CHAPTER 2

REVIEW

⇒ Strengths And Well-Being In Youth: Studies and research done

⇒ Research in the field of Measurement of strengths

⇒ Problem Statement

⇒ Need for adaptation of VIA-IS youth to Indian population

⇒ Adaptation Procedure: Important Considerations
With the work of Cohen & Pressman (2005) at Carnegie Mellon University, the positive mind-body connection is making its way into academia and the public.

Cohen & Pressman (2005) concluded that Positive Emotional Style may play a more important role in health than previously thought. Cohen and his colleagues found that people who are happy, lively, calm or exhibit other positive emotions are less likely to become ill when they are exposed to a cold virus than those who report few of these emotions. In that study, Cohen found that when they do come down with a cold, happy people report fewer symptoms than would be expected from objective measures of their illness.

In contrast, reporting more negative emotions such as depression, anxiety and anger was not associated with catching colds. That study, however, left open the possibility that the greater resistance to infectious illness among happier people may not have been due to happiness, but rather to other characteristics that are often associated with reporting positive emotions such as optimism, extraversion, feelings of purpose in life and self-esteem.

Cohen et al., (2006) in a recent study with controls for those variables produced the same result: The people who report positive emotions are less likely to catch colds and also less likely to report symptoms when they do get sick. This held true regardless of their levels of optimism, extraversion, purpose and self-esteem, and of their age, race, gender, education, body mass or pre-study immunity to the virus.

This study in addition to others gives the much needed empirical support to the theoretical concepts of the eudaimonia and its observable effects. Over the course of development in the field, three surprising empirical findings have already emerged: first, it discovered a remarkable similarity in the relative endorsement of the 24 character strengths by adults around
the world and within the United States (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005a). The most commonly endorsed ("most like me") strengths, in 40 different countries, from Azerbaijan to Venezuela, are kindness, fairness, authenticity, gratitude, and open-mindedness, and the lesser strengths consistently include prudence, modesty, and self-regulation. The correlations of the rankings from nation to nation are very strong, ranging in the .80s, and defy cultural, ethnic, and religious differences. The same ranking of greater versus lesser strengths characterizes all 50 U.S. states—except for religiousness, which is somewhat more evident in the South—and holds across gender, age, red versus blue states, and education. These results, the authors purport, reveal something about universal human nature and/or the character requirements minimally needed for a viable society. Second, a comparison of the strengths profiles of U.S. adults and U.S. adolescents revealed overall agreement on ranking yet a noticeably lower agreement than that found between U.S. adults and adults in any other nation that have been studied (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005b). Hope, team-work, and zest were more common among U.S. youths than U.S. adults, whereas appreciation of beauty, authenticity, leadership, and open-mindedness were more common among adults. Third, although part of the definition of a character strength is that it contributes to fulfillment, strengths "of the heart"—zest, gratitude, hope, and love are more robustly associated with life satisfaction than are the more cerebral strengths such as curiosity and love of learning (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004).

The field of Positive Psychology lays major thrust in the field of empirically testing its theory leading to construction and evaluation of a number of instruments addressing the purpose of quantifying constructs like satisfaction, strengths, happiness and the like. Some of the widely used tests in the Positive Psychology are Subjective Happiness Scale, Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory, VIA Inventory of Strengths to name a few. The Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), is a 4-item scale of global subjective
happiness. Two items ask respondents to characterize themselves using both absolute ratings and ratings relative to peers, whereas the other two items offer brief descriptions of happy and unhappy individuals and ask respondents the extent to which each characterization describes them. The SHS has been validated in 14 studies with a total of 2,732 participants. The TRIM is a self-report instrument that assesses the motivations assumed to underlie forgiving: Avoidance and Revenge. Responses to 12 statements referring to a transgression recipient's current thoughts and feelings about the transgressor are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Recently, a six-item subscale to reflect benevolent motivations toward the transgressor has been under development. The TRIM subscales not only correlate with a variety of relationship, offense, and social-cognitive variables, they have also demonstrated strong relationships to a single-item measure of forgiveness. Growing evidence shows that certain strengths of character—for example, hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective—can buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma, preventing or mitigating disorders in their wake (Park & Peterson, 2006b). Character strengths also help youth to thrive. Good character is associated with desired outcomes such as school success, leadership, tolerance and the valuing of diversity, the ability to delay gratification, kindness, and altruism (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). Good character is associated with a reduction of problems such as substance use, alcohol abuse, smoking, violence, depression, and suicidal ideation (Park, 2004b).

Individual strengths and their role in overall well-being has also been extensively studied. The efficacy of gratitude interventions has been studied in clinical samples (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005), student populations (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006), and general adult populations (Seligman, Steen, & Peterson, 2005). Using another intervention known as "three good things in life," Seligman, Steen, and Peterson (2005) asked a different group of participants to write down three things that went well each day. In addition, they were asked to
provide a causal explanation for each good thing. The participants were instructed to perform the exercise every night for one week. At the one-month follow-up, participants using this exercise were happier and less depressed than they had been at baseline. More importantly, they stayed happier and less depressed at the three-month and six-month follow-ups. Empirical studies have shown that those who kept gratitude journals felt better about their lives. Compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events, those who kept gratitude journals on a weekly basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

STRENGTHS AND WELL-BEING IN YOUTH: STUDIES AND RESEARCH DONE

Character strengths are related to achievement, life satisfaction, and well-being of children and youth. Recent research suggests that when people find new ways to engage their strengths, they make significant improvements in their sense of purpose, overall well-being, and life satisfaction.

As yet, the mechanism by which strengths enhance well-being remains unclear or unsubstantiated. The link between strengths identification itself and well-being deserves attention (Park & Peterson, 2009). Linley (2008) notes that effects of strengths identification include a sense of validation and appreciation. Clearly it's an uplifting process, and improved self-esteem or broader positive affect may contribute to well-being. Evidence suggests however, this is not fully responsible; the jobs, relationships and hobbies people identify as most fulfilling are those in keeping with the signature strengths, which were at the time unidentified (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Seligman (2002) argues that fulfillment is inherent in virtuous action, rather than a consequence of its. Supporting this idea, Davies and
Boniwell (2009) found well-being was predicted by deployment of both an individual's top five and bottom five strengths. Interestingly, the state of flow was predicted by deployment of the top five strengths only. This supports the notion that fulfillment is inherent in virtue, but also indicates that the signature strengths are distinguishable by a subjective sense of engagement in their deployment.

These key findings associating deployment of signature strengths as personal fulfillment and flow mark character strengths apart from personality traits and support the conceptualization of strengths as being energizing via their authenticity (Linley, 2008). Such findings also fit the Peterson et al's (2007) demonstration of a mediation of hedonism, flow and meaning in the relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction. As only partial mediators, however, they are not sufficient to fully explain this relationship. Linley (2008) emphasizes a neurobiological basis underlying the authentic and energizing nature of strengths, and to pursue this argument it is now crucial to obtain supporting cognitive neuropsychological evidence for understanding the neurological and cognitive underpinnings of strengths and their relationship to well functioning.

The potential applications for strengths approaches for well-being are vast, ranging from executive coaching, youth development, offender rehabilitation and ageing (Linley & Harrington, 2006) to clinical psychology, where the VIA is asserted as a starting point for the alternative DSM, with psychological disorder reframed as the absence, opposite or exaggeration of character strengths (Peterson, 2006b).

The population for whom a strengths-based approach seems particularly invaluable is youth, who are at a critical development stage and making key choices about the future. An association between character strengths in youth and academic success, health promoting behaviour and life satisfaction have been reported (Park & Peterson, 2006; Ma et al 2008,
Lounsbury et al. 2009) and the literature consistently advocates cultivating specific strengths in youth to these ends.

The evidence that character strengths are ubiquitously valued, desirable in industry and society and associated with the 'good life' not only suggests strengths development has a place in education, but that solely academic measures of success are too narrow (Park, 2009). Beyond cultivating good character in schools, perhaps we should be posing deeper questions about societal recognition given to character strengths. Are education's strictly academic measures of success sufficient for the individual, employers and wider society? What capabilities might society and industry miss from those individuals who slip through the academic net? And could strengths identification direct and empower those individuals currently branded 'fail' by the education system?

Evidence suggests academic failure may damage young people's motivation to pursue their work and life potential, and that strengths-based measures of success may have a supplementary role in education.

For example, one specific yet relevant youth population worthy of consideration is the UK's relatively high proportion of teenage parents. Cater and Coleman (2006) note repeated failed government teen pregnancy interventions may reflect a misconception that teen pregnancy is accidental, when evidence suggests it is often planned. What might motivate a teenager to plan a pregnancy? Evidence suggests poor academic performance and diminished self-efficacy play a significant role, and this is an example of where a strengths framework in education might prove uniquely valuable.

Low academic performance as a significant precursor (not consequence) to teen pregnancy has been replicated internationally (Wellings et al. 2001; Botting et al., 1998; Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Fergusson & Woodward, 2000; Yampolskaya et al., 2002), and has also been found as
the only direct predictive risk factor, controlling for other risks such as parenting behaviour, parent education, deviant peers and risky behaviours (Scaramella et al, 1998).

Cater and Coleman (2006) found planned teen pregnancy is characterized by low academic achievement, poor self-efficacy beliefs and a desire to prove capability: "Bringing up a baby was perceived as providing a sense of purpose, one that provided a sense of capability and satisfaction, and was better than having a low paid, 'dead-end' job." (p.65).

The importance of self-efficacy beliefs are generalizable to other students; Wilson and Michaels (2006) note poor self-efficacy beliefs are common in struggling students who react to frustration and failure by resisting academics, while Pajares (2009) notes academic achievement is positively associated with self-efficacy, which in turn is critical to the life choices students go on to make.

A hypothesis worthy of research is that students' diminished self-efficacy might be tackled not only by aims at improving academic performance (the current role of the education system) but by broadening measures of success. Strengths-based measures seem uniquely appropriate for this task not only because they may enhance self-efficacy for all by identifying valued capabilities beyond a strictly academic framework, but because they offer direction, identifying those areas in which an individual naturally finds engagement while outlining a valued skillset relevant to the workplace.

Interestingly, Steen et al (2003) demonstrated an encouraging appreciation for strengths from young people; they not only believed character strengths were desirable and worthy of recognition, but were highly energized in discussion of the topic.

If psychologists believe every young person, regardless of academic
prowess, has strengths worthy of contribution in life and work, this hypothesis warrants research.

The strengths research is in its infancy and robust construct development is a critical next step before great strides in its application can be made. The important groundwork for creating a vocabulary for strengths has however, begun.

Transcending barriers between groups, a universal language of strengths may identify pathways to a successful and happy life for all (Linley & Harrington, 2006). Where gaps in early knowledge inevitably exist, the diverse evidence of associations between strengths and personal engagement and wellbeing demonstrate the potential application for the strengths approach in broad, meaningful and worthy of ongoing pursuit.

In terms of educational application, if industry and society value character strengths, by giving them due recognition alongside academic achievement, strengths-based success measures might identify pathways where every individual can succeed in work and society, enhancing self-efficacy and motivating all young people equally (with or without academic success) to go on to flourish.

It is argued that recent times have seen significant changes in young people's transitions, because the nature of the world in which they live has changed dramatically. In this new world young people have greater opportunity but less certainty about their futures, requiring them to be more reflective and make more reasoned choices about their futures (Beck 1992). At the same time, a range of social and economic changes have meant that transitions can be more difficult for young people to achieve and that this transitional phase of life is becoming longer and more complex (Valentine, 2003), though as noted above, these changes have not affected all young people in the same way, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds tending to have different patterns of transition.
than those from more privileged backgrounds (Bynner, 2005). At one time aspects such as class, gender, ethnicity and disability may have been more predictive of likely future is for young people, although these features are also likely to have masked wide-ranging experiences of becoming adult. Thus the assumed commonality of experience of transition is increasingly being questioned in the era of individualisation, in parallel with increasing concern about the future that young people will have.

Hence it is clear that young people were anyone for that matter do not follow a common path to positive development. It is also known now that character strengths lead to a life of fulfillment. Hence the logical conclusion is that children should be encouraged to develop these internal strengths during their academy climb from kindergarten through high school. In the famous words of Martin Luther King Jr, "we must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education." So when we think of education in the broadest sense of the word, it is important to consider how kids develop character strengths during childhood and adolescence that determine the kind of adults they become.

This recent interests of researchers into cultivation of character strengths in youth aimed at bringing about more meaningful positive development has led to the development of positive youth development (PYD) perspective. This is a strengths-based conception of adolescence. Derived from developmental systems theory, the perspective stressed that PYD emerges and the potential plasticity of human development is aligned with developmental assets. From this perspective, youth are not broken, in need of psychological repair, or problems to be managed (Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray & Foster,·1998). Rather, all youth are seen as resources to be developed (Roth & Brooks-Gunn 2003).
These findings have important implications for educators, parents, mental health professionals, and policy makers who concern themselves with the promotion of positive development among young people. First, schools and youth programs should start to measure young people’s assets, like the VIA character strengths, as much as they measure deficits and shortcomings. The tracking of problems and weaknesses has a long lineage within education and mental health, whereas measures of positive development such as character strengths are neither as numerous nor as well developed (Park & Peterson, 2005). By and large, schools, youth programs, and societies do not monitor positive development and outcomes, despite the proliferation of character education programs.

One measures what one values, and one values what one measures. If society really cares about good character among young people, we should be assessing strengths and paying attention to how they develop. Educators and parents are already busy measuring young people’s academic abilities and monitoring the progress of learning. We hope that someday schools will also assess the character strengths of students and just as diligently record the progress of their development.

Second, educators and policy makers should pay attention to particular character strengths. Research consistently shows that strengths of the “heart” like love and gratitude, those that connect people together, are more strongly associated with well-being than are strengths of the “head” that are necessarily individual in nature—e.g., creativity, critical thinking, and appreciation of beauty and excellence (Park & Peterson, 2008; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Formal education has long stressed the latter strengths, but if an additional goal of education and youth programs is to encourage a psychologically healthy life, the research results suggest that the former strengths deserve equal attention.

The character strengths – perseverance, love, gratitude, and hope – predict academic achievement in middle school students and college students
Character strengths were also found to be related to achievement, life satisfaction, and well-being in children and youth (Park & Peterson, 2008). Academic achievement among school children is predicted by perseverance and temperance strengths (Peterson & Park, 2009). Similar results are found as well among college students (Lounsbury et al., 2009). Learning occurs not just within people but among them, and character strengths can facilitate the process. Lounsbury et al., (2009) in their research demonstrated extensive, and in some cases, substantial, relationships between character strengths and student satisfaction and academic achievement.

Furthermore, the strengths of bravery and appreciation of beauty play a role in successful recovery from illness and spirituality/religiousness is associated with a life of meaning and purpose. In a longitudinal study, it was found that effective teachers—judged by the gains of their students on standardized tests—are socially intelligent and show zest and humor.

Taken together, these findings imply that the encouragement of particular character strengths would not only make young people happier, healthier, and more socially connected but also help them do better at school and to be more productive at their eventual work. Attention to young people’s character is not a luxury for our society but a necessity, and it requires no tradeoff with traditional academic goals.

Third, the VIA classification provides a useful vocabulary for people to talk about character strengths in an appropriately nuanced way (Park, 2004b; Park & Peterson, 2008). Simply saying that someone has good character (or not) does not lead to anywhere useful. In contrast, using the strengths concepts and measures associated with VIA classification, people can describe the profile of strengths that characterize each individual. The VIA measures allow comparison of character strengths across individuals but also within individuals. That is, they can be scored ipsatively (e.g., rank ordered for an individual) to identify one’s
signature strengths regardless of where he or she may stand compared to others.

Such a strength-based approach would be particularly useful for working with students having a history of disability, poor achievement, and other troubles. When we compare these individuals to the norm, as often we do, it may be difficult to find anything at which they are good. However, by considering the profile of the 24 VIA strengths within an individual, we can identify those strengths that are most salient for that person. And then, educators, parents and professionals can help young people to use these strengths in their lives, in and out of school.

A strengths-based approach can be used with young people at any level and of any ability. Because signature strengths are the ones people already possess, it is often easier and more satisfying to work with and on these strengths. Once young people build their confidence by using and developing their signature strengths, they can be taught how to use these strengths to work on their less-developed strengths. It can be frustrating and difficult to work only on weaknesses and problems. Young people may give up or become defensive or indifferent about their problems. However, if discussions and interventions start with the strengths of young people—things at which they are already proficient—rapport can be built, and motivation thereby increased. The net effect of a strengths-based approach should enhance success of any and all interventions.

The exercise of signature strengths is particularly fulfilling. Consider a study that was done with adults who completed a VIA survey and identified their top strengths, who were then asked to use these strengths for a week in novel ways (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Relative to a comparison group without this instruction, these individuals increased their happiness and also decreased their depression at six months follow-up. These changes were evident if research participants continued to use their strengths in new ways. Finding novel ways to use
strengths every day is critical and reflects the importance of ongoing personal effort in producing a flourishing life.

Researchers have also been interested in how strengths of character in the VIA Classification develop and change, although the primary goal was to establish the groundwork—the classification and the measures (Park & Peterson, 2009). Given the desirable consequences of character strengths, there is good reason to ask how they can be strengthened among those who possess them or created from scratch among those who lack them. Here, Kurt Lewin’s (1947) adage is highly relevant. He had said that the best way to understand a phenomenon—in this case good character—is to try and change it. It is clear from research that character strengths among youth and among adults are relatively stable across time, a finding in keeping with the view of them as trait-like. The character strengths also show interpretable developmental trajectories. For example, the least common strengths among young children and adolescents are those that require cognitive maturation: e.g., appreciation of beauty and excellence, forgiveness, modesty, and open-mindedness (Park & Peterson, 2006a, 2006c; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006).

This work is in its infancy, but researchers have so far learned that character strengths are influenced by nurture and nature. Indeed, a variety of influences contribute to development of good character—genes, family, schools, peers, and communities. Not surprisingly, the character strengths of parents and children tend to converge, especially between fathers and sons and between mothers and daughters. In a twin study that compared similarities in the VIA strengths in identical versus fraternal twins, it was found that each of the strengths is moderately heritable, as are many individual differences (Steger, Hicks, Kashdan, Krueger, & Bouchard, 2007). The study additionally showed that shared family environment influenced some of the strengths (e.g., love of learning), an unusual result in this type of research, which rarely finds any influence of.
growing up in a given family after common genetics are controlled (Dunn & Plomin, 1992).

Perhaps family influence is more relevant for positive characteristics than for the negative characteristics typically on focus in twin studies. For virtually all of the VIA strengths, non-shared family environment (e.g., peers and teachers) proved the most important influence. Dramatic events can increase character strengths. For example, in the six months after the 9/11 attacks, the character strengths of faith (religiousness), hope, and love were elevated among US respondents but not among European respondents (Peterson & Seligman, 2003). Successful recovery from physical illness is associated with increases in the strengths of bravery, kindness, and humor, whereas successful recovery from psychological disorder is associated with modest increases in the strengths of appreciation of beauty and love of learning (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006). And exposure to trauma results in increases in the character strengths of religiousness, gratitude, kindness, hope, and bravery—precisely the components of post-traumatic growth (Peterson, Park, Pole, D’Andrea, & Seligman, 2008).

None of these studies had a fine-grained design, and we do not know the process by which strengths of character develop. The VIA Classification is intentionally descriptive and not based on any given theory. However, researchers do have some ideas about how character strengths are created, increased, sustained, and displayed.

It is now believed that character strengths are habits, evident in thoughts, feelings, and actions. (cf. Aristotle, 350 BCE/2000). They are certainly not latent entities. No one is a “good kid deep down at heart” unless he or she shows good character in ways that can be seen.

When we say that character strengths are trait-like, we mean only that the habits to which they refer are relatively stable across time and relatively
general across situations. No further meaning should be inferred, and the fact that character strengths as measured are moderately heritable does not mean that they are immutable or singular things (Peterson, 2006).

According to Aristotle, virtues (character strengths) can be taught and acquired only by practice. Aquinas similarly argued that a virtue is a habit that people develop only by choosing the good and consistently acting in accord. Other scholars have made the same point that character must be developed by doing and not just by thinking or talking about it (e.g., Maudsley, 1898). These various notions about virtue imply that character can be cultivated by good parenting, schooling, and socialization and that it becomes instantiated through habitual action.

Positive role models are also important for the development of good character (Bandura, 1977; Sprafkin, Liebert, & Poulos, 1975). Adults in young people's lives may play important roles as character mentors. Indeed, we are all role models, for better or for worse, and we need to act in ways worthy of emulation. Remember the saying: “Children may not listen to their parents, but they never fail to imitate them.” If adults value and want to teach young people good character, they should start by showing them how through their own actions. We visited a private high school a few years ago and were impressed that the “no makeup” policy for students was followed as well by their teachers, even though it was not in any teacher manual, simply because it gave teachers the moral authority and credibility to enforce the rules. Finally, we assume that the situation matters not only for acquiring character strengths but also for using them. It is obviously easier to display certain character strengths in some settings than in others.

Character development programs need to teach specific activities of strengths and encourage young people to keep using them in their daily lives (Park & Peterson, 2008, 2009). Saying “do your best” or “be the best that you can be” is not a good way to cultivate good character.
Young people need to be instructed to choose the target strengths on which they want to focus, to set specific and measurable goals, and to devise concrete action plans to achieve these goals. For example, if kindness is the chosen target strength, saying hello to at least one new person each day at school provides an effective goal and action plan. Continuous monitoring and journaling of progress are critical. In short, one must make a measurable life style change. An individualized program for cultivating character based on an individual's character strength profile may be more effective than a general—one size fits all—program for everyone.

Chanting slogans or putting up banners or holding monthly school assemblies will not be as effective as an individualized program for each young person that encourages him or her to behave in different ways. Change does not occur in a vacuum, and a first step in cultivating strengths of character is to legitimize a strengths vocabulary in whatever settings people happen to be. Here the VIA Project can be helpful by providing the words with which we can describe our own strengths and those of others, whether they be strengths that already exist or strengths that we want to build. Then one needs to start using these words often enough so that they do not sound awkward or quaint.

In conclusion, it cannot be emphasized enough that application of character strengths is a vital art of positive youth development and it gets even more important in the current scenario of cut throat competition and rising stress levels.

RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF MEASUREMENT AND CLASSIFICATION OF STRENGTHS

To arrive at the twenty-four strengths, Peterson and Seligman (2004) collected many dozen of inventory of virtues and strength, from historical and contemporary sources. It is possible to affirm through the observation and analysis of many writings that most of the thoughts and tendencies
related to virtues are derived from ancient people. Times may change the way to focus on and to announce ethics and virtues, but the essence remains the same, because the essence of life in human beings are ethical values or virtues (Carr & Steutel, 1999). The main point is to accept that ethical values benefit in all aspects of life and then to be aware of these advantages and is to start applying and developing them in a daily activities in order to find more quality in life, success, harmony and joy.

Throughout history, virtues and strengths have been a subject of intrigue. The terms "ethical values", "virtues" and "character education values are strengths" may be considered close related for the purpose of current research. "Moral virtues" and "moral character" can also be thought of in the same vein provided they do not include religious connotations. Wynne (1998) emphasised, "many educators are re – discovering an historic truth, that could character and good learning complement each other". In ancient Greece, for Aristotle's ethics, to be virtuous was a practice of life, which if done well, nurtures the good life. Socrates affirmed that the purpose of acquiring knowledge is to live better lives.

Although the importance of character and strengths has been long known, theorists called it a subject of Philosophy rather than Psychology for a long time. Gradually however the focus was brought back as discussed earlier. The most frequent objection to previous classification schemes is that they fall short of being universal and are in fact idiosyncratic, culturally bound, and laden with tacit values. Inshort, goes the typical argument, there are n universal when it comes to virtue. But perhaps there are some ubiquitous virtues and values that can be identified by looking for them at the appropriate level of abstraction.

The task of proposing an exhaustive list of virtues is so easy that it has been done hundredsof times. Moral philosophers, theologians, legislators, educators, and parents all have ideas about what character means, and few have resisted the temptation to articulate a definitivelist of the virtues that constitute the well-lived life. The most frequent objection to previous classification schemes is that they fall short of being universal and
are in fact idiosyncratic, culturally bound, and laden with tacit values. In short, goes the typical argument, there are no universals when it comes to virtue.

Coming back to Seligman and Petersons 24 strength in question here, they arrived at it after reviewing the strengths, virtues, values given by different historical and contemporary sources and compiling it into what they refer to as the catalogues of Virtues and strengths. They limited the search to ancient traditions recognized for their enduring impact on human civilization. In their attempt to make this catalogue exhaustive and possess mutually exclusive categories, if there were more than one possible entrant, they chose the one that reflected the most crucial aspects of the tradition under study. The results of the catalogue are listed in Appendix - I.

So far we have attempted to understand the basic premise of the field of Positive Psychology. We also know that character strengths of an individual aid him to flourish and lead a fulfilled life. It is therefore a logical conclusion that we should next explore the available instruments for quantification of character strengths.

The focus of the current study is the youth population and hence we shall limit this discussion to the 198-item VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth) authored by Nansook Park and Christopher Peterson. This instrument is intended for use by young people (ages 10—17). It is a face-valid self-report questionnaire that uses 5-point Likert-style items to measure the degree to which respondents endorse each of the 24 strengths of character in the VIA Classification. It takes 45 minutes to complete. All scales have satisfactory alphas (> .70). The VIA-Youth has been validated against self- and other-nomination of character strengths and correlates with measures of subjective well-being, happiness, and school grades.
Raising virtuous children is an ultimate goal not only of all parents and educators but also of all societies. Across different eras and cultures, identifying character strengths (virtues) and cultivating them in children and youth have been among the chief interests of philosophers, theologians, and educators. With a few exceptions, these topics have been sadly neglected by psychologists whose main focus so far has been the opposite of virtues that is the interest has mainly stemmed from maladjusted behavior and its correction. However, the emerging field of positive psychology specifically emphasizes building the good life by identifying individual strengths of character and fostering them (Seligman, 2002). Character strengths are now receiving attention by psychologists interested in positive youth development. They may contribute to a variety of positive outcomes as well as work as a buffer against a variety of negative outcomes, including psychological disorders. Although the interest is focused on long-term developmental trajectory of good character, it is not plausible to use the same measures across the lifespan. Adolescents may show their bravery by the type of clothes they wear or their willingness to befriend otherwise ostracized classmates. Adults in contrast may show their bravery by dissenting from the majority in town meetings or by blowing the whistle on wrong-doing at work. There is clear continuity in the psychological meaning of these acts, although the behaviors of course differ across developmental stages. So, there is a need for parallel measures across the lifespan that are at the same time developmentally appropriate. It was precisely for this reason that VIA-youth was devised that uses developmentally-appropriate questions but measure the same components of character among youth and adults.

The VIAyouth project first identified consensual components of character and then devised ways to assess these components as individual differences. The components of good character exist at different levels of abstraction. Virtues are the core characteristics valued by moral
philosophers and religious thinkers: wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence.

These six broad categories of virtue emerge consistently from historical surveys (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2002). Character strengths are the psychological ingredients—processes or mechanisms—that define the virtues. In other words, they are distinguishable routes to displaying one or another of the virtues. For example, the virtue of wisdom can be achieved through such strengths as curiosity, love of learning, open-mindedness, creativity, and what we call perspective—having a big picture on life. The entries for the VIA Classification were arrived at by reviewing pertinent literatures (contemporary and historical) that addressed good character—from psychiatry, youth development, character education, religion, ethics, philosophy, organizational studies, and psychology (e.g., Peterson, 2003). From the many candidate strengths identified, the list was winnowed by combining redundancies and applying the criteria discussed earlier.

When these criteria were applied to the candidate strengths identified through literature searches and brainstorming, what resulted were 24 positive traits organized under six broad virtues. What distinguishes the VIA Classification from previous attempts to articulate the components of good character is its simultaneous concern with broad-based assessment. The strategy most extensively developed to date entails self-report surveys able to be completed by respondents in a single session. Several versions of the questionnaire for youth, the VIA Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth) were devised and experimented with. Different item formats and phrasings were tried before arriving at the current inventory, which is still under development. A sample of items in the VIA-youth is as follows:
Initially separate inventories were created for preadolescents and adolescents by adapting items from the adult survey and phrasing them in what was thought were developmentally appropriate ways. This work was informed by the results of separate focus groups with developmental and educational psychologists and with students in 20 different high school classes in Michigan (Steen, Kachorek, & Peterson, 2003). It was then decided that the preadolescents and adolescents versions were not sufficiently different, so a single inventory was created which was suitable for children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17. The researchers also varied the response format (3-point scales versus 5-point scales) before concluding that 5-point scales were able to be used by even the youngest of the respondents and that they yielded more reliable composites.

It was found that most individuals in a small sample of 8-year olds had difficulty completing the VIA-Youth, and so it is recommend that the measure be used only with children who are at least 10 years of age. However, 10-year olds show a tendency to “inflate” across the board their self-ratings of character strengths, just as they do measures of self-esteem or wellbeing, perhaps as a result of egocentrism. Accordingly, comparisons between pre-adolescents and adolescents on the VIA-Youth scores should be interpreted with a caution.
The latest measure contains 182 items (7-9 items for each of the 24 strengths, placed in a nonsystematic order) and a small number of demographic questions. This Version currently is being developed. Most of the scales include one or more reverse-scored items, although the author believes it should have more such items, and the next version of the VIA-Youth will include a greater number of reverse-scored items. These have proved difficult to write given the conceptualization of character strengths as involving more than the absence of the negative. That is, there could be questions that tap—for example—meanness, but someone who fails to endorse these questions is not necessarily kind. Another challenge faced is the need to keep the VIA-Youth short enough not to burden young respondents but long enough so that individual scales are still reliable.

Previous and current versions of the VIA-Youth has been completed by more than 1400 middle and high school students of varying ethnicities and SES levels in seven different states (Alabama, California, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas). These inventories were administered in a group format during regular class times by the regular classroom teachers, who read the instructions aloud to the students and answered any questions by the students. It took 40-45 minutes for students to complete the survey. About 3% of respondents fell into a pattern of answering all the questions on a given page with the same option; their data were excluded from the final analyses. Information on the disability status of individual students was not collected. Research is also underway across the world to test, validate and adapt the inventory to various nations and cultures.

Although it is preliminary, a recent study with high school students provides promising evidence of the reliability and validity of the VIA-Youth. Along with measures of subjective well-being, the most recent version of the VIA-Youth was completed by 306 students in two different
Philadelphia public schools (46% eight graders, 30% ninth graders, and 24% tenth graders). The sample consisted of 50% males and 50% females. Fifty-three percent self identified as African-American, 5% as Asian-American, 8% as Latino, 1% as Native American, 27% as white, and 6% as “other.” Overall, mean scores for all strengths are in the positive range but still show variation (Appendix-II). Most scales have moderate to satisfactory alphas (see Table 3), although the strengths of temperance have proven more difficult to measure reliably than other strengths. The same challenge in writing converging temperance items for adults was also found, implying that these characteristics may be less “traited” (more contextualized) than other strengths in the classification.

There are gender differences. Girls score higher than boys on a number of the strengths (e.g., appreciation of beauty, open-mindedness, gratitude, kindness, love, perspective, spirituality; all ps < .05). Age differences are also observed. In general, tenth graders score higher than eighth graders on most of the strengths, although tenth graders show a slight decrease in the strengths of temperance and spirituality (all ps < .05). There are no meaningful ethnic differences on any of the scales except for spirituality, where non-white students (especially African-Americans) score higher than white students (p < .001). The results also support the validity of the VIA-Youth. Students’ subjective well-being correlated with most of the interpersonal strengths, a finding consistent with results from our studies of adults (ps < .001). Strengths of temperance predict grades in English, math, and science courses, even when ability test scores are controlled (ps < .01). Principal component analysis of scale scores using varimax rotation suggest a four factor solution—not surprisingly a somewhat simpler structure than the five- or six-factor solution we usually find for adults (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, in press). Tentatively three of these factors were identified as akin to basic traits captured in the Big Five taxonomy: conscientiousness (e.g., prudence, self-control, persistence), openness to experience (e.g., creativity, curiosity, zest), and agreeableness (e.g., kindness, fairness, forgiveness), plus a fourth factor comprised mainly of St. Paul’s theological virtues (e.g., spirituality, hope, and love).
As development of the VIA-Youth and obtaining larger samples is underway, further exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses both of individual items and scale scores are needed to confirm this solution.

Studies with previous versions of the VIA-Youth further support the validity of the scale (Dahlsgaard, Davis, Peterson, & Seligman, 2002). Self-nomination of strengths correlate with the majority of the matching scale scores. Teacher nomination of strengths correlate with the matching scale scores for about half of the strengths—those manifest in everyday behavior as opposed to those requiring specific occasions (like the experience of fear or threat for the display of courage). Also, teacher ratings of student popularity correlate with interpersonal strengths.

Although the work is in progress, findings support the potential utility of the VIA-Youth measure for assessing character strengths among youth. First, it is essential to understand how these measures might be used in basic research. Almost all of the strengths in the VIA Classification have been the subject of previous empirical research using various strategies of assessment. However, despite likely links, these lines of research have been conducted in isolation from one another, in part because an efficient battery of strength measures has not existed. One could assemble such a battery by collating existing measures, but respondent burden would quickly become prohibitive as more and more surveys are added. The VIA-Youth in contrast allow 24 different strengths to be assessed comprehensively and efficiently, making research possible that looks at the joint and interactive effects of different character strengths.

Furthermore, the VIA measures allow an investigator to control for one strength when ascertaining the correlates or consequences of another. Conclusions can thereby become more crisp. For example, a researcher using the VIA measures would be able to say that spirituality has (or does not have) consequences above-and-beyond contributions of associated
strengths like hope, a conclusion not possible if only measures of spirituality are used in a study.

Second, the VIA measures can be used in applied research to evaluate prevention and intervention programs for positive youth development. Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) reported that character-building is the second most frequently-cited goal of youth development programs.

Despite growing interest in character education curricula and wellness promotion programs, empirical validation of their effectiveness is scant (Eccles & Goorman, 2002). In some cases, strengths of character are the explicit outcome of interest, and in other cases, one or another character strength is proposed as a mediator or moderator of the effects of the intervention on other outcomes. The availability of our character measures will allow such interventions to be rigorously evaluated and perhaps will lead to the discovery of unanticipated effects of interventions. Eventually, this information will provide a concrete basis for designing effective youth development programs.

Third, the VIA-Youth may have some utility—theoretical and practical—when scored ipsatively. That is, its scales not only allow comparisons and contrasts of character strengths scores among individuals and groups, but they also can be used to identify an individual’s “signature strengths” relative to his or her other strengths. The researchers have speculated that most individuals have such signature strengths. Encouraging youth to identify their defining strengths of character and to use them at work, love, and play may provide a route to the psychologically fulfilling life (Seligman, 2002). The effects of naming these strengths for an individual and encouraging their deployment deserve study. It is worth emphasizing that ipsative assessment of character strengths is not the same as the specification of cutpoints—e.g., decreing that someone who scores above 4.5 on our curiosity scale is curious, whereas someone who scores below 4.5 is not. Indeed, the
conceptualization of character strengths as traits—dimensions or continua—argues against the use of cutpoints except as a shorthand way of saying that individuals score relatively high or relatively low in a strength. This is hardly a novel conclusion; modern personality theories no longer posit types of people, despite the intuitive appeal of being able to speak about someone as an introvert or an optimist (Peterson, 1992).

Fourth, although it has been concluded that the measures developed are efficient, they are not as instantaneous as exit interviews, and they would be expensive if used with state or national samples. The surveys take as long as 40-45 minutes to complete, and younger respondents require supervision to prevent break-off effects due to wandering attention. As noted, VIA-Youth is not designed for practitioners looking for single indicators of character strengths. Character strengths are sufficiently complex that a single-indicator approach to their assessment poses serious limitations. Anyone interested in assessing strengths needs to appreciate that there is no shortcut to measuring good character.

Some researchers or practitioners with a more focused goal may administer only selected subscales if they so desire, although it is not recommended at this point. Presenting respondents with 8 or 10 items measuring—for example—forgiveness and nothing else might create a demand for socially desirable responses that the full batteries seem to avoid by allowing all respondents to say something positive about themselves.

Fifth, eventually a shorter versions of survey might be created, not by eliminating items from a given scale but by collapsing scales following factor analyses indicating redundancy. If the factor analyses does hold, it is conceivable that it may result in a "brief" measure of character strengths that containing 12-15 items for each of the basic factors. Although the scientific desirability would be questionable. We observe with some irony that one of the most widely studied and validated
personality inventories for adults—the NEO-PI—which began with the goal of capturing basic personality traits by factor analysis has of late been elaborated to include thirty so-called facets that provide a more nuanced view of the basic traits, even though these facets are not compelled by factor analytic results (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Sixth, although self-report seems to be a valid way of measuring psychological constructs, there are lingering concerns about “social desirability” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). A youth development leader might inadvertently “teach to the test.” Also, survey methods based on self-report have obvious limitations for measuring character strengths among very young children or children with certain disabilities. Accordingly, in order to improve validity, assessment should include alternative method like informant reports and observations. Structured interviews to measure character strengths also deserve attention.

Finally, although it has been argued that the character strengths in the VIA Classification are ubiquitously valued—perhaps universally so—there is a need to test this argument with cross-national and cross-cultural data. So far respondents from almost 50 different nations have been surveyed about character strengths that are most valued. However, very little has been done to adapt VIA-IS youth to different cultures. The Adult version has been translated to 17 languages and adapted accordingly. However, the youth version still remains in its nascent stages of exploration.

Across, the globe the adult version has been extensively studied and a pattern of virtues, gender and age differences is slowly emerging. In a study (Linley, Maltby, et al., 2007), four of the top five “signature strengths” of the UK men and women overall were the same (open-mindedness, fairness, curiosity, and love of learning). Strengths typically showed small but significant positive associations with age, with the strongest associations with age between curiosity and love of learning.
(strengths of wisdom and knowledge), fairness (a strength of justice), and forgiveness and self-regulation (strengths of temperance).

Biswas-Diener compared three cultural groups – the Inughuit, an Inuit society in Greenland, the Maasai, tribal pastoralists in Kenya (Biswas Diener, 2006) (the people whose women put the ceramic face plates in their lips), and students of the University of Illinois (Biswas, 2006). They went through the list of strengths, asking whether the participant recognised it, how important it was, and whether they would want it in their kids. Results were slightly different between these groups, but they all reported a high level of recognition, importance, and desirability. Only 48% of the Masaai recognised, forgiveness, the next lowest was perspective and wisdom, recognised by 69% of the Inughuits. All the other strengths were recognised by 80% in each group.

The creation and adaptation of the German version of the VIA-IS and its peer-rating form using a sample of 1,674 adults was done in 2010 (Ruch, Proyer, et. al., 2010). The 24 subscales had high reliability (median $\alpha = .77$; median corrected item-total correlations = .45) and high stability across 9 months (median test-retest correlation = .73).

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The current study has a two fold aim: product refinement and testing the premise of ubiquitousness of strengths and virtues as proposed by positive psychology. This an applied research aimed at product refinement of the VIA-IS to make it more suitable for use in the Indian context. The theoretical stand point describes the strengths and virtues to be universal in nature. However, recent studies involving adaptation of the test to different cultures has resulted in contradictory results. Most research has pointed towards a four to five factor solution rather than the current six.
Through the current study, it was attempted to test the hypothesis of universality of strengths and virtues.

**NEED FOR ADAPTATION OF VIA-IS YOUTH TO INDIAN POPULATION**

Over the last two decades, India has emerged as a developing country of particular interest in the area of positive youth development. The economic growth during this time has been unprecedented; the size of the middle class has quadrupled and each year, one percent of the poor has moved out of poverty (Chakrabarti & Cullenberg, 2003). As the private economy has enjoyed notable success, however, the poor have continued to struggle. Growth in labour intensive jobs has been minimal, thereby limiting increased employment among the many poor Indians, particularly those living in rural areas (Chakrabarti & Cullenberg, 2003). Simple public goods, such as basic education, health care, and drinking water, are not made available. Thus, in the midst of increased prosperity within India, the poor within society continue to struggle and lack access to services critical to escaping poverty. High levels of crime, poverty, and unemployment challenge positive youth development, particularly in rural areas. The increased privatization of the Indian educational system also heightens risk level of poor young people; those youth belonging to lower castes are at particular risk of poor educational achievement in both rural and urban areas. Shifts within the culture of India also reinforce the need for strong focus on holistic youth development.

Going by the current trends, media reports and various research works we can see a disturbing self destructive trend in the youth of today which could be the result of increasing stress, pressures and expectations laid on them. Traditionally, however, our culture has also valued the virtues and values engrained in our minds by the society, religion and parenting. This concept is very close to the idea behind positive psychology and hence can be easily harnessed to work for the youth of today. If we are successfully able to identify the signature strengths as proposed by the
Values in Action Inventory for Youth (VIA-Youth) of Park and Peterson (2006), we can also help them harness them and use them to their advantage. It is a logical conclusion that the society flourishes if the youth flourishes.

It is amply clear that increasing stress levels and competitive environment deem it necessary that we look positive psychology as a vital platform to aid positive development in youth. In India, majority of the population speaks Hindi/Hindustani hence using the inventory in its current form is redundant. Mere translation also does not suffice since quite a few phrases when translated lose their true meaning. Hence a need was felt to adapt in Hindustani for the youth population of India.

All the reasons cited above regarding the need for testing character strengths of the young population in order to help them in harnessing their strengths hold good here too. And given the current scenario it becomes even more vital part of aiding them in leading a fulfilled life.

Character strengths, when exercised, not only prevent undesirable life outcomes (Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Botvin, & Diaz, 1995) but are important in their own right as markers and indeed causes of healthy life-long development (Colby & Damon, 1992; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997). Growing evidence shows that specific strengths of character—for example, hope, kindness, social intelligence, self-control, and perspective—buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma, preventing or limiting problems in their wake. In addition, character strengths help young people to thrive and are associated with desired outcomes like school success, leadership, tolerance and valuing of diversity, ability to delay gratification, kindness, and altruism (Park, 2004b).
ADAPTATION PROCEDURE : IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

The aim of the translation/adaptation process is to produce a test or instrument with comparable psychometric qualities as the original. Growing recognition of multiculturalism has raised awareness of the need to provide for multiple language versions of tests and instruments intended for use within a single national context. Considerable evidence exists today suggesting the growing need for multi-language versions of achievement, aptitude, and personality tests and surveys. Adaptation to a different language from the original version does not merely involve translation. In the current study, we undertook an elaborate and detailed multilevel translation of the inventory, the ultimatum aim being adaptation of the inventory to the spoken language of the majority of the Indian population that is Hindustani. Before proceeding, a distinction needs to be made between test adaptation and test translation. The term test adaptation is preferred to the more popular and frequently used term, test translation, because the former is broader and more reflective of what should happen in practice when preparing a test that is constructed in one language and culture for use in a second language and culture. Test adaptation include all the activities from deciding whether or not a test could measure the same construct in a different language and culture, to selecting translators, to deciding on appropriate accommodations to be made in preparing a test for use in a second language, to adapting the test and checking its equivalence in the adapted form. Test translation is only one of the steps in the process of test adaptation and even at this step, adaptation is often a more suitable term than translation to describe the actual process that takes place this is because translators are trying to find concepts, words, and expressions that are culturally, psychologically, and linguistically equivalent in a second language and culture, and so clearly the task goes well beyond simply preparing a literal translation of the test content.

Before setting out to adapt the VIA-IS, it was essential that we had a clear idea regarding the standards laid down for the same. The American
Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) Standard for Educational and Psychological Testing (1985) provides careful directions for educational measurement specialists and psychologists who select, develop, administer, and use educational and psychological tests. Three of the standards in this publication seem especially relevant in the context of our test adaptation:

**Standard 6.2.** When a test user makes a substantial change in text format, motor fenestration, instructions, language or content, the user should revalidate the use of the test for the changed conditions or have a rationale supporting the claim that additional validation is not necessary or possible.

**Standard 13.4.** When the test is translated from one language or dialect to another, its reliability and validity for the uses intended in the linguistic groups to be tested should be established.

**Standard 13.6.** When it is intended that the two versions of the dual-language tests be comparable, evidence of test compatibility should be reported.

These standards provide a framework for considering sources of error or invalidity that might arise in efforts to adapt a test from one language and culture to another. For our purpose, sources of error or invalidity that arise in test adaptation can be organized into three broad categories: (a) cultural/language differences, (b) technical issues, designs and methods, and (c) interpretation of results. Failure to attend to the sources of error in each of these categories can result in an adapted tests that is not equivalent in the two languages and cultural groups for which it is intended. Non-equivalent tests, when they are assumed to be equivalent, can only lead to errors in interpretation and faulty conclusions about the groups involved.
The assessment and interpretation of cross-cultural results should not be viewed in the narrow context of just the translation or adaptation of the tests. Rather this process should be considered for all parts of the assessment process, including construct equivalence, test administration, item formats is used, etc. Construct equivalence encompasses both conceptual/functional equivalence as well as equivalence in the way the construct measured by the test is operationalized in each language/cultural group (Harkness, 1998).

The importance of obtaining the services of competent translators is obvious. Too often though, researchers have tried to go through the translation process with a single translators selected because he or she happened to be available—a friend, colleague, someone who could be hired cheaply, and so on. Competent translation work cannot be assumed. Also, the use of a single translator, competent or not does not permit valuable interactions among independent translators to take place to resolve different points that arise in preparing a test adaptation. A single translator brings, for instance, a perspective, a preference for certain words and expressions, which may not be the most suitable for producing a good adaptation of the test. Multiple translators can protect against the dangers of a single translator and his or her preferences and peculiarities.

"De-centering" is sometimes used in adapting tests. It may be that some words and expressions do not have the equivalent words and expressions in the target language. It is even possible that the words and expressions do not exist in the target language. De-centering involves making revisions to the source language tests so that equivalent material can be used in both the source and target language versions. The process of culturally decentering test materials is somewhat more complex than either the direct translation or back translation processes. Cultural decentering does involve translation of the instrument from an original language to target language. However, unlike direct translation, the
original measure is changed prior to being adapted (or translated) to improve its translatability; those components of the tests that are likely to be specific to the original culture are removed or altered. Thus, the cultural biases, both construct and method, are reduced. In addition, the wording of the original measure may be changed in a way that will enhance its translatability. The process is usually performed by a team composed of multilingual, multicultural individuals who have knowledge of the construct to be measured and perhaps of the original measure. This team then changes the original measure so that "there will be a smooth, natural sounding version in the second language" (Brislin, 1980a). If decentering is successful, the two assessment instruments that result, one in each language, are both generally free of culture specific language. Werner and Campbell (1970) suggest several approaches to decentering including taxonomic decentering, multiple stage translation, mapping of paraphrases across languages, and interview schedule-based decentering. In essence, decentering involves the following (with variations depending on the procedures chosen):

- each draft question is reformulated and paraphrased with the goal of eliminating culture-specific aspects and simplifying complex sentences into basic, most simple constructions;
- each item (or set of paraphrases for an item) is translated into the target language. Here the idea is not to translate in any 'close' or literal fashion, but to produce as many paraphrases in the target language of the 'meaning' of the source language text(s) as possible;
- these paraphrases in the target language are translated in comparable 'paraphrase fashion' into the source language;
- the sets of paraphrases for each item/sentence in each language are compared;
- the closest equivalents across the two languages are selected;
- this selection forms the basis of both final questionnaire texts for the item/sentence.
One generally important feature of decentering approaches is that they stand in direct contrast to the 'close', which clings to words or structures across languages and, in doing so, produces unnatural-sounding translation. Another important feature of decentering is the centrality it gives to working out different versions in different languages before a 'source' text is fixed for posterity.

De-centering is ideally possible when the source language tests is under development at the same time as the target language version. This is the situation with tests intended for use in international assessments, and some credentials tests intended for worldwide use. The two most popular designs are forward translation and backward translation. With a forward translation design, a single translator or preferably a group of translators adapt the test from the source language to the target language. Then, the equivalence of the two versions of the tests is judged by another group of translators. Sometimes as a final step, yet another person, though not necessarily a translator, will take the target language version of the test and edit the test to "smooth out" the language. Choppiness can result when translations from different individuals and groups are merged into a single version. The main advantage of the forward translation design is that judgments are made directly about the equivalence of the source and target language versions of the test. The validity of the judgment about the equivalence of the two versions can be enhanced by having a small group of examinees provide translators with their interpretation of the test questionnaire directions, content, and formats. This can be done in what are called "think-aloud" studies.

The main weakness of the forward translation design is associated with a high level of inference that must be made by the translators about the equivalence of the two versions of the tests. Other weaknesses include (a) translators may be more proficient in one language than other, (b) ratings of test equivalence involve judgments by persons who are bilingual, and so they may use insightful guesses based on their knowledge of both
languages (c) translators may be better educated than the monolingual examinees for whom the test is intended and so they miss some problems that would be confronted by the examinees, and (d) the monolingual test developers are not in a position to judge the equivalence themselves.

In the present study committee translation method was used to translate the test to Indian context. Committee or parallel translation involves several translators who make independent translations of the same questionnaire (Brislin, 1980b) At a reconciliation (consensus, revision) meeting, translators and a translation coordinator compare the translations, reconcile discrepancies and agree on a final version which taps the best of the independent translations or, alternatively, appears in the course of discussion. The committee members should provide competence in whatever varieties of the target language are required for respondents and in the various skills required for survey work. The committee approach is fairly labour, time and cost intensive. Like any approach that assesses equivalence or appropriateness on the basis of textual evaluation, committee decisions are ultimately based on subjective judgments. Committees are as open to group dynamic drawbacks as other groups. Given individual competence within the group, however, group screening is likely to be effective. While competent translators are necessary, the role and skills of the committee coordinator are crucial, as is an understanding and acceptance of the procedures by all involved.

The back translation design is the best known and most popular of the judgmental designs. In its most popular version, one or more translators adapt the test from the source language to the target language. Different translators take the adapted tests (in the target language) and adapt it back to the source language. Then, the original and the back-translated versions of the tests are compared and judgments are made about the equivalence. To the extent that the two versions of the tests in the source language look familiar, support is provided for the equivalence of the source and target versions of the test. The back translation design can use to provide a
general check both on the quality of the translation and to detect at least some of the problems associated with poor translations or adaptations. Researchers especially like this design because it provides them with an opportunity to judge the original and back translated versions of the tests so that they can form their own opinions about the adaptation process. This is not a possibility for them with the forward translation design unless they are proficient in the languages.

Adapting or translating achievement, ability, and personality tests and questionnaires prepared in one language and culture into other languages and cultures has had a long history in educational and psychological testing though this fact is not well-known among educational researchers and measurement specialists. At least five reasons can be found in the literature for adapting tests:

1. Very often adapting a test is considerably cheaper and faster than constructing a new test in a second language,
2. When the purpose for the adapted test is cross-cultural or cross-national assessment (such as with many credentialing exams), an adapted test is the most effective way to produce an equivalent test in a second language,
3. There may be a lack of expertise for developing a new test in a second language,
4. There is a sense of security that is associated with an adapted test more so than a newly constructed test especially when the original test is well-known, and
5. Fairness to examinees often results from the presence of multiple language versions of a test (see Hambleton & Patsula, 1998).

Unfortunately, though the practice of adapting or (simply) translating tests can be traced to the intelligence tests of the French psychologist Alfred Binet at the beginning of this century, there is substantial evidence to suggest that improved methods for adapting or translating tests from
one language and culture to others are needed, and that considerably more attention should be given to this important task than it is typically given by researchers and/or test developers. Too often in practice the test adaptation process seems to be viewed as a routine task that can be completed by anyone who knows the relevant languages. One consequence is adapted tests in the target languages of interest with only superficial equivalence to the tests in the source language.