CHAPTER I

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I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

The area of self-perception remains unexplored to a certain extent owing to its field of subjectivity. An individual when presented with a physical stimulus responds to it physiologically which can be seen in his overt behaviour, but the psychological changes simultaneously taking place within himself are not known. It is difficult to understand these inner subjective changes taking place in an individual. Our entire personality occupies a central role in our perception as an object of perception, as well as being an instrument of perception. The way an individual perceives his personality may have psychological consequences for him which can be known if probed into the inner recesses of his mental processes. The subjective field of the individual is known as "self" and how he perceives it is known as his "self-perception".

In this study an attempt has been made to explore the inner world of the individual as perceived by himself. It is our common experience that whatever may be our capacities or limitations as measured by objective standards, we may not perceive them exactly as they are; and surprisingly enough as has been pointed out by JOURARD (1963), MORGAN (1964), GUILFORD (1965), MASLOW (1962), COLEMAN (1960) and ROGERS (1951), predictions of our behaviour conform more to our "perceived capacity" rather than the "real" capacity. In other words, our self-perception i.e. various aspects of our personality as perceived by us, if fully explored, would be a more reliable
guide for understanding and predicting our behaviour rather than other objective reports based on the results of only objective measurements.

Self-concept theorists promote the self concept as the most important and focal object within the experience of each individual because of its primacy, centrality, continuity and ubiquity in all aspects of behaviour, mediating as it does both between stimulus and response. The self-concept that is, the evaluated beliefs a person holds about himself, is accepted by most psychologists as a worthy and respectable subject for study since it is amenable to scientific investigation.

The present study aims at exploring the self-perception of the college going students and the possibility of its being associated with some personality and academic variables.

An individual is the unique combination of all the characteristics that are outwardly evident, and he is at the same time all that is concealed in his inner and relatively private experience. What the individual sees of his own outer manifestations and what he believes other persons see and think about him has much to do with the way his inner person develops. Similarly, these inner aspects influence to an important degree the pattern of the outer characteristics of personality. Furthermore, personality is not just separate from the environment. Thus the organism's "wholeness" implies a perceived and structured environment which is continually modifying the organism and which in turn is modified by the organism. So to
understand a person's personality as perceived by himself, we
must have an understanding of how he perceives himself and how he
perceives the world related to him. Thus, many contemporary
psychologists, ascribe to the self concept a key role as a
factor in the 'integration of personality, in motivating
behaviour and in achieving mental health'.

WILLIAM JAMES (1890) was the first psychologist to study
the concept of global self and defined it operationally. Thus the
study of self in its various manifestations became more precise,
experimental and systematic. ROGERS (1951) stated the importance
of self-reference for clinical groups. He explained that
"behaviour is the product of one's perceptions and these
perceptions are phenomenological rather than 'real' because what
is perceived is 'reality' to the perceiver and these perceptions
have to be related to the existing organisational field, the
pivotal point of which is the self-concept, which ultimately
 guides his behaviour."

Other developments on self-concept noted by WYLIE
(1961) helped to carry self-constructs back into the mainstream
of psychology and increasing importance was given to ego
development in the self-concept. With the infusion of
phenomenological theory and the increased explorations, self-
concept was firmly established as an important construct in the
study of human behaviour.

Considering the significance of self-perception, the
growing generation should be given a clear idea about their true
personalities. In order to do that there must be an objective
measurement to find out the actual self-perception of the today's growing generation. In the present study the exploration of the subjective aspects of personality have been selected as a problem for Gujarati and non-Gujarati college going population from the cosmopolitan city of Bombay and the metropolitan city of Ahmedabad.

Irrespective of the objective capacity that a person possesses, it is self-perception that is directly associated with his social interaction, his level of achievement, his self-esteem and related confidence, and finally his adaptability and adjustment in the family and society. There is no one-to-one relationship between a person's ability and the way he evaluates himself. The highly talented individual may be with deep feelings of inferiority which would prove detrimental to his growth and on the other hand the mediocre one may feel highly proud and self-satisfied leading to further progress and development, eventually beneficial to him and to society. Over and above this, there are other aspects of self-perception which are related to problems of personal and social adjustment which needs to be explored. Thus according to the psychologists who emphasize the study of personality and motivation from the individual's point of view emphasize the study of self-perception as very basic to that issue.

This study is mainly undertaken to have an understanding of self-perception of the college going students and to study the main areas associated with the self-perception of these Ss either positively or negatively at college level.
II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the present study an attempt has been made to explore the self-perception of the college going students. The study also aims to find out whether there is any correlation between the self-perception of the student and his adjustment level. The other variables added to the study are sex-differences in self-perception, influence of residence and cultural background related to the self-perception of the students. The sex-differences and influence of residence are also studied in relation to the adjustment level of the students. Lastly an attempt has been made to find out whether there is any association between self-perception and achievement level of the student.

The present investigation is an attempt to study the self-perception of the college going students. In Gujarat this kind of study has not been undertaken so far. The research worker is interested to study this problem because of the following reasons:

1. The student's self-perception is likely to throw light on their knowledge about themselves and insight into their personalities.

2. This study may also throw light on whether self-perception is correlated with the student's achievement level.

3. This study may help to find out whether higher self-perception means better adjustment in an individual or not.
4. This study may throw light on whether the environmental factors have any correlation with the self-perception of the college going students of the cosmopolitan and metropolitan cities.

In short the present study is an attempt to understand the basic idea of what is the student's self-perception level and what are the important variables correlated with it. The problem requires exact understanding of certain basic terms.

III. CLARIFICATION OF THE BASIC TERMS :

There are certain pillars on which the entire foundation of the definition of this research work depends. These may be considered to be the focal points which the research worker has highlighted and clarified in the process.

(A) Perceptual Field
(B) Self
(C) Self-perception
(D) Self-perception at college level.
(E) Self-perception and Adjustment level.
(F) Self-perception and Sex-Related Differences.
(G) Self-Perception and Cultural Background.
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All these basic terms are explained in detail so as to clarify their meaning for the present study.
As discussed earlier people do not behave according to the facts as others see them. Each behaves according to the facts as he sees them. The behaviour of the individual is governed by the unique perceptions of the individual about himself and the world as perceived by him. This implies that each individual's perceptual process is private and separate from the rest of the world. The perceptual field is the product, end-result or outcome of the operation of the subjective perceptual process (SNYGG and COMBS, 1951). It is each individual's personal and unique field of awareness, the field of perception responsible for his interaction with his environment.

The concept of complete determination of behaviour by the perceptual field is the basic postulate of phenomenology, a term derived from philosophy, which holds that reality lies not in the event but in the phenomenon, i.e., in the individual's experience of the event. According to this approach, behaviour is a function not of the external event but of the individual's perception of it. ROGERS (1951) states: "As experience occurs in the life of an individual they are either symbolised, perceived and organized in some relationship to the self; ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self-structure, denied symbolisation or given a distorted symbolisation because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self". This means that it is the individual's concept of himself that determines the kind and quality of the experiences perceived. The
phenomenological approach to behaviour, into the principles of which the modern theory of self conception has become cemented, interprets behaviour in terms of the phenomenal field of the subject. The perceptual field therefore is also regarded as the phenomenal field. This field possesses five properties explained below:

(i) Fluidity:

It means the potentiality to change. The change is possible through the influence of multitudes of internal and external stimuli. The capacity for change also makes learning, reasoning, remembering, forgetting and creativity possible.

(ii) Stability:

It means relatively permanent nature of the basic structure. The perceptual field is stable because of the organized nature of its content. Whatever perceptual content is available, it does not exist in fractional isolated pieces; rather it is systematically organized into meaningful experiences which gives them stability over time. Stability, therefore, does not contradict fluidity; it simply means that any change in the perceptual field is not without meaning.

(iii) Direction:

Direction means Goal-Oriented nature. It also implies meaningfulness and purpose mentioned above. It is the organized nature of perception that makes direction possible. What goals
are selected, of course, depends upon the past experience and the existing needs of the perceiver. This implies that perception is highly influenced by motivational factors. As these factors change, the perceptual field changes accordingly. Despite this, the whole field works as an organized unit for some purpose at a time.

(iv) Perceptual Vigilance:

This is the property directly related to the goal-oriented nature mentioned above. Perceptual vigilance means the tendency to accentuate and facilitate the detection of the internal and external stimuli that are perceived to be associated with one’s goal. An individual late for his work, perceives vehicles much more than anything else. This implies that the items selected depend upon the predominant needs within the individual existing at the moment.

(v) Perceptual Defence:

This is an exact opposition to perceptual vigilance. Perceptual defence means the tendency to ignore, overlook, minimise or deny those internal and external stimuli that are perceived as interfering or dangerous in the achievement of one’s goals. The public speaker, expecting to hear a loud applause for his speech would ignore a few shouts from the audience asking him to sit down. This process may be conscious or unconscious. Its major function is to maintain the stability of the perceptual field, by denying those factors that distract it.
These characteristics eventhough applicable to the perceptual field in general, differ in content from person to person, e.g. stabilising contents of the perceptual fields of a Professor and an Architect are different. Similarly, the nature of direction will differ tremendously from person to person as has been pointed out by a number of writers (SHERIF & SHERIF, 1969, KRECH, CRUTCHFIELD and BALLACHY, 1962; SARGENT & WILLIAMSON, 1966). It then becomes an important problem for the social psychologists to study the conditions that influence the selection of the content of the perceptual field. Research studies in this field conducted mainly by Clinical Psychologists (ROGERS, 1954; COLEMON 1960) and Child Psychologists (THOMPSON, 1965; DINKMEYER 1967; WATSON, 1959) have introduced the concept of 'self' that has been regarded as important in understanding this process of selection. The objectives of the present study do not touch the areas of perceptual vigilance and perceptual defence.

(B) SELF:

When Psychologists refer to 'self' they are thinking in terms of a conceptual structure rather than a physical one (COLEMAN, 1960). Like gravity, the self cannot be observed directly but is inferred from various phenomena which can be observed and which seem to operate according to some unifying principle. The self in other words, is not a mystical entity but a useful and seemingly necessary construct.

WILLIAM JAMES (1860) explored the concept of self in psychology and has presented a theoretical structure of the
self by considering it as a hierarchial structure as shown in figure:

THE STRUCTURE OF SELF

All conscious persons can experience the totality of self.

W. JAME'S two discriminated aspect.

The self as a knower or I

The self as known or me

Indographic level Self image or
Each person has Picture (structure)

and can undertake Self Evaluation or Self Esteem or Self Acceptance (Process)

Cognised self or self as known to the individual.

Other self or self as the individual believe's individual.

Ideal self or self as the individual would like to be.

This is an attempt to clarify in a heirarchial manner what in most psychological writings is given in unclear terms. At the summit the superordinate construct is that of the Global Self, that sense of continuity, or what JAMES termed the "stream of consciousness" which is the totality and singularity of a person. This Global self includes so much that it ceases to have any value or meaning since the study of it would be no less than the study of the experiencing agent and his entire psychological processes. It is composed of two aspects -
(a) The Self as knower or I, i.e. the process of active experience, and
(b) The Self as known or Me, i.e. the content of that experiencing.

It does not, on initial consideration appear unreasonable to consider the Self as Knower or the experiencing subject as the aspect of major concern. It is the basic human capacity for awareness that makes us each acknowledge our self identity. However, such an approach restricts study to the scientific speculation in theological and philosophical terms. Another difficulty is that this concept of Self as Knower is a nomothetic concept, i.e. of universal application since every person has the capacity for undertaking active experiencing and self awareness.

The content of the experiencing or the Self as known is on the other hand an idiographic concept, i.e. person specific. In other words, while everyone is an experiencing 'I' in RAINEY's words (1943, pg. 18), the self concept is "the individual as known to the individual, a unique configuration". This aspect of the Global self, the self-concept, or Me, is the individual's percepts, concepts and evaluations about himself, including the image he feels others have of him and of the person he would like to be, nourished from a diet of personally evaluated environmental experience. This is the theoretical background from which the idiographic background of the individual self has developed.

Actually the nomothetic background always provides the theoretical basis for the development of an idiographic approach
which can be tested empirically through research and experimentation. The results would in turn either support the basic theory or they would require some modifications in the basic theory. Therefore both these aspects are considered to be interrelated i.e. two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other.

Writings from classical Greek times to the present have revealed a shift in emphasis from a philosophic and subjective experiencing 'I' to a psychological, and empirical 'me' move from the self as knower to the self as known, a discrimination most cogently established by WILLIAM JAMES, (1890).

Experience may be considered to be any state, process or function which happens to or occurs within the human organism. Objective experience is that which can be empirically observed, operationally defined and qualitatively measured without reference to variables within the organism. Subjective experience on the other hand is not wholly accounted for by observable and measurable variables. When empirical procedures, operational techniques and statistical measures are insufficient to fully account for the experience or behaviour in question; and when logic seems to require that some intra-organismic state is to be hypothesized to account for the experience, the experience is regarded as subjective. The term 'subjective' here is the same as 'phenomenological' and marks the behaviour as of the organism and within the organism. The concepts postulated to describe or explain such subjective or intra-organismic experience or behaviour are called hypothetical constructs. Self is just such a hypothetical construct in psychology. Self may be said to be
phenomenally observed, experientially defined and qualitatively measured variable. HALL & LINDZEE (1957, Pg. 468) state in thus:

"The self, whether it be conceived as object or as process or both, is not homunculus or 'man within the breast' or soul; rather it refers to the object of psychological processes or to those processes themselves, and those processes are assumed to be governed by the principle of causality. In other words, the self is not a metaphysical or religious concept. It is a concept that falls within the domain of scientific psychology."

Another more empirical approach towards the study of self has been presented by COLEMAN (1959). His is more of an empirical approach mainly because the results are drawn from the studies of normal and abnormal population. In examining the self-structure, COLEMAN has focussed on two aspects of the individual's experience of self.

1) **Self as an Object** - referring to the individual's perception and evaluation of himself as something distinct from other persons and things, i.e. his self concept.

2) **Self as a process**; or self as being referred to the individual's perception of himself as a Knower, Striver and Doer with facilities for perceiving, evaluating, choosing and planning in reference to himself. Both these aspects are highly interwoven; but require separate clarification to understand their distinct roles and functions.

1) **SELF AS OBJECT**:

When self is thought of as an object, it refers to the
individual’s self-image. This image incorporates the individual’s perception of what he is really like, i.e. **Self-Identity**: his value as a person i.e. **Self Evaluation** and his aspirations for growth and accomplishment i.e. **Self-Ideal**. The self is regarded as the core of individual’s frame of reference consisting of his assumptions concerning facts, values and possibilities. As these assumptions play a determining role in the adjustment process, they require a further discussion about their theoretical and practical implications.

**SELF IDENTITY**:

Man is not born with a sense of self. In fact the newborn infant apparently does not even know where his own body ends and his environment begins. Only gradually he learns to recognise his body parts, names, feelings, and behaviour as integral parts of a single me and to build up a cluster of assumptions about himself. It is this self-structure that provides the child with a stable sense of his own identity and a central reference point for his adjustive behaviour. This the individual’s existence centres around the perceptions of ‘I’ and ‘ME’. Whatever happens in the outside world is always perceived in relation to ‘I’ and ‘ME’.

As the individual’s experience broadens, his self-image gradually extends to include certain things outside of himself with which he feels personal involvement. **ALPORT** (1955) describes this process as that of ego-extension and regards identification of the child with the parents as a responsible condition for its origin.
ALPERT describes this process more fully:

"A child ... who identifies with his parent is definitely extending his sense of self, as he does likewise through his love for pets, dolls, or other possessions, animate or inanimate".

"As we grow older, we identify with groups, neighbourhood, and nation as well as with possessions, clothes, home - they become matters of importance to us in the sense that other people's families, nations or possessions are not. Later in life the process of extension may go to great lengths, through the development of loyalties and on moral and religious values".

The individual's self-identity is shaped partly by the social roles he plays. An individual is expected to play different roles at a time, like that of a father, husband, employer, etc. He also tends to adopt the attitudes and values that are expected of him.

SELF EVALUATION:

Self-evaluation means an assessment made by the individual regarding his assets and liabilities, achievements and failures, potentialities and limitations and adequacy and inadequacy. The overall assessment consists of the individual's self-worth. The feelings of self-worth may be highly positive or negative. There is a direct relationship between self-evaluation and feelings of satisfaction that a person achieves. If a person's self-evaluation is higher than his feelings of satisfaction will be much more profound as compared to a person whose self-evaluation is very low. The determining forces
influencing the process of self-evaluation have been clearly pointed out by SNYGG and COMBS (1959) and have been supported by a number of research workers, (JOURARD, 1958; JERSILD, 1952; ROGERS, 1951). In the words of SNYGG and COMBS (1959):

"In his interaction with father, mother and siblings, the young child begins his differentiations of self as liked or unliked, wanted or unwanted, acceptable or unacceptable, able or unable, worthy or unworthy, adequate or inadequate. These are the kind of perceptions through which the individual is able to symbolise his own degree of self-actualization. The more positive self-definitions he acquires, the greater is the feeling of adequacy and need-satisfaction, and conversely the more negative self-definitions he acquires, the more frustrated and unhappy he becomes. Experience later in life may change the concepts developed as a product of family living but never easily or quickly. The most basic of such self-concepts may be so deeply rooted in the individual's organizations that they cannot be easily changed even by the most drastic of later experiences" (pg. 136).

From this it can be noted that family, peers, and social groups play an important part in the evaluation of an individual about himself.

SELF - IDEAL:

The self as object includes not only the individual's view of himself in terms of his own identity and worth but also his aspirations for growth and accomplishment. Implicit in the individual's self-ideal are his assumptions of possibility - his
notion of what he should be able to achieve or become—and his assumptions about what is desirable. This ideal image is built in relation to the way the individual sees himself now, or his assumptions of facts. Self-ideal as defined by ENGLISH and ENGLISH (1958) "is a standard of behaviour set by oneself for oneself. It is the integration of the values one holds for oneself and which one seeks to realize". An individual’s self-image of what he really wants to be ideally acts as an important variable in determining the pattern of life. It is necessary that the individual’s level of aspiration be realistic, for if it is too high it will lead to failure and self-devaluation and if it is too low, to a waste of personal resources and opportunities. Ideally, the individual selects goals that are appropriate to his interests, aptitudes and opportunities, but outside pressures often tend to push him to other directions.

Oftentimes are self-ideals of ours related to identifications we make with various models like parents, teachers, television personalities, athletes, public figures and others. Out of this identification with parents is of utmost importance because they are the ones to make the child aware of his existence and act as a source of rewards and punishments.

The child imitates the parents and learns from them what is desirable and what is undesirable. The parents play a positive role in the development of the self-perception of their children. Thus parents and environment are greatly responsible for the ideation of 'self'.
SELF AS A PROCESS:

The human organism could function on a mechanical level without a structure but once the sense of self develops in the individual, there is an awareness about his existence, his identity and his activity, the individual always behaves in reference to it and comes to perceive himself as an active agent in determining his own behaviour. It is equivalent to what WILLIAM JAMES calls as the "Knowing Self" (1890). The experience of inner direction involves the self as knower, striver and doer.

(a) Self as Knower:

Self as a knower involves the ability of human organism to perceive itself somewhat as it would be another object. All the knowing activity of the human being is carried in relation to self. All the perceptual stimuli from internal and external environment is evaluated, integrated and stored with reference to perceived significance of self. Whatever the individual knows about himself and others comprises the frame of reference which is later used in choosing and carrying out actions. The frame of reference built should be accurate and realistic so as to cope up with situations of different types. This aspect of self helps in adjustment of the individual in different situations and if the knowledge of the individual is distorted, he will be unable to cope up with situations as they really are.

(b) Self as Striver:

This is the basic tendency of the individual to seek and avoid things in terms of perceived significance, i.e. in
terms of its meaning put to it. Regardless of the external influences, self always remains active in its survivings.

Because the self-structure is experienced as the very core of existence, its maintenance and enhancement becomes matters of special concern. There are different ways by which an individual tries to enhance his self-imposition so as to increase his feelings of personal worth and adequacy. For this reason, the individual would try to defend his existing assumptions from attack as far as possible and would be prepared to relinquish them if only he gets different self-structure of equal or greater appeal. In many large and small ways the individual strives to maintain and enhance the good picture he has about himself. He tries to hide and defend the negative aspects of his personality.

(c) Self as Doer:

The typical pattern of adjustive behaviour in the human organism involves perceiving the situation; processing all the information received from inner and outer sources - evaluating its significance; integrating it with previous knowledge, deciding what cause of behaviour it dictates, and pursuing a course of action that seems best suited to meeting the requirements of the situation. All these processes take place with reference to the individual's perception of himself as an active and responsible agent with conscious intent - as a doer with the capacity for self-direction. A child's "discovery" of himself as an active agent is a key step in emergence of his self-concept.
The present research mainly concentrates on the study of the interrelationship between the self as object of the college going students and their adjustment level.

(C) SELF - PERCEPTION :

All of the man's moral action is shaped by his 'private' conceptions of the world as discussed earlier. One of the most interesting social objects one may perceive and react to is one's own personality. This perception of the individual about his own personality contributes in the development of the self-concept of the individual. So self-concept mainly consists of the individual's perceptions about himself which is also regarded as his self-perception. Thus self concept and self-perception prove to be synonymous terms.

The self concept is largely identified with the orientation of Phenomenology, and has been given the most systematic use in the theory of personality associated with CARL ROGERS. According to ROGERS (1951) "self-perception is composed of such elements as the perception of one's characteristics and abilities, the percepts and concepts, self in relation to others and environment. The value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects and goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive and negative valence". The person will perceive those concepts and percepts which are functionally significant to him and the others are denied symbolisation or given a distorted symbolisation because they are inconsistent with the individual's perception of himself. The
self-concept thus becomes central to every person’s psychological existence.

The self perception theoretical point of view states that people’s attitudes, beliefs and characterisations are to a considerable degree determined by observation of their own behaviours. The underlying principle is as we tend to judge the feelings of others by what we see them do, so we infer our own attitudes by self-observation. The phenomenal field is the totality of experience that a person is aware of at any instant. The phenomenal self, is differentiated out of the phenomenal field, and has significance only within the totality of experience. SNYGG and COMBS (1949) state thus:

"This phenomenal self, includes all those parts of the phenomenal field which the individual experiences as part of characteristic of himself". The phenomenal field of SNYGG and COMBS (1949) appears to possess three constituents which form the self-concept. (See Fig. On Next Page.)

The total perceptual field which includes all the individual’s perceptions is represented by the largest circle, (A) within this field there is a smaller area, (B) which includes all these perceptions which a person holds about himself, irrespective of their clarity or their importance to any particular moment. This is the phenomenal self. The heart of both the field and the self consists of a still smaller area which SNYGG and COMBS suggest includes only those aspects which are important or vital to the person. This is his self-concept. It is a stable, important and characteristic organisation composed of
The Self Concept

The Self

The Phenomenal Field.
COLEMAN (1960) has also rightly pointed out that "self-perception is seen as an integral image of one’s self". From this it becomes evident that self-perception is an important personality variable influencing our behaviour. Therefore, whenever the question of personality assessment arises along with other psychological and physiological traits, self-perception should also be given an equally important position because it contributes to the individual in many ways as mentioned below.

1. Self-perception facilitates the emission of a consistent response to a particular group of stimuli. Such classification enables the individual to gain control of his environment by cataloguing into discrete units the plethora of stimuli that impinge upon his personality.

2. Self-perception facilitates generalisation of learning from others.

3. It facilitates social interaction so that the individual can anticipate the expected reactions of others.

4. It permits self-evaluation to be carried out on the basis of which future behaviour can be based.

5. The information of self-concept relevant to a particular context as a brief personal summary which the individual can communicate to others has an extremely functional value in society. By this others know what to expect from one behaviourally.

6. The information on self-concept helps in the placement of an
individual in formal institutions such as industry and higher education.

The present study concentrates on studying the self-perception of college going students and how this self-perception is affected by other variables which ultimately influence the personality. In order to study the self-perception of an individual, it is necessary to understand what the self-perception really consists of. ROSENBERG (1965) had considered this question and has given four components of which self-concept consists of. They are given below:

(a) Self-image - what the person sees when he looks at.

(b) Affective intensity - How strongly the person feels about these various facets;

(c) Self-evaluation - whether the person has a favourable or unfavourable opinion of various facets of that image;

(d) Behavioural predisposition - What a person is likely to do in response to his evaluation of himself.

However, the difficulty faced in studying the area of self-perception is that it is a highly cognitive and subjective aspect of personality. So development of an instrument to measure the exact self-perception becomes imperative and a very challenging problem. In the present study an attempt has been made to develop one such instrument for the measurement of the self-perception of the college going students.

D. SELF - PERCEPTION AT COLLEGE LEVEL:
When one talks about the self-perception of normal persons and particularly the college going students, one has the present day educational system before him. An important reason why the self-concept is currently regarded as a crucial element is because education is recognised to be having diverse aims. The educated person is not merely a memory bank of academic facts. Physical, social and emotional development are equally within the aegis of the college. This widening of purpose injects self-concept development as a central theme in non-cognitive development.

A classroom of students does not necessarily consists of all students having equal intellectual development. However, when the results are compared with the basic IQ level, one is really surprised to find that IQ does not play an important role in the achievement level of the student. There seems to be some other pervasive and important variable influencing the performance level of the student. An experienced teacher is in a position to find out that there are certain students in the class having definitely superior potential, but they never consider themselves to be so capable. On the other hand, there are other students who are highly confident, perhaps too highly confident about their capacity and their potential than what they are or really possess. The actual performance of the student seems to be influenced by this attitude of the student towards his personality. If this is true, it means that self-perception is one equally important variable just like the IQ in influencing the achievement level and personality development.

SNYGG and COMBS (1949) and JERSILD (1952) in their
work published the self-concept as an important variable influencing the performance of both teacher and taught. The initial impetus in Britain came with the work of STAINES (1958) in his careful observation and research into classroom practice from which he was able to conclude that not only was the self-concept present in all learning but was also a major outcome of all learning situations, though its presence might pass unnoticed by teachers intent on inculcation of academic knowledge and skill. Therefore it becomes imperative for the teacher to find out the self-perception level of each and every student so that he can be given proper personal and vocational guidance also, if necessary.

Keeping this problem in mind, the present study concentrates on the development of an instrument which can measure the self-perception of the college going students.

However, there are many other variables which enter and play a role in the development of his self-perception after the subject completes his high school and enters college. This area eventhough important, there is unfortunately no valid test or instrument available to measure the self-perception of the college going students. One such test was developed in Gujarat in BHATT (1972). However, it is limited upto the assessment of the self-perception of high school going students. So it is necessary to develop a new instrument for the measurement of self-perception of the college going students.

At this juncture it becomes necessary to examine the exact nature of the self-perception of the group selected for the
present study. They have already crossed the high school and entered a new environment, age-wise also they are considered more grown-up and responsible in their families. Similarly in the college environment, they are supposed to participate in many co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and are also required to cope up with peer pressure and maintain social relations. So the self-perception of the student depends on many other factors which need to be explored.

Thus before developing the instrument, it was equally necessary to find out the major areas of total self-perceptual field of the selected group. In order to find out these contents following methods were adopted:

(i) Interview with the college going students regarding what they think about themselves was necessary. They can talk or describe in writing regarding what they feel about their personality and which aspects of their personality are important according to them. By interviewing about 15 students sufficient material was collected which gave an idea about the existing self-perception of the college going students.

(ii) Interviewing the teachers who are teaching in the college and getting their opinions regarding what they think about the student's feelings towards their own personality. A good observant teacher will be able to point out how many students think too high about themselves, how many underestimate their potential and how many just don't know what is their real personality.

(iii) Interview with the parents, counsellors and consultants gave an
idea about the major frustrations in the student's life like failure in examination, low percentage in the results, incompatibility with other students, problems of interaction with opposite sex etc.

On the basis of all these, five major areas of self-perception were decided and defined explicitly which are given below:

1. Physical Appearance
2. Family Background
3. College life
4. Personality Traits
5. Social Relations
6. Additional Areas suggested by the Ss.

A detailed explanation of these areas is necessary for getting a clear picture of self-perception.

Physical appearance for a college student is one of the important aspects on which he forms opinions about himself. MEAD (1934) described that "one essential component in the delineation of oneself involves the discovery that everything within the integumental limits of the skin is a part of the self". A person's height, weight, complexion, eyesight, body proportions so become closely associated with his attitudes to himself and to feelings of personal adequacy and acceptability so that the body becomes a central feature in the self-perception of an individual. This aspect of the self-concept, the perception of the physical self is referred to as the body image. The body image though subjective is open to private and public evaluation.
as it is the most visible part. Because others perceive and react to the individual, at least partially, in terms of his skin, size, colour, appearance and physical make-up the individual's perception of himself reflects considerable attention to such features. JOURARD and SECORD (1954, 1955a, 1955b) in a series of studies found that the feelings an individual had about his physical body were similar to those he held about himself generally and high self-esteem correlated strongly with the acceptance of one's physical body.

At college level the aspect of physical appearance gains importance due to the following reasons:

1. It is at this time that the maximum awareness of one's looks arises and becomes relevant to the individual.

2. This is the time when mutual impression about one's looks between boys and girls become important. The general tendency is of influencing each other by one's superior looks.

3. The positive acceptance of one's looks as perceived by the individual and as perceived by others leads to positive self-acceptance of one's self.

4. Physical appearance is a very potent agent for attracting particular social responses. This feedback creates to a considerable degree the way a person feels about himself.

5. Today's advertising world i.e. television, mass-communication, inspires the youth to look smart and attractive which helps to increase their level of self-confidence.

Another important area affecting the self-perception of the individual is his family background which contributes in the development of his personality. Though at college level, the
student does not like to discuss about his family very often, the security and the stability provided by the family can hardly be doubted. The family provides a social environment which may be conducive or non-conducive to the individual's growth and development of his personality which will affect his self-perception. As DIAMOND (1957) comments: "It seems a reasonable assumption that the continuance of a warm, permissive acceptant social environment is favourable to the development of a healthy self-esteem, while a critical judgement, rejecting environment.... fosters the development of negative self derogatory feelings...." 

Thus the contributions of the family needs to be mentioned which helps the person to form his self-perception in a positive direction because of the following reasons:

1. It provides social status to the individual.
2. It also provides economic background and financial stability to the student. Of course, not all individual's are having the financial stability.
3. It mainly provides a psychological background where a person is in a position to share all his experiences that are pleasant and unpleasant and get guidance and moral support in times of difficulty and emotional crisis.

As can be seen the family background is an important variable affecting the self-perception of an individual, it provides a limited environment. When an individual enters college, the college environment becomes more important to him. In college, the student is exposed to a much broader environment where many other aspects related to college environment like
academic success, forming new friendships, interaction with peers and teachers gain more importance. The student is required to cope up with all kinds of stresses and maintain his self-esteem in the eyes of others. TURNER and VANDERLIPPE (1958) found the congruence between cognised self and ideal self is greater in those college students who are more active in extra-curricular activities, who love higher scholastic averages and who are given higher sociometric rankings by fellow students. Thus the college environment facilitates an all round development which will help to enhance the student's self-perception. Inability to cope up with these stresses will lead to a feeling of inadequacy resulting into a poor self-perception in a student. Following are the contributions of college environment:

1. College life provides different scope of activities which helps the individual to develop his mental and physical faculties.

2. Academic success is given heavy weightage in college. With academic success the student is in a position to prove his worth and maintain his self-esteem.

3. The individual gets an idea about his own personal adequacies and learns to evaluate himself objectively.

4. The student comes to know about his acceptance by others which is very important to him at this juncture of life on which his inter-personal relationships are built.

Thus the college life becomes the foundation of an individual's personality and his future.

Though there is a lot of significance of the college environment on the self-perception of the student, one's awareness of one's personality becomes an important factor affecting the
self-perception. As AllPORT (1961) writes: "Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychological systems that determine characteristic behaviour and thought". Each individual is different from every other individual in respect of such characteristics as physical appearance, mental abilities, interests and aptitudes either qualitatively or quantitatively. With these variations in background, each individual will view his personality according to his unique perceptions of these aspects which will form his self-image. This self-image is unique to the individual and will affect his thinking and behaviour. Tension results when wrong conceptions are attached with the individual. Therefore an idea about one's personality is very important because of the following reasons:

(1) It shows how an individual is different and unique from other individuals.

(2) It makes the individual aware of the different traits that one possesses.

(3) It makes one understand one's own limitations.

(4) It helps the individual to probe into one's mental processes to get an idea about one's subconscious and its functions.

(5) It gives the individual an idea about any irrational fears within one's self.

(6) It gives the individual an understanding of one's own motives and makes one aware of the emotional areas which will reflect in the overt behaviour.

After considering the significance of personality
traits on the self-perception of the student, the social relations of an individual in the context of society and how the individual perceives these relations comparing his own standing cannot be circumvented. CHARLES COOLEY (1902) and GEORGE MEAD (1934) were among the first to suggest that self-concept arises in part out of one's interactions with other people. COOLEY pointed out the importance of subjectively interpreted feedback from others as a main source of data about self. Other persons supply the "mirror" in which the individual learns to see himself. Out of their response to him he constructs his self-image. Thus, from what others say or seem to be saying about him, what others do or seem to be doing to show that he is valued or not valued. From such interpersonal relationship, the individual develops the picture he has of himself. This picture regarding his social self affects his perception in many ways as mentioned below:

(1) It enables the individual to know the level of acceptance he has in a social group which is directly related to his self-esteem.

(2) Self recognition about his own capabilities in interpersonal interactions increases his level of confidence.

A variety of other questions for the test were selected on the basis of the ideas contributed by the Ss when they were asked to write essays on "myself". Certain questions on marital areas, money matters, union activities, friendship, extra-sensory perception etc. have found a place in the inventory as they were reported by the Ss to play a significant role in influencing their perceptions about themselves.
Adjustment is one important personality variable in connection to the self-perception which has been dealt with in the present study. The psychology of adjustment is concerned with the total range of psychological adjustments involved in human experience. It seeks to give an understanding of a personal mode of dealing with both internal and external sources of stimulation. It inquires into basic sources of motivation, it studies the transformation of motives by learning; it studies the variability of response to experience; and it seeks to define the conditions under which people alter their behavior.

Man must satisfy his physiological needs by adjusting to his physical environment. But he must in addition to the physical, also relate to the psychological needs like society, affiliation, aggression and others in socio-cultural setting. The term adjustment is often used to convey a variety of different ideas. We refer to adjustment as growing accustomed to a particular condition, such as the changing weather. We may refer to adjusting or confirming to the ways of the majority. Adjustment can also refer to an individual's subjective state of well-being and happiness.

In the present study, adjustment has been understood as adapting well to the home and college environment resulting into a positive and constructive personality which is devoid of conflicts.
COLEMAN (1956) defines adjustment as:

"Effectiveness of the individual's efforts to meet his needs and adapt to his environment". Psychologically adjustment implies many things like "the wholesome reduction of the pressure of needs, reasonable skills in dealing with frustrations, the development of psychological mechanisms by which difficulties can be circumvented or overcome, the adoption of patterns of behaviour required by varying situations, the efficient resolution of conflicts and learning how to get along successfully with other people" SCHNEIDERS,(1960).

In the present investigation adjustment is studied in reference to the social, personal and educational context and to further find out its relationship with self-perception.

It is not an uncommon belief that an individual who sees or perceives himself in good light has related higher adjustment than the individual who perceives himself in poor light correspondingly having a lower adjustment in important areas of life. However this hypothesis can only be proved with proper and scientific investigation of the relationship between the self-perception of an individual and his adjustment. The present study concerns itself with this problem.

The research worker is interested in finding out whether high self-perception is correlated to better adjustment level and a low self-perception is correlated to poorer adjustment level in the college going students.

The concept of determining adjustment at college level
gains lot of importance due to following reasons:

(1) The college students are many a time not aware of the difficulties they face in adapting to college environment. The adjustment level of the student if determined will give him an awareness of his own personal limitations in adjusting to the particular environment. This will help him to make improvements in his present conditions, eventually leading to better adjustment.

(2) The measurement of adjustment of the students will help the teachers and professors to understand the students at personal level and give them proper guidance.

(3) This kind of measurement can have good predictive value in educational areas. The student will be in a position to overcome his academic limitations and achieve better results.

(4) The teachers and professors would be in a position to find out students with psychological problems and guide them to proper institutions for treatment.

(5) The college students have a tendency to project a different impression about themselves due to the factor of "social desirability" affecting their perceptions. The measurement of adjustment gives a clear idea about their personality as perceived by them.

Thus in the present study adjustment is measured in order to study if there is any congruence between the self-perception of the students and their actual personalities, as adjustment would prove to be the actual predictor of personality.
While exploring the self-perception at college level, it becomes necessary also to study the sex-related differences in the self-perception of males and females. It is not being male or female that is important by itself, rather whether one is masculine male or a feminine female gains more importance. Masculinity and femininity refer to that constellation of characteristics and behaviour deemed appropriate and relevant in the society at this particular time to males and females respectively. A keystone of the self-concept is this concept of being a masculine or a feminine person. Whatever attributes the individual infers he possesses the global self-concept rarely appears in the neutral gender, rather each quality is attached to a given sex by the possessor, e.g. the self-concept of being an attractive lady, or a handsome man.

KAGAN (1964) expounded the aspect of sex-role development in the formation of the self-concept of males and females. The central concept for KAGAN is the sex-role standard or the learned psychological behaviour and characteristics of each sex. This sex-role standards are culturally approved for male and female and are internalized by individuals to guide and evaluate this behaviour. The individual learns to differentiate between the male and female role standard from childhood assisted by society's concern with this dichotomy as transmitted by parents and other agents of socialisation.

The basic human motive as KAGAN posits is that of the need to bring one's behaviour into conformity with a previously
learned sex-role standard. Behaving consistently with this standard is self reinforcing, while the standard itself is strengthened by the reinforcing consequences of action in accordance with it. All this inculcates sex-typed self-concept traits, behaviours and feelings more strongly. Congruence with the sex-role standard brings positive self-evaluation of one's masculinity and femininity. The present study also concerns with studying the self-perception of the college going students in relation to the sex-differences in males and females.

It is assumed that the differences in the self-concept appears to stem from the different sources of the male and female self-concept in that the central facets of masculinity and femininity bear traits which are differentially evaluated by society. These sex role stereotypic characteristics or traits are usually uncritically accepted and incorporated into the self concepts of males and females. Despite presumed changes in society caused by formal legislation and informal pressure groups, the psychological dichotomy of sex-role attributes and sex-concepts between males and females still exists quite strongly, with male self-concepts replete with activity, dominance and self-assertion traits. Self-perceived female self-concepts manifest dependent, confirmist, affiliative, nuturant, tender, sensitive qualities BURNS, (1977).

In the present study, the research worker is interested in studying whether there are sex differences in the self-perception of the males and females in college going students and to study whether the sex-role identity influences the self-perception of males and females in different ways.
As can be noted the experiences with other people in ways that are congruent with sex role identity, reinforces that identity. But experience with others disconfirming the individual’s beliefs about his sex identity destroys a basic faith in the person as to what he or she is. The culturally approved sex-role identity stereotype functions as the ideal to which individuals aspire. The closer the individual perceives his attributes are to this ideal the more positive the self-perception to his sex role identity.

Thus studying the sex-related differences in self-perception is important due to the following reasons:

1. This will give an idea about the differences in the self-perception of males and females at college level.

2. This study will throw light on the different areas of self-perception important to males and females in the formation of their self-concepts.

3. This kind of interpretation will render contributions to the field of differential psychology.

(G) SELF PERCEPTION AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

As discussed earlier self-perception appears to be a highly subjective and cognitive area of personality related to certain intrinsic factors. However, the extrinsic factors related to self-perception cannot be ruled out, the one mainly being the
cultural background. Cultural background refers to the particular social and cultural environment in which the individual is brought up.

In order to understand the influence of cultural background on self-perception, it is necessary to understand the concept of culture. WITTKOWER and DUBRENIL (1968) define culture as:

"a blueprint of living that presents individuals of a society with modes of behaviour, thought and sentiment". Culture is seen as the way an individual is brought up in a particular social context holding values, customs, perceptions and expectations of that particular social environment.

The self-concept includes cognitive awareness of one's own behaviour and interactions with other people in relation to this socio-cultural environment. The evaluative aspects of the self-concept are highly dependent upon these social origins in the environment. According to MCDAVID and HARARI "not only do culturally defined standards of social desirability govern the recognition of particular qualities in oneself, but they also provide the yardstick or standard against which aspirations and ideals are framed and against which one gauges his regard for himself".

A lot of variance is seen in different cultures. Cultures differ in functional or dysfunctional behaviours, in acceptable emotional expression, in coping styles and in many other aspects.
Members of a common culture, who share common standards, for what is socially acceptable and valued, generally hold similar conceptions of the ideal self. Therefore, the norms and standards of groups or cultures to which the individual belongs may also influence the standards against which he evaluates himself. Thus the effect of cultural background can be best understood if various aspects of the man’s relation to his social environment are taken into consideration from which he perceives his own personality in comparison to others and consequently comparing his culture to other cultures.

India is having many diversities amongst people practicing different religions, having different customs and moral and social values. Therefore, there are different cultures co-existing together in the Indian society. In order to explore the self-perception of these Ss it becomes imperative to study the cultural background affecting them.

One such attempt has been made in the present study. The present study deals with exploring the self-perception of the college going students from two different cultural background. The students are drawn from the Gujarati and Non-Gujarati cultural backgrounds from the cosmopolitan city of Bombay and the metropolitan city of Ahmedabad. The main purpose behind this kind of study was:

1) To compare the differential effects of the multi-versatile culture of Bombay as against a restricted culture of Ahmedabad on the self-perception of the college going students.
(2) To compare the self-perception of the youth who is facing more or less a very complex society as against the youth who is comparatively facing limited cultural variables.

(3) To compare the self-perception of a homogeneous Gujarati group and the heterogeneous non-Gujarati group.

(4) At present this kind of cultural variables have not being given primary importance in the field of psychology. Therefore, it is likely to be an important variable to show its contribution in the area of self-perception of the growing population of India.

(H) **SELF-PERCEPTION AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL**

In order to understand the self-perception of the student at college level, it is essential to study the relation between self-perception and achievement level. The level of achievement is the standard measure of an individual's academic capacity. Since IQ measurement entails a long procedure which is not comprehensible and feasible in day to day testing, the standard of achievement of the student is taken as a variable to study this relationship. It is an indirect way of measuring IQ, the individual is closer in touch with and more conversant with the meaning of college achievement.

Self-perception and achievement level seem to be closely linked. The educational institutions are the arenas in
which all young persons are compelled to compete, and in doing so are forced to reveal personal adequacies and inadequacies in public contents, frequently on unequal terms with others in events not even of their own choosing, against externally imposed standards. Given the heavy emphasis on competition and the pressures applied by teachers and most parents on the students to achieve success, it is not surprising that the academic achievement is employed as an important index of self-worth by these students. The evaluations of others become self-evaluations, so that a successful student comes to feel competent and capable, a failing student comes to feel incompetent and inferior.

There is an overwhelming evidence of the positive association between self-concept and academic achievement. The numerous research studies summarised by Labenne and Green (1969), and Purkey (1970) give adequate testimony to the fact that low self-concepts that do not contain the view that the child is competent or can succeed in his school-based activities, but tend to produce underachievement and poor performance levels, and in some cases withdrawal from academic activities. What is equally certain is that children who possess positive self-concepts are able to make more positive and clearer appraisals of their ability to perform in the school milieu and actually produce results in their academic studies which are superior to those turned in by pupils with more uncertain and negative feelings about themselves.

In the present study, the research worker is interested
in knowing how far the self-perception and one's achievement level are inter-related in college going students. The study particularly concentrates on finding out whether the way an individual perceives his own capabilities and limitations have any relation with his level of performance. The study concerns with achievement level in college going students and its relation to self-perception which is considered to be a basic problem at college level because of the following reasons:

1) Entry to college brings doubts to most students as they are presented with a new variety of experience such as looking after oneself away from home, developing new friendships and coping with higher level work. Each new student needs to prove his worth and this worth is generally proved by attaining higher achievement level.

2) Academic success raises or maintains self esteem. This recognition of self esteem influences performance through expectations, standards, recognition of personal strengths, higher motivations and level of persistence, eventually leading to increased competencies and higher level of self confidence.

3) A high achievement level in a student is regarded as a sign of self enhanced self-development. Those who are better achievers are regarded as more superior by the other fellow students and these students who are not able to excel more are considered to be failures in college.

4) At college level, teachers and peer groups begin to replace
parents as a major source of self information. With their aura of expertise, authority and evaluation, teachers as ‘significant others’ feed the pupil’s self concepts with a menu of positive, neutral and negative reinforcements as related to their academic achievements, which tends to enhance or debase their performance.

As can be seen this is an important problem to be investigated in college going students. However, over and above scholastic achievement there are other criteria coming up fast to prove the success of students at college level. Today’s concept of achievement level rivals with the scholastic achievement because there are many other talents like singing, dramatics, sports which are also recognised at college level. It would have had been a detailed study if achievement level and non-achievement success in other activities would have been compared. Unfortunately other groups were not available in sufficiently large numbers, so the idea was dropped. However for the future study this can be a very good comparison for self-perception of the college going students.

IV. PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

The purpose of the present study is to explore the following problems:

1. To assess the self-perception of the college going students.

2. To study whether there is any correlation between the self-
3. To explore whether there are any sex-related differences in the self-perception of the college going students.

4. To explore whether there is any influence of cosmopolitan and metropolitan residence on the self-perception of the college going students. (Residence of Bombay and Ahmedabad.)

5. To explore whether self-perception is associated with the cultural background of the Ss. (Gujaratis and Non-gujaratis)

6. To explore whether there are any sex-related differences in the adjustment level of the college going students.

7. To explore whether there is any influence of residence on the adjustment level of the college going students.

8. To study whether there is any correlation between the self-perception and achievement level of the college going students.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The study of self-perception gains significance and relevance because it enables to explore the inner world of the individual which otherwise in daily life cannot be understood or interpreted from overt behaviour. It throws light on the areas mentioned below:
1. Individuality is the prime characteristic of human behaviour. Each individual is different from the other in many aspects. It means that presented with the same stimulus it can evoke different type of responses in different individuals. These kind of exploration renders more knowledge to the field of Differential Psychology. It provides a basic approach to an understanding of personality and interpersonal relations.

2. Self-perception has predictive value. It shows the level of self-satisfaction that an individual has. Some people inspite of having a healthy perception about themselves are not satisfied with what they are and they always aspire to be something else. This idea constantly builds up revolting emotions in their minds eventually affecting their adjustments negatively. Therefore in order to understand how far the perception of an individual is in congruence with the real self, the study of self-perception is necessary.

3. The study of self-perception is equally important to find out positive and negative oriented personalities. Some people have an intropunitive tendency to react to frustrations by directing anger and blame onto themselves whereas some have an extrapunitive tendency to react to frustrations by showing anger towards and investing blame onto others. On the other hand there are other pragmatic types whose future is in their hands and are concerned with the outcome. These different types of approaches in an individual categorizes adjusted and maladjusted personalities which can be studied and understood better.
4. In the present set-up the students are hardly aware of what they are, what are their capabilities and their limitations, to what standards they can come upto in their careers. The study of self-perception provides a guideline for the student to know himself in the right perspective.