Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Research on physical (facial) attractiveness stereotyping reveals that attractive people are perceived as possessing better and more desirable personalities and as being more likely to obtain life's material and psychological benefits than are their less attractive counterparts. Studies on physique attractiveness reveals that mesomorphs tended to create a positive impression, while the ectomorphs and endomorphs evoked images which were, respectively much more negative than that of mesomorph.

Following these major findings of studies on physical attractiveness, the present study conducted on university students in which male and female subjects (a) preferred the photograph of a opposite-sex stimulus person previously judged a high attractive, medium attractive or low attractive; (b) preferred the silhouette of a opposite-sex stimulus person represented as asthenic, athletic and pyknic; (c) rated the personality of self as perceived by themselves and judges as high, medium, or low attractive persons; (d) rated the personality of self as perceived by themselves and judges as asthenic, athletic, or pyknic; (e) rated the personality of other person (i.e. liked stimulus person opposite sex) on the basis of his/her facial photograph; (f) rated the personality of other person (i.e. liked stimulus person of opposite sex) on the basis of his/her silhouette.
Stereotyping: Concept and Definition

The term 'stereotyping' was first coined by Lippman in 1922 and since then hundreds of studies have been carried out on stereotyping. Stereotyping is the result of socialization. As the famous journalist Walter Lippman noted:

We do not see first, then define; we define first and then see .... we are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions ... govern deeply the whole process of perception. (1922, pp. 81,90)

Stereotyping is probably one of the most important concepts in psychology, the process that can investigate the relationship between actors such as similarity, rewards and attraction. People tend to characterize others as belonging to one or another social group whose members are believed to have particular physical, social and psychological characteristics. This process of cognitive categorization is known as stereotyping involving the drive for unity and consistency, the filling in of assumed content and the structuring around a central theme. In stereotyping the central theme is the person's membership in a specific group. For example, he or she is a Hindu or Muslim, higher caste or lower caste, attractive or unattractive.

Stereotyping: False or real

In support of their view that stereotypes are false most social psychologists have given the following reasons. First, stereotypes enlarge the difference between groups (for example, male are dominant, female are submissive) and do not take into
consideration the opinion of the thousands of people belonging to
the group under judgement. Second, stereotypes often rely on
the totally unproven assumption that the groups behaviour is
biologically determined. Third, many of the traits assigned through
stereotyping are simply not there. For example, drug addicts do
not have distinct personality.

However, many stereotypes do have some superficial truth.
For example, many scheduled tribes are criminal. But what does
this mean? Stereotypes usually explain such type of superficial
truth by supporting the argument that scheduled tribes are "born
with it". On the contrary, the evidence indicates that this is
learned behaviour. That is, scheduled tribe adopts criminality
as profession.

In reality the traits are much more likely to be the
result of stereotyping itself- the group definitions and group
restrictions built into our socialization and social attitudes.

Advantages of Stereotyping:

Stereotypes serve several important functions for those
who hold them. First, stereotyping is important because it is
considered to be one of the main avenues for the expression of
social and cultural attitudes, i.e. the products of socialization.
Second, by stereotyping we can reduce the overwhelming complexity
of social information to more manageable proportions. Rather
than getting lost researching for some one's idiosyncratic and
unique traits we can organize an impressions in general stereotypes. Third, because people share stereotypes, they can communicate directly and easily with those who share them. Stereotypes are a form of social shorthand. There are, of course many differing categories that can serve as basis for stereotypes, younger, old, various ethnic groupings, male or female. Each serves as a convenient way to organize our perceptions of people. The convenience of stereotyping is typically acquired at terribly low cost: it strips people of their individuality, saving them from making conscious and considered judgements, a fairly expensive exercise.

Disadvantages of Stereotyping:

Much is lost as a result of stereotyped thinking. The person doing the stereotyping sacrifices breadth and accuracy of perception. He limits his interests, his curiosity, his friendships, his understanding of human-kind. Furthermore, he limits his personal growth. He cannot be gentle— that is too womanly.

A person is locked into a limited definition of his personality and capability, a definition which may have nothing whatsoever to do with him but which he will probably internalize all the same. (Many working women accept lower pay on the assumption that men should earn more) If the person rejects the stereotype and deviates from it, he is likely to be punished or at least discouraged. The path of least resistance, is to remain within your stereotypes.
In defense of superficial judgements, it may be said that the other persons surface is sometimes the only clear thing about him. But if we rely too much on surface, filling in the personality picture with our private notions about people in general, then eventually we not longer see reality.

**Physical Attractiveness:**

One of the first thing we notice about other person is his/her physical appearance. Commonsense suggests that this factor plays a major role in interpersonal attraction—more than most people realize. Physically attractive persons are generally liked to a greater degree than are unattractive ones upon a first meeting (Berscheid & Walster, 1974). A number of studies draw the same conclusion that the more physically attractive a person is, the more he or she is liked by others.

As for the definition of the term "attractiveness" it has not yet been defined. It is obvious that individuals differ in what they find attractive in others, and there are also historical and socio-cultural variations. There are very few objective measurements (except tape measurement for judging Miss world and Mr. Universe competitions), by which a person can be classified as attractive or unattractive. Unfortunately, there have been relatively few attempts to study the components of beauty or the physical attractiveness. So it would suffice to say that attractiveness is a relative and subjective term. A body of psychological research had identified some aspects of physical
attractiveness—facial beauty, body build, dress, height, and various parts of the body, etc. that may be attractive or repulsive to some people.

Studies on physical attractiveness variable have powerful influence on social attitudes, attributions and behaviour in a variety of cultural context (see review by Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Cash, 1981). These studies indicate that differing levels of attractiveness elicit differential social perceptions, exchanges, and behaviours that often favour the attractive while operating as a detriment to those who are physically unattractive.

The earlier researches on physical attractiveness stereotyping raised certain issues regarding assessment of attractiveness. First, attractiveness is either static component (i.e. stable and enduring physical characteristics) or changing component (i.e. grooming, facial expression, nonverbal behaviour). In earlier researches on physical attractiveness year book facial photographs were used to manipulate attractiveness. These researches emphasized that attractiveness is a static phenomenon represented by the face (Berscheid & Walster, 1974). A recent investigation conducted by Sussman et al. (1983) provides evidence that questions the view of physical attractiveness as a static or changing variable. The authors of the study found a significant target person X grade interaction in assessing attractiveness from the year book photos of the same subjects in 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th grades, indicating that some individuals changed more relative to the group than others. The authors suggested that
fluctuations in facial attractiveness may have been due to changes in hairstyle, use of make up or mood.

Another changing component of physical attractiveness is grooming. Some studies have examined the effects of grooming variables (e.g. clothing, hairstyle etc.) on physical attractiveness (Cash, 1985; Graham & Jouhar, 1981).

Second important issue that arises in the assessment of physical attractiveness is the relative value of facial and physique attractiveness in overall judgements of physical appearance. Although both facial (cf. Cash, 1981) and bodily attributes (Lerner & Gellert, 1969; Lerner & Korn, 1972) have been used as measures of physical attractiveness in the past, little is known about how they influence overall perceptions of appearance. Mueser et al. (1984) found that both facial and bodily attractiveness of females were predictive of their overall attractiveness, although the face was a slightly more powerful prediction. In an experimental study using males as target persons, Jones (1982) found that bodily attractiveness significantly influenced overall attractiveness, although facial attractiveness did not.

Third issue is effect of nonverbal behaviour on assessment of physical attractiveness. The data of Mueser et al. (1984) gives an answer of the question: Does visual information gained from a "moving target" person significantly influence attractiveness judgement? Mueser et al. (1984) found that target persons were seen as less physically attractive when their facial
expression were sad, than when their expressions were either neutral or happy. Judgements of neutral or happy expressions did not differ. In addition, when four dimensions of facial expression were assessed (Pleasantness, intensity, surprise, naturalness), only pleasantness consistently emerged as the most significant predictor of corresponding changes in attractiveness. Thus Meuser et al. concluded that fluctuations in perceived facial attractiveness may be associated with changes in affect. This conclusion questions the generalizability of the many studies that use static photograph as stimulus materials, and suggests the need either to study physical attractiveness under naturally occurring, ecologically valid conditions or to use more dynamic methods of stimulus presentation i.e. videotape (Brown Cash & Noles, 1986).

Finally, a related issue in attractiveness research concerns the manner in which attractiveness, its components and other physical attributes convey information about gender (Cash & Janda, 1984). The first cues people usually have for inferring whether a person is male or female are cues from physical appearance. There is a growing literature (Cash & Duncan, 1984; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Gillen, 1981; Major & Deaux, 1981) that confirms "what is beautiful is sex typed" phenomenon, the notion that physical attractiveness often conveys sex-role appropriateness, particularly for females. Given that physical characteristics exert such a strong influence on gender stereotyping (Deaux & Lewis, 1984), it is possible that the same factors that affect perceptions of attractiveness also affect sex-role stereotyping.
Physical attractiveness stereotype:

Physical attractiveness stereotype is an important factor in social perception and behaviour and social interaction. Physically attractive people are generally assumed to have a number of more positive qualities than their more average looking counterparts. For example, Dion et al. (1972) showed photographs of attractive and average people to their subjects. The subjects attributed more positive personality traits, greater occupational success, acquiring new friends, increased dating frequency, mate selection and higher marital adjustment to the physically attractive people. There is another aspect of physical beauty that replaces a person's qualities: For example, mature women are more likely than young girls to think that beards and hairy chest are attractive in men because these things are associated with a common stereotype of sexual potency or masculine strength which tends to replace youthful prettiness in women's evaluation of male beauty as they grow older (London, 1975).

Since Dion et al.'s (1972) study, evidence of physical attractiveness stereotyping has been found in numerous studies (Cash, 1981, Dion, 1986). Attractiveness has been shown to function as an evaluative cue for older as well as younger adults (Adams & Huston, 1975; Johnson & Pittenger, 1984), which suggests that attractiveness stereotyping occurs throughout adulthood.

Body-build or physique has been considered to be a major source of physical attractiveness among adults. A small group of
studies provides evidence that sex-differences exist in stereotyping of body-build (Hamid, 1968; Kiker & Miller, 1967; Miller et al., 1968; Stewart et al., 1973; Kaushik, 1986).

These studies have many common methodological weakness and features. First, studies relating to the stereotyping of body-build were more concerned with the implications of Sheldon's morphological theories rather than stereotyping per se. Second, all of these studies relied upon some measures of consensus as sole criterion for stereotyping, and with few exceptions (e.g. Miller et al., 1968) most failed to proceed beyond this level of analysis. Third, in most of the studies, the data were obtained by the method of forced nominations, where the subjects were allowed to select only one target as 'most' (or 'least) suiting the trait in question. Fourth, most of the studies conducted on stereotyping of body-build were concerned exclusively with male targets. Fifth, the majority of published papers suffered from excessive brevity and an insufficiently detailed presentation of results, greatly reducing their potential for developing addition hypotheses concerning the role of body build in impression formation or for building a more adequate conceptualization of stereotyping. Sixth, few studies determined the influence of self and personality on stereotyping, employed less restrictive procedures such as ranking, grading or paired comparisons, the number of targets (usually three to five occasionally as many as 11 targets) and their nature with extremes of endomorphy, mesomorphy and ectomorphy being the most commonly
employed target). Seventh, Sheldon's influence upon the stereotyping research, (a) Sheldon (1942) has published an atlas of standard physiques, allowing researchers to communicate about the stimuli used without publishing pictures of them (b) There is the influence of Sheldon's hypothesized relationship between overt behaviour and physique as described by his morphology (Biller and Liebman, 1971; Child, 1950; Walker, 1962); some authors implicitly or explicitly reasoning that the stereotyping of somatotypes would tend to substantiate Sheldon's claims. Eight, the relationship between Sheldonian dimensions and social expectations has not been demonstrated.

The results of all studies showed that differences in body build give rise to a wide variety of social stereotypes, with some achieving quite notable levels of consensus. In general, it was found that mesomorphs tended to create a positive impression, while the ectomorphs and endomorphs evoked images which were, respectively, more or much more negative than that of mesomorph. For female target persons the roles of ectomorphs and mesomorphs in social image were reversed with thinness being the valued characteristic.

Significance of the Present Study:

Keeping in view the above issues and weaknesses, relating to perception of appearance and physique attractiveness stereotyping, the present study brings under investigation four issues concerning physical attractiveness stereotyping research.
The first issue concerned with assessment of stereotype. Most research on cultural, sex-role, religious and caste stereotypes, that is, the set of beliefs about the groups shared by members of our society.

Despite the popularity of the checklist approach (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979), percentage estimations (Brigham, 1971, 1973) and ratio approach (Mc Cauley & Stitt, 1978; Mc Cauley et al., 1980) to the measurement of stereotypes, the present investigator has adopted a different method to assess physical (facial and physique) attractiveness stereotyping. The ideal procedure adopted in this investigation is to obtain physical attractiveness stereotypes by the high, medium, and low attractive male and female, vis-a-vis asthenic, athletic and pyknic male and female subjects for themselves and others in terms of personality traits. A detailed account of assessment of stereotypes is given in chapter Three.

The second issue pertains to the similarity between physical attractiveness stereotyping of the self and stereotyping of others and the similarity of stereotyping between the liked stimulus persons. The similarity between stereotyping of self and stereotyping of others is determined by comparing the number of high, medium and low attractive male and female subjects, asthenic, athletic and pyknic male and female subjects, endorsing the similar traits for the self and others. The similarity of stereotyping between the liked stimulus persons is also assessed in the same way.
The third issue is about determining similarity in stereotyping between high, medium and low attractive male and female subjects' self-evaluation and others evaluation, and between asthenic, athletic and pyknic male and female subjects' self-evaluation and others evaluation. It may be noted that similarity in the degree of physical attractiveness stereotyping (mainly physique attractiveness) have largely been ignored in earlier research.

The fourth issue concerned mainly with the hypotheses based on physical attractiveness stereotyping. Broadly speaking, three hypotheses - "What is beautiful is good", "What is good is beautiful" and "What is beautiful is sex-typed phenomenon" - are widely prevalent in physical attractiveness stereotyping research. Studies bases on these hypotheses emanating mainly from western research indicate that differing levels of attractiveness elicit differential social perceptions, exchanges, and behaviours that often favour the attractive while operating as a detriment to those who are physically unattractive. Besides, these hypotheses have given undue greater importance to 'face' than to 'physique'. That is, physical attractiveness hypotheses has generally undermined the importance of physical attractiveness variable.

The problem of the present study is to assess facial and physique attractiveness stereotyping among adults. An important question that arises in the assessment of facial and physique attractiveness is the meaningful application of these three hypotheses to these aspects of attractiveness. As the term
"beautiful" has generally been applied only in the case of facial attractiveness excluding physique attractiveness, there seems to be greater justification for the present investigator to formulate a new hypothesis entitled as "What is liked is good". It is presumed that the scope of the term "Liked" will, besides including facial attractiveness will also include physique attractiveness and other aspects. The criteria for likeness may vary from one group to another group. In other words, every culture has its own criteria of attractiveness. For example, in Indian culture, male subjects showed higher attraction for the high attractive females, whereas the female subjects showed higher liking for the medium attractive males (Husain & Kureshi, 1983). Similarly, with respect to physique attractiveness, male subjects showed preferences for asthenic females and female subjects preferred athletic males (Husain & Kureshi, 1982).

In the present investigation therefore, this hypothesis is to be tested both for facial and physique attractiveness stereotyping, believing that findings based on the present study will provide us enough intriguing and promising results and implications.

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

- To determine high, medium and low attractive male subjects' preferences for the high, medium and low attractive female stimulus persons.
- To determine high, medium and low attractive female subjects' preferences for the high, medium and low attractive male stimulus persons.
- To determine asthenic, athletic and pyknic male subjects' preferences for the asthenic, athletic and pyknic female stimulus persons.

- To determine asthenic, athletic and pyknic female subjects' preferences for the asthenic, athletic and pyknic male stimulus persons.

- To determine the significance of difference between high attractive male and female, medium attractive male and female, and low attractive male and female subjects' preferences for the similar - dissimilar facial attractive stimulus persons.

- To determine the significance of difference between asthenic male and asthenic female, athletic male and athletic female, and pyknic male and pyknic female subjects' preferences for the similar - dissimilar physique stimulus persons.

- To determine similarity in stereotyping among high, medium, and low attractive male and female subjects' self-evaluation.

- To determine similarity in stereotyping among asthenic, athletic, and pyknic male and female subjects' self-evaluation.

- To determine similarity in stereotyping between high and medium, high and low, and medium and low attractive male and female subjects' self-evaluation.

- To determine similarity in stereotyping between asthenic and athletic, asthenic and pyknic and athletic and pyknic male and female subjects' self-evaluation.
To determine similarity in stereotyping between high attractive male and female medium attractive male and female and low attractive male and female subjects' self-evaluation.

To determine similarity in stereotyping between asthenic male and female, athletic male and female, and pyknic male and female subjects' self-evaluation.

To determine similarity in stereotyping among high, medium and low attractive male and female subjects' evaluation for the similar-dissimilar facial attractive liked stimulus persons.

To determine similarity in stereotyping among asthenic, athletic and pyknic male and female subjects' rating for the similar-dissimilar physique attractive liked stimulus persons.

To determine similarity in stereotyping between high and medium, high and low, and low and medium attractive male and female subjects' evaluation for the similar-dissimilar facial attractive liked stimulus persons.

To determine similarity in stereotyping between asthenic and athletic, asthenic and pyknic and athletic and pyknic male and female subjects' evaluation for the similar-dissimilar physique attractive liked stimulus persons.