CHAPTER : I
INTRODUCTION

I THE BACKGROUND

In Gujarat alone, about 100,000 boys and girls appear at the Secondary School Certificate Examination every year and the number is ever increasing. Out of these, about 50 per cent get through the examination. A vast majority of those who get through the examination long for admission to the preparatory courses, such as, arts, science, Commerce, etc. Some of them go to polytechnics also. Selection of a particular course is seldom based on any systematic procedure. Parents, peer groups, students' own likes and dislikes affect the choice in most of the cases. This was observed by the present investigator while working in the Guidance Centre. Many students approached him with questions of what way to go when they were at cross-roads. But the work was greatly hampered due to lack of suitable devices for measuring various interests of individuals. The motivation to prepare an instrument to measure major interest areas actually stem from these perennial questions. To meet this felt need for a device to measure interest the investigator undertook to standardize an interest inventory.

Interest can be measured by different techniques, which are discussed in the IVth chapter. The construction and standardization of the interest inventory was preferred to other techniques on the grounds of economy, large scale applicability, saving of time, and better reliability. Even
in the hands of those who do not claim to be expert psychologists, inventories yield meaningful data. In India, there is a dearth of trained personnel in the field of guidance and counselling, who can use complicated devices. Simple paper and pencil tests, which do not involve much complications in the process of administration and interpretation have to be preferred for the time-being.

In such work, restrictions have to be imposed in terms of population, purpose, and even the aspects to be measured. The present investigator decided to restrict the applicability of the inventory to the final grade students of the secondary school going population. This restriction was imposed because the primary purpose was to use it with the Xth grade high school students in schools. This final grade is very important for the students as they have to decide at this stage what they want to do, and where they want to go. Moreover, these students in schools did know the local regional language, as the medium of instruction in schools was the local regional language. Therefore, it was thought desirable to use the Gujarati language for the inventory as it would suit all of them better than the English language.

Moreover, most of the students expressed their problems such as selection of subjects in the S.S.C. class, selection of the courses after the S.S.C. examination, decision about their future career. As a result of this it was felt that some sort of measure of areas of interest would be directly useful in the counselling work. It was with this purpose in mind that the work was begun in this direction.
The entire procedure of study is gradually revealed in the chapters that follow. But before embarking on the problem the investigator came across certain observations as a result of his library study. The investigator thought it worthwhile to give these observations as a background:

To put it in other way, the points of discussion are as follows:

- Individual differences in interest
- Interest and its importance
- Interest and its bearing on Education
- Interest and adjustment

II INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN INTEREST

The science of psychology is young in the sense that it came to be studied very recently as a systematic body of knowledge about the phenomena of behaviour. Those who devoted their time and energies fully helped to give it a self-contained shape. However, psychological thought as such can be traced back to the remotest antiquities, scattered through the writings of several ancient thinkers.

Individual differences were perceived, perhaps, as contributions of persons to their own good as well as to that of a community. It is observed that some individuals were more successful than others in making their own lives richer and happier, and also in making some positive contribution to the welfare of the society in which they lived. In a competitive society of to-day, these differences
are greatly exaggerated and are more conspicuously perceived and consciously felt. A university announces its results. A few come out with flying colours, a certain percentage passes out while the others fail. An employer receives hundreds of applications for a post. He interviews a few applicants and finally selects one. Examples of this type can be multiplied indefinitely. They all point to but one fact that individuals differ. They differ in a number of aspects and the differences are manifest in all walks of life.

Within the individual himself there are different factors. One is good at a few, average at some, and inferior in others. The factors in which he is good are his assets on which he can generally capitalize and succeed in future.

There are, therefore, differences between interests as well as within an interest area. If it is possible to discover the strong and the weak points of an individual and if his energies and resources can be directed accordingly, perhaps, the psychologists might be able to erase the word 'failure' from the dictionary.

A vocational counsellor says that in order to get success in a certain occupation, a person must have a certain level of intelligence and a special ability or aptitude, a particular set of personality characteristics and an inclination to do that kind of work which is involved on that job - this we call interest. It has been proved by a number of research workers that every occupation has a
minimum requirement in terms of intelligence or general
ability. If a person having lower level of it than required
enters it his chances of failure are very great. Similarly,
he must have a set of special abilities or aptitudes. A man
who shows lower performance on the mechanical aptitude may
not be a successful engineer. If he is good at the musical
aptitude he has good chances of becoming a successful
musician. Can we say the same thing about personality?
Broadly speaking, personality includes other factors in its
frame of reference. For convenience, ability part is always
treated separately. Interest can be said to be dependent
upon the underlying personality characteristics. Eventhough
a person has an aptitude for a particular line he may not be
successful in it. Ability to do the job is a latent factor
just like the capacity of a steam-engine. But in order to
exploit work from it one needs motive power. An engine can
work only if there is steam or any other power to operate it.
A person's abilities may also remain unexploited or unused
if he is not interested in using them. Interest provides
motivation and as such it is a dynamic factor. It plays a
great role in an individual's performance on his job. There­
fore, interest is more fundamental to the study and under­
standing of an individual person.

The understanding or the insight gained into this factor
of a man can help parents in providing certain activities to
their children wisely, teachers in making their students
conscious about their educational programme, counsellors in
planning the educational and vocational careers of their
counsellors and in helping them through their various problems, and the selectors in the selection in school, college or for employment. These are the important areas of application of the interest measurement but in fact it is applied in a much greater variety of situations. Like any other measurement, it is a problem of measurement of interest for prediction in the future with a view to fostering individual happiness and his social efficiency and worth.

III INTEREST AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The role of interest in the entire functioning of human beings in various contexts has been recognized by many. It has been rightly described as the key to the life adjustment, and the source of stimulation. Either in day-to-day life or in specific fields of operation, interest has a marked contribution to make.

Glen Gardener speaks appealing to the man's self-interests which forms "a very convenient handle by means of which he can effectively be manipulated ... It is probably true that nine out of ten men can be handled if the appeal is made to the right self-interest".

Fryer says, "The real value of the examination of interests lies in the measure of development. A knowledge of

the individual's abilities assists an adjustment of the individual in educational and vocational efficiency.

Success in establishment, according to Super, may be somewhat related to interests. Since, as was just mentioned in connection with entry, men and women tend to enter occupations which are appropriate to their interests and tend to have inappropriate occupations if they do enter such.

Satisfaction in work is what might be expected to be the outcome of having appropriate interests. Other factors would be likely to affect satisfaction but liking for the work activities would also seem to be a major contributing factor. Thus, success or advancement in an occupation might be expected to be partly a function of interest.

IV INTEREST AND ITS BEARING ON EDUCATION

Psychologists and educators look upon interest as an important psychological factor, by which a pupil can be guided into a better adjustment. The role of interest in education has also been acknowledged by Rousseau. He says that education comes through the workings of natural instincts and interests, and not through the response to external force. According to Herbart interest may be viewed


as a product of education and education as the process of stimulating the spontaneous interest of the individual. In the words of Monroe⁶ "Interest is essential as the starting point of the educative process; effort is essential as its outcome. The purpose of appealing to the interest of the child is to lead him to the point where he will put forth effort to master the unsolved problems, the undetermined relationships of his environment". Thus, interest and education have a mutual bearing on each other; one stimulates the other.

William James⁷, speaks of interest as a selective agent in all experience. "My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind—without selective interest, experience is utter chaos. Interest alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade, background and foreground, intelligible perspective in a word".

Thorndike⁸ considers interest to be a pleasurable feeling which aids learning. According to him interest is the result of past experience. As pointed out by Strong⁹ interest is an intermediate indicator of success.

⁶ Monroe, op.cit., p. 752.
Burt\textsuperscript{10} while discussing the problem of selection of pupils for different types of secondary schools stresses the need for taking into account interest and personality.

Dewey\textsuperscript{11} in 1915 has also laid emphasis on the need to recognize the importance of interest in education. He pointed out that this would lead to a consideration of an individual, his specific capabilities, need and preferences.

Thorndike\textsuperscript{12} also found out a close correlation between the pupils estimates of their own interest in their school subjects and their ability in them. This bespeaks the importance of interest for selection purposes.

Interest has also invited the attention of the consultative committee on the education of the adolescent. In 1927, this committee included interest among the requirements which should be kept in mind while planning curricula. That interest has a special position in educational planning has been endorsed by the study of Berdie\textsuperscript{13}. Similarly, the study by Hartley\textsuperscript{14} suggests the value of interest and interest

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  \item \textsuperscript{10} Burt, Cyril: Simposium on the Selection of Pupils for Different Types of Secondary Schools; British Journal of Educational Psychology, 17, 1947, pp. 57-71.
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Dewey, John: Interest and Effort in Education; (New York: Riverside Educational Monograph, 1913, p. 16).
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Thorndike, E.L.: Early Interests - Their Performance and Relation to Abilities, School and Society, 1917, pp. 178-179.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Berdie, R.F.: The Prediction of College Achievement and Satisfaction; Journal of Applied Psychology, 1945, 28, pp. 239-243.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Hartley, E.A.: A study of interests of Second Year School Pupils and Their Possible use in Reallocation to different Types of Schools, M.A. Thesis, University of Hudson, 1955.
\end{itemize}
assessment for the purpose of allocation. Hamilton\textsuperscript{15} in 1956 found out a significant correlation between his interest test and achievement in technical and science course. Very recently Lambert\textsuperscript{16} has admitted that it is possible to increase prognosis for the different sections of the curriculum by the use of interest assessment.

Roder\textsuperscript{17} expressed his optimism over interest assessment for the purpose of allocation.

On a critical review of the past studies on the importance of interest for educational purpose, it appears that motivation goes a long way in one's achievement. The importance of interest for prognostic purposes has been admitted by many and some light has been thrown on how interest contributes to success.

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\textbf{V \hspace{1cm} INTEREST AND ADJUSTMENT}
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Regarding the role of interest in one's adjustment to life, there is enough evidence that interest is a strong factor determining much of the behaviour patterns in the field of education or occupation. As a personality variable interest has found a significant place in recent psychology.

The data regarding prime source of interest is still

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inadequate because of the complex process underlying the formation of interest. In the opinion of Super\(^1\)\(^8\) interests are the product of interaction between inherited, neutral, and endocrine factors on the one hand and opportunity and social evaluation on the other. It is related to one's needs and mode of adjustment. There is a controversy as to how interest patterns begin to crystallize, yet there is very little doubt about the role of environmental factors in the development of interest.

Vernon\(^1\)\(^9\) has included interest as an important variable related to personality and has described interest as complex as amalgam of subjective feelings and objective behaviour tendencies. He has also pointed out that interest is at least as meaningful and as difficult to reduce to a few unidimensional variables.

The complexity of interest and its relationship with personality adjustment have received the attention from quite a few psychologists. Carter\(^2\)\(^0\) says, "In this process of trying to adjust to a complex culture, the individual finds experiences which offer some basis for the integration of personality. The pattern of vocational interests which gradually forms, becomes closely identified with the self....

\(^18\) Super, D.E.: op. cit.,
The pattern of interests is in the nature of a set of values which can find expression in one family of occupations but not in others.

It has always proved difficult for the psychologists to come to an agreed proposition on interest patterns with reference to their psychological dimensions. This is partly because of the fact that interest expresses itself in various forms. If we take into account the various modes of expressions of interests there would be hundred and one classifications at the surface level. It has, therefore, been considered desirable to come to certain fundamental classification of interest for practical purposes. The need for differentiation in terms of interest has been felt strongly in recent years as interest has been considered as a very important variable determining one's achievement.

In view of the immense possibilities for explorations on interests, the present study has its two main objectives:

(a) to meet the need for a device to measure interest and

(b) to help workers in the field of guidance and counselling. And with this aim in view, the inventory was designed in the way closely resembling that of Kuder. Of course, the planning and processing of it was done in complete... independence from Kuder's technique.

The need for such a study was felt because of the importance of interest in the field of education and guidance.
There is very little (as compared to that in the U.S.A.) about scientific basis that appears to have been evolved as yet for vocational counselling in Indian contexts. In most of the cases, the students show utter confusion about their area of interest and also the lack of conviction in self-concept. This unfortunate state of affairs prompted the writer to undertake the present investigation in the hope that it would help the younger generation to have a definite knowledge of its own interests. This knowledge is supposed to contribute much to one's future adjustment to the vocational world and is thus essential for a careful planning.

**RESUME**

The purpose of the standardization of the present interest inventory was to produce a tool useful in the counselling of high school students studying in the XI grade or the S.S.C. class. To start with the work, some theoretical background was necessary. Interest is receiving greater attention of psychologists and educators in recent years. The importance of interest is being realized in the field of educational and vocational adjustment. The concept of interest requires clarification. A fair attempt has been made to define interest from the psychological stand-point. It has been regarded as a variable related to personality and particularly to motivation. The complex nature of interest and its development has also been admitted. The bearing of interest has proved significant. There is
adequate evidence that motivational factors have definite roles to play in one's educational and vocational achievements. The relationship between interest and personality has been stressed by a number of psychologists. The need for such a study was felt because of the importance of interest in the field of education and guidance and also because of the felt need of such tools (Inventory, in the present case) in the field of Guidance and Counselling.
References:


