

**Cognising Asian Societies
Through Psychological
Underpinnings**

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Cognising Asian Societies Through Psychological Underpinnings

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Every culture has its own values, traditional set-up, conduct cores and behaviour parameters. All cultures are different to each other, but there is a point where we can see the similarities in them.

Keeping these views in consideration this volume is planned and it aims to explore the variation in the Asian societies in psychological perspective. We have taken help from so many members of society and we are grateful to them. We are sincerely thankful to our contributors who have shared their thoughts with us. They supported us and showed patience to get it in shape. We are thankful to Abhishek, Mrs. Kavita Khawar and Navjot Joshi for tedious job of systematization of the script.

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Aradhana Shukla
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Narendra Singh Thagunna

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Role of Self-disclosure and Emotion Regulation in Parent-Adolescent Relationship

Sweta Pathak, Mithilesh Kumar Tiwari and Shubhra Sinha

Introduction

Good health both physical and mental is of paramount importance for human existence. It is often conceived as an outcome of interaction between individual and environment, mutually affecting each other. Good health helps in building strong relationship, better adaptation to change and in dealing effectively with life's challenges. During adolescence, adolescents face countless physical, cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural changes due to various factors including biological, social, psychological etc. Psychological changes of adolescence include autonomy demands, identity development, development of knowledge and skills, changes in emotional understanding about oneself as well as others and also several abilities of abstract thinking, introspection and practice of moral values in behaviour (Myers, Laurent & Hodges, 2014).

In this phase of development, many times a rift may develop between parents and their children, because it is a time of rapid physical/psychological development and deep emotional changes, which are often confusing and uncomfortable for adolescents and parents alike. Identifying accurate emotional cues from outside as well as from inside, differentiating between different emotional states, using appropriate behavioural strategies in different emotional situations etc., which are collectively referred as emotional intelligence, significantly affect the emotional experience and ultimately mental health of individuals (Underwood, Moore & Rosenhan, 1973).

Emotion regulation is another important aspect of emotional development which is aimed at modifying emotional experiences through using various

strategies, to make emotional experiences congruent to the individual's adaptation (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010; Gross, 2015; McLaughlin, Hatzenbuehler, Mennin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011).

Emotion regulation is conceived as “the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one's goals” (Thompson, 1994). Gross (1998) identified various strategies which further divided into two broader categories—Cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Each strategy has different short-term as well as long-term health consequences.

Conventionally adolescence has been characterized as a stage of storm and stress. Due to a lot of changes in hormonal, maturational and expanded network of relationship as well as globalization, adolescent's expectations from their immediate family environment change. Adolescents demand more autonomy in their decisions related to various aspects of their life, at the same time, parents become more vigilant about their whereabouts, their activities and friend circle. Parents and adolescent's behaviour are contingent upon each other. Parents adopt different strategies and to control, monitor and supervise their adolescent's behaviour, which collectively referred to as parenting styles (Barnhart *et al.*, 2013). Parenting style is basically a type of interaction between parents and adolescents through which both share their expectations and demands with each other. The quality of interaction between them is a very crucial factor in determining the overall development of adolescents. There is plethora of studies related to different type of parenting styles and their impact on different aspects of adolescents' development (Bornstein & Putnick, 2012; Pomeranz & Wang, 2009).

Self-disclosure is a type of communication in interpersonal relationships which have significant contribution in the quality of relationship and ultimately on the mental health and well-being of the participants involved in it. Self-disclosure is a process of voluntarily divulging something personal with some significant other in the relationship. Content of the self-disclosure may be of personal, emotional, conceptual or both and may be related to any issue, of the outer world (Ignatius & Marja, 2007). Thus, the quality of self-disclosure in terms of quantity, frequency, accuracy, truthfulness and content have significant impact upon the quality of interpersonal relationship. Self-disclosure is not having to be all or nothing. Disclosing one's mental health is a very personal and subjective matter and while disclosing something personal, it is also important to accept negative responses from others.

Self-disclosure: The Conceptual Framework

Self-disclosure is a form of interpersonal communication which plays an important role in the management of the parent-adolescent relationship. Self-disclosure is defined as “an act of revealing information to others” (Archer, 1980) and has been regarded as a major factor in influencing the course of development, maintenance, and deterioration of a relationship (Derlega *et al.*, 1993; Laurenceau & Barret, 1998). The context of self-disclosure includes one’s personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Derlega *et al.*, 1993). Self-disclosure involves an implicit or explicit understanding that the personal information revealed to the other party will not be relayed further (Yovetich and Drigotas, 1999). Through self-disclosure, an individual lets himself or herself be known to the other person, in a way it, “reduces the mystery” between people (Jourard, 1971). Self-disclosure is one of the most important mechanisms in the development of intimacy (Lauer *et al.*, 2000).

Dolgin and Kim (1994) reported that adolescence is characterized by increased peer pressure and the tendency to disclose more to their peers while concurrently decreasing disclosure to parents. It represents a significant change from the disclosure patterns of childhood where parents serve as primary confidants for their children. This situation presents two major challenges before parents. First is to protect the emotional bond between parents and adolescents which is naturally at stake because of the heightened autonomy demands and second is to exert control on the ideas and behaviour of adolescents to prevent them from potentially risky situations and from getting them culturally uprooted. The whole venture of parenting is directed towards these two goals. Now, it is important to understand self-disclosure through the lenses of two major theoretical substrates dealing with it.

The social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) examines the relationship choices that individuals make on the basis of costs and benefits associated with the relationship. Theory suggests that when the rewards exceed the costs, there is equity in the relationship and the partners are motivated to stay in it. But when the costs exceed the rewards, the partners are likely to consider other alternatives, such as leaving the relationship entirely or initiating relationships with others. Applying the same principle, Altman & Taylor (1973 & 1987) concluded that every self-disclosure has certain costs as well as certain rewards or payoffs. Rewards include developing trust and liking for each other, finding solutions to their problems by talking to reliable others and getting a chance to release one’s pent up emotions.

On the other hand, the cost may be putting one's image at stake, getting socially stigmatized, experiencing rejection, social isolation and threats to personal well-being. Besides this, another feature of disclosure is that it creates an obligation for the listener to return the disclosure with the same amount of breadth and intimacy, which may not be achieved at all times. So the decision of disclosing or not disclosing oneself to others depends upon careful consideration of these possibilities.

The Social penetration theory was given by Altman and Taylor (1987) to provide an insight to the development of interpersonal relationships. They proposed that as relationships grow, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow, non-intimate levels to deeper levels and finally reaches to more personal ones. Altman and Taylor (1987) suggested that this closeness in relationship occurs through a gradual process of self-disclosure, which proceeds from superficial to intimate levels of exchange as a function of both immediate and final outcomes. The term "social penetration" is used to refer to both overt interpersonal behaviours that take place in social interaction and internal subjective processes that precede, accompany and follow overt exchange. This theory is perhaps best known for its onion analogy. It claims that our relationships progress through four stages before reaching stability where communication is open and partners are highly intimate.

- Orientation stage
- Exploratory affective stage
- Affective stage
- Stable stage.

When the relationship starts breaking down and costs exceed benefits, there is a gradual withdrawal of disclosure which leads to termination of the relationships. This process is called de-penetration. Both theories explain the notion, function and process of self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships but with respect to parent-child relationship the Social exchange theory appears more suitable, as this relationship is biological and extremely intimate from the beginning.

Self-disclosure: Types and Dimensions

Depending upon its nature and content self-disclosure is categorized into different types. For example, Waring (1987) suggested two types of disclosure namely *Personal self-disclosure* which means disclosure

about oneself and *Relational self-disclosure* which focuses on disclosing one's relationship with another person. Pathak & Sinha (2018) also found similar factor structure in their study where they developed a scale measuring self-disclosure in parent-adolescent relationship, as suggested by Waring (1987).

Zur (2009) identified four types of self-disclosure used in clinical settings, described as follows:

- 1. Unavoidable Self-Disclosure:** As the name implies, unavoidable self-disclosure encompasses those attributes/mannerisms that are obvious in someone. It might include the gender, age and physical characteristics of the person disclosing the information. Unavoidable self-disclosure is uncontrollable. There is nothing that people can do about it. It covers disclosure through place of practice, tone of voice, pregnancy, foreign or any accent, stuttering, visible tattoos, obesity and many forms of disability, such as paralysis, blindness, deafness or an apparent limp (Zur, 2007, 2009). Counsellors reveal themselves also by their manner of dress, hairstyle, use of make-up, jewellery, perfume or aftershave, facial hair, wedding or engagement rings, or the wearing of a cross, or any other symbol (Barnett, 1998; Zur, 2007). Body language can include any non-reflexive or reflexive movements of parts of the body. Clients, are often more attuned to non-verbal cues, such as body language and touch, than to verbal communication (Knapp & Hall, 1997).
- 2. Accidental Self-Disclosure:** Accidental self-disclosure occurs when there are incidental (unplanned) encounters outside the office, spontaneous verbal or non-verbal reactions, or other planned and unplanned occurrences that happen to reveal counsellors' personal information to their clients. (Knox, Hess, Petersen, & Hill, 1997; Strieker & Fisher, 1990).
- 3. Deliberate Self-Disclosure:** This refers to the counsellor's intentional, verbal or non-verbal disclosure of personal information, information about who the counsellor really is which is not commonly known. A deliberate self-disclosure may occur when the counsellor exposes some personal and family photographs in his/her office which will go a long way in providing background information about the counsellor. (Barnett, 1998; Mahalik, Van Ormer & Simi, 2000; Zur, 2007). Two types of deliberate self-disclosures are identified by Knox,

Hess, Petersen, & Hill, (1997). These are self-revealing (the disclosure of information by counsellors about themselves) and self-involving (counsellors' personal reactions to clients).

4. **Clients' Deliberate Actions:** These are also potential sources that can reveal personal information about the counsellor. Inquiries can be initiated by clients about their counsellor by conducting a simple Web search. Such searches can reveal a wide range of professional and personal information, such as family history, criminal records, family tree, volunteer activity, community and recreational involvement, political affiliations and much more. Counsellors do not always have control over what is posted online about them, which means they may not have control or even knowledge of what clients may know about them. A client's deliberate tracking, spying or stalking their therapist can reveal a significant amount of private and personal information (Zur, 2007, 2008).

Above mentioned four types of self-disclosure suggested by Zur (2007, 2008) were specifically for clinical settings, which are applied in other settings as well i.e.—peer group, parent-child relationship etc.

Three different dimensions of self-disclosure were also identified by Omarzu (2000) as **breadth**, **duration** and **intimacy**, where breadth refers to the diversity of contexts and topics during self-disclosure, durations means amount of time people utilizes in sharing information with others and intimacy means that how much importance individual places on the topic they discuss with others.

Self-disclosure serves two important functions which are important within every network of relationship (Ando, 1990; Derlega *et al.*, 1993). First is personal function (emotional expression, self-clarification, social validation) and second is interpersonal function (relationship development, social control and intimacy maintenance). Both of these are very vital for the successful development as well as maintenance of the relationship. Self-disclosure may be either unplanned or planned. People may prefer planned disclosure about potentially stigmatizing information because it maximizes privacy regulation.

The term “reciprocity” is an important and thoroughly investigated aspect of self-disclosing behaviour (Barack & Gluck-Ofri, 2007). Various authors have referred to this process as the “dyadic effect” or the “mutual effect” (Jourard, 1991). This concept refers to the process of mutual exposure by communicating partners, in which a disclosure by one partner is followed by disclosure by the other (Barack & Gluck-Ofri, 2007).

The self-disclosure of children to their parents is the dominant source of information for parents to gain knowledge about their children and their daily lives. Parental knowledge of their children's whereabouts and daily lives has been linked to several positive outcomes. The more parents know about their kids, the lower the rate of behaviour problems among children, and the higher the children's well-being.

Self-disclosure can be strongly influenced by the culture we live in. There are cultures in the world that are much more intimate and are less reserved when it comes to personal space. Some studies have suggested that it is not only parenting style or child's personality that determines the level of disclosure, the nature of issues and cultural norms about discussing such issues with parents also play a crucial role in controlling the width, depth and intensity of child's disclosure to parents. For example, Youniss and Smollar (1985) found that adolescents tend to discuss their school work, future plans, and social issues with their parents, but they do not communicate much about issues like dating (although they disclose more to mothers than fathers).

Mental Health and Well-being of Adolescents: Role of Self-disclosure and Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is an important aspect of individuals wellbeing, it focuses on how effectively people manage their and others emotional experiences, expressions and reactions in day to day life. Previous studies suggest, inadequate emotion regulation leads to several psychological problems, interpersonal difficulties and poor resilience to stressful situations (Aldao *et al.*, 2010, 2015; Gross, 2015; Moore, Zoellner, & Mollenholt, 2008; Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012).

Gross (1998) proposed a model of emotion regulation, known as **Process model of emotion regulation** and reported five essential points of emotion regulation which are *situation collection*, *situation alteration*, *attentional disposition*, *cognitive variation* and *response adjustment*. There are two types of strategy which people adapt during the process of emotion regulation, i.e.—*Cognitive reappraisal (CR)* and *Emotion expressive suppression (ES)*.

Cognitive reappraisal strategy is antecedent focused, which acts before the completion of emotional response and useful when the stressful situation cannot be changed (Gross & John, 2003). It decreases the emotional impact of stressful situation by reframing the present perception of stressful situation. It is an effective and frequently used strategy in

modifying the impact of emotional experiences. Expressive suppression (ES) is a response-focused strategy, which includes reduction of facial expression and regulation of positive and negative emotions. It may have negative emotional and psychological effects on individuals as it reduces expressive behaviour knowingly. Previous studies support cognitive reappraisal strategy more than expressive suppression strategy because, rather than disturbing emotional response cognitive reappraisal focuses on provoking stimulus and leads to greater life satisfaction, positive emotions, high self-esteem and good social relationship (Webb *et al.*, 2012; Haga, Kraft, & Corby, 2009; Balzarotti, John, & Gross, 2010; Cabello, Salguero, Fernández-Berrocal, & Gross, 2013; John & Gross, 2004; Loughed & Hollenstein, 2012; Moore *et al.*, 2008).

Pennebaker and O’Heeron (1984) concluded in their study that talk with confidant was the important factor contributing to health and psychopathology of spouses of victims of suicide and other accidental death. Those who talked with confidant experienced less intrusive and unwanted thoughts related to death of their spouse. Several mechanisms were proposed to explain why and how self-disclosure is contributing to the health and well-being of individuals.

From inhibition/disinhibition perspective, self-disclosure leads to disinhibition of thoughts and feelings related to various aspects of life which in turn lead better health & well-being, whereas non-disclosure related with the psychological inhibition of thoughts and feelings and these thoughts/feelings becomes intrusive, ruminating in nature and in turn affect their mental health. Cole & colleagues (1996) in their study on psychological inhibition among men having HIV found that those who were classified as “closeted” i.e. concealed about their identity and homosexuality with others, have higher risk of developing diseases as compared to those individuals who were classified as “open” i.e. disclosed about their identity and homosexuality with others. Preoccupation model of secrecy (Lane & Wegner, 1995) maintained that secret thoughts and feelings are associated with the obsessive preoccupied other cognitive thoughts. These obsessive thoughts/feelings associated with secrecy, are self-sustaining in nature and lead to various kinds of mental health issues. In contrast to self-disclosure, non-disclosure in the form of maintaining secrecy have negative consequences upon the health of individuals.

Expressing own thoughts and feelings in any form (talking, writing etc.) lead to less stressful experiences. Expression of cognitive processing in writing or talking allow individuals to accept their own

psychological state as well as being acceptable in their network of relationship with whom they share their thoughts/feelings. Constructing narratives to express their feelings help people in exploring meaning in their experiences, alternatives and validate their experiences (Lepor, Ragan & Jones, 2000).

Pathak and Sinha (2018) conducted their study specifically on parent-adolescents relationship exploring relationship between self-disclosure of adolescents and emotion regulation strategies. Researchers found that those who disclosed more on personal issues, use emotion suppression technique more as compared to those who disclose less, whereas no significant difference appeared on the dimension of cognitive reappraisal. Emotion expression provides information to observers about a person's social intentions and his/her feelings regarding the current relationship. Expressive suppression is quite common during social interactions (Gross & John, 2003) and several evidences suggest important links between emotion expression, social relationships and health (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991; Seeman, 2001; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiekolt-Glaser, 1996).

Conclusion

Although research into self-disclosure and emotion regulation in parent-adolescent context is in its relative infancy, there is sufficient evidence which suggest that self-disclosure helps adolescents to communicate and express their positive and negative emotions to their parents easily, so that they suffer less from emotional chaos and bond positive relations with their parents. Sufficient evidence suggests that adolescent should use strategies that influence their appraisal of the situation to create the most appropriate emotional climate to respond. Research suggests that this approach is likely more effective than the suppression of emotions that have already happened. In short, where dysfunctional emotions are concerned, prevention might be better than cure. Further study should focus on cultural criteria that influence self-disclosure. Although there is widespread study on gender differences in self-disclosure, more research is needed on the psychological and social sustaining of these effects.

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MENTAL HEALTH
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Volume 4: Therapeutic Applications

Volume 5: Adolescents & Children Mental Health

Volume 6: Women Mental Health

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Volume Five

Adolescents & Children Mental Health

Edited by

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Preface

We desire to live a healthy and happy life. It is a common and well accepted fact that everyone desires to live a healthy life. The mind and bodily functions are closely embedded hence, the relative significance of mental health along with physical wellness cannot be denied. As mind and bodily functions are closely embedded we cannot deny the relative significances of mental health long with physical wellness. Mental health is an integral part of health, mental health is more than the absence of mental illness, and mental health is intimately connected with physical health and behaviour. Mental health is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning for an individual and for a community. Good mental health is a sense of wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. It enables us to fully enjoy and appreciate other people, day-to-day life and our environment.

Mental health is the sheer responsibility of a person himself. The mental health field aims to deal with: (1) mentally ill people, (2) people at risk and, (3) promoting mental health of normal people so that their normality can be sustained.

If we go back into the history of mental health we can see that it was treated either as “boon of God “(good or positive mental health) or “curse of God “(bad or negative mental health). Both the eastern and western evidences support the notion. Not only in abroad but our ancient evidences also support this notion. The western literatures on mental health were seen hallucinations as communication of humans with bad souls, ghosts and witches. Moreover, in the ancient Indian literature of Ayurveda, Mental disorders are represented as various forms. The aetio-genesis of these disorders was thought to be endogenous because of provoked humours like vat, Pitta & Kalph. Exogenously the causes were attributed to sudden fear or association with ill influence of certain mythological gods or demon. Charak Samhita listed Psychiatry as ‘Bhuta Vidya’. Psychotherapy was known as Ilaj-I-Nafsani in Unani Medicine. But time never remains stable.

Years and years were passed and the outlook of people towards mentally ill people become more and more aversive and they were treated like an undesirable social being for whom only such behaviour was required that was only meant for animals or criminals. Even with the advent of modern scientific methods and practical thoughts, the stigma and discrimination against mentally illnesses prevails the society. However, the advocates of Psychology started to cola soft touch and healing approach for the mentally ill people. Again it took decades to develop behaviour and psycho therapies against tying mentally ill people with iron chain, and treat them like prisoners. A complete soft and medico-human environment under single roof was constructed for them and it was termed as asylum or mental hospital. Psychologists attempted such patients to get out from the boundaries and from the trap of ojhas, neem-haquims and other such traditional healers and placed them at asylum. The patients were properly medicated along with different psychotherapies and many of them got complete recovery. At first the asylums were established in abroad but in India the first asylum was established in 1787 by Surgeon Kenderline in Calcutta and thereafter many asylums were made. This period was relatively longer but it opened the doors of a new era for the support and care of mental ill-health. They not only paid attention to treat the mentally ill people but also concentrated on maintaining and nurturing public health, and trying to eradicate the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental disorders. Psychologists and mental health care professionals are still trying to launch innovative programs for the same. The focal theme of these developmental programs is the utilization of community resources for mental health care. These programs have given new vision to the mental health care professionals to prevent mental disorders and promote mental health. This also needs a greater role for the non medical mental health care professionals and better utilization of cultural resources in terms of belief, practice and important social institutions like family and community groups. The contemporary world's realization about mental health and mental illness has come to a point where we find passionate discussions and caring mental health professionals to deal with mental disorder and promote well being.

Keeping these views into consideration the innovative thought of this series appeared in our mind and we decided to pool the thoughts of psychologists and health care professionals regarding various concerns of mental health. The basic aim of this series was: (i) to bring concepts, issues, strengths and treatment in a single jacket, (ii) bring a sense of mental health awareness in people so that they can make their health

safe with additional attention on social health, (iii) to carve the research competence in young researchers, and (iv) to put forth the mental health policies before the readers, so that a better understanding of mental health can be developed.

About the Series Mental Health: Psycho Social Perspectives

It is a series on the psychology of mental health and we have tried to cover as many areas as possible and we could justify its name i.e. rethinking. Many traditional notions of mental health have been reconceptualised and many concepts in a new framework have been introduced. This series has four volumes:

1. **Mental health: Psychological Issues and Interventions:** In this volume we have covered various issues that foster or hamper mental health. Also, strategies to minimize negative mental health and improve positive mental health are discussed.
2. **Mental health: Multigroup Analysis:** This volume covers the conceptual background and psycho-social perspective of mental health in various social settings.
3. **Mental health: Strength of Human Resources:** In this volume we have tried to throw light on the promotional strategies of mental health following which a person can be relieved from negative mental health.
4. **Mental Health: Therapeutic Applications:** This volume covers a range of behavioural therapies which were found effective to minimize or overcome mental ill health.
5. **Mental Health of Adolescents and Children:** This volume presents a wide spectrum of the mental health of children and adolescents which are seen in them.
6. **Mental Health of Women:** This volume presents the mental health of women in different perspective

We have exercised our best attempt to seek out as many experiences as possible and we also anticipate that this will open new foresight for the researchers. However, we will be highly blessed to obtain the healthy and critical comments from our colleagues, seniors and friends and we will appreciate them from the bottom of our hearts.

**Aradhana Shukla
Anubhuti Dubey**

Acknowledgements

We, the editors, feel immense pleasure to present our series on mental health before the august readers. We hope that it will be admired by you all and the comments will be highly appreciated.

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15 March, 2021

Aradhana Shukla
Anubhuti Dubey

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Is There an Indian Way of Accommodating Cultural Change?

Shubhra Sinha

As the name implies, this chapter is in a way inspired by the famous essay written by Ramanujan (1990) 'Is there an Indian way of thinking?' The essay makes sound arguments to highlight the diversity of Indian culture to an extent that it apparently rejects the notion of oneness by saying 'there is no single Indian way of thinking rather everything found in India is simply Indian'. Although the article impressively put forth its stand, it also motivates readers to think of common thread connecting India from east to west and north to south as the term 'diversity' does not imply the complete absence of oneness (at least in Indian context). The present chapter is an outcome of similar intellectual exercise and revolves around a central question 'is there an Indian way of accommodating cultural change?'

This question in itself accepts two things: first there is a rapid cultural change experienced throughout the country and second people respond to it differently. The reason of this difference lies in the fact that the experience of acculturative stress differs from one to another individual and also differ their readiness and style of accommodating it. The aim of this chapter is to examine the pattern of cultural change and find some common themes in it.

The chapter is divided into four sections. First section delineates the reasons of having multiple cultural pockets in India and briefly highlights the salient cultural features that make Indian psyche somewhat unique. Second section discusses the spread of acculturative influences in various domains of life. Third section presents a review of studies dealing with culture change and

people's response to that especially in context of Indian family system. This theme has been selected for family is the formative unit of society. It provides (a) the immediate developmental niche to the developing individual, (b) a medium of value transmission from one generation to the other, (c) essential cognitive skills to deal with acculturative changes. Finally, fourth section makes the concluding remarks of having/not having an Indian way of dealing with culture change.

India: A Truly Pluralistic Society

India exemplifies pluralism in true sense. The signature line of Indian society is 'unity in diversity'. The root of diversity lies in its ecological richness and frequent invasions it has experienced.

The Ecology-Culture-Behaviour Link

India is the oldest living civilization of the world which dates back to 8000 years according to the latest report of ASI (May 29, 2016). It is also one of the most diverse places on this earth. Extended on an area of 3,287,263 km., India is a land of high mountains, deep valleys, fertile plains, dry deserts, lush green forests and a long coastal region as it is surrounded by oceans from three sides. The country regularly enjoys four seasons in a year and is a host of hundreds of food crops, cash crops, plantation crops and horticulture crops. The great biodiversity of India leads to a variety of ecosystems both terrestrial and aquatic. However, the diversity here is not confined to landscape, flora and fauna but is also manifested in cultural systems.

The ecology-culture-behaviour link is substantiated by the fact that ecology provides the broader context to live in, which is full of both resources and challenges for life. Humans, being highly adaptive, develop mechanisms to utilize the natural resources optimally in order to meet the challenges posed by the ecology. In doing so, human beings create an artificial environment around themselves, which is often referred to as culture (Herskovitz, 1955). The culture defines the way of life of the group of people inhabiting that place. It is reflected both in intrinsic as well as extrinsic features of people's life style and behaviour. This can be observed by the presence of amazing varieties of food, clothes, languages,

architecture, religions customs and traditions in Indian society. The eco-cultural model proposed by Berry (1976), also advocates the interconnected nature of ecology, culture, and behaviour. The model implies that change in one system will invariably bring about changes in the other two also.

Frequent Invasions from Outside

India has been a rich country. Its richness manifested itself in different domains like art forms, literature, fertile plains, trade relations, wealth, architecture, technological innovations and many more. The affluence combined with the politically divided structure of the nation, made it highly vulnerable for outside invaders. As an obvious consequence India has a long history of invasions spanning over several hundred years from various communities like Shaka, Kushan, Hoon, Mongols, Mughals, Britishers, Portugese, and French. Invaders came looted the land, ruled here and finally settled down and became a part of the country. They brought their food, clothes, language, lifestyle, art, and culture along with them. This added more variety in the cultural fabric of this country and made muticulturalism—a regular practice of life.

Cultural Factors Adding Uniqueness to Indian Psyche

When we think of the cultural factors responsible for the unique flavour of Indian psyche, religion comes first as it has been the central force determining the do's and don'ts of people's life since the beginning of civilization itself. It has been a glue binding people together. India is the birth place of major religions practiced all over the world such as Sanatan Vedic Dharma, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, whereas it is also a home for Islam and Christianity. The postulates of Vedic Dharma has many striking features that has significantly contributed to the salience of Indian psyche. It embodies the highest human values like universal brotherhood, peaceful co-existence with nature, non-violence, truth, unconditional love and care for all forms of life on the mother earth, but the real strength of this ideology lies in the fact that it is a tradition of asking questions. Nothing is accepted without careful scrutiny, without trying it by logic. It beautifully balances the value

of obedience inherent in Indian culture and do not let it stop independent thinking. Moreover, it demonstrates the dynamic and evolving nature of knowledge. That the knowledge is generated, assimilated, integrated, and transmitted to upcoming generations in the service of mankind. Presence of different philosophical traditions opens the room for peaceful co-existence of multiple opinions and ideologies. Subjective perception and interpretations are well-accepted. Elaborated and well-crafted lay philosophies of behaviour are proposed in Indian culture. It strongly believes that behaviour is largely contextual, and must be judged with respect to its context. Concept of place, time, and person presents a framework against which the diversity of human behaviour can be explained. It gives rise to an attribution style which pays attention to both individual and situational specificities before making a causal attribution of a behaviour or incidence. The philosophy of Madhyam Marg, put forth by Bauddh dharma, supports leading a balanced life. No wonder the values of adjustment and accommodation are ingrained in Indian culture.

Hindu religious scriptures are full of apparently contradictory concepts and then synthesize them beautifully into one. The concepts of '*Bhagya*' (destiny) and '*Karma*' (action), '*Sagun*' (God personified) versus '*Nirgun Ishwarvaad*' (God as an absolute power) help reducing cognitive dissonance and promoting dialecticism. Provisions like '*Aapad dharma*' means provisions of deviating from the prescribed behaviour under emergencies or out of compulsion to ensure survival, and '*prayaschit*', i.e. provision of correction for an inadvertent wrong doing, gives a room for necessary deviation from the standard set of behaviour without getting culturally uprooted. Our social system is based on interdependence. This value is reiterated in our religious texts but the same sets highly individualistic goals for individuals such as salvation and establishes that every soul is alone in this world, which is nothing but an illusion. So Indians can easily accommodate apparently contradictory ideas without getting disturbed. This phenomenon was described as 'indifference to contradiction' and 'peaceful coexistence of logical opposites' by Koestler (1960). So, this style of accepting and practicing different things makes Indian society truly multicultural in nature and also offers a ground to believe in the uniqueness of Indian psyche.

The Process of Culture Change

The process of culture change, which is also known as acculturation is not a new thing for India. It has been experiencing strong, involuntary acculturative currents in the form of outside invasions and a voluntary acculturation through trade relations, exchange of art forms and literature frequently occurring since the time immemorial. However, the acculturation experienced now-a-days is much more planned, penetrating and widespread as compared to past experiences. Marked by the beginning of globalization the process of culture change has been accelerated manifolds. Big population, young population, rapidly growing economy, largest middle class ready to buy international brands, easy access to internet and satellite channels, voluntary/involuntary migration, democracy, social and cultural freedom to adopt different life styles, made it one of the most lucrative market for the rest of the world. Once a country is identified as a potential market, all forces put their maximum efforts to mobilize it in their own way. This happened with India also and the result is seen as rapid modernization. So it is unquestionably a rapidly acculturating place. But this is only one side of the coin. The other side is the robustness of Indian culture. The fact that this is a living culture for the last 5500 years in spite of all turbulences mentioned in the above two sections cannot be ignored. It means Indians do not compromise with old values, customs and traditions in order to acquire new ones; they simply co-exist. This coexistence is the magic trick Indians do when faced with acculturative stress apart from the established techniques of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry *et al.*, 1989). It is magical as it does not depend on making evaluative judgments as the rest of the techniques do. It is magical as it neither requires people leave certain aspect of their own culture (as is the case with integration and assimilation) nor it asks people distance themselves from the new culture (as is the case with separation) and still it is not a counter-productive strategy like marginalization. Rather this way of accommodating culture change has been found to generate least psychological stress in people undergoing the process.

Individualism/Collectivism as the Major Dimension of Culture Change

Dimension of individualism/collectivism emerged out of the Hofstede's culture dimension theory originally proposed by a Dutch management researcher Geert Hofstede in 1980 in order to classify nation along four dimensions, namely, (1) Power distance index, (2) Individualism/collectivism, (3) Uncertainty avoidance index, and (4) Masculinity/femininity index. Depending upon these indices India was classified as a dependent collectivistic society, i.e. displaying high power distance and low individualism. Hofstede's work initiated research in the dimension of individualism/collectivism, which later became the central theme of cross-cultural research. Individualism pertains to societies where inter-individual ties are loose, individual-achievement is more important than group's goal. Freedom of choice and right to privacy is must. On the other hand collectivism is defined by strong ties between people, group goals are given priority over individual achievement, sharing, and caring are common practices (Hofstede, 1980, Hui & Triandis, 1986, Sinha & Verma, 1987). Later on Triandis (1985) differentiated between culture level phenomena and individual level attributes, which were termed as idiocentric and allocentric by Triandis (1985), separatedness *versus* relatedness by Kagitcibasi (1982), and independent/interdependent self by Markus and Kitayama (1991). As most of the underdeveloped and developing countries showed low level of individualism and most of the developed industrial societies showed high level of individualism in Hofstede classification, a general opinion that under the influence of industrialization and modernization collectivistic societies spontaneously move towards individualism. This is called modernization hypothesis theory (Lerner, 1958). However, cross-cultural studies demonstrate that this is not the true picture as studies conducted in different parts of the world including India repeatedly proves that collectivistic societies do not become entirely individualistic but assume a new position in between the two poles. Moreover, there can be a difference between culture level and individual level acculturation (Berry, 1980, 1995, Kagitcibasi, 2002). Examining the patterns of individualism and collectivism, Sinha (1990) demonstrates the coexistence of I/C by describing people's interaction with 'in-group' *versus* 'out-group'

members. With in-group members the behaviour is characterized by cooperation and affiliation whereas interactions with out-group members is characterized by competition and rivalry.

Effect of Culture Change in Family Settings

Socio-cultural context plays an important role in the overall process of development (Dasen, 2003). The changing socio-cultural context has presented new challenges before the developing individuals everywhere in the world (Arnett, 2012), including India (Choudhary & Sharma, 2012). Several studies have been taken up to examine the effect of acculturation on intergenerational relationships. Acculturation is supposed to increase independence, autonomy, exercising one's own choice as opposed to inter-dependence, relatedness and obedience (Snyder, 2004). Chitins (1968) found that when children perceive that parental values are no more useful for their life, they either (a) gave up their aspirations and changed their life style to match it with that of the parents, or (b) turned a deaf year towards parents or (c) openly rejected parental commands resulting in tacit disapproval by the parents. In a study, perception of parenting by Indian and German adolescents indicated that Indian adolescents perceived parental control as parental involvement not as parental interference, therefore, contrary to German sample parental control is not related with anxiety in India (Albert, Trommsdorff, & Mishra, 2007). Another study made a comparison between three generations, i.e. grandmother, mother, and adolescent grandchild with respect to the level of individualism and collectivism they have. The study was conducted in both rural and urban settings. It was hypothesized that the grandmother sample would show the highest level of collectivism but lowest level of individualism, adolescents would display the opposite pattern, i.e. highest level of individualism and lowest level of collectivism whereas mothers' sample would show moderate score on both dimensions. Moreover the urban sample was supposed to be more individualistic than the rural sample and the differences were thought to be more pronounced in adolescents' sample than the mothers' or grandmothers' sample. However, the findings were very different from the hypothesized pattern. Although adolescents were more individualistic than their mothers and grandmothers they did not

differ significantly from them in terms of collectivism. Moreover, the urban sample was more collectivistic than the rural sample (Mishra & Sinha, 2012). Another study attempted to examine the value preferences among adolescents, their mothers and fathers. The values included in the study were obedience, independence and self-reliance, being popular among friends, doing well in school and being a good person. Among the other patterns an important one showed that equal importance was assigned to obedience and independence. No generation-wise difference was found in that respect (Sinha, 2009). Obedience is considered to be an important value endorsed in collectivistic societies. This value is also sensitive towards culture change as increasing independence would make people exert their own choices instead of following the commands of others. So a study was conducted to examine the significance of obedience for adolescents in the changing socio-cultural context of Indian society. The focus was especially on function and behavioural expression of obedience in daily life of adolescents. Findings revealed that obedience is still very important value for the adolescents. Instead of being perceived as a sacred duty of children, it now serves four types of functions in the life of adolescents, namely knowledge functions, self-enhancing function, harmonizing function and miscellaneous functions. Moreover, adolescents are not willing to comply fully with the parental commands, they want friendly suggestions instead, which allow them enough freedom to negotiate and modify things if required. Obedience also varied according to context. Issues related to family traditions elicited more obedience from adolescents than the issues of personal importance (Sinha & Mishra, 2013).

The findings presented above undoubtedly prove the coexistence of opposite tendencies like individualism and collectivism in Indian culture. Moreover, it suggests a strong tendency of adapting elements of other cultures to make them suitable for one's own cultural setting. Evolving a more flexible form of one's own values and beliefs is also common. However, the most interesting feature of Indian society is that it carries everything with it like different tools in a box and utilizes them as and when required. So, what will come out of the box and at what time, depends much on what the situation demands. Moreover, the studies mentioned in the previous section are done in different

parts of the country, with different samples, and in different time frames. There is a striking similarity in the conclusions drawn by these studies across-situation and overtime justifies the claim of Indian psyche being a psyche of co-existence. Now it would be apt to say that there may not be an Indian way of thinking but there is certainly an Indian way of accommodating cultural change.

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