenreiner, 1997; Goldberg et al., 2003). Strong materialistic values have also been seen to be associated with lessened involvement in family, community, and social issues (Kasser, 2002). Undesirable psychological

and physical outcomes have been shown to relate to materialism (Kasser and Ryan, 1993, 1996 and 2001)

Materialism and life satisfaction. Current literature reports that materialism is negatively related to well-being, quality of life, and satisfaction with life in general (e.g. Richins and Dawson, 1992; Sirgy, 1998; Kasser 2002; Roberts et al., 2005).

An investigation of materialism and undergraduates' life satisfaction was carried out by Ang Chin Siang and Mansor Abu Talib in Malaysia in 2011 on 363 undergraduate students. Results of the study affirmed that materialism (measured by Richins and Dawson's 15-item material values scale) was statistically correlated to life satisfaction (measured by SWLS). Notably, it was also observed that 'Possession-defined Success' items captured the most variance in undergraduates' life satisfaction.

Self-esteem

Rosenberg defined self-esteem as "a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self (1965: 30). Self-esteem is usually broadly defined as a person's overall evaluation of, or attitude toward, her or himself (James, 1890; Leary and MacDonald, 2003; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, and Schimel, 2004).

Theories of self-esteem. The following are the theories of self-esteem reviewed for the study:

Sociometer theory. Sociometer Theory (ST) proposes that Self-esteem aids in serving the need to belong (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). According to ST, state Self-esteem represents perceptions of one's current relational value in the immediate situation (Leary and Baumeister, 2000). As a result, state Self-esteem fluctuates

depending on the salient social context. However, individuals are also able to report levels of global, or trait, Self-esteem that can demonstrate consistency across time (Kernis and Waschull, 1995).

Terror management theory. According to the theory, development of sophisticated cognitive abilities in humans would have led to the realization that death was inevitable and hence paralyzing terror. Self-esteem is defined as feeling that one is living up to the standards of one's culture, as this provides protection from death via literal or symbolic immortality.

Self determination theory. According to the SDT, humans have three innate psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000). This perspective distinguishes between two types of Self-esteem: contingent and true (Deci and Ryan, 1995). Contingent Self-esteem is described as unstable and resulting from conditions that are unsupportive of some or all of the three posited psychological needs. In contrast, true, stable Self-esteem reflects self-worth that does not fluctuate as a function of one's accomplishments.

Several studies reported an increase in Self-esteem during adolescence (Huang, 2010; Pullmann, Allik, and Realo, 2009; Twenge and Campbell, 2001). However, other studies have reported that Self-esteem remains the same (Young and Mroczek, 2003) or may even decrease (McMullin and Cairney, 2004; Robins et al, 2002).

A few available longitudinal studies suggest that self-esteem increases during young adulthood (Huang, 2010; Ort et al 2010). Studies have also illustrated that during middle and late adolescence, and into early adulthood, Self-

esteem stabilizes or even increases (Savin-Williams and Demo, 1983; Harter, 1990).

Self-esteem and life satisfaction. Research has implicated self-esteem to play an important role in determining the level of life satisfaction. This may be illustrated further by the findings of a meta-analysis of 137 different personality constructs undertaken by DeNeve, Kristina M.; Cooper, Harris in 1998 to determine the correlates of subjective well-being (SWB). This study found private collective self-esteem to be one of the traits most closely associated with SWB along with other traits such as hardiness, locus of control, etc.

Self-esteem and materialism. The relationship between materialism and self-esteem has been reviewed and researched repeatedly (Kasser, 2002; Chang and Arkin, 2002; Larson, Sirgy and Wright, 1999; Richins, 1999; Mick, 1996). Kasser conducted a review of the theory and research of the two constructs and postulated an inverse bidirectional relationship between the two while Mick found that the inverse relationship between the two lost significance when controlling for social desirability.

Materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction. One prominent study which focused on all the three variables was conducted by William David Meek in 2007. Meek studied 194 undergraduate students at a Midwestern University in USA. The Material Values Scale by Richins and Dawson (1992) was used along with Belk's Materialism Scale to measure the level of materialism. Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale was used to determine the levels of self-esteem while the Brief Life Satisfaction Scale by Lubin and Whitlock was used to assess 10 domains of life satisfaction. Results showed that life satisfaction had a significant and positive relationship with self-esteem; a significant and negative relationship with personality based materialism,

and did not have a significant relationship with values based materialism.

Subjective Well-being

Subjective well-being consists of three separate but associated components: (1) cognitive evaluations of the conditions of one's life, (2) positive affective states and (3) negative affective states (Campbell 1981; Diener et al. 1985). The cognitive evaluation component of subjective well-being is called life satisfaction. "Life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment of an underlying state thought to be relatively consistent and influenced by social factors" (Ellison et al. 1989).

Research studies (Koivusilta et al., 2002; Berntsson et al. 2001; Currie, 1999; Grob et al., 1999; Kainulainen. 1998; Deiner et al., 1996) indicate that the level of adult and adolescent well being is fairly high regardless of the macrosocial context. It has also been seen that self rated global well being has temporal stability over years (Kainulainen, 1998; Suh et al., 1996).

Theories of subjective well being. The following are the theories of subjective wellbeing considered for this paper:

Top-down perspective. Top-down theories of SWB suggest that people have a genetic predisposition to be happy or unhappy and this determines their SWB "setpoint". Set Point theory implies that a person's baseline or equilibrium level of SWB is a consequence of hereditary characteristics and therefore, almost entirely predetermined at birth. The dynamic equilibrium model of SWB (Headey and Waring, 1992) proposes that personality provides a baseline for emotional responses.

Bottom-up perspective. Bottom-up approaches posit that there are universal basic human needs and happiness results from their

fulfilment. A theory propounded to explain the limited impact of external events on SWB is hedonic adaptation. This theory proposes that positive or negative external events temporarily increase or decrease feelings of SWB, but as time passes people tend to become habituated to their circumstances and have a tendency to return to a personal SWB "setpoint" or baseline level.

Rationale of the Study

Research studies in India have not yet looked at materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction together in relation with one another. Hence it is important to study these variables to determine the nature of the relationship between the two variables.

Past research, while focusing on the association between materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction, has largely ignored evolving interventions in order to increase the self-esteem of individuals in the society. An intervention offers an opportunity to establish a causal relationship between the variables under study.

A lot of research studies while focusing on the variables of interest, have focused on adults or children or adolescents but not young adults. This age group is important to study because this population represents the transition from adolescence to adulthood and hence the phenomenon observed in adolescence or adulthood may or may not hold true for this population. Further, in a longitudinal study young adults have been documented to have high levels of materialism compared to other age groups (Belk, 1985).

Also a research conducted among business graduates in Singapore (Kasser and Ahuvia) demonstrated that pursuing commerce related courses may be associated with higher internalized levels of materialism, hence only

non-commerce students were chosen for the present research.

Delhi, as a cosmopolitan city, invites and accommodates students who are young adults, from all over the country, in order to pursue their specialized courses. Acclimatization to this multicultural metropolitan city spans over a few years. Hence the current research undertook a minimum of four years of stay in Delhi as a criterion for inclusion to the sample.

The present research aims to understand the impact of the level of materialism on the life satisfaction of late adolescents and young adults aged from 17 to 21 years and it also aims to examine the role of self-esteem as a significant variable in determining the nature of this relationship.

The data for the present research has been collected in two parts. The first study, follows a¹. correlational design and is an attempt to assess². the level of materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction among 105 17-21 year old students³. pursuing non-commerce undergraduate courses in the Delhi University using the Material Values Scale (by Richins and Dawson), Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale and Satisfaction With Life⁴. Scale (by Deiner) respectively.

The second study aims to examine the link between self-esteem, materialism and life satisfaction in an experimental context by¹. priming the self-esteem of 17-21 year olds². chosen from the first study using convenience sampling. With the help of an experimental design the study aims to compare the³. relationships between the three variables after the self-esteem prime with the relationships between the variables before the session in order to examine the impact of the intervention on the self-esteem of individuals and also to ascertain whether self-esteem can be treated as a variable

that can be implicated in the relationship observed between life satisfaction and materialism in the first study.

Objectives

1. To assess the degree of materialism, self-esteem and life satisfaction of 17-21 year old students.
2. To examine the interrelationships between the variables under study.
3. To explore the impact of an intervention designed to prime the self-esteem of 17-21 year old students.
4. To explore the impact of an intervention designed to enhance self-esteem on the interrelationships between the variables.

Hypotheses

In the first study the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: An inverse relationship is likely to exist between self-esteem and levels of materialism in the sample of 17-21 year olds.
- H2: An inverse relationship is likely to exist between the levels of materialism and life satisfaction of 17-21 year olds.
- H3: A positive relationship is likely to exist between the self-esteem and life satisfaction of 17.-21 year olds.

In the second study the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H4: Greater levels of self-esteem are likely to be associated with the Self-esteem priming intervention.
- H5: Self-esteem priming intervention will affect levels of life satisfaction and materialism of 17-21 year olds.

Variables.

In the study one (correlational study) level of materialism (inclusive of the dimensions of: a. acquisition centrality, b. possessions as reflective of Success and c. possessions as a source of happiness) were considered as variables.

In study two (self-esteem priming intervention) self-esteem was considered the independent variable.

Method

In the first study, the sample was administered Richins Material Values Scale (short form), Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale and Deiner's Satisfaction with Life Scale in a single setting one after the other and a correlational research was conducted.

A convenience sample of females from the first study was taken for the second study which followed an experimental design in which an intervention was undertaken to prime self-esteem. The impact of the intervention was examined by administering the three scales again to assess the variables of interest.

Sample

For the first study, a sample of 105 undergraduate students of Delhi University was taken. All individuals were between the age group of 17 to 21 years and had done their schooling in India. Only Individuals staying in Delhi or NCR for at least 4 years and having a family income equivalent to or greater than 5 Lakhs per annum were taken. The sample consisted of individuals pursuing non-commerce courses from various colleges across Delhi University. For the intervention, a convenience sample of females who had participated in the first study was taken.

Measures

The instruments used to assess the variables of interest were Richin and Dawson's Scale of Material Values (Shortened Version), Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale and Deiner's Satisfaction with Life scale (SWLS). All measures had sound psychometric properties.

Intervention session

The intervention session consisted of four activities and lasted for an hour. The participants were asked to introduce themselves by telling their names, the one thing that they are passionate about, two of their biggest accomplishments and the one thing/person/quality in their life that they're the most grateful about. Then they were given a post-it note, were asked to come up with an adjective to use as a prefix with their name which started with the same letter as their name and stick this note to their clothing.

Then the participants were asked to endorse themselves as if they were a product in order to convince at least two people to become their friends. At the end of every ad, there was voting by the show of hands to see how many people got convinced. Following this activity, they were told to take 5 minutes and list down the 5 things that they do in everyday life that makes them feel happy.

Finally, they were made to play a game called 'hot-seat'. In this game, all participants had to come one by one and sit on a chair placed in the centre of the room, the 'hot seat'. The rest of the participants had to compliment the person sitting on the hot seat based on their interaction with the person within or outside the session.

This was followed by re-administration of the questionnaires and debriefing.

Results

Study One

Data obtained by administering the self-esteem scale, material values scale and satisfaction with life scale was analyzed by using Pearson's correlation method.

Table 1 <i>Correlation Between Variables in Study One</i>		
Variable One	Variable Two	Correlation Coefficient
Materialism	Life Satisfaction	-0.23*
Materialism	Self-esteem	-0.13**
Self-esteem	Life Satisfaction	0.56*
* Correlation significant at 0.05 level (one tailed test) ** Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (one tailed test)		

Study Two

Self-esteem priming intervention was conducted and questionnaires were re-administered. Correlations for the pre and post conditions were calculated, but the analysis of data is underway and hence only the correlation will be presented here without accounting for significance.

Table 2 <i>Correlations for the Pre and Post Test Conditions in Study Two</i>			
		Pre-test	Post-test
Variable One	Variable Two	Correlation	Correlation
Materialism	Life Satisfaction	-0.91	-0.91
Materialism	Self-esteem	-0.13	-0.47
Self-esteem	Life Satisfaction	0.01	0.16

Discussion

The first study aimed to examine the level of self-esteem, materialism and life satisfaction of 17-21 year olds and explore the interrelationships between the three variables. The study hypothesized that an inverse

relationship would be observed between materialism and life satisfaction as well as materialism and self-esteem while life satisfaction and self-esteem would exhibit a positive relationship.

The results document a statistically significant inverse relationship between materialism and life satisfaction with the correlation being significant 0.05 level of two-tailed test. This result is in line with the observations of previous research which has found materialism to be associated with a poor quality of life, low levels of affective well-being and satisfaction with life in general (e.g. Roberts et al. 2005). This observed relationship may be explained using the social comparison theory which posits that needs and desires are usually built on social comparisons and identification with reference groups (Passas, 1997). In a society without fixed social classes, reference groups are often fluid. Once one moves to a new level of affluence, new reference groups may form, and new means and aspirations would make one's current wealth and possessions seem inadequate. Thus materialists may have very unrealistic and abnormally high standard-of-living goals which may lead to greater dissatisfaction with standard of living than non-materialistic goals (Sirgy1988).

A negative relationship was observed between materialism and self-esteem. However this relationship was not significant at 0.05 levels. This relationship has been reviewed and researched repeatedly (Kasser, 2002; Chang and Arkin, 2002; Larson, Sirgy and Wright, 1999; Richins, 1999; Mick, 1996). This inverse relationship may be explained by the fact that individuals with discrepant Self-esteem engage in attempts to deal with psychological discomfort associated with the discrepancy, including various forms of self-enhancement (Jordan et al 2003; Zeigler-Hill and Terry, 2007). A focus on

material goods is an important way that consumers attempt to build and communicate a more positive self image (Belk, 1988; Escalas and Bettman, 2003; Solomon, 1983). Thus, essentially concern over how one is viewed by others, which is a characteristic of low self-esteem (e.g. Leary, 2004) has been associated with materialism. In the present study, however, while a negative relationship has been observed, it is not significant. This may be due to small size of the sample and a larger sample may have been more helpful in illustrating a statistically significant negative relationship between the variables. Thus generalizations would have to be made with caution.

A statistically significant positive relationship was observed between life satisfaction and self-esteem. Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive as well as bidirectional relationship between the two variables of interest. Research has implicated self-esteem to be an important part of the factor structure of subjective well being (DeNeve, Kristina M.; Cooper, Harris, 1998). This relationship may be explained in terms of the additive or the interactive models. According to the Additive models, the presence of a high self-esteem acts as a protective factor which subsequently lead to a higher level of well being and hence greater life satisfaction. According to buffering hypothesis (interactive model), factors such as self-esteem may interact with risk factors such as poverty and their impact may influence the outcomes under highly stressful situations.

The second study consisted of a Self-esteem priming intervention session. The analysis of data derived from the intervention session is under analysis and hence cannot be interpreted or discussed here. However, the subjective experience of the participants immediately after the session has been presented in the table 3.

Table 3 <i>Subjective Experiences of Participants</i>	
Participant	Subjective Experience
01.	"I thought the session was interesting and created a feel good atmosphere. It was fun overall and the best activity was the one in which we had to endorse why we would be good friends."
02.	"I really liked the session especially the activity which involved complimenting other and getting complimented. That is because even though we all know some things about ourselves. The activity about writing things that make us happy everyday really brought things into perspective for me. For example, 2 things on my list were eating malai jam sandwich, talking to my best friend and watching grey's anatomy."
03.	"It was a good session. I liked the hot-seat part the most-it made me feel very good. There was nothing that I didn't like!"
04.	"It was a great experience. I got to know many people. It was a good interactive session. My favourite part was when people had to tell what they thought of me. It was good to know what people thought of me at our first meeting."
05.	"The activities were very interesting. The best activity I felt was the first one where we spoke about our accomplishments and stuff because it forced us to be retrospective and introspective. It told me what I've done and at the same time to remember and cherish the things I am grateful for. Thanks for the experience."
06.	"The activity that I found the most interesting was giving nicknames to ourselves. It was mix of heart and head. The session really made me feel good about myself."
07.	"I loved the session. I have, since my kindergarden years, wanted to be perceived as an intelligent person and today's session was a dream come true when I was repeatedly told my others that I am seen by them as someone who can hold intellectually stimulating conversations. All the activities made me feel very good and I liked all of them equally well. Thank you so much for doing this!"
08.	"I really enjoyed the session. It made me feel happy, it wasn't something that I was expecting and you made an effort to make us feel good about everything. I really liked the activity in which you asked us to give compliments to each other. It was lots of fun. It was an Eca period well spent!"

Limitations

The present study was conducted on a convenience sample of 105 young adults from Delhi University and the small sample size may be seen as a limitation because it doesn't allow for any generalizations to be made as the sample is not representative of the population of interest and may not capture the true essence of the interrelationships among variables.

The Self-esteem priming intervention involved a single session and thus was limited in its impact on the self-esteem of individuals. The session may not have produced any long term effect on the global self-esteem of the individuals at all.

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About the Author



Shivangi Gupta has done a review on research conducted upon attachment styles in adolescent romantic relationships, a project on how advertisements create gender stereotypes in the minds of young children, etc. She is fascinated by personality psychology (particularly the Jungian school of thought), cognitive neuroscience as well as developmental psychology. She has keen interest in pursuing research within psychology as she feels that research is fundamental to the growth of any discipline.



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Emotional Recognition Ability of Autistic Children

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to study the emotional recognition ability of children with autism. Popular clinical perception highlights autistic children's deficits in expression of emotion. Several studies have tested the hypothesis that people with autism are emotionally flat because they cannot understand emotional expressions and a current trend in research indicate conflicting results. The present study had adopted a control group design with 20 subjects in each group. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the clinical group comprising of moderate to high functioning autistic children were specified. Each group was exposed to three conditions- schematic, still and dynamic, where the task was to identify the appropriate emotion in the picture/clip presented. Preliminary results indicate that though the average performance of the clinical group in identifying emotions was superior in schematic condition identifying followed by dynamic human clips, but they showed slight deficit when presented with still human pictures. Their performance was also significantly poor than the non-autistic children. These results suggest that emotion perception impairment is not likely to be the primary underlying deficit in autism. A finding to this effect has important implications for the diagnosis, classification, assessment and treatment intervention for autistic children. Further results are discussed in the paper along with directions for further research.

Emotional Recognition Ability of Autistic Children

Autistic disorder is characterized by symptoms from categories of qualitative impairment in social interaction, impairment in communication and restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior or interests. India is home to about 10 million people with autism and the disability has shown an increase over the last few years. Children with autism are perceived to have profound problem with the social world. It is assumed that typically, autistic children do not show any need for affection or contact with anyone. They frequently make eye contact and their gaze is said to have an unusual quality. Laboratory studies with high functioning autistics have found that they may recognize others' emotions without really understanding

them. There are broadly 2 theories that suggest why children with autism are not able to understand emotional expressions. The affective theory, originally proposed by Kanner (1943) suggests that in autism there is an innate inability to enter into emotional touch with other people; and the Cognitive theory focuses on the autistic child's difficulty in understanding other people's mental states, that is, theory of mind deficit. The role of facial expression in activating and regulating emotion experience has become a lively topic of research and theoretical discussion.

In recent years there has been a revival of interest in Kanner's (1943) proposal that autistic children "have come into the world with an innate inability to form the usual, biologically provided affective contact with people" (p. 250).

Two factors that have contributed to this focus on autistic children's affective impairments are the newly emerging experimental studies of emotion recognition in autistic children, and an increasing awareness that at least some of the cognitive abnormalities so typical of autism might need to be understood in the context of, or even as the developmental outcome of, 'basic' social-affective impairments. Both clinical and experimental evidence highlight autistic children's deficits and idiosyncrasies in the facial, vocal and gestural expression of emotion.

There is a weight of empirical evidence to support Darwin's (1872/1965) suggestion that normal human beings are biologically predisposed to exhibit certain patterns of bodily form and movement in the expression of affective states. This applies to facial expressions, vocalizations and probably also gestures. At the conclusion of his own account of *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin (1872) reflected that "there seems to be some degree of a *priori* probability that their recognition would likewise have become instinctive... It is however extremely difficult to prove that our children instinctively recognize any expression".

There is now a small but consistent body of experimental evidence to suggest that autistic individuals are abnormal in their attentiveness to facial expressions of emotion, and are impaired in their capacity to discriminate and recognize other people's facial, gestural and vocal expressions of affect. The evidence comes from studies that have compared autistic and non-autistic retarded individuals matched for chronological age and for one or the other aspect of cognitive ability.

In a study by Izard (1971) it has been shown that 3 yr-olds may be able to indicate which of a series of photographed facial expressions is happy, sad, afraid, etc, and to make appropriate choices of schematically drawn faces to complete the picture of a person in situations that might lead the person to be happy, sad, afraid or angry. In a study of children's ability to identify the emotional meaning of vocal

expressions, Dimitrovsky (1964) presented 5-12 yr-olds with tape recordings of prose delivered in a voice expressing anger, happiness, 'love' or sadness, and asked them to select a stick-figure drawing (depicting facial and bodily gesture) of the man that it sounds like. Five yr-olds performed poorly but above chance levels and subjects' scores increased gradually with the children's age.

Jennings (1973) tested autistic, non-autistic retarded and normal children who were presented with sets of three photographs of people, and were asked to indicate which two were the same. The photographs could be grouped according to facial expressions, or the presence or absence of hats. Only the autistic subjects paired more frequently on the basis of hats than on the basis of facial expressions. Similar findings were reported by Weeks & Hobson (1987).

Langdell (1982) matched autistic and non-autistic retarded children for age and performance on the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC) (full-scale), and found that all his subjects could sort photographs of happy and sad faces when given whole faces or the lower halves, but autistic subjects were less able to sort the upper halves of the faces. His study reported that autistic adolescents, who were able to identify schematically drawn happy and sad faces, were more impaired than control subjects in sorting the faces by the eye areas. However, the experimental work by Langdell (1978) and Attwood (1984) indicated that autistic children are not markedly impaired in the recognition of all kinds of 'meaning' inherent in faces and gestures.

Hobson *et al.* (1988 a) adopted a similar methodological approach in testing autistic adolescents and young adults for their ability to classify photographed faces and parts of faces according to identity and emotion. In this instance, autistic and non-autistic subjects were matched for age and verbal ability. The results indicated significant group differences in the profiles of performance on the emotion' sorting

tasks but not on the identity sorting tasks. In the first experiment 23 subjects selected facial expressions of emotion (both drawn and photographed) to go with different gestures, vocalizations and contexts depicted on videotape and then in drawings. In a subsequent task subjects selected drawings of emotionally expressive gestures for videotaped faces and audio taped vocalizations. Autistic children demonstrated a marked impairment in choosing appropriate drawings and photographs of facial expressions of emotion to "go with" videotaped gestures, vocalizations and contexts characteristic of happy, unhappy, angry and fearful feelings. Similarly, the second experiment which was a modification of the earlier one, involved four emotion recognition tasks (of six basic emotions) and six tests of object or event recognition (non-emotion tasks). This study also, in congruence with the previous one, furnished evidence that relative to non-autistic control subjects, autistic adolescents and young adults have more difficulty in choosing photographed faces of emotion for recordings of emotionally expressive voices than they do in choosing photographs to accompany non-emotional meaningful sounds.

In another study by Tantam et al (1989), ten autistic children in comparison to 10 non-autistic children matched on chronological age and performance IQ were tested on their ability to interpret faces by finding the odd facial expression of emotion. The tool that was used was pictures from Pictures of Facial Affect (Ekman & Friesen, 1976) on 6 basic emotions. In one of the condition, a word card was also presented alongside the photograph and the subject asked to identify the picture which went best with the word. Their results, replicated the findings of Hobson as the autistic children performed less well than the non-autistic children at finding the odd expression and odd person out thus suggesting a specific perceptual abnormality in at least some children with autism.

A study by Ozonoff et al (1990) tested the hypothesis that young autistic children are selectively impaired in one domain of social and affective development which is emotion perception. Fourteen autistic children, matched

on sex and verbal measure of mental age with non autistic children were tested for emotion perception deficits through sorting, matching and cross modal approaches on 3 emotions (happiness, sadness and anger). The results of Study 1 fail to support the hypothesis of specific emotion perception deficits in autistic children and were not coherent with Hobson's findings.

Reviewing past literature, it may be concluded that there is a lack of evidence for specific emotion recognition deficits in autism, or at least for marked differences between autistic and non-autistic subjects which are consistent across the diagnostic groups. Moreover, it is not established that to what degree, the autistic children's impaired performance bears a specific relation to their failure to grasp the meaning of expressions of emotion, either within the setting of the task or within more natural social situations. A methodological issue that must be attended to in studying the primacy of the social deficit is task design. Past literature indicates that three different approaches have been adapted to assessing the emotional recognition ability of autistic children. These are: sorting (pair pictures with one or the other of 2 target pictures), matching (first developed by Braverman (1986) requires subjects to match a set of pictures with a target picture) and cross modal procedures (in which subjects are required to pair the facial expression of emotion with a congruent voice, gesture or context). Out of these only cross modal procedures would reduce the possibility of using perceptual strategies based on visual spatial cues. It can be said that poorer performance on the social form of the cross modal task may simply reflect the difficulty of the task, rather than the autistic child's knowledge of the social world. Moreover, only limited number of studies (Hobson 1988) assessed on more than 3-4 emotions. Even though few studies used video clips, the nature of their use is unclear (example videotape of a live but still dog or exaggerated full body bodily gestures of every emotion) thus limiting their natural effect and context. Unfortunately, in many studies of emotion perception, issues of reliability and validity were either not attended to or not reported. Studies with sample size fourteen and below have also

used complicated inferential statistic tools like ANOVA and t test, putting very grave questions on their reliability. Besides, the researcher could not access even one study pertaining to Indian or Eastern population indicating a dire need for the present study in this area.

Researchers and clinicians alike have struggled to identify the nature of the underlying deficit central to autism, one of which is emotional recognition. Although evidence for the primacy of the social deficit in autism is building, this hypothesis is by no means universally accepted. Studies show that some domains, such as self-recognition and the ability to sort and match photographs of faces by identity appear relatively intact in the autistic child. . This has direct implications on diagnostic assessment and intervention with autistic children. Moreover, the present study addressed the methodological issues of previous studies and incorporated the multiple modes of visual stimuli in order to better assess the emotional recognition ability. Static representations do not capture the internal and external dynamics that are of the essence of bodily expression of emotion, and they generally fail to depict all else that is characteristic of particular expressions, particularly when an individual is placed in a context. To some degree, facial and gestural expressions which are presented on film may circumvent some of these problems (Frijda, 1953), and in the present study an attempt was made to integrate films and drawings of the various expressions. The present study is an experimental investigation of autistic children's seeming failure to comprehend the emotional expressions.

Method

The study followed a controlled group design using the purposive and snowball sampling technique to identify the respondents.

Sample

A total of 20 subjects in each group of children with Autism and children with normal development (Table 1) were chosen. Inclusion

and exclusion criteria for each population were specified, which included age range of 6-16 years, boy or girl for both populations. Moreover, mild-moderate to high functioning Autistic children as determined by developmental assessment and diagnosis in the absence of any co-morbidity were included in the research.

Table 1
Descriptive Characteristics of the Two Groups

	Clinical	Control
Sex Ratio	17 boys, 3 girls	9 boys, 11 girls
Mean age in years	11.45	10.65

Procedure

Children were contacted through various NGOs, clinics and schools in Delhi. Each organization was informed about the objectives of the research, the approximate time required and informed consent was duly taken from the parents. Thus, non probability purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used to data collection. *Pilot phase:* A pilot test of 2 children with autism and 2 children with normal development was undertaken to familiarize the researcher with tools and potential (if any) difficulties associated with the conduction. During this phase the researcher realized the need for limited number of options to be presented for each emotion, especially to the clinical population. Thereafter, a list of 3 options for each emotion was prepared randomly.

Tools

Three kinds of stimuli were used based on Ekman's list of 6 Basic Emotions. Facial expressions of emotion have been systematized by Ekman and Friesen (1975), who have published a large set of photographs of posed facial expressions which have been extensively validated. These have been used in studies of the interpretation of facial expression by mentally handicapped people and by people with schizophrenia as well as in studies of children's ability to interpret facial expressions. The following are the conditions (kinds of stimuli):

Schematic diagrams. The first visual stimuli involved the use of 6 schematic diagrams (smiley faces) of emotions of happy, sad, fear, anger, surprise and disgust from those that appear in Visual Language of Schematic Faces, duly laminated with uniform size of A4. The exposure time for every picture was a maximum of 20 secs.

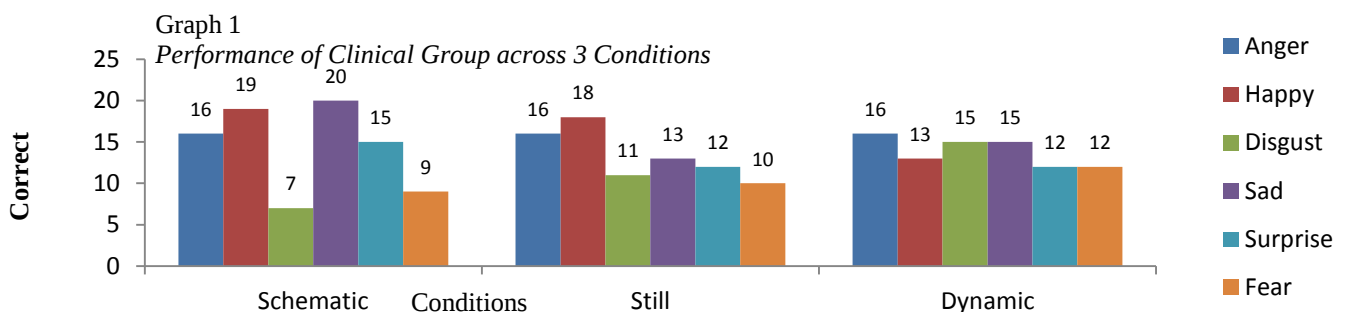
Static photographs. A set of six photographs of faces of a woman with expressions of happy, sad, fear, anger, surprise and disgust were selected from those that appear in *Unmasking the Face* by Ekman & Friesen (1975). High-quality black-and-white photocopies of these faces were employed, each duly laminated with uniform size of A4. The exposure time for every picture was a maximum of 20 seconds.

Dynamic videos. A set of 10 second 6 silent clips of people with facial expressions and focus on the six basic emotions were selected to be presented to the participant on the

researcher's laptop. The exposure time for every picture was a maximum of 2 trials.

The researcher sampled daily Indian soap operas, national TV programs and popular movies to identify clips adequately demonstrating the 6 basic emotions. Hence, the method of selection of clips was purposeful. Clips initially selected by the researcher were screened for 10 normal adults who viewed each clip and were asked to identify the emotions. The videos that were most often identified correctly as displaying the right emotion and rated as most intense on the specific emotion were included in the final study.

In conjunction to schematic and still pictures, video clips were employed in order to capture the 'aliveness' and 'context' of the expressions in replicable form. This methodology ensured that the children attend to the meaning rather than the perceptual configuration of the respective stimuli. Clips were simple and natural, with focus on face.



Results

Table 2

Clinical Group: Percentage of Correct Responses across 3 Stimuli

	Anger	Happy	Disgust	Sad	Surprise	Fear	%
Schematic	16	19	7	20	15	9	71.6
Still	16	18	11	13	12	10	66.67
Dynamic	16	13	15	15	12	12	69.16

Table 3

Control Group: Percentage of Correct Responses Across 3 Stimuli

	Anger	Happy	Disgust	Sad	Surprise	Fear	%
Schematic	18	20	14	20	20	16	90
Still	8	20	17	18	17	14	78.3
Dynamic	20	19	18	19	19	19	95

Graph 2

Performance of Control Group Across Three Conditions

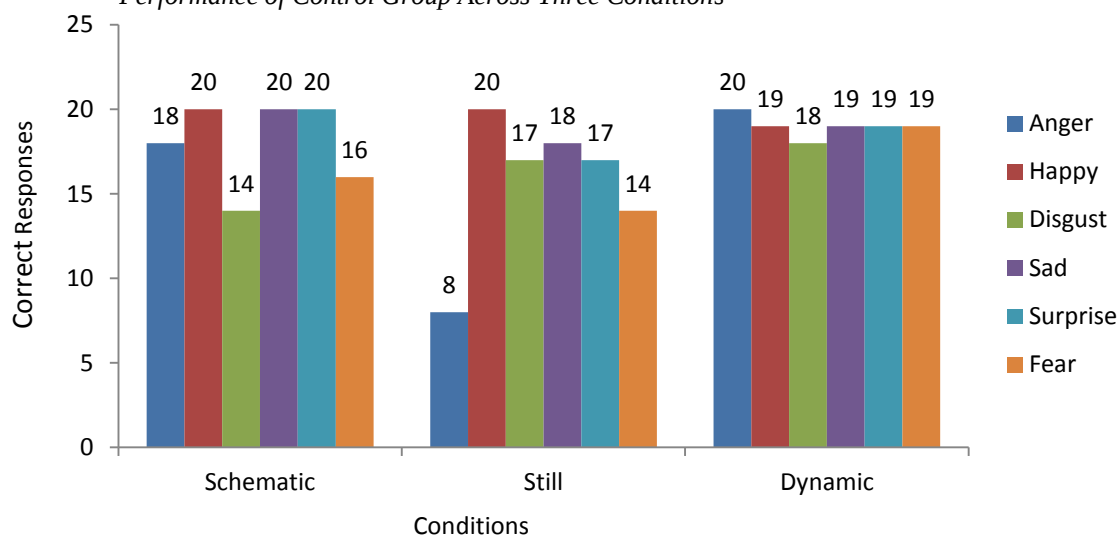


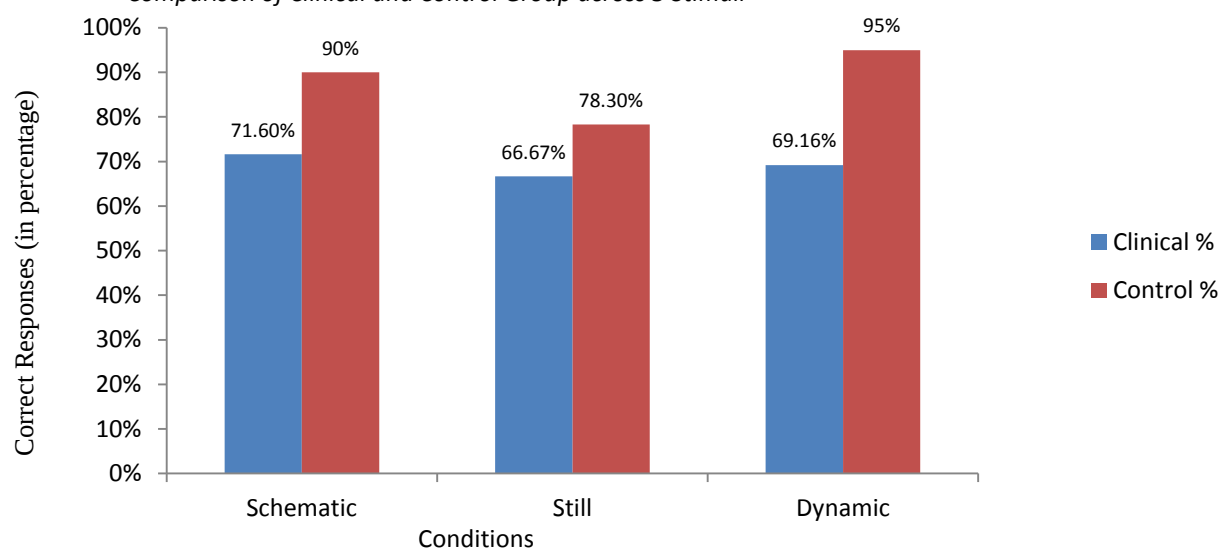
Table 4

Comparison of Clinical and Control Group across 3 Stimuli

	Clinical %	Control %
Schematic	71.6	90
Still	66.67	78.3
Dynamic	69.16	95

Graph 3

Comparison of Clinical and Control Group across 3 Stimuli



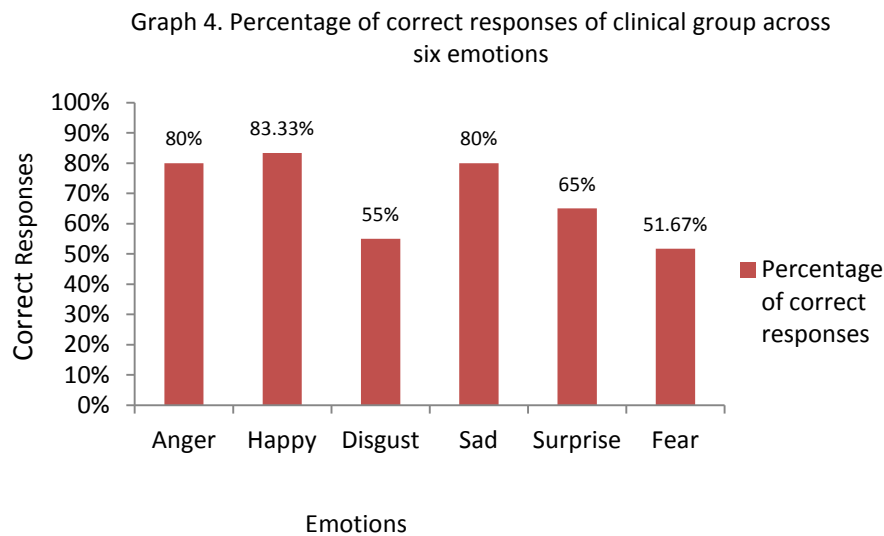


Table 5
Clinical Group: Percentage of Correct Responses across 6 Emotions

Emotion	% of correct responses
Anger	80
Happy	83.33
Disgust	55
Sad	80
Surprise	65
Fear	51.67

Discussion

As can be seen in Graph 3, according to descriptive statistics, the autistic children did not perform as well as the control group across the three stimuli for recognition of six basic emotions. It is further noticed that within the clinical group, the autistic children performed best when presented with schematic diagrams (71.6%), followed by dynamic video clips (69.16%) and least in the second condition of still pictures (66.67%). The researcher further intends to perform tests of inferential statistics to arrive at a conclusion of significant difference, which will aid the findings to provide an evidence for practical implications of the present study. It is also observed from Graph 4 that on an average, 83.33% of autistic children were able to correctly recognize happiness, followed by anger and sadness (80%), surprise (65%), disgust (55%) and fear (51.67%).

Also, as seen from Graph 3, the performance for both groups decreased (78.3% for control group and 69.16% for clinical group) when presented with still photographs of facial expressions as extracted from Ekman's standardized set of photographs. These findings have important implications for the study.

Poor performance of both groups on the second condition raises questions about validity of the stimuli used. Even though the photographs by Ekman & Friesen (1975) are well established tools also used in past researches, it is perhaps not applicable to cultural context in which the study was conducted.

Also, what is interesting to notice is how autistic children respond differently to different stimuli. As noticeable, there is a very minor difference in the average performance on Schematic and dynamic condition. This finding stands in stark contrast to popular clinical perception of autistic children not being able to pick up social cues. The finding therefore partially failed to replicate previous investigations.

If there is a primary deficit in the social and affective sphere in autism, only a subset of processes may be affected. In evaluating the primacy of a particular set of impairments, the following criteria need to be satisfied. Any deficit considered primary should be present in all autistic children and should distinguish them from other clinical groups; that is, the deficit should be both universal and specific to autism.

In addition, a primary deficit should be one of the most persistent and impairing features of the disorder. Finally, a primary deficit should not be one that can be considered secondary to other autistic features. If emotion perception impairment is truly the fundamental deficit underlying autism, one can expect it to be a more robust phenomenon apparent across studies, paradigms and control groups. In at least one study which supported the existence of specific emotion perception deficits, the authors pointed out that the size of effects was surprisingly small (Braverman et al., 1989) suggesting that group differences were statistically, but not practically, significant (Ozonoff, 1990). While it appears that there may be some impairment in affect perception abilities in autism, the evidence for the primacy of this deficit is not convincing, as Ozonoff (1990) says, the deficit thus is neither universal nor specific to autism, but may be a correlate or secondary consequence of a different, more fundamental disability in the social-affective realm. Thus it can be speculated that autistic children may have difficulty, but not capacity deficit in emotional recognition.

The emotion recognition abilities are not completely absent in autistic children. The results of this study provide suggestive evidence towards qualitative differences in the evaluation of emotional meaning of facial expression of simple emotions by autistic and non autistic children.

Implications and Future Directions for Research

The findings of the present study have direct implications, especially on the assessment one makes of an autistic child. The diagnosis of social and emotional deficits is likely to be dependent on the tool being used for assessment. As evident from present and past studies, if the tool is not accurate, then it will not be truly representative of child's capacities. Thus, methodological issues must be thoroughly taken into account when working with autistic children. Such findings also have implications on the intervention programmes being carried out with autistic children. As evident from the study, autistic children are to a great extent able to pick

up emotions from social cues (dynamic condition). Thus the need of the hour would be to incorporate these observations and build intervention programmes based on interactive stimuli in order to hone such skills in autistic children.

A limitation worth mentioning in the present study is that various non specific impairments of some of the autistic children such as inattentiveness, shorter gaze fixation and repetitive pattern of choosing options did not allow the researcher to gather whether the chosen option was an accurate depiction of child's abilities. Further studies in emotional understanding of autistic children are required to reconsider the primary deficit of social impairment in autism, which is indicated as only relative difference in comparison to the normal group in the present study.

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The Learning Curve

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The Indigenous Self

Reflecting on Indian Cultural Contributions to Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The conceptualization of pathology or deviant behavior has largely been determined by a group of individuals working within the frameworks of individualistic cultures and largely positivist approaches to research. The present paper has discussed the nature of understanding of the broad concept of 'self' and 'consciousness' in a comparative perspective of the Eastern and Western paradigms of research to see the culture specific assumptions of morality of the self. An attempt has been made to examine how the re-interpretation of these concepts might influence the way mental health professionals define well being and envision desirable goals of therapy in the Indian context. Questions regarding the unique location of youth in the "hybrid" culture of modern India have been emphasized. The paper has utilized analytical papers of K Kiran Kumar; Ajit Dalal; Raja Selvam; commentarial texts on the Bhagavad Gita to see their practical applications in everyday living.

The Indigenous Self: Reflecting on Indian Cultural Contributions to Psychology

The relationship of India and psychology can be explored in two ways. One by looking at how "modern psychology" has been plucked and replanted in India from the West and the other by looking at how human existence has been described since ages in the Indian subcontinent's varied culture. The fact prevails that the institutionalized method of studying psychology has largely been dominated by Western perspectives. Whereas the assumptions and expectations regarding human nature, be it cultural, social and moral, has largely been removed from the focus of study, and sometimes even ignored. Dalal, in his paper, points out very incisively and truly that psychology has been marginalized in India due to the absence of a supportive intellectual atmosphere. Poverty along with politicizing of decisions regarding development policies keeps the scholarly pursuit

in the field of psychology at periphery. The abysmal funding for academic institutions coupled with increasing student enrolment discourages performance in the true spirit of research. But there are some intrinsic drawbacks in psychology as conceived to be a scientific discipline. The primary limitation lies in the methodology which excessively is empiricist-positivist and does not allow the researcher to widen the scope of inquiry. It fails to solve many of the existential and ground level problems of the majority of Indians and curtails application to government and non-government bodies. It has been recognized that science is guided by unstated and untested assumptions and that scientific theory and theorists are themselves grounded in a particular culture (Kuhn, 1970), and that facts and theory are not categorically separate (Feyerabend, 1993) because of the element of interpretation that is involved. Therefore, we should strive for developing a discipline of psychology that is familiar, natural and based upon the Indian culture rather than

blindly replicate or verify studies conducted elsewhere and study concepts that hold qualitatively different ramifications for us.

In the light of this need for indigenization of psychology, the paper attempts to describe and evaluate the concepts of self and consciousness available in the Indian context of philosophy and psychology and thereby derive a framework for how morality is conceived, how problems in living are conceptualized and how well being is defined.

Indian Self and Consciousness

There are six schools of thought within what is called Indian psychology, within which the *Vedanta* and *Samkhya* systems are the most influential. Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Sutras* (based on *Samkhya*), recognizes the principle of self-preservation (*abhinivesa*) across all living beings. In *Samkhya*, which holds the dualistic mind-body position, the self called *Purusha* is described to be identical in all living beings. It is a passive spectator who is involved with the events around it because of the ignorance of its true nature. The *Purusha* is contrasted with *prakriti* which is the all-pervading and uncaused and eternal principle of the universe. Its constituents are identified as the three strands called *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

Sattva is explained as the experience or knowledge of pure consciousness and thus is the most desirable of *gunas*. *Rajas* is characterized by agitation and desires and is governed by the principle of satisfaction of the same. *Tamas* is a sense of indolence or inertia and leads to the tendency of projecting problems to external causes. A balance of *gunas* may be advocated for growth and functioning in the lived reality of human beings, but it is the ultimate goal of existence would be to achieve realization of the true nature of self as that beyond *gunas* and thus beyond pain or pleasure. The Gita imparts the method of steady contemplation upon the infinite nature of the Self and thus end our limited, mortal ego.

Advaita Vedanta, a non-dualist position with respect to mind-body reality, holds that the multiplicity of forms that is visible to us is a manifestation of a singular principle called Brahman. Shankara who is the proponent of *Advaita* distinguishes between what is called the *sthula sharira* (gross body) and *sukshma sharira* (subtle body). The gross body is explained in terms of five sense organs, five motor organs and the inner instrument called *antahkarana*. The *antahkarana* consists of mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahamkara*), and psyche (*citta*). Here *manas* is used in a limited sense as that function, which in relation to sensory and motor organs receives impulses, and then presents to *buddhi* that discriminates, judges, determines, decides, and so on, and later *ahamkara* appropriates the experience to self. Vijnananabhikshu and Aniruddha regard *buddhi* as the chief ingredient of the subtle body because it is the primary organ of the experience of pleasure and pain.

In a study operationalizing the concept of *ahamkara* by Kiran Kumar et al, an 18-item version of *Ahamkaara* questionnaire was constructed. Four components of *ahamkara* were derived from the scriptures namely, agency (*kartrtva*), identification (*samga*), individuality (*vaishishtya*), and separation (*anyata bhava*). The concept of *ahamkaara* embraces many of the modern psychological concepts of locus of control, self-efficacy, Self-esteem, individuality, relational self, individualism–collectivism, ego-boundary, autonomy etc. The author suggests that under or overemphasis of one or the other component of *ahamkara* may manifest as neurotic symptoms of mental afflictions whereas *vaishishtya* (individuality) that is required for self-actualization is a manifestation of the healthy aspect of *ahamkaara* (Salagame et al, 2005). At the same time it is important to note that the thinkers (*rishis*) advocate developing a sense of detachment from the *ahamkaara* as a whole in order to realize the true nature of Self. This is in contradiction to the Western emphasis increasing self-esteem or enhancing the self-concept for growth because ideal growth is seen as transcending the boundary of *ahamkara* which is self-realization.

Apart from the *Samkhya* and the *Vedanta*, other philosophical schools of thought include the Nyaya-Vaisesika, Mimamsa, Jainist and Buddhist schools. According to Nyaya-Vaisesika school, all psychological functions are attributes of self and they are produced mechanically with mind-sense-object relation. The Nyayasutra (Gautama, 200 AD), which is the primary reference text for this school makes sound theoretical viewpoints. It testifies for psychometrics by claiming that dysfunction is assessable by means of logical proof. Gautama has mentioned five kinds of fallacies of reason namely discrepancy (*sabhyabhichar*), contradiction (*virudha*), ambiguity (*prakaranasama*) and mistimed (*kalatita*). Balodhi (1986) has proposed the use of these fallacies as tools of the assessment of dysfunctional cognitions.

Mimamsa, in contrast to the previous school, claims that all psychological functions manifest from the nature of their objects. When cognition and the object's actual nature are not found in sync, it is because of the incongruity in the conditions. Hence, dysfunctions are primarily due to the defects in the objective stimuli and passions of the mind. The Vedanta school accepts the Samkhya concept of modification of mind as *vrittis* or psychological functions, but diverges from calling the existential reality as illusion or *maya*. Vedanta identifies three types of modification called *vivarta* (*mistaking one thing for another*), *parinama* (modification of matter) and *adhyasa* (projection or hallucination) to explain how the world appears to the person who is unaware of the true nature of the self. Such ignorance distorts the nature of an object, making it appear as something else.

The Jaina philosophy views the self as a conscious being and identifies functions of the mind as manifestations rather than its characteristic. It defines dysfunction as an awareness of an object outside its limitations. Buddhism attributes human beings as possessing traits that naturally condition them and make them suffer. There are three *bhavas* or emotions (desire, aggression and illusion), five obstacles to happiness (craving, resentment, laziness, anxiety

and doubt), and four obsessions or *asavas* (sensuality, ignorance, fear of death and speculation) that make people dysfunctional.

Special Types of Indigenous Psychology Models

The works of the *siddhas* can be classified under eight heads: *vaatham* (chemical), *vaidikam* (sacrificial), *yogam* (spiritual), *jnanam* (scientific), *maruthwam* (medical), *mantram* (psychic), *ganitham* (astrological), and *marmam* (martial). As it is a highly integrated system, the basic terminology, concepts, and definitions are common to all. Out of these *yogam*, *mantram*, and *marmam* directly deal with psychological processes. The most outstanding contribution of *siddha* system is the comprehensive classification of psychotic disorders, referred to as *unmadam*, into 18 *kirikas*. They give precise definition, etiology, dynamics, symptoms, treatment, and exact prognosis of each one of them (Saktidharan & Kumar, 2001).

The unique nature of this system as explicated by its fundamental tenets, principles and applications deserve to be studied separately and utilized locally as Dravidian psychology. This requires special mention as there is variation in the language used in the *siddha* texts as well as in availability of natural herbs prescribed as medicines that have to be handled and studied keeping in mind their context.

Mukhopadhyay and Roy (2004) have proposed an organizational change in rural bank development based on Sri Aurobindo's view of spiritual transformation. Their study on 219 employees aimed at determining the relative importance of organizational, spiritual health variables in predicting differences between high- and low job-satisfied groups. They note that when there is a change in the goal of organization from materialistic to spiritual orientation, employees experience a change from a self with boundaries to a boundary-less self. They termed this as spiritual transformation of the human self.

Dalal, in his paper "Journey to the Roots", mentions the characteristic advantages of studying and applying Indian psychology. Unlike popular opinion, Indian psychology is based on

veridical methods. Though not a traditional science since it includes the area of consciousness and is methodologically different, it is by no means, less stringent than desired. Knowledge is not abstract but is observed and experienced as the same because the subject matter is the true nature of self. The Indian thought systems have ‘experiential–cognitive’ bases. Methodologically speaking, *adhyayana* (study) or *swaadhyaya* (self-study), *abhyasa* (practice), *anubhooti* (experiencing), and *pramaana* (demonstration) are important ingredients of any study. According to Gupta (1999), the emphasis on the practice and experiencing accompanied by analysis makes Indian systems demonstrative, which is central to the epistemology of Indian thought. *It is universal* in the sense that it does not narrow down the scope of inquiry as well as application on the basis of culture despite its origin in a particular culture. It takes into consideration the *inner state* as defined by the consciousness of a person and thus at the same time providing a wider perspective to place problems of individuals as found in empirical research. Indian psychology is *spiritual* in its orientation in the sense that by covering the entire range of human development the distinction between natural and supernatural is removed through realization of their merging. Indian psychology is *applied*. It is concerned with transformations of human conditions from dependence on material objects to that of a state of well-being. The goal of Indian psychology is to help the person transcend from a conditional state (mechanical and habitual thinking) to an unconditional state of freedom and liberation. This is achieved through knowledge, collective progress and a sense of balance involving detachment.

Auluck (2002a) identified another important feature of Indian psychology which involves the examination of both phenomenal and noumenal reality—*vyaavahaarika* and *paaramaarthika satya* in the words of Shankara. Also, it is pointed out by him that the *Mandukya Upanishad* comprehensively analyzes waking, dreaming, and sleeping states, and proves the ‘inevitability of a common substratum’ of *atman* which cannot be identified with our common

sense notion of waking self,’ unlike the western notions of consciousness. Thus the study of the self is called *aadhyaatma shaastra* not *manah shaastra* which is an important point of divergence from the modern psychology.

Thus all empirical knowledge (psychological or otherwise) are considered valid only in a limited sphere and is regarded as false (*mithya*), in the sense that it keeps changing (*anithya*) and is not absolute. Therefore in the tradition, Upanishadic and Vedantic teachings are known as *jñāana yoga* or *jñāana maarga*, because they emphasize on discriminating between true knowledge (*satya*) and false knowledge (*mithya*). If *abhyasa* and *vairagya* are the basis of yoga, *vichaara* (enquiry) and *viveka* (discrimination) are the key concepts in Vedanta.

It is interesting that Samkhya traces the whole of cosmic evolution to psychological categories. It is a ‘top-down’ approach, which is diametrically opposed to the contemporary scientific perspectives on evolution that commences with physical substrates and hence, ‘bottom-up’ in its approach. *Ahamkaara* is the individuating principle which underlies the subject–object differentiation and represents the subjective pole.

Suffering, Mental Afflictions and Problems in Living

Verma (1994) identifies the reasons for sorrow to be: (a) the conception of a limited self, (b) the emergence of the quality of restless mobility or *rajoguna*, (c) dependence on external objects as sources of *sukha* (pleasure), and (d) fear of separation from the source of *sukha*. According to Palasane and Lam (1996) the Western approach is concerned with distress or the negative aspects of stress, whereas in Eastern thought, both pleasure and pain are considered stressful, and there is a greater acceptance of suffering.

Anand et al. (2001) note that *Samkhya Kaarika* has conceived three types of human suffering namely, (a) *aadhibhautika*, which involves suffering arising from external physical

factors, such as other humans, animals, and so on; (b) *aadhidaivika*, which arises from a different type of external factors, such as demons or deities; and (c) *aadhyaatmika*, which focuses on dealing with suffering ‘pertaining to the self’. The *aadhyatmika* suffering arises from two internal sources: one from the body, and the other from the mind. The three types of suffering (*taapa traya*) mentioned above have formed the bases for all types of healing practices in Indian tradition, where we have well-systematized ones like *ayurveda*, *siddha*, and folk healing practices.

Patanjali in *Yoga Sutra* regards *klesa* as the primary source of suffering. *Klesas* are five in number namely; *avidya* (ignorance), *asmita* (egoism), *raaga* (attraction), *dvesa* (repulsion), and *abhinivesha* (lust for life). They are afflictions that plague a person leading to misery. The factors, which help to overcome suffering, include *dharma* (right conduct), detachment and impulse control, belief in rebirth and *karma*, and transcendence. Coster (1934) compared these *kleshas* or afflictions with the primary anxiety and insecurity in the light of psychoanalysis.

Well being

Sushruta Samhita a well-known *ayurvedic* text defines *swaasthya* with reference to body, mind, and spirit. Not only that it specifies health as a condition of balance of bodily elements (*sama dhatu*), body humors (*sama dosha*), body energies (*samagni*), and unhindered eliminative process, it also insists that one should have pleasant disposition in his/her sensory functioning, mind, and self (*prasanna atma indriya manaha*). The role of spiritual dimension is not fully acknowledged. Following the Indian science of life, – *Ayurveda*, the regulation of *aahaara* (food), *vihaara* (recreation), *aachaara* (routine), and *vichaara* (thinking) is proposed to achieve the state of positive health and well-being.

In an interesting analysis, Shukla (2000) observes that the code of health is culturally constituted. The medical and social discourses often intermix and influence each other to promote notion(s) of health. The Indian notion of health views that a

swastha person is autolocated. Further, he notes that, in the field of health and illness, the basic condition of health is the *swaasthya*, the state of ‘being-in-itself’.

A model of pathology of human condition is given very succinctly in the Gita: *When a man thinks of objects, “attachment” for them arises; from attachment “desire” is born; from desire arises “anger” ... From anger comes “delusion”; from delusion “loss of memory”; from loss of memory the “destruction of discrimination”; from destruction of discrimination, he “perishes.”* Discrimination here means the sense to identify relationships between objects and the self. The “therapy” to this pathology of human existence is given in the subsequent *shlokas*: *“But the self-controlled man, moving among objects, with his senses under restraint, and free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace. In that peace all pains are destroyed; for, the intellect of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady. That man attains peace who, abandoning all desires, moves about without longing, without the sense of ‘I-ness’ and ‘my-ness.’”*

The Sufi traditional concepts of innate resources, bliss and serenity (*Tamianant-e-Nafs*) and the concept of self (*Kashf*) as ‘intuitive–empathic understanding’ have been studied by Beg and Beg (1970; 1996) and combined with teachings from Vedanta and Logotherapy (Viktor Frankl) to explain the concept of well being. According to them, transcendence and meaning making of the existential reality are what constitute the purpose of the creative force of life.

One of the recent methods in Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is giving a discourse. A discourse consists of material drawn from one’s cultural sources like folklore, scriptures, stories, life examples, and social treatises. In this context, the author considers Tirukkural as one of the best-suited social treatise, which can be extensively used by the counselor. As Venkatachalam observes, the most important REBT principles match well with that of Tirukkural. Tirukkural consists descriptive and

prescriptive messages encapsulated in short pithy statements.

Morality

Purushartha (values), translated as “what are desired by man” by Hiriyantha (1975), refers to the motivational aspect of human behavior. According to Dalal, *dharma* was first mentioned in the *Rigveda* and later elaborated in Gautam's *Dharmashastra* (about 600 B.C.). It is one of the four primary values in human life the other three being, *artha*, *kaama*, and *moksha*. *Artha* represents material wealth and *Kaama* represents all types of desires. *Moksha* represents liberation and freedom from the cycle of birth and death. The Indian tradition prescribes that human beings should pursue *artha* and *kaama* guided by principles of *dharma*, and strive towards *moksha*. *Dharma* has greatly influenced ways of thinking, perceiving and categorizing experiences. As Kakar (1979) stated, "In its social implication, dharma is an inherent force in human being which holds the individual and society together, or going one step further, the force which makes 'individual and society hold each other together'." The *Dharma* of a person is believed to be contingent on four factors: (a) *desh* (country/region), (b) *Kala* (period of history), (c) *shrama* (work, occupation), and (d) *guna* (biomental attributes). The concept of *Dharma* is part of the broader Hindu theory of life cycle and developmental stages (*Ashrama dharma*). It is both a process and mechanism of social integration to maintain harmonious relationship within the society. Transgression of *Dharma* is presumed to be the root cause of all social unrest and conflicts.

Summary

Studies of Indian concepts such as yoga have largely been empirical and their focus has been to verify the physiological effects of practicing the yogic postures and breathing techniques. Bhushan (2003) notes that yogic practices help in enhances memory, self-confidence, creativity and adjustment of adolescent school students. It has been recognized (Walsh, 1999; Salagame, 2002) that there exist differences in the ways in which yoga

is practiced and often the techniques are unconnected to the larger theoretical attitudes that the philosophical positions advocate for a healthy life. Nonetheless, the techniques by themselves are beneficial as noted by the quoted study.

It arises in one's mind that life is not always characterized by suffering and thus there is no need to practice detachment. The Indian texts again answer this query that it is our attachment to objects that cause us to believe in happiness or contentment. This is temporary gratification. Thus it advocates that we should not be attached (*anaasakti*) to the fruits or rewards of our actions (*nishkaama*) but nevertheless live and carry out actions.

In traditional Western psychology, morality has largely been dealt with according to the assumption of a particular approach regarding the extent of free will or determinants we have over our behavior. Williams (1992), engages in a critical debate of placing morality in the human context rather than the metaphysical. According to this paper, if traditional psychology chooses to be deterministic, it is precisely demanding to give up our understanding of what is human i.e. freedom and morality and on the other hand free will entails establishing the grounds of choice (determining the reasons of a particular decision) and the problem in distinguishing between freedom and randomness. Both positions are inescapable unless the concept of morality is placed in a human context. If there is something called agency, then its basis is in the moral truth and choices that we as a species have to discover as a collective.

According to Szasz (1960), “mental illness” if in the brain should be called neurological disorders, but if they are stemming from the inherent struggles of human beings then they are “problems in living” and therefore, question the ethics of psychotherapists who “diagnose” and “treat” them. Indian psychology has done just that by uniting human species as having same sort of problems in living but in different degrees as arising in the body, mind and consciousness.

Rao (1997, 2004) observes that the differences in conceptualization of self and the existing body of literature in both the East and the West should be integrated so as to arrive at a wholesome understanding of the human experience. While the Western perspective focused on the 'phenomenal manifestations of consciousness', the study of the Eastern perspective is complementary to the Western if the goal is to achieve a fuller grasp of consciousness and 'its role in our being'. Raja Selvam analyzes Advaita Vedanta and Jung's comparison of it with analytical psychology's concepts of self and consciousness. The two major criticisms are that Indian psychology lacks a basis in critical philosophy and the second is the existence of higher states of consciousness. The author points out that with the advent of new evidence from the quantum physics challenges the extent to which unconscious material can be made conscious along with supporting evidence that there exists a common substratum to the universe which is termed as Brahman. The Jungian self is approximate to Advaita Vedanta's *Isvara* than it is to the *Brahman*. Advaita Vedanta goes well with Jungian psychology with another level of self (the *Brahman*) and another goal for human consciousness in *moksa* or enlightenment. Jungian psychology gives Advaita Vedanta the routes for accessing spiritual and psychological requisites for enlightenment.

The import of making a comparison between Western views and findings is to not just critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses

of each but also to make the point that none is better than the other in today's time and situation. Both cultures have amalgamated in a globalised world where the youth in India on one hand are faced with the choice of being completely conditioned to the Western way of looking at the psyche and on the other hand led on to follow blindly whatever one's cultural/religious text preaches. The current generation of youth in general and a student of psychology in particular needs to consider that they are not living in one well defined culture and that an integrated model of their lived reality and desired existence needs to be reformed according to their times.

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