ABSTRACT

Through the investigation entitled "A Study of Certain Personality Characteristics of Satisfied and Dissatisfied Individuals", an attempt has been made to extract the phenomena of satisfaction from its philosophical moorings and place it on an empirical base.

Connotations given to the term satisfaction have highlighted it as a "state" and as a "goal", but satisfaction as a "process" and in terms of dynamics involved has not been given consideration. The very limited number of studies that exist in the area have been concerned with investigating factors like sex, age and economic well-being as determinants of satisfaction. It was felt that an understanding of dynamics can be achieved if the locus of study is shifted to the individual, rather than positioned at the level of distal stimuli, and the intervention of person-specific characteristics in processing, (and influencing) the environment-related stimuli is appreciated. Personality factors appeared to be the most logical expression of person-specific characteristics. Through a study of personality configurations and characteristics of satisfied and dissatisfied persons, the phenomena of satisfaction, so predominantly subjective in its connotation and content, was
diverted into the empirical channel.

The dependent variable in our study was satisfaction. Personality factors together with sex, age and S-E-S constituted the independent variables.

Cattell's 16 PF scale was used to measure personality factors and satisfaction was measured through a duly modified version of Cantril's self anchoring technique.

The work of Grichting (1983), Veroff (1962) had pointed towards the unidimensional bipolarity of satisfaction. We therefore, defined dissatisfaction as "low satisfaction". The "satisfied" and "dissatisfied" groups were consequently identified in terms of high and low scores on satisfaction.

In view of the fact that understanding the process of satisfaction would be made more meaningful if the nature of experiences associated with satisfaction was also considered, the experiences reported as satisfying were classified in terms of 'self-oriented' and 'other-oriented'.

The issues and concerns of our investigations led to the formulation of the following hypotheses -
1. Individuals who perceive themselves as satisfied differ in their personality configuration from those who perceive themselves as dissatisfied.

2. Certain personality traits contribute significantly to the experience of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

3. Men and women differ in terms of their satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

4. Individuals falling in the higher age groups differ from those in the lower age groups in terms of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

5. Individuals belonging to the high socio-economic status group differ from those belonging to the low S-E-S group in terms of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

6. There is a difference among men and women in the nature of experiences contributing to satisfaction.

7. There is a difference between the high and low age groups in the nature of experiences contributing to satisfaction.

8. There is a difference between high SES group and low SES group in the nature of experiences contributing to satisfaction.
The personality configurations of the Satisfied and Dissatisfied groups were compared through the coefficient of profile similarity. The rp (coefficient of profile similarity) was computed between the "Average satisfied group" and the two extreme groups also, to provide a comprehensiveness to this comparison.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to study if personality variables were predicting satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the sample as a whole and amongst men and women and in the various age groups.

"Satisfaction" was also studied in relation to sex, age and S-E-S variables. t-values were computed for the intergroup comparisons.

The difference amongst the groups in terms of the nature of experiences associated with satisfaction was measured by computing chisquare values for self-oriented experiences and other-oriented experiences in the various groups.

The profile similarity analysis between the various groups, particularly between satisfied and dissatisfied groups of subjects has raised important conceptual issues. Results that confound rather than clarify are totally in order at the early
stages of a work, and the need to understand the satisfaction-
dissatisfaction continuum through fresh methodology and
techniques is called for.

Two personality variables namely Intelligence and Parmia
(venturesome, bold, low susceptibility to threat) emerged to be
significant predictors of satisfaction-dissatisfaction in our
sample. Some variations in terms of sex and age were observed,
suggestive of the fact that some other variables seem to come up
in specific groups, (though not to a significant level in terms
of their unique contribution) and in forth-coming investigations
they could be taken up meaningfully.

Sex and age groups did not differ in terms of satisfaction
scores, but in terms of the S-E-S scores we observed a
difference, in an unexpected direction.

The lowest S-E-S group (family income below Rs.1000/- per
month) showed a significant difference in the mean satisfaction
score in relation to three higher S-E-S group. The particular
nature of the situation (academic environment placing greater
importance on excellence and brilliance compared to material
possessions) could possibly be responsible for the low income-
group subjects, who were all scholarship holders and self earn
programme participants, for showing the highest mean score on
satisfaction. It appears that sex, age and S-E-S per se do not intervene significantly in the experience of satisfaction, rather, the dynamics generated through them are important, for we find that in changed situational contexts their impact on the experience changes.

In terms of the specific nature of experiences reported as satisfying there was a difference amongst the sex-groups and age-groups, but none among the S-E-S groups. Gender role differences, and distinctive expectations arising therefrom play an important role in determining "world view" and nature of experiences, accounting for this difference amongst sexes. Age also carries with it specific problem and demands which affect the experiential frame of reference, thereby accounting for this difference.

It is essential that a phenomena of such great significance to the human being as satisfaction undoubtedly is be studied seriously and ---

(a) more broad-based investigations as opposed to studies confined to academic environs, be taken up.

(b) models based on theoretical contentions be formulated and tested.
(c) an attitude of accepting the challenge to study subjective realities within an empirical framework be generated.

(d) intervention strategies based on factual information be formulated to give help to the dissatisfied and unhappy.

The investigation has provided valuable direction for further work by highlighting areas of doubts, conceptual as well as methodological and by providing some basic information about personality factors associated with satisfaction - dissatisfaction together with drawing attention to the unique manner in which economic factors may function in certain contexts.