CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is a strange irony that all civilizations that bloom and flourish are strown with the memorable aggressive acts of the rebel and the illustrated expressions of the same in the works of the artists. In fact the birth of civilization as Rolle May (1976) reported took place when Prometheus stole fire from the gods on Mount Olympus and gave it to man. But apparently what has held the minds of men are the effects accruing from such acts and not the psychological phenomena leading to

Heraclitus (Circa, 500 B.C.) was one of the first to state that aggression could be viewed as "the world propelling principle which creates the harmony between opposites." Since then this enigmatic form of behaviour fascinated only a few thinkers. But now the interest and fervour in unfolding the nature of this captivating phenomena has

Nearly every writer has remarked upon the overwhelming in aggression. The international scene of the
20th century however, is as indelibly marked by certain gruesome acts of violence as any other century. History has recorded amongst other events the mass executions by the Greeks after the capture of Troy (1184 B.C.) the destruction of Carthage by the Romans (146 B.C.) and the cries of pain and torture that marked the Crusades. And despite all the learning and restraint that resulted in the most sublime works of art and culture, man is still overcome by blinding rage, suspicion, jealousy, anger, resentment and hostility. It is no wonder that the revolting horrors of Hiroshima, My Lai, Bangladesh and the chronic Middle East continue to erupt, perhaps as cruel reminders of man's inability to assess and control this phenomena whose genesis still eludes scientists and philosophers alike.

Today, however, there is heightened awareness of the need to study this phenomena, demonstrated by the explosion of research publications, the establishment of the International Society of Research for Aggression(ISRA) and special violence clinics. In fact the need to study it has been growing with the increase in internecine warfares, lock outs and strikes in industry as well as total rebellion and international skirmishes and wars. Mukharjee (1966) using differential calculus on derived a simple theoretical equation from the assumption that
the product of positive and negative attitudes of one
nation towards a rival nation remain constant. The
equation was aimed at predicting the amount of hostility
one nation harbours against a rival nation when threat
remains constant.

Besides the assessment of national hostilities,
there is an even greater need to assess the aggressive
potential in individuals and to channelize it appropriately,
keeping in mind the constructive and destructive aspects.
This redirection of the aggressive potential and the
consequent reduction of its expression in the interpersonal
context, is well supported by the therapeutic designs
ingeniously planned and effectively executed by Buech (1971).
The techniques have been described at length in the book
"Aggression Lab (1971)".

The need to assess and channelize aggression may
be necessary for all. As Wolff (1972, p. 23) stated,

The fact that we feel angry but behave
solemnly or feel murderous but do
not commit murder, presenting instead
an outer appearance of self-control or
even passivity makes us no less aggressive
in terms of our affective state.

While discussing aggression and ill-health Wolff
further emphasized the above point. In the 'helpless
hopeless' state of the severe depressives the aggressive
potential is definitely not absent. It has been
dangerously turned inward resulting in self-hatred and even self-destruction. Engel (1967) remarked on the fact that the diminished ability to fight is probably the precursor of an organic disease process and adversely affects the course of somatic illness.

Citing various diagnostic categories Wolff (1969) stated that repression of aggression may lead to various pathological manifestations. Failure of the action of aggressive impulses, when threatened may lead to anxiety and phobia. In the hysterias the conversion symptom may substitute aggression as it forms a means of control over others. Further, aggression may be projected on others, as in the case of the paranoid, or it may be withdrawn to such an extent, that a schizoid personality results. At times the suppression of aggression or inhibition of it leads to sexual disorders such as impotence and frigidity.

In all these conditions the nature of aggression differs. There are perhaps not only several forms of aggression each individual resorts to, but also different intensities of suppression and expression of the same. Researches probably attempt at unraveling the entangled intricacies of the phenomena. But the complexity of the whole issue seems to be growing with little synthesis or definitive conclusions. In fact the situation is
analogous to an orchestra without the conductor in which each maestro artist plays the most mellifluous notes but loses the effect as they no longer cohere with the others to produce the desired symphony.

The analogy may be quite pertinent to research concerning the nature and assessment of aggression. There have been determined but isolated attempts by several scientists to assess aggression through various means. Perhaps the most objective and most unmanifested measures of aggression are the physiological measures. There is no doubt that the studies by Az (1953), Frankenstein (1934, 1935) and Schachter (1971) were crucial in disclosing two major dimensions of aggression in the form of the anger-in and anger-out states. But these two dimensions identified in this manner said little about numerous other forms of aggression, man performs surrenders to, or voluntarily resorts to. The projective techniques also largely suffer from the same drawbacks and several others. In fact the meticulous and carefully planned attempt at the projective assessment of aggression by Cluesen (1969) was later commented on by the author himself. Cluesen stated "even if these results must be considered very satisfactory there are certain disadvantages ... the scoring of individual protocols is rather time-consuming even for an experienced scorer."
The self-report inventory or questionnaire technique has been reported to be one of the most suitable techniques for the measurement of aggression. However, the disadvantages of using such a technique must be kept in mind while applying it in any situation. At times the self-report may be faulty because the individual lacks knowledge regarding himself. At other times he may be restricted by the structured situation, created by the test. What the test measures may be different from what the individual does in actual life. Lastly there is the drawback, most frequently pointed out, that what is reported could be false.

Despite the series of disadvantages inherent in the technique, it is the communication by the individual, usually verbal, that lends itself to objective assessment. If an individual wishes to be evaluated accurately much depends on the sincerity with which the test is taken. This again would depend on the instructions given. However, the validating assessment through ratings of experts and a dialogue after the self report is completed, may be extremely helpful. The confusion that arises through misperceptions and misinterpretations which take place between people has been emphasized by Laing (1971) and Cooper (1976).

The advantages of using personality inventories as
measures are several. They have been reported to be the most economical, objective and simple. They are economical as they are framed to cover a wide range of questions on the topic, which the interviewers may miss. They help the interviewer to avoid collecting irrelevant information. The questionnaires prove a compact and comprehensive coverage of the area being considered. They are economical again because they can be administered to more than one person at a time. The objectivity provided by a questionnaire measure is one of its strong assets. The experimenter bias and the subjectivity of the rater or interviewer is eliminated. Further with the use of computer facilities the scoring and analysis of such results is simplified. Lastly there is the ease in administration which is usually a problem with the projective and physiological measures. But whatever be the advantages the most essential requirement is that the questionnaire be a valid instrument for assessment, just as any other instrument should be.

There has been a tendency on the part of scientists to overplay the effectiveness of assessing physiological mechanisms and observable behaviour and to rely on such reports only. However, Wolff (1973) has explicitly warned about the possibility of losin, sight of those aspects of behaviour which spell men, out to be different
from animals and lifeless objects. According to Wolff, only by combining the study of man's outer behaviour and biological functioning, with that of his inner psychological experience (Guntrip 1967, Home 1966, Hill 1971) as it is communicated to the observer, can the psychosomatic approach lead to a meaningful understanding of the phenomena of health and illness in man.

The assessment of the psychological experience communicated through answers to a questionnaire perhaps provides the most meaningful and comprehensive analysis of the same, particularly in the area of aggression. Consequently the present investigation was directed towards the development of a multifaceted aggression scale that would contain the prismatic nature of aggression.