NCERT Solutions Ch 2 Self and Personality

Review Questions

1. What is self ? How does the Indian notion of self differ from the Western notion?

Answer

Self refers to the totality of an individual's conscious experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings with regard to herself or himself.
The Indian notion of self and the Western notion of self differ from each other by a number of important features. The most important distinction is the way the boundary is drawn between the self and the other. In the Western view, this boundary appears to be relatively fixed on the other hand, the Indian view of self is characterised by the shifting nature of this boundary. Thus, our self at one moment of time expands to fuse with the cosmos or include the others. But at the next moment, it seems to be completely withdrawn from it and focused fully on individual self (e.g., our personal needs or goals).
The Western view seems to hold clear dichotomies between self and other, man and nature, subjective and objective while the Indian view does not make such clear dichotomies.
In the Western culture, the self and the group exist as two different entities with clearly defined boundaries i.e. individual members of the group maintain their individuality while in the Indian culture, the self is generally not separated from one's own group; rather both remain in a state of harmonious co-existence.
In the Western culture, on the other hand, they often remain at a distance. That is why many Western cultures are characterised as individualistic, whereas many Asian cultures are characterised as collectivistic.

2. What is meant by delay of gratification? Why is it considered important for adult development?

Answer

Delay of gratification also known as self control is a practice which means learning to delay or defer the more pleasurable or fun loving needs and rewarding later.
It is considered important for adult development because any situations of life require resistance to situational pressures and control over ourselves. Human beings can control their behaviour the way they want which is possible through what is commonly known as 'will power'. Delay or defer the satisfaction of certain needs or practicing self control play a key role in the fulfillment of long-term goals.
Indian cultural tradition provides us with certain effective mechanisms (e.g. fasting in vrata or roza and non-attachment with worldly things) for developing self-control. A number of psychological techniques of self-control have been suggested which are:
(i) Observation of own behaviour: This provides us with necessary information that may be used to change, modify, or strengthen certain aspects of self.

(ii) Self-instruction: It is another important technique. We often instruct ourselves to do something and behave the way we want to. Such instructions are quite effective in self-regulation.

(iii) Self-reinforcement: It involves rewarding behaviours that have pleasant outcomes. For example, you may go to see a movie with friends, if you have done well in an examination. These techniques have been tried out and found quite effective with respect to self-regulation and self-control.

3. How do you define personality? What are the main approaches to the study of personality?

Answer

Personality refers to psychophysical characteristics of a person that are relatively stable across situations and over time and make her or him unique. It also define our existence and the ways in which our experiences are organised and show up in our behaviour.
A number of approaches and theories have been developed to understand and explain personality. Main approaches to the study of personality are:
(i) The type approach
(ii) The trait approach
(iii) The interactional approach
(iv) Psychodynamic approach
(v) Post frendian approach
(vi) Behavioural approach
(vii) Cultural approach
(viii) Humanistic approach

4. What is trait approach to personality? How does it differ from type approach?

Answer

Trait approach is very similar to our common experience in everyday life. These theories are mainly concerned with the description or characterisation of basic components of personality. It tries to discover the 'building blocks' of personality. Human beings display a wide range of variations in psychological attributes, yet it is possible to club them into smaller number of personality traits. For example, when we come to know that a person is sociable, we assume that s/he will not only be cooperative, friendly and helping, but also engage in behaviours that involve other social components. Thus, trait approach attempts to identify primary characteristics of people. A trait is
considered as a relatively enduring attribute or quality on which one individual differs from another. They include a range of possible behaviours that are activated according to the demands of the situation.
• The type approaches attempts to comprehend human personality by examining certain broad patterns in the observed behavioural characteristics of individuals while the trait approach focuses on the specific psychological attributes along which individuals tend to differ in consistent and stable ways.
• Each behavioural pattern of type approach refers to one type in which individuals are placed in terms of the similarity of their behavioural characteristics with that pattern while in trait approach refers to the degree of presence or absence of the concerned behavioural

quality on which individuals can be rated.

5. How does Freud explain the structure of personality?

Answer

According to Freud's theory, there are three primary structural elements of personality which are id, ego, and superego. They reside in the unconscious as forces and they can be inferred from the ways people behave.
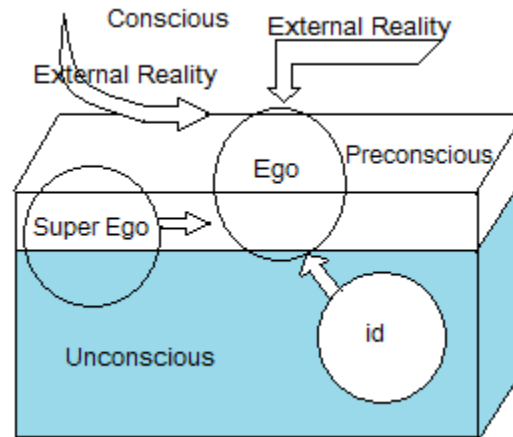
(i) Id: It is the source of a person's instinctual energy. It deals with immediate gratification of primitive needs, sexual desires and aggressive impulses. It works on the pleasure principle, which assumes that people seek pleasure and try to avoid pain. Freud considered much of a person's instinctual energy to be sexual, and the rest as aggressive. Id does not care for moral values, society, or other individuals.
(ii) Ego : It grows out of id, and seeks to satisfy an individual's instinctual needs inaccordance with reality. It works by the reality principle, and often directs the id towards more appropriate ways of behaving. The ego is patient, reasonable, and works by the reality principle.
(iii) Superego : The best way to characterise the superego is to think of it as the moral branch of mental functioning. The superego tells the id and the ego whether gratification in a particular instance is ethical. It helps control the id by internalising the parental authority through the process of socialisation.
Thus, in terms of individual functioning Freud thought of the unconscious as being composed of three competing forces. In some people, the id is stronger than the superego; in others, it is the superego. The relative strength of the id, ego and superego determines each person's stability. Freud also assumed that id is energised by two instinctual forces, called life instinct and death instinct. He paid less attention to the death instinct and focused more on the life (or sexual) instinct. The instinctual life force that energises the id is called libido. It works on the pleasure principle, and seeks immediate gratification.

6. How would Horney's explanation of depression be different from that of Alfred Adler?

Answer

Horney was another disciple of Freud who developed a theory that deviated from basic Freudian principles. She adopted a more optimistic view of human life with emphasis on human growth and self- actualisation. Horney's major contribution lies in her challenge to Freud's treatment of women as inferior. According to her, each sex has attributes to be admired by the other, and neither sex can be viewed as superior or inferior. She countered that women were more likely to be affected by social and cultural factors than by biological factors. She argued that psychological disorders were caused by disturbed interpersonal relationship during childhood. When parents' behaviour toward a child is indifferent, discouraging, and erratic, the child feels insecure and a feeling called basic anxiety results. Deep resentment toward parents or basic hostility occurs due to this anxiety. By showing excessive dominance or indifference, or by providing too much or too little approval, parents can generate among children feelings of isolation and helplessness which interfere with their healthy development.

In contrast to that, Adler's theory is known as individual psychology. His basic assumption is that human behaviour is purposeful and goal-directed. Each one of us has the capacity to choose and create. Our personal goals are the sources of our motivation. The goals that provide us with security and help us in overcoming the feelings of inadequacy are important in our personality development. In Adler's view, every individual suffers from the feelings of inadequacy and guilt, i.e. inferiority complex, which arise from childhood. Overcoming this complex is essential for optimal personality development.

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7. What is the main proposition of humanistic approach to personality? What did Maslow mean by self-actualisation?

Answer

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow have particularly contributed to the development of humanistic perspective on personality.

The most important idea proposed by Rogers is that of a fully functioning person. He believes that fulfilment is the motivating force for personality development. People try to express their capabilities, potentials and talents to the fullest extent possible. There is an inborn tendency among persons that directs them to actualise their inherited nature. Rogers makes two basic assumptions about human behaviour. One is that behaviour is goal-directed and worthwhile. The second is that people (who are innately good) will almost always choose adaptive, self-actualising behaviour. Rogers views personality development as a continuous process. It involves learning to evaluate oneself and mastering the process of self-actualisation. He recognises the role of social influences in the development of self-concept. When social conditions are positive, the self-concept and self-esteem are high. In contrast, when the conditions are negative, the self-concept and self-esteem are low. People with high self-concept and self-esteem are generally flexible and open to new experiences, so that they can continue to grow and self-actualise.

Maslow has given a detailed account of psychologically healthy people in terms of their

attainment of self-actualisation, a state in which people have reached their own fullest potential. Maslow had an optimistic and positive view of man who has the potentialities for love, joy and to do creative work. Human beings are considered free to shape their lives and to self-actualise. Self-actualisation becomes possible by analysing the motivations that govern our life. We know that biological, security, and belongingness needs (called survival needs) are commonly found among animals and human beings. Thus, an individual's sole concern with the satisfaction of these needs reduces her/him to the level of animals. The real journey of human life begins with the pursuit of self-esteem and self-actualisation needs. The humanistic approach emphasises the significance of positive aspects of life.

8. Discuss the main observational methods used in personality assessment. What problems do we face in using these methods?

Answer

The main observational methods used in personality assessment are
interview, observation, ratings, nomination, and situational tests.
(i) Interview: It is a commonly used method for assessing personality. This involves talking to the person being assessed and asking specific questions. Diagnostic interviewing generally involves in-depth interviewing which seeks to go beyond the replies given by the person. Interviews may be structured or unstructured depending on the purpose or goals of assessment.
In unstructured interviews, the interviewer seeks to develop an impression about a person by asking a number of questions. The way a person presents her/himself and answers the questions carries enough potential to reveal her/his personality.
The structured interviews address very specific questions and follow a set procedure. This is often done to make objective comparison of persons being interviewed. Use of rating scales may further enhance the objectivity of evaluations.
(ii) Observation: Observation of behaviour is another method which is very commonly used for the assessment of personality. Use of observation for personality assessment is a sophisticated procedure that cannot be carried out by untrained people. It requires careful training of the observer, and a fairly detailed guideline about analysis of behaviours in order to assess the personality of a given person.
For example, a clinical psychologist may like to observe her/his client's interaction with family members and home visitors. With carefully designed observation, the clinical psychologist may gain considerable insight into a client's personality.
(iii) Behavioural Ratings: These are frequently used for assessment of personality in educational and industrial settings. Behavioural ratings are generally taken from people who know the assessee intimately and have interacted with her/him over a period of time or have had a chance to observe her/him. They attempt to put individuals into certain categories in terms of their behavioural qualities. The categories may involve different numbers or descriptive terms. It has been found that use of numbers or general descriptive adjectives in rating scales always creates confusion for the rater. In order to use ratings effectively, the traits should be clearly defined in terms of carefully stated behavioural anchors.

(iv) Nomination: This method is often used in obtaining peer assessment. It can be used with persons who have been in long-term interaction and who know each other very well. In using nomination, each person is asked to choose one or more persons of the group with whom s/he would like to work, study, play or participate in any other activity. The person may also be asked to specify the reason for her/his choices.

(v) Situational Tests: A variety of situational tests have been devised for the assessment of personality. The most commonly used test of this kind is the situational stress test. It provides
us with information about how a person behaves under stressful situations. The test requires a person to perform a given task with other persons who are instructed to be non-cooperative and interfering. The test involves a kind of role playing. The person is instructed to play a role for which s/he is observed. A verbal report is also obtained on what s/he was asked to do. The situation may be realistic one, or it may be created through a video play.

Problems faced in using these methods:

Observation and interview methods are characterised by the following limitations:

(i) Professional training required for collection of useful data through these methods is quite demanding and time-consuming.

(ii) Maturity of the psychologist is a precondition for obtaining valid data through these techniques.

(iii) Mere presence of the observer may contaminate the results. As a stranger, the observer may influence the behaviour of the person being observed and thus not obtain good data.

Behavioural ratings suffers from the following major limitations:

(i) Raters often display certain biases that colour their judgments of different traits. For example, most of us are greatly influenced by a single favourable or unfavourable trait. This often forms the basis of a rater's overall judgment of a person. This tendency is known as the halo effect.

(ii) Raters have a tendency to place individuals either in the middle of the scale (called middle category bias) by avoiding extreme positions, or in the extreme positions (called extreme response bias) by avoiding middle categories on the scale. These tendencies can be overcome by providing raters with appropriate training or by developing such scales in which the response bias is likely to be small.

Nominations received may be analysed to understand the personality and behavioural qualities of the person. This technique has been found to be highly dependable, although it may also be affected by personal biases.

9. What is meant by structured personality tests? Which are the two most widely used structured personality tests?

Answer

Self-report measures is fairly structured personality test. This was used by Allport who suggested that the best method to assess a person is by asking her/him about herself/himself. This led to the use of self-report measures. These are fairly structured measures, often based on theory, that require subjects to give verbal responses using some kind of rating scale. The method requires the subject to objectively report her/his own

feelings with respect to various items. The responses are accepted at their face value. They are scored in quantitative terms and interpreted on the basis of norms developed for the test.

The two most widely used structured personality tests are:

(i) The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI): This inventory is widely used as a test in personality assessment. Hathaway and McKinley developed this test as a helping tool for psychiatric diagnosis, but the test has been found very effective in identifying varieties of psychopathology. Its revised version is available as MMPI-2. It consists of 567 statements. The subject has to judge each statement as 'true' or 'false' for her/him. The test is divided into 10 subscales, which seek to diagnose hypochondriasis, depression, hysteria, psychopathic deviate, masculinity-femininity, paranoia, psychasthenia, schizophrenia, mania and social introversion. In India, Mallick and Joshi have developed the Jodhpur Multiphasic Personality Inventory (JMPI) along the lines of MMPI.

(ii) Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ): Developed by Eysenck this test initially assessed two dimensions of personality, called introverted-extraverted and emotionally stable-emotionally unstable. These dimensions are characterised by 32 personality traits. Later on, Eysenck added a third dimension, called psychoticism. It is linked to psychopathology that represents a lack of feeling for others, a tough manner of interacting with people, and a tendency to defy social conventions. A person scoring high on this dimension tends to be hostile, egocentric, and antisocial. This test is also widely used.

10. Explain how projective techniques assess personality. Which projective tests of personality are widely used by psychologists?

Answer

Projective techniques is indirect method of assessment of personality. This provides us with a real picture of an individual's personality using indirect method.

Projective techniques were developed to assess unconscious motives and feelings. These techniques are based on the assumption that a less structured or unstructured stimulus or situation will allow the individual to project her/his feelings, desires and needs on to that situation. These projections are interpreted by experts. A variety of projective techniques have been developed; they use various kinds of stimulus materials and situations for assessing personality. Some of them require reporting associations with stimuli (e.g., words, inkblots), some involve story writing around pictures, some require sentence completions, some require expression through drawings, and some require choice of stimuli from a large set of stimuli.

The projective tests of personality which are widely used by psychologists are:

(i) The Rorschach Inkblot Test: This test was developed by Hermann Rorschach. The test consists of 10 inkblots. Five of them are in black and white, two with some red ink, and the remaining three in some pastel colours. The blots are symmetrical in design with a specific shape or form. Each blot is printed in the centre of a white cardboard of about 7"?10" size. The blots were originally made by dropping ink on a piece of paper and then folding the paper in half (hence called inkblot test). The cards are administered individually in two

phases. In the first phase, called performance proper, the subjects are shown the cards and are asked to tell what they see in each of them. In the second phase, called inquiry, a detailed report of the response is prepared by asking the subject to tell where, how, and on what basis was a particular response made. Fine judgment is necessary to place the subject's
responses in a meaningful context. The use and interpretation of this test requires extensive training. Computer techniques too have been developed for analysis of data.
(ii) The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT): This test was developed by Morgan and Murray. It is a little more structured than the Inkblot test. The test consists of 30 black and white picture cards and one blank card. Each picture card depicts one or more people in a variety of situations. Each picture is printed on a card. Some cards are used with adult males or females. Others are used with boys or girls. Still others are used in some combinations. Twenty cards are appropriate for a subject, although a lesser number of cards (even five) have also been successfully used. The cards are presented one at a time. The subject is asked to tell a story describing the situation presented in the picture.
(iii) Sentence Completion Test: This test makes use of a number of incomplete sentences. The starting part of the sentence is first presented and the subject has to provide an ending to the sentence. It is held that the type of endings used by the subjects reflect their attitudes, motivation and conflicts. The test provides subjects with several opportunities to reveal their underlying unconscious motivations. A few sample items of a sentence completion test are given below.
1. My father _____
2. My greatest fear is_____.
3. The best thing about my mother is _____.
4. I am proud of _____.

11. Arihant wants to become a singer even though he belongs to a family of doctors. Though his family members claim to love him but strongly disapprove his choice of career. Using Carl Rogers' terminology, describe the attitudes shown by Arihant's family.

Answer

According to Carl Rogers' terminology, People try to express their capabilities, potentials and talents to the fullest extent possible. There is an inborn tendency among persons that directs them to actualise their inherited nature. He made two assumptions about human behaviour. One is that behaviour is goal-directed and worthwhile. The second is that people (who are innately good) will almost always choose adaptive, self-actualising behaviour. He noted that self was an important element in the experience of his clients. Thus, his theory is structured around the concept of self. The theory assumes that people are constantly engaged in the process of actualising their true self. He recognises the role of social influences in the development of self-concept. When social conditions are positive, the self-concept and self-esteem are high. In contrast, when the conditions are negative, the self-concept and self-esteem are low.
Thus, Arihant family will disapprove his choice of career as they want to be a doctor to satisfy the self concept. Arihant's family will want him to pursue the career of their inherited

nature and will become stubborn about it even though they love him. They will try their best to stop him from choosing the career of singer which is not in their inheritence