CHAPTER I

APPROACHES TO THE THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

"Every person has a basic need to develop his potential to the fullest, to progress beyond what he is now. He may not know which path leads to growth, and he may be blocked by all kinds of environmental and cultural obstacles, but his natural tendency is toward actualisation of his potential."

ERNEST R. HILGARD

Introduction to Psychology, p. 10.
The nature of personality has intrigued man from the time he started thinking about himself. Personality is used in various senses both popularly and scientifically. The term is here used to denote the totality of the human person—his physical, social, mental and spiritual make up. To G.W. Allport "Personality is what a man really is."  

The phenomenon of personality, like life itself, is not something static, rather it is a flow like a river which changes with every foot of ground it covers and with every day it exists. This elusive and changeable nature of personality is bound to give shape to a peculiar style creating a salient impression of one on the other. This makes each individual unique. This uniqueness is expressed as his personality.

'Personality' is derived from the Latin word 'Persona' which means a mask. 'Persona' was the mask used by Greek actors to disguise their true identity and to project a new personality on the stage. The Romans later adopted this technique. For them 'Persona' meant how "one appears to others and not as one actually is." Hence etymologically, personality denoted a 'cover for the real person'.

Psychologists have from time to time attempted to formulate theories which define personality, but no one has yet come up with
a definition that satisfies all. Hence the ongoing efforts to understand and define the nature of personality.

In a broad sense, personality is all encompassing. It is physiological because one's physique and appearance form part of one's personality. It is psychological because it takes into account one's traits and habits. It is intellectual because it includes one's intelligence and mental make up. Hence personality is inclusive of all these elements which are put together and made to function in unison. Thus personality should be a harmonious integration of an individual's bodily structure, behaviour, attitudes and interests. Ideally the mosaic of one's personality is fashioned by the interaction of the experiences with the biological and psychological make up of the individual.

Personality is not an aggregate of different characteristics haphazardly thrown together. "Psychology of personality is concerned with the relationships that have been scientifically observed and can be generalised to hold for a class of individuals." Psychologists have defined and interpreted personality from different angles. An overview of the various approaches adopted by the psychologists is given below.

1. **Type approach**

   The very first theory of personality was a type theory, a theory of temperaments, classified into a few clearly defined types. The psychologists who held this view are Hippocrates, Kretschmer, Sheldon, Jung and Eysenck. The first three have developed their theories on the basis of somatic traits and the other two followed the psychological traits.
Of the two, Eysenck further refined the type approach in his research effort. According to him "personality is more or less stable and enduring organisation of a person's character, temperament, intellect and physique which determine his unique adjustment to the environment."

The type approach was found inadequate to unfold the nature of personality as it tended to lump together a number of types assigning the person to a stereotype. Moreover it merely stressed physical characteristics in formulating the theories of personality neglecting cultural influences. Hence most psychologists rejected this theory and switched over to the trait approach.

2. Trait approach

Quite a few psychologists have sought a formulation of personality theory based on traits. A trait is any aspect of personality that is reasonably characteristic and distinctive. G.W. Allport, the first proponent of this approach, defined trait "...as a neuro psychic system." He stated that "Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."

Guilford and R.B. Cattell suggested some fine tuning to the basic approach of Allport, which was considered merely descriptive. Guilford defines personality as an individual's "unique pattern of traits." According to R.B. Cattell "Personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation." Thus he laid stress on both bodily and mental factors manifested through habits, attitudes and trait and the uniqueness of each individual underlying the idea of personality as a dynamic growth system.
Trait theory fails to unfold the nature of personality fully, as it focuses only on the personal determinants of behaviour. Hence this approach has to be supplemented with other methods.

3. Behavioural approach

Behaviourism has a great impact on the psychology of learning and its influence also extends to the area of personality. Behavioural approach lays emphasis on the behaviours that are acquired through learning. Watson, the proponent of this approach, defines personality as "the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observation over a long enough period of time to give reliable information." He argues that the data on the study of personality must be observable and measurable.

Behaviourism is also known as stimulus-response theory. B.F. Skinner defines personality "as the description of rules or principles that govern the relationship between stimuli, responses and reinforcements." He considers development of personality as a series of experiences involving reinforcement.

This theory neglects the mental processes like thinking, planning, making decisions etc. that come between the stimulus and observable response. To conceive human personality solely in terms of stimulus input and response output is to conjure up a totally mechanical model of human personality. Hence this approach, too, is considered inadequate. A new perspective then emerged, known as the psychoanalytic approach.
4. **Psychoanalytic approach**

The psychoanalytic theory of personality presented by Sigmund Freud is a highly dynamic one which offers an explanation about the unconscious facet of personality in a convincing manner.\(^1\) Psychoanalytic approach, in contrast to other approaches, explores the unconscious motives that mould human behaviour. According to Sigmund Freud, personality is made up of three major systems, "Id, ego and super ego."\(^2\) Each of these has its own properties, functions and operative principles. They overlap and interact closely with one another. The interaction of these tripartite divisions of mind functions as the dynamics of behaviour.\(^3\)

The basic assumption of Freud's theory is that much of man's behaviour is determined by unconscious innate instincts.\(^4\) By unconscious process Freud meant thoughts, fears and wishes of which the person is unaware, but which influence his behaviour.\(^5\) These unconscious impulses find expression in dreams, slips of speech, neurotic mannerisms\(^6\) etc.

Psychoanalysis is essentially negative. Freud concentrated on the biological aspects of the body only, reducing human beings to a mass of 'instincts' and 'drives'. His views are fascinating, but they do not give due importance to the effect of social and developmental aspects of personality. Freud's theory does not give adequate attention to the role of environment and its impact on personality. Hence a new approach called the humanistic approach was developed.
5. **Humanistic approach**

Humanistic approach emerged in the 1950's and 1960's as a 'third force' in order to distinguish it from the two established systems of psychology: Behaviourism and psychoanalysis. A group of psychologists objected to behaviourism as too mechanistic and to psychoanalysis as too pathological. In contrast to these approaches, humanistic psychologists emphasised the unique qualities of human beings and believed that goals, values, thoughts and aspirations play an important role in influencing human behaviour. They also believe that man is responsible for his actions, since he is free to choose and determine his actions. They reject the concept of man as a mechanism controlled by external stimuli or by unconscious instincts but consider him as an "actor" capable of controlling his own destiny and changing the world around him.

Humanistic approach evolved partly as a reaction against these aspects of technological society that tend to dehumanize man. Buchler and Allen suggest that the concept of humanistic psychology is a response to the crisis faced by the modern western world, specially the youth who grope and search for a new meaning for life rejecting the traditional values as irrelevant. In these circumstances the humanists come out with a positive picture of personality so as to satisfy the hunger of youth.

The humanistic approach focuses upon the whole person. It predicts a person's nature of behaviour. Every individual has his own experience that determines his conduct, which tries to discover, his self, the core of personality. Thus this approach is concerned with
the "self" and the subjective experience of the individual. Its emphasis is on the 'here and now', rather than on events in early childhood that may have shaped the personality of the individual.

The humanistic approach thus seems to be relevant in unfolding the nature of personality, since it tries to take into consideration all aspects of a person's individuality when formulating theories of personality.
5.1. **Uniqueness and feasibility of Humanistic approach**

The humanistic approach has been very much influenced by 'phenomenology and existentialism'. Phenomenology as applied to psychology is a method of describing aspects of behaviour as perceiving feeling, learning, remembering and thinking. It aims at the description of the experience of the human individual in a situation. Humanism shares with phenomenology the importance of subjective experiences based on self and the world around a person.

Existentialism is a natural outgrowth of phenomenology and concerned with concrete human existence. The corner stone of existentialism is the realization that the ultimate direction of one's life lies within the scope of one's own self. Hence the humanistic approach accepts this basic concept — self — as an active intentional centre of being. Thus in a sense humanism welds existentialism and phenomenology.

Buchler developed two basic concepts in this approach — the whole person model and the humanistic perspective. The humanists lay emphasis upon the whole person with his direct experience as the unit of study because parts of a person in function are as meaningless as a single straight side of a square. They also consider human beings with their unique qualities, values, thoughts and aspirations as an open system that gives out and takes in matter, energy and inspiration from the environment for the development of personality. More important, perhaps, is the idea that "the healthy and fully developing person is one who lives his life with a definite purpose, an overall goal in life."
In this approach the greatest importance is given to healthy personality with a central goal that creates and upholds the inner order for self-direction in contrast to the negative and pessimistic picture of human nature portrayed by Freud. The inner order paves the way for the process of integration in the development of personality. The process of integration, according to humanists, is brought about by continual psychological growth and improvement. Among the contemporary psychologists, one of the prominent proponents of this approach is Abraham Maslow.38

Article ii

ABRAHAM MASLOW: A CONTEMPORARY HUMANIST

Abraham Maslow is one of the best known humanist psychologists. He started his studies as a behaviourist, focussing on the behavioural pattern of his child. His investigation opened up a new insight that the theories of behaviourism cannot explain solely the experiences of the child in relation to the external world. Moreover his studies based on the tragedies of World war II and the harsh experiences his community had faced during the war convinced him that man has an innate capacity to improve himself continuously. The factors that help in this improvement of experiences39 play a vital role in the development of his personality. As a consequence of his findings Maslow was budged from a behaviourist to a humanist giving prime importance to the person as a whole. In order to understand his ideas on the development of personality, it is necessary to take a look at his concept of personality.
1. **Maslow's views on personality**

Maslow feels that psychology has so far placed more emphasis upon man's frailties than upon his strength. It has thoroughly explored his sins and weaknesses, neglecting his virtues. Thus psychology seemed to restrict itself voluntarily to only one half of the rightful jurisdiction—the darker, meaner half. But Maslow has an optimistic view regarding human personality. He makes a heroic effort to focus upon the other half of the picture, the brighter, the happier half and thus has tried to give a portrait of the total man. Maslow is one of the few theorists who have taken their ideas about human behaviour from studying highly creative and psychologically healthy persons. In the view of Maslow, the development of personality consists in actualising this better half and in fulfilling the potentialities through a growth from within rather than through forces from without. Maslow has posited the importance of the inner nature as the core of one's personality.

1.1. **Inner nature: The core of personality**

Maslow believed that "each person is born with an inner nature which is a combination of characteristics of the individual and of the species." This nature, the core of personality, is one's most basic needs, desires and psychological capacity, usually not obvious and easily seen, but rather hidden and unfulfilled, weak rather than strong. One of the significant characteristics of the inner nature is that it is not destroyed even if it has been overcome by the evils, rather, it is waiting for future opportunities to express itself projecting its "constructive and trustworthy" nature. Every person, thus, has a basic need to progress beyond what he is now, to develop his potential.
to the fullest.

Maslow sees human life as an endless struggle to grow and to reach one’s full potential. For growth to occur, the inner nature must have an adequate opportunity to express itself. Psychologically healthy and growth-motivated people endure the pain necessary to allow their inner nature to express itself. On the other hand unhealthy people permit their nature to be easily overcome by evils of society. Maslow’s approach, thus, is different from that of others, for he looks primarily at the healthy side of human nature. With a view to developing the good element of one’s inner nature in its fullness leading to a strong character, moulding the core of personality, Maslow propounded the theory of self-actualisation.

2. **Theory of self-actualisation**

Self-actualisation means developing one’s highest potential, doing things in the best possible way while helping those around in achieving their fullest development. It is the fulfillment of the creative urge inherent in human nature. For Maslow, any urge is a deficit state which motivates the person to remove the deficit by means of his willful action. Organisms are driven or pushed into motion much the same way an automobile engine is cranked into activity when the ignition key is turned or the starter is stepped on. This need or deficit is like a hole that demands to be filled in by creative actions, making the organisms fully developed.

The term self-actualisation was first used by Kurt Goldstein. "The essential meaning of the concept, self-actualisation, is found in the discovery of the real self and its expression and development."

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This concept was taken up and refined by Maslow. He defines self-actualisation as

an ongoing actualisation of potentials, capacities and talents, as a fulfilment of mission (or call, fate, destiny or vocation), as a fuller knowledge of and acceptance of the person's own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy within the person. 49

It is a tendency that can be defined as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything one is capable of becoming. 50

Self-actualisation is found to be a universal phenomenon in nature. Maslow considered it as a fundamental need of all human beings. 51 But the specific ends towards which people strive for vary from person to person. This is due to the fact that people have different innate potentialities shaping their needs and directing their individual development. When people accommodate themselves to different environments and cultures and assimilate the necessary inputs from this milieu, action functions by needs and motivation for the development of personality. Hence human needs and motivation form a fundamental basis for self-actualisation according to Maslow.

2.1. Human needs and motivation according to Maslow

'Motivation' is derived from the Latin word 'Motum' which means to move, motor and motion. 52 It is defined as the "psycho-physiological or internal process initiated by some need which leads to activity which will satisfy that need." 53 The term 'need' refers to "a condition experienced by the individual and not to a condition attributed to the individual by others, however well-intentioned they may be." 54 Hence every action of an organism is need-based.
Maslow, a leader in the development of humanistic psychology, has proposed a classification of human needs ascending from the basic biological needs to the more complex psychological, intellectual and aesthetic needs culminating in self-actualisation. This hierarchy of needs can be broadly classified into basic needs and growth needs.
According to Maslow the base of the hierarchy consists of physiological needs like hunger, thirst, sex and the need for warmth which are largely innate.\textsuperscript{59} New motives and needs appear as the individual grows by interacting with other people and are called psychological needs. The important psychological needs are safety needs, related to security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear etc., the need of acceptance in which the individual desires to be liked, loved and to belong and self esteem needs in which one desires to see oneself as adequate, competent and useful.\textsuperscript{60} Psychological motives are influenced primarily by learning and by the kind of society in which the individual grows up. Basic needs, thus can be grouped into personal needs\textsuperscript{61} and social needs.\textsuperscript{62}

Maslow maintains that the needs at one level must be at least partially satisfied before those at the next level become important determiners of action. When food and safety are difficult to obtain, the satisfaction of these needs will affect a person’s actions and the higher motives will have little significance. Only when the satisfaction of these basic needs is easy, the individual will have the time and energy for intellectual and aesthetic needs.\textsuperscript{63}

At the level of intellectual need the goal of the people is to understand their world, appreciate and accept it for what it is. They have a great desire to learn the nature of truth and wisdom.\textsuperscript{64} Aesthetic need is the need for order, beauty, symmetry, for completion of the act, for system and for structure.\textsuperscript{65}

Maslow holds the view that even after the satisfaction of the need for knowledge, understanding and the aesthetic need, one will
not be at rest. He is motivated for self-actualisation, to do what he can to fulfil his potentialities. Maslow termed "the need for self-actualisation as the drive to find ever more adequate means for self-expression, to realise one's potentialities, to develop greater degrees of effectiveness and competence, to be creative, to develop roles in life that are satisfying and worthwhile."66

According to Maslow, basic needs are stronger than growth needs and will dominate a person's behaviour when they are not satisfied. Once a person's basic needs are satisfied he turns his attention towards growth needs. But there are some exceptions where growth needs predominate over basic needs. In such cases growth needs become their basic needs. This can happen as the person advances in his growth.

The hierarchy of needs, thus ascends from personal level to the higher psychological needs and to self-actualisation. It is an ongoing attempt of individuals to reach their full potential by maximising all their talents and abilities.

2.2. Hierarchy of needs and personality development

Maslow views personality development as an attempt to work one's way up the hierarchy of needs by planned, creative, voluntary actions. He has relatively little to say about the development beyond his hierarchy of needs. He believes that the individual walks his way through the first several levels in the hierarchy during childhood. The infant is exclusively concerned with physiological needs shortly after birth. There are a number of needs and motives that underlie the feelings, thinking and overt behaviour of children.67 The importance
of the safety needs becomes more obvious as childhood progresses. The necessity of belongingness to a particular peer group dominates the behaviour of the child in the middle and later years. Adolescents are primarily interested in self esteem leading to self-actualisation. These needs urges and drives are the steps within the process of personality development.

For Maslow, personality development is the achievement of self-actualisation and a person who attains this stage is the self-actualised person. The self-actualised person can be described as relatively spontaneous in behaviour and far more spontaneous in their inner life, thoughts, impulses etc with a behaviour marked by simplicity, naturalness, lack of artificiality or straining for effect. To reach this stage he has to undergo a continuous struggle from within. This process of struggle for self-actualisation leads to what Maslow calls peak experience.

Peak experience appears in "moments of highest happiness and fulfilment." It demands a person’s relentless struggle by means of actions to reach the peak of a mountain. When the person reaches the peak he is rewarded with a panoramic view of the land. Such deep emotional experience results when one triumphs in self-actualisation.

According to Maslow peak experiences are one kind of transcendent experience in which one goes beyond the boundaries of one’s own ego. A person who has reached such a peak feels one with nature and the universe. A total communion is established with the universe as a whole and the self-actualised person feels part of the flow of the universe, its past, present and future. Hence the self-actualised
individual is one with a strong sense of personal identity. He has a profound commitment to moral, social and political principles. He has the courage even to face social ostracism in adhering to his principles. Maslow is of the view that although all have the potential to reach this state, only a few are able to attain it, since it involves more persistence, courage, hardwork and willingness to transcend conventional standards. Thus Maslow's theory of personality development suggests its suitability to analyse the role of action in the development of personality as delineated in Gandhi's life.

The core of Maslow's theory of self-actualisation is the achievement of a set of needs and the simultaneous emergence of another set. This rhythm of fulfilment and appearance of needs is maintained by an ongoing series of creative voluntary actions. Hence the significance of actions in the process of personality development.

**Article iii**

**SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTION IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT**

Human personality is shaped by the impact of action on a person's inner nature, in which knowledge plays the role of a catalyst. The knowledge of ceaseless activity of conversion of matter into energy and vice versa becomes the substratum for dynamic actions which is the immutable law of nature. This knowledge has brought about a fundamental change in the attitudes of scientists giving a philosophical slant to their entire view of the cosmos. Cosmos is conceived as matter in ceaseless, unending activity. Man as a part of the cosmos can never
be immune to action. Whether one likes it or not, one has to be active. So, action is the foundation of life and dynamics of every person.

1. Definition of action

Action may be defined as "a complex entity consisting of three parts: the motive, the act, and the consequence."\(^72\) According to J.P. Guilford: "A motive is any particular internal factor or condition that tends to initiate and sustain activity."\(^73\) For McDougall, "Motives are conditions - psychological and physiological within the organisms that dispose it to act in certain ways."\(^74\) Hence motive is the mental process that originates from a need which is a psychological drive of the human mind. When the mind is dissatisfied with an existing situation, the need arises as an inner force for a change. This change is to bring about satisfaction of the earlier felt need. Hence "motives may be seen as energy arising from unfulfilment and directed toward gratification."\(^75\) Motive thus is purely subjective and is the initiator of the act and its consequences. The act is the physical effort born out of the motivation to fulfill the need. The consequence should successfully satisfy the motive and thus the primary need. If the need is completely satisfied, then action is considered successful.

These actions which are performed by a prevision of what one is going to do and is always directed "by a desire and perception of the nature of our activity as well as of the purpose going to be served by it"\(^76\) are called voluntary actions. In this investigation action denotes voluntary actions.
2. **Voluntary action: Salient features**

Voluntary action is a deliberate intervention or non-intervention by a human being in the course of nature. When we analyse such actions the following characteristics have to be taken into consideration:

a) Voluntary actions are deliberate attempts and mostly practical. They are well thought out, assessed and executed by man. The responsibility solely rests on the performer.

b) Purpose and will play an important role in these actions. Man realises a purpose of his own for his actions to which he subordinates his will. Thus the actions mediate, regulate, control, co-ordinate and balance the relation between the organism and the environment.

c) Voluntary actions are an exclusive attribute of man. They are events that are properly characterised and assessed in terms of rules of conduct or principles of rational ethical behaviour and for which the agent is held responsible, liable, rewarded and punished.

3. **Origin of voluntary action**

Voluntary actions originate in the mind. The mental phenomena concerned are "such things as we call feelings, desires and the like...." Desire, wish and will are states of mind to fulfil a felt need. We will for it, if it is possible and wish for it, if it is not realizable. Need propels man towards the object which can satisfy the need. A set of actions is undertaken to reach the object to satisfy the
need. William James explains; "A supply of ideas of the various movements that are possible, left in the memory by experiences of their involuntary performance is thus the first requisite of the voluntary actions." Thus voluntary actions are secondary functions performed deliberately in order to fulfil a need.

For an action to become voluntary it must fulfil three conditions of being objective, subjective and having concordance. It must be objective to rationally pre-determine the sequence of actions. It should be subjective to fulfil a desire. Its success depends on the concord between what was intended and what was achieved.

4. Psychology of voluntary action

Voluntary action is a combination of mental and physical acts. The former constitutes desire, deliberation and will. Every action starts with a desire. A desire is not merely an appetite but a distinct tendency towards an object. The object we desire fulfils the deficiency we experience in the existing situations. Man deliberates to achieve the object with the direction and control of the will by means of physical acts. Thus the mental and physical acts are intimately interrelated.

The process of voluntary action has three phases — cognitive, affective and conative. The different aspects of the mind are viewed separately for a better understanding of the process of action.

4.1 The cognitive aspect

This aspect is concerned with the thinking and reasoning of the
human mind. Mind has many needs at a time, of which a particular desire dominates. The cognitive aspect recognises and analyses the pros and cons of this desire to make crystal clear the reason, means and ends. Then it plans and organises the action to make it successful.

4.2. **The affective aspect**

This aspect of the mind constitutes feeling. Man has not only the capacity to know but also the capacity to respond emotionally to what he knows. Man is driven by a number of desires. If all the desires act in unison there is no conflict but if the desires are mutually contradictory, then there is internal conflict. In such a state of conflict man becomes confused. People with strong wills deliberate upon the possible results of these conflicting desires and decide to fulfill the most important desire to the exclusion of others experiencing a feeling of satisfaction. On the contrary, people with weak wills cannot control themselves and do mutually contradictory things experiencing a feeling of pain and want in the non-attainment of the goal.

4.3. **The conative aspect**

It is concerned with two interrelated steps - choice of the desire and the physical aspect of the action. The actions planned and organised by the cognitive aspect, are to be selected with determination and given a practical form by the conative aspect so as to fulfill the desire. Complete satisfaction comes only upon turning the will for fulfilment of desire into action which forms the physical aspect of action.

Voluntary action is the outcome of a number of mental processes.
There is motivation, desire selection, determination and will. These mental activities culminate in physical action. Thus voluntary action includes both mental and physical aspects which lead to the development of the actual self to the ideal self.

5. **Physiology of voluntary action**

Actions are the end products of certain factors such as the psychological, physical and physiological states of the person. Human actions have a physiological basis evidenced by the use of the nervous system in actions.

The human nervous system can be divided into central nervous system and peripheral nervous system. The central nervous system consists of the brain and the spinal cord. Brain "is the control room of the huge complicated telephone system of the body," protected by the skull and the spine. The rope-like structure following the brain composed of bundles of nerve fibres is called the spinal cord, protected by the vertebral column. Spinal cord is the channel carrying messages to and from the brain and nerves. It acts also as an organ for effective reflex action.

The nerve tissues lying outside the bony case of the central nervous system constitute the peripheral nervous system. It consist of a network of nerves which help in passing the sense impressions from the central nervous systems to the muscles. It is nothing but a sum total of the nerves that receive stimulus and carry out the response.
In the preceding section it has been posited that actions are the end products of human motivation. Motivation creates a strong urge as a stimulus for action, received through sense organs and do not bear any significance unless given meaning by the nervous system. How one acts in a given situation depends upon the judgement of one's brain. Therefore this stimulus is carried as an impulse through the nerves of the peripheral nervous system to the brain of the central nervous system. The brain directs and controls the observations and perceptions in co-ordination with the parts of the body to perform the act. Sensation forms the first stage and perception the second in the stage of development brought about by actions. This direction is given in the form of a message through the nerves to the different parts of the body. Actions thus form the result of both the impulses and reflexes carried by the nerves.

In voluntary actions a perfect co-ordination of the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system is obvious. The co-ordination of these systems also exercises a profound influence on emotions, physical development and intellect. The emotional, physical and intellectual development of a person brought out by action is the outcome of the efforts and endeavour of the nervous system as a whole. These actions when repeated form a habit. According to W. James: "Habit is a tendency of an organism to behave in the same way as it has behaved before." Habit is shaped by the repetition of the same action for the same message carried by the nerves. W.M. Ryburn explains:

Nerves carry messages to and from the brain. When approximately the same message is taken
to the brain, and the same answer comes back, for the same action to result, a kind of track is worn, so that the answer to the message carried to the brain becomes more and more automatic. It becomes more and more difficult for any other answer to come to the ingoing message than the one that has been given again in response to what is approximately the same message. Thus the basis of habit is this groove, as it were, which is born in the nerves.

To make it more clear, when the synaptic resistance is broken, the current of one neuron passes to the other. Synapses are junctions where the two ends of neurons meet in order to pass and receive the nerve current or impulse. The nerve energy (current or impulse) travels smoothly when the junctions or the synapses make way for it and that makes habitual behaviour possible. The persistent habit thus formed from repeated actions leads to a strong character that forms the core of personality.

In a nutshell, the intricate network of nerves and the elaborate brain work together, harmonising and co-ordinating all the internal and external functions of the body and the cognitive, affective and conative aspects of behaviour, thus making the body and mind a single functional unit. Since the nervous system has control over growth and development by means of actions, it influences personality in a significant way. Actions thus have a pivotal role in moulding personality. This role has to be closely looked into.

**Article IV**

**FUNCTIONS OF ACTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY**

The need for action is a basic urge of human life. The dynamic
human personality responds incessantly to inner and outer forces, exposing the functions of actions with different experiences. Every experience brings some change often subtle and unobservable, sometimes striking and forceful in the process of growth and integration.

1. **Formation of habits through experience**

Man is infused with mental qualities and the first quality of the mind is that it registers experiences. An action with a rich experience has the quality of newness, freshness and a pleasant shock of discovery along with a sense of personal achievement. It is often the culmination or fulfilment of other experiences. Emotionally significant aspects of experiences are directly related to habits.

According to Sturt and Oakden "those acts are habitual which are performed with little or no thought and always in approximately the same way." \(^{101}\) Hence habits are acquired dispositions. But repetition of an action alone does not create a habit; the reason behind this repetition brings out the motive power. "The body of habit is mechanical activity, its goal is the emotion which impels one to act." \(^{102}\) Thus an activity is repeated again and again not because it occur by chance as is supposed by the neurological theory of habit, but because it had yielded satisfaction at the first occurrence and is yielding satisfaction even now, as is supposed by the psychoanalysts. \(^{103}\) Hence experience plays an important role in the formation of habits.

As it was observed in the psychology of voluntary actions experiences can be of three types - cognitive, affective and conative. All these experiences that human beings derive occur on three levels...
- direct, contrived and symbolic. The order of arrangement of these experiences is of increasing abstractions or decreasing directness. In a pictorial pinnacle, as depicted by Edgar Dale and called the 'Cone' of Experience.
The base of the cone represents direct, purposeful experiences that are seen, handled, tasted, touched, felt and smelt, forming the bed-rock of all actions. Such rich, full-bodied experiences are well remembered and accurate, definitely leading to habits. When direct experiences are neither possible nor desirable, contrived experience which is an 'editing' of reality by their interpretation makes the real life experience easier to understand thus supplementing the formation of habit. Symbolic or abstract experiences also perform the same function, with a solid foundation of direct and contrived experiences, offering verbal, and written symbols. William McDougall states that "true habits may be voluntarily acquired or may be induced by discipline and drill." 

Habit is thus formed through an intermix of direct, contrived and symbolic levels with cognitive, affective and conative experiences. It is a process by which the mind reacts to external conditions by means of voluntary actions modified by what has been experienced before. This enduring habit shaped from enriching experiences of repeated actions becomes a solid foundation for a powerful and steady character.

2. **Emergence of character through habits**

According to Woodworth, "habit is a well learned performance." It is acquired "by means of constant and uniform activity." William James says that a man tends to act in a certain way because he has acted that way before. As a result of practice a sequence of movements is done with minimum effort and energy.
Habit is fundamentally voluntary. It is acquired voluntarily by actions guided by principles. This can be proved from daily experiences. Initially what one does, thinks or feels may require a voluntary and deliberate attention and strenuous effort on one's part. A person has control over his actions only when he is conscious of the reason why he is acting in a particular way. As a consequence of practice, the sequence of movements required to achieve a given result and the fatigue involved in action are diminished. According to William James, "Naturally the conscious attention for each action diminishes with repetition making the action automatic. The more extensive and long-standing the practice, the firmer is the habit established." But when the habit is well established forming part and parcel of character there is no need of conscious reference to the original experience. Thus habit diminishes the conscious attention with which acts are performed.

According to William James, habit is "the enormous flywheel of society. Its most precious conservative agent." For S.K. Mangal, habit leads to sentiments combined to form a properly organised system called character. For Samuel Smiles, "character is the bundle of habits." This character makes an individual accountable to himself and to society so far as they have consequences for society. Thus character forms the fabric of the individual and society based on habits and action.

3. Shaping of personality through character

A man who is single minded in his devotion to a cause is depicted as a man with a strong character. According to Curt Boenchim "when we talk of a strong character we mean strength of will."
defines character as a completely fashioned will. To Benjamin Dumville it is the "sum of all tendencies which an individual possesses." For Vatsyayan, it is the habitual mode which regulates the system of impulses and desires.

In the words of William McDougall, "character is not something given in our inborn constitution, it is something that we gradually acquire, each in our degree, by means of actions. So it is a complex physiological structure expressed in one's conduct. In the words of Skinner and Harriman "There is no curriculum or method that will produce character by magic. On the contrary, every experience in the home, at church, on the playground or at school presents an opportunity for character development."

Individuals with strong character are usually free from emotional conflicts. This is due to their regard for self with favourable self-images and slow ego-strength. Thus, character becomes intimately integrated with temperamental traits and self. McDougall in his book "Character and Conduct of Life" writes, self regard becomes the flywheel of character, the regulator of conduct. For Ross, "Character is just the organised self." Instincts, emotions, habits, temperament, will and sentiments - all are the constituents of character. The organisation of these constituents into one whole in the form of a permanent mental structure is taken as the character of an individual. Therefore the study of one's character needs complete understanding of one's habits, motivation, will, sentiment, intellect, self-image and many other factors affecting his total personality.

Thus consistent actions are related to habits, habits to character.
character to self and self to personality. McDougall stresses the importance of acquiring a strong character by means of action in order to develop personality. S.K. Mangal and William James bring out the relationship between habit and character, through actions, in the development of personality. Action and personality are thus intimately inter-twined by the ropes of habit and character. Character development thus, in its true sense, indicates an allround development and requires an integral effort. The functions of actions mentioned above are the basic ones in the development of personality. In making personality more refined, actions play some further roles like adaptation and organisation.

4. Functions of adaptation and organisation

Action plays a central role in the adaptation of a person to the different situations of life. Piaget defines adaptation as the process by which an individual finds a balance between the opposing forces in life. People adapt to environment and then organise what they have experienced, to form a refined character. Hence adaptation is the change in the organism that occurs as a result of his organisation of life experiences. Thus the two functions - organisation and adaptation - are directed towards the external and internal environments. In organisation, intelligence is organised and co-ordinated with all other acts. The form of organisation (structure) changes as a result of progressive adaptation. Structures change through the activity involved in adaptation.

Adaptation comprises of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation means "taking in" or incorporating experiences into a
person's existing strategies. It is the activity which modifies the environment to conform to the mental organisation of the subject, fitting new examples into what is already known. Accommodation means a change or modification in a person's concepts or strategies because of new information that has been assimilated. It is the activity which modifies the mental organisation of the subject in conformity with the demands of the environment. Thus accommodation is changing one's structure to fit the new experiences that occur. Any accommodative act presupposes an assimilation of the material; hence assimilation can be considered as the primary activity. An equilibrium is reached when a proper balance is struck between assimilation and accommodation. A change in the development of character is the aftermath of this equilibrium leading to the emergence of a personality not known earlier. In raising one's personality to the level of excellence, function of transcendence plays an important role.

5. Function of transcendence

Transcendence is an extra-ordinary excellence, surpassing everything. It can mean the attainment of a high level of cognition in which peak experiences can occur and leave the person with heightened illumination when everything proceeds serenely on a higher plateau of calm awareness of self and the universe. Transcendence can also mean a going beyond one's own beliefs and values both in understanding and in relating to other people.

Action with its function of transcendence raises man to a level of excellence, in which he goes beyond the boundaries of his own ego. Transcendence of the ego can take place when actions are placed under
the "aspect of eternity" enacted in response to the "requiredness" of nature.\textsuperscript{129} This can be made possible through the moulding of personality by forgoing one's needs for the sake of others.

According to Maslow, the fulfilment of hierarchical needs transforms one into a self-actualised personality. But apart from this model of Maslow, there is another model that has emerged with a rare breed of man. This man is willing to identify himself with the needs of others by-passing his own basic needs in order to achieve something extra-ordinary and sublime. In this act the original object of gratification is replaced by a higher goal, where the instinct of fulfilling one's needs is turned into a new and useful channel. It is a re-channelization of lower nature toward higher order of behaviour. This man aims at something which transcends the aspiration of ordinary mortals.

Gandhi is such a man. He sets his goal of uplifting the poorest of the poor. In the process he by-passed his personal hierarchical needs. Truly great persons thus set goals which are extra-ordinary in depth and vision that leads to integration.

6. Function of integration

Integration attempts a wholeness, a completeness, a sense of oneness. Personality integration means a relationship between the organism and its environment which has a minimum conflicting components.\textsuperscript{130} Full integration implies total absence of inner conflicts and the complete successful adaptation to external environment. Integration, thus, should be a harmonious balance between the individual's desires and ambitions on the one hand and his powers and
capacities on the other. Hence the hallmark of an integrated personality is balance and harmonious adjustment to environment. According to Richard Dewey and W.J. Humber "Consistency in attitudes is a prerequisite for this oneness of personality." But this consistency does not mean rigidity, instead it should necessarily mean flexibility whereby a successful and completely integrated personality can alter with the environment when adjustments are required and embrace new features.

The immediate social environment of a person might create conditions that are not conducive to personality integration. But a good personality will consider all the negative factors as means of heightening self-awareness by which the personality is integrated. This integrated personality lives and grows extracting the best from every situation with perfect adjustment. Integration is a continuous process of development in the horizontal, vertical and abyssal dimensions constituting the cognitive, emotional and social aspects.

The harmonious development of these aspects depends on the function of processing the raw materials perceived from the outside world. The information gathered about the universe and its laws through the senses is the horizontal dimension. The perception of morality, ethic, beauty, spirituality and divinity is the vertical dimension. The knowledge gathered in the horizontal and vertical dimensions are assimilated and personalized in the abyssal dimension, where a ceaseless activity of conversion of matter into energy prompts one to incessant action. This process of transformation leads to integration through conscious efforts of self-discipline where all the three aspects in the three different dimensions function in an
inter-related, blended, harmonious way.

In short, personality culminates in its development through the function of integration. Personality integration is the sum total of consistent actions and experiences leading to self-awareness, good habits and strong character with the intermixing of cognitive, affective and conative aspects of mind and behaviour.

Of the various approaches to the theories of personality the humanistic approach is suitable for this investigation, since it focuses upon the whole of the human person as the unit of study. It is helpful in unfolding the nature of personality as it tries to take in all aspects of a person's individuality — physical, mental and social in formulating theories of personality. Of the different contemporary psychologists Abraham Maslow, one of the prominent proponents of humanistic approach, is chosen for this study, with his self-actualisation theory as the particular frame of reference.

Maslow, basing his investigations on healthy and creative persons had on the whole an optimistic view of personality unlike other psychologists who laid much emphasis upon man's frailties. He believed that the inner nature of man is basically good, though weak. Hence life becomes an endless struggle to grow, to overcome and to reach one's full potential in attaining self-actualisation.

Functions of adaptation, organization and transcendence help in refining character, taking one to a higher level of development — the integration of personality. Hence personality integration is a harmonious blending of different aspects of the totality with an expression of wholeness, completeness and a sense of oneness.
In order to highlight the salient features of an integrated personality, an Indian model is selected for study and analysis.

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