CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION
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Man is basically a social animal. He is born and lives in a social world—a world comprised of many relationships—friendships, acquaintanceships and enmities. A new born baby has no special relationships with the adults around, although he depends totally on others for the satisfaction of his basic needs. However, very soon he is able to identify the persons who fulfil his needs and to develop a special relationship with these persons (his family members). All these relationships are nothing but interactions. So, long before he is able to use language, a child learns to interact with others. Presumably, all of the orders in man’s concepts of natural phenomena began with his perception of differences and interactions with the things surrounding him.

As the person further grows, he becomes the member of different social groups. These groups are made because of common ideology, place of living, language, culture and mutual interdependence. Social groups are mainly divided into two broad categories viz., primary and secondary. The members in a primary group share close, intimate and warm personal ties with one another. Such groups are generally small and of face to face nature. The
relationship in a secondary group is mostly formal, cool and contractual. It is not necessary for the member of a secondary group to participate in such groups as whole personalities; rather they relate themselves with the group through specific functions. Social organizations serve the best example of such groups.

Whether in a primary or in a secondary group, the individual always responds selectively to the group members. He comes near to only those who respond to him and avoids those whom he feels he can not be interested or who may refuse to accept him. During the process of interaction some persons emerge as populars, some are neglected by others, while others remain isolated.

When we contemplate about the reasons of individual's acceptability in a group, we have to consider such questions: what qualities does the popular possess? How does he think and feel about himself and about others? Have person-perception, impression management, self-presentation, etc. to play any role in popularity and isolation? Which type of bias components operate while they make judgements about themselves and about others?

The present study is an attempt to find answer to some of the above questions by bringing together the two
fields of social psychology viz., sociometry and person perception. It is hoped that the study of the processes underlying the perception of self and others would enable us to have a better understanding of an individual's acceptability in a group.

Over the centuries, thoughtful individuals in many different fields (poets, philosophers, novelists) have sought to understand the nature of our interactions with others. The outcome of their collective efforts, is in the form of a vast body of 'informal knowledge' concerning the nature of social behaviour. It was Moreno who made initial efforts to study the interpersonal relationships in a formal and scientific way. Jacob L. Moreno devised the sociometric test to study the interpersonal relationships expressed through choices and mutual attractions. It was Moreno's genius to contrive the criterion for uncovering the interpersonal choices of the children for one another. This efficient method of measuring group structure is not yet superseded by any method in its usefulness for the study of interpersonal choices.

Infact, the origin of sociometric thinking was presented in Moreno's book 'Das Stegreiftheater' (1923), but the foundation stone of the sociometric movement was
laid by his most stimulating book entitled "Who Shall Survive" (1953), in which sociometry was presented as an important technique of understanding the interpersonal attraction. The greatest contribution of Moreno is that he developed a technique, which made it possible to investigate the issues which were merely speculated previously. This technique permits the analysis of each person's position and status within the group with respect to a particular criterion (Moreno, 1934).

Thus, sociometric technique is a method to determine the degree to which individuals are accepted in a group, to discover the relationships that exist among these individuals, to reveal group structure, and to identify subdivisions of the group and various types of group positions like populars, neglectees, isolates, etc. (Sharma, 1975). One might say that sociometry is the study and measurement of social choices. It has also been called as a means of studying the attractions and repulsions of members of groups. In short, sociometry is a broad term indicating a number of methods of gathering and analyzing data on the choice, communication, and interaction patterns of individuals in groups.
In 1912 Moreno had developed two hypotheses which, later on, became genesis of sociometry. These were:

1. The spatial proximity hypothesis, and
2. The temporal proximity hypothesis.

According to the first, the nearer two individuals are to each other in space, the more do they owe to each other their immediate attention and acceptance. The second hypothesis postulates: "The sequence of proximity in time establishes a precise order of social attention and veneration according to a temporal imperative, the here and now demands help first, the next in time to the here and now backward and forward requires help next" (Moreno, 1912).

The basic theoretical frame developed and guided by the practical insights from the fields was finally reported in 1934 with much enthusiasm around. Florian Znaniecki (1937) has remarked:

"The issues raised by new field (sociometry) were old sociological problems but that sociometry merits the credit for enabling the behavioral scientists to study phenomena which for thousands of years have attracted the social scientists and were rather evaluated than investigated" (Znaniecki, 1937).
The basic sociometric techniques were generated between 1918 and 1923. By 1932 the American public were made aware of the concepts and research tools. Since its inception in 1934, sociometry has been successfully revealing the group structure (Evans, 1962). An interesting era in the field, however, began when several important variables were related to the sociometric status of the individual. The purpose was to understand as to why some people are more socially accepted, while others are rejected. There are several important variables which have been found to be related with the sociometric data. Empirical studies have shown that physical attractiveness (Cooper, 1944; Lee, 1943; Walster, 1974; Miller, 1978; Mudux, 1981 etc.), intelligence (Heber, 1956; Wrighter, 1948; Blazley, 1948; Mannrino, 1976), age (Heber, 1956; Cohen, 1977), race (Gottman, 1977), socio-economic status (Lundberg, 1937; Sower, 1948; Becker and Loomis, 1948; Campell, 1964; St. John, 1970; Barnett and Zukeri, 1977; Burzynaki, 1980) and personality traits (Seage, 1933; Fleming, 1935; Urdoon, 1954; Lend-Skold, 1973) etc. are the important factors in determining the sociometric status of the individual.

Reviewing the work on sociometric choices, one wonders that while the above mentioned factors have been
given much importance in determining the sociometric choices, person-perception processes — processes by which men come to know and to think about other persons, their characteristics, qualities and inner states — have been ignored. Realizing this fact the purpose of present study is to bring out the difference in the perceptual processes of populars, neglectees and isolates, when they are required to evaluate their ownself and others.

'Person perception' or 'impression formation' is referred to the way we 'perceive' or 'cognize' other persons — their intentions, attitudes, traits, emotions, ideas, abilities and purposes, as well as their overt behaviour and physical characteristics. In other words, person perception refers to the processes by which man comes to know and to think about other persons, their characteristics, qualities and inner states. The term 'perception' is taken sometimes as 'apperception and cognition'. It is also named as social perception, person cognition and interpersonal perception. Perhaps the best term is that used by many French writers, who speak of "la Connaissance d'autrui" which in English means "knowledge of others". Another good term, as Kaminski (1959, 1963), has ably argued, would be 'social cognition'. 
Whatever the label, the basic question remains the same: "How we perceive and know the characteristics of other persons?" Is this process distinguishable from other forms of perceiving and knowing? Heider (1958) wrote: "we shall speak of 'thing' perception as non-social perception when we mean the perception of inanimate objects, and of 'person perception' or 'social perception' when we mean the perception of another person".

The inferences and observations which we make about other people are mainly about emotions, intentions, attitudes, ideas, abilities, purposes, traits, thoughts, perceptions, memories, events that are 'inside' the person and strictly psychological. This makes a difference between the person perception and other forms of perception. In addition, in person perception the similarity between the perceiver and the perceived object is greater than in any other case. This unique fact probably inclines and enables the perceiver to make full use of his own experience in perceiving, judging or inferring others' state or intentions (Tagiuri, 1954). Impressions can be based upon a wide variety of information about the other person.

The process of how we know people did not receive formal and separate attention until the later part of
the nineteenth century. Darwin's work (1872) on emotional expressions and their recognition gave scientific impetus to this problem and at the beginning of this century the range of questions was extended to: How do we know any characteristics of another (Hollingworth, 1911)? What are the characteristics of the "good judge" of other person? Later, concern spread to the still broaden problem of how people perceive or know their human environment in general. Many writers, including Cooley, Mead, Allport, Brunswik, Murrey, Tagiuri, Taft, Kaminski, etc. drew attention to the importance of understanding these processes.

People use various cues, information and concepts while forming impression or in thinking about others. People can arrive at some evaluation of another person from almost 'any' data, and that they do so with a high degree of consensus (Asch, 1946). This has been shown in various studies using a great variety of cues, such as actual persons, photographs, voice recordings, trait information, posture (Ekman, 1964), schematic representations of persons (Rosenberg and Langer, 1965) and paths described by a person (Tagiuri, 1960). People's feelings toward, and reactions to criticisms and deprivation
vary dramatically according to whether the other person is seen as having "intended" or as having been responsible for the negative action. This suggests that people may be very alert to and watchful for cues of this aspect of the other (Hastorf, 1964; Jones and DeCharms, 1958; Strickland, Jones and Smith, 1960; Thibaut and Riecken, 1955). Two other aspects that seem strongly to attract the beholder's attention are a person's good-bad qualities (Heider, 1958b; Osgood, 1953) and his relative 'power' (Pepitone, 1958).

Apart from such general aspects of the other person, which are probably basic to interpersonal relation, it seems likely that the attributes of the other person to which attention is given depend on the motivational state of the judge (Berlew and Williams, 1964).

In conclusion, it appears that people use a large variety of cues to make inferences about the state of mind and personal qualities of other persons; they seek to combine these inferences in various ways to achieve a unified and organized impression.

Our perceptions of other persons set the stage for our later interactions with them. That is, our perceptions of their feelings, motives, intentions, and characteristics strongly affect the way we react to and with
them. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any aspect of our social relations which is 'not' strongly affected by such perceptions.

A thorough review of the literature reveals that self-perception holds an important place in person perception. A person's self-image has an important impact upon his perception of other people. Paterson's study (1974) observes that people may perceive others in such a way as to protect or enhance their concept of themselves. Conversely, small situational changes in self-image are capable of producing related specific changes in images of other people (Lewick, 1983).

In the process of assessing the personality characteristics of the subjects in real life, psychologists have been employing those persons who happened to interact with the subjects over considerable periods of time and hence are expected to be aware of their personality dispositions. Although it is reasonable to obtain more accurate description of personality of subjects from those who know the subjects very well, than from those who are strangers, even the familiar assessors are known to make different kinds of errors regarding the elevation, dispersion and the interrelationship of the traits. In addition to the motivated distortion of evaluation of
others, different sets of errors have been reported in the context of the accuracy of ratings where the criterion have been individual's self-ratings. When no criterion have been employed, the ratings themselves furnished the evidence of rater's tendency to be lenient or strict in assigning ratings to others.

'Leniency error' is the tendency to rate others (and also oneself) high on favourable traits and low on unfavourable ones. Another well-known tendency is stereotyping, the general inclination to give prefabricated description to a person on the basis of some easily and quickly identifiable characteristics such as age, sex, ethnic membership, nationality or occupation.

Another judgemental effect that plays an important role in this process is the 'halo-effect', a term coined by Thorndike (1920). As early as 1907 Wells found that judges tended to rate subjects on several traits in terms of a general impression of goodness or badness (the 'halo') and that this introduced a spuriously high correlation among their ratings.

'Assumed similarity' (first reported by Hanks, 1936)—the inclination under certain circumstances to attribute others responses one would give oneself, a form of
projection - generates high accuracy scores for judges who happen to be similar to the persons judged.

In addition to the assumed-similarity mechanism, there are other processes that people can use while making judgements. For example, subjects might observe their own behaviour and consider how that behaviour might be interpreted by the other person.

As pointed out earlier, our purpose is to study the person perception processes and make use of them for an understanding/individual's sociometric position in a group. Our assumption is that those who can attract choices by majority of group members are aware of traits which are perceived as socially desirable and important. For this reason they either try to inculcate these traits in their personalities or simply present themselves as possessing those traits that are generally valued in the culture. Besides keeping good social knowledge about traits, populars may possess the skills which are helpful in handling the interpersonal relations, both in dyadic and group situations. They are perhaps capable of encountering others in such a manner that the reward/cost ratio is favourable for the others and for this reason others may prefer to have permanent relations with them.
On the other hand, neglectees and isolates are expected to lack the social knowledge of acceptable traits and for this reason may fail to cultivate such traits and also fail to present themselves as possessing traits which endear them to others. So far as their reward/cost ratio is concerned, they might ask for more rewards than costs because of their lack of interpersonal skills.

As far as the self-perception is concerned, it may be hypothesized that due to positive appraisal of populars by others, such individuals may have positive self-concepts based on the reflected self-image, and for this reason they may perceive themselves positively. In contrast, those who are neglected and who are denied acceptibility (isolates), are likely to have low self-esteem due to negative self-reflected image, and therefore, may perceive themselves negatively.

Self is involved in processes of forming impressions of others. Studies have proved that the more desirable the self-rating on a dimension the more central that dimension is in perceiving others (Lewick, 1983). In this context, it is logical to expect that populars may perceive others favourably, whereas neglectees and isolates may perceive others negatively.

It is also logical to expect that there may be
differences among the three groups with regard to the bias components (judgemental errors). The populars are expected to be lenient not only when they rate themselves or other populars, but also when they rate isolates and neglectees. This is expected because in order to maintain their popularity, their interaction with others is to be a situation of exchange in which the outcome - the difference between the cost and reward - is positive for others. The tendency of lenient evaluation of others would also be less costly for the populars because, otherwise, they would have to convey the impression that they like others even when they may not do so. As far as two other sociometric groups are concerned, we can expect that isolates and neglectees may be less liberal in evaluating themselves than in evaluating those for whom they have expressed favourable feeling in the form of sociometric choices.

The populars are expected to show less halo-effect while rating themselves and others, because they are expected to have a better understanding and discrimination of intraindividual variations of personality characteristics and it is the simplistic judgement of others that may come in their way of evolving strategy that would lead to their acceptability in the group.
The three groups are likely to vary with respect to the measure of rater-trait interaction. This measure indicates the tendency to assign high/low ratings on certain traits by certain raters.