

# INTRODUCTION TO PERSONALITY

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The word personality is derived from the Latin word 'Persona' means mask, used by the actors to change their appearance but in Roman period it was taken to mean the actor. The meaning of the word personality has changed little since classical times. We often say 'fine personality', 'good personality', 'poor personality' etc. on the basis of physical make up, manner of walking, talking, drawing and other similar characteristics of the individual. However, this is a very limited view and the psychological concept of personality goes further and deeper than mere appearance or outward behavior.

Different View Points to define Personality

## 1) Philosophical view point

Philosophers are of the view that the personality is ideal of perfection or self-realization or the internal self.

## 2) Sociological View Point

This view point thinks that the individual is nothing but a reflection of the society. Personality is the integration of all traits which determine the of the society. Personality is the integration of all traits which determine the role of the status of the person in society, ie. "Social effectiveness". In the Warren's dictionary it is defined that "Personality is the integrative organization of all the cognitive, affective, conative and physical characteristics of an individual as it manifests itself in local distinction from others.

## 3) Layman View Point

From this point of view, personality means those qualities which cast their influence on others. How an individual affects other persons with whom he comes in contact or the effect or impact which an individual leaves on other people is called personality. It is also understood that personality is the stimulus value which one individual has for others or the total picture of an individual's organized behavior.

## 4) Psycho analytic view point

According to Freud, personality is the combination of three components ie. Id. Ego and Super Ego which are manifested through behavior.

## 5) Psychological view point

Psychologists are of the view that personality is the sum total of all the biological innate disposition, impulses, tendencies, aptitudes, attitudes and instincts of the individual and the acquired dispositions and tendencies and instincts of the individual and the acquired dispositions and tendencies acquired by experience. This approach was criticized and other psychologist's emphasis on integration and organization in defining personality. They define personality is the entire organization of a human being at any state of his development. The way the individual adjust with the external environment is personality. Thus psychologically personality is the integrated and dynamic organization of the physical, mental, moral and social qualities of the individual as that manifests itself to others in social life.

## Definitions of Personality

Some of the important definitions of personality are

- 1) **Morton Prince** (1914): "Personality is the sum total of biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, aptitudes and instincts of the individual and the dispositions and tendencies acquired by experience"
- 2) **Gordon R.G.** (1928):- "Personality is a comprehensive term which includes character"
- 3) **Watson J.B** (1924): "Personality is the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observation over a long enough period of time to give reliable information."
- 4) **G.W. Allport** (1937):- "Personality is the dynamic organization with in the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to the environment".
- 5) **R.B. Cattell** (1967):- "Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation"
- 6) **Eysenck H.J.** (1947):- "Personality is the more or less stable and enduring organization of persons character, temperament, intellect & physique, which determine his unique adjustment to the environment"
- 7) **Guilford J.P** (1967): "An individual's personality then is his unique pattern of traits"

### **Factors Influencing or Affecting Personality**

Personality is dynamic, growing, and different in each person in physical appearance, temperament and motivation. The differences become more pronounced and complex with increasing age and maturity due to continuous interaction with the environment and accordingly each one of us develop a personality different from others. Now the question arises; how does personality develop? What causes these variations? Why do we develop different personality's inspite of basic similarities? All these can be answered if we examine the various factors which influence the structure & functions of personality. Thus the development of personality depends upon the following factors.

- (i) Physiological and physical factors (genetic or biological)
- (ii) Environmental or Social factors
- (iii) Psychological or Mental factors
- (iv) The cultural factors.

**The biological factors** affecting the development of personality are mainly three. They are

**a) Physique,**

**b) Chemique**

**c) Nervous system.**

a) Physique

An individual's personalities differ according to his physique. These aspects are height, weight, body-built, color appearance and proportion etc, which determine to a large extent the way in which he behaves towards other and how others react towards him. It is seen that in daily life the fact men are easy going and social while thin men are self controlled, irritated and unsocial. Even tall & fair persons enjoy an

advantage over their short and ugly associates. Thus the physical structure has some relation with environment and makes a change in their personality.

#### b) Chemique

Chemique is meant the possible effects of the ductless glands on the personality development. Ductless glands called endocrine glands releases hormones into the blood stream which carries them to all parts of the body. It brings about changes in physical appearance, motor functioning. intelligence and emotional stability. Eg:-Pituitary, Thyroid, Adrenal etc. Individuals with profound imbalance of ductless glands are rarely happy or well-adjusted, Glands play an important part in bodily, mental and

#### c) Nervous System

Nervous system is mainly classified as Central Nervous system (Control of our will) and Autonomous nervous system (autonomic). The conditions of the body brought by drugs, disease, diet, toxins etc. may also influence one's personality and behavior. Hence heredity lies at the root of all the possibilities of personality development.

### **2) The Environmental or Social Factors**

Physical and geographical conditions of the environment play an important role in shaping the personality of human beings at every stage of development. The type of home atmosphere parent child relationship, financial conditions, types of school and the community or society etc are some of the factors of environment which affect the personality.

Besides the role of parents in personality development the atmosphere in the family is greatly influencing. A peaceful and loving atmosphere results in children being orderly peace-loving and very

### **3) The Psychological or Mental Factors**

The psychological factors like motives, interests, attitudes, character, thinking, intelligence, reasoning, imagination, creativity, habits, mental health etc. developed by the individual also affect their personality to a great extent.

### **4) The cultural Determinants**

Every society is characterized by its cultural heritage which is transmitted from generation to generation in the form of social heredity. Thus personality of an individual is gradually shaped by the culture where he is born in. Culture is a way of life. It is a fact that we are able to distinguish one person from other on the basis of effect of his culture over his personality characteristics. Thus the attributes and values practiced in a culture have a great effect on the personality development of its members.

### **Major Characteristics**

- 1) Personality is something unique and specific. Every one of us is unique person and different from one another.
- 2) Personality is dynamic and moving force. It is never fixed & rigid. However it seems to remain stable to a large extent.

- 3) Personality is the sum total of various human qualities. It includes all the behavioral patterns. It includes cognitive, conative, affective domains and covers the conscious, activities. semiconscious & unconscious
- 4) Personality has a structure. It consists of certain dimensions. It is the combination of inner as well as outer qualities.
- 5) It is not mere physical appearance but it is the study of both physical & psychological factors as an integrated system.
- 6) It is the product of Heredity & environment
- 7) Personality exhibits self consciousness as one of its main characteristics. Man is described consciousness. as a person' when the idea of 'self' enter into his
- 8) It is subjected to disorganization & disintegration leading to severe personality disorders.
- 9) Learning & acquisition of experiences contributes towards growth & development of personality
- 10) It can be described & measured.