

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR SERIES- 9

Lecture:9

(Duration: 1 hour)

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR: PERSONALITY

Personality - the term generally refers to the total behaviour of the individual. When we say that X has a police personality or the personality of a sub-inspector, we usually mean that he has a robust physique, muscle-strength, serious face with a police moustache etc. This is only the outer layer of a police officer's physique which, of course has something to do with his behaviour, is not his personality. Personality includes many things including the character and temperament of a person. At the same time, some people describe a police sub-inspector as smart person who is hot-tempered, efficient and energetic. When people make such descriptions about a sub-inspector, they are speaking about the personality of the officer. In other words, they presumably describe the person of the sub-inspector as a whole. The description shows how the sub-inspector is evaluated by people with his habitual patterns of behaviour- i.e. smart, hot-tempered, efficient and energetic. Physiologists call these qualities as traits which describe a person's habitual behaviour. A trait is the enduring pattern of behaviour. Trait is different from habits. Smoking may be a habit in a person who is very kind, generous and considerate to others which are all considered to be traits. In order to say that a particular person has a particular trait in him, it is necessary that he should habitually show such behavioural patterns in his behaviour

(Fig:5)

Specific Responses can be politeness, obedience, patience, responsibility, punctuality etc.,

Human Values and Police Behaviour

Habitual Responses mean that the person behaves in a particular manner more or less on a permanent basis Habitual responses make the traits which when put together make the personality In the above picture one may see that a particular person shows specific responses in a particular way as a more or less permanent behavioural pattern. These specific responses together make his habitual responses to such situations. The habitual responses together make a man's personality.

CASE- ILLUSTRATION

A police officer interrogates a suspect on some issues. The suspect's answers to the questions are likely to irritate any police officer who questions him. But in this case, the officer is calm and collected. This is called the specific response to the situation.

The same officer goes for law and order duty in connection with the visit of a V.V.I.P. People who have come there are not listening to what the police tell them. Usually a police officer may get angry in such situations. In this case, the officer is calm and collected.

Thus, in many situations of different kinds, the officer is calm and collected. Hence it is called the habitual response of the officer.

Thus, on evaluation, it is possible to see that some people are calm, collected, patient, perseverant, honest, sincere etc. in their transactions with others. Putting them together, the personality of an officer is described as honest and efficient, corrupt and efficient, smart and sincere etc. This is called the unique personality of an individual. Traits show how a person behaves. They do not and cannot explain why a person behaves in a particular way.

Bureau of Police Research & Development

The folk belief is that fat people are good natured and jolly. Short people are cunning and untrustworthy. These concepts are hardly based on any Scientific researches. Nevertheless Kretschmer (1925) attempted to work out relationship between personality factors and body- types. He built a theory of personality on his findings about body structure.

Kretschmer classified people into asthenic, athletic, pyknic and certain mixed and unclassifiable types. The asthenic is a "Lean, narrow by built" man who looks taller than he is. The athletic has strong development of skeleton, musculature and skin, wide shoulders, excellent chest etc. and the " pyknic" possesses medium height, soft, broad face, short massive neck, soft wide hands, soft rounded limbs etc.

Later Sheldon and his associates (1940, 1942, 1954) made use of Kretschmer's as a starting point and brought out personality theory after classifying characteristics and correlating them with personality traits. Sheldon's system could be used to classify the body structure of people into endomorphous (prominence of visceral organs and fat) mesomorphous (prominence of muscle and bone) and ectomorphous (prominence of angularity and fragility with little fat or muscle).

There are criticisms against the theories of body structure and constitution to explain personality. The main objection is that these theorists who try to explain personality purely in terms of physical structure tend to overlook the capability of man/ woman to modify their behaviour. As human beings develop or grow older, a lot of modifications in the behaviour take place and accordingly there occurs change in their personality as well and accordingly there occurs change in their personality as well.

Human Values and Police Behaviour

After 1920s' several attempts have been made to establish that personality are due to endocrine functioning or malfunctioning Max Schlapp and Edward Smith etc. were very prominently known in this field as they tried to establish even criminal behaviour as a result of endocrine malfunctioning. However, later researches questioned the endocrinological approaches and generalisations in explaining

personality and its development. Many endocrinologists find it difficult now to connect personality to endocrine functioning.

HOW DO PEOPLE DEVELOP PERSONALITY TRAITS

Learning theorists say that the traits are learnt by individuals from earlier infancy. It takes a period of time for its development. If, one wants to develop aggressiveness as a trait in another, it is necessary that adequate environment is provided to him so that he can become aggressive. The advocates of this theory may say that personality of an individual is a learnt behaviour and they further say that the personality development is through reinforcement, reward and punishment. They may say that a police officer behaves in a particular manner with desirable or undesirable personality traits, because he learns such behaviour patterns from other police officers. However, social psychologists may not fully endorse the learning theorists. They emphasise identification and imitation as the twin methods of personality development. Police officers come to identify with their superiors whom they think can be taken as the models of their behaviour. Some imitate them. Imitation is not limited only to behavioural traits but also of gestures, habits and attitudes. It has been observed that police officers who had experienced great deal of physical punishment during their training period or afterwards tended to be hostile and aggressive even to the people who come to them for getting services.

Bureau of Police Research & Development

FRUSTRATIONS, MENTAL CONFLICTS AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Frustrations, according to James C. Coleman is the experience which an individual has when his motives are thwarted either by some obstacle that blocks or impedes his progress toward a desired goal or by the absence of an appropriate goal.

ILLUSTRATION

1. Knowing that a suspect is hiding himself in a place, the sub-inspector and party reach there, but in vain. They experience frustration.
2. Being motivated called to settle a matter the police have called X to the police Station. Reaching there the sub-inspector is found absent. X feels frustrated.

FRUSTRATION AND FRUSTRATORS

(Fig:6)

Here the individual is motivated to reach a goal, but cannot because of a barrier that works between him and the goal.

MENTAL CONFLICTS

Mental conflict in simple terms means a painful state of mind resulting from frustration or a clash between two wishes - defines page. According to Coleman, mental conflict is a stress characterised by desires, needs or environmental demands.

Human Values and Police Behaviour

FRUSTRATION AND FRUSTRATORS

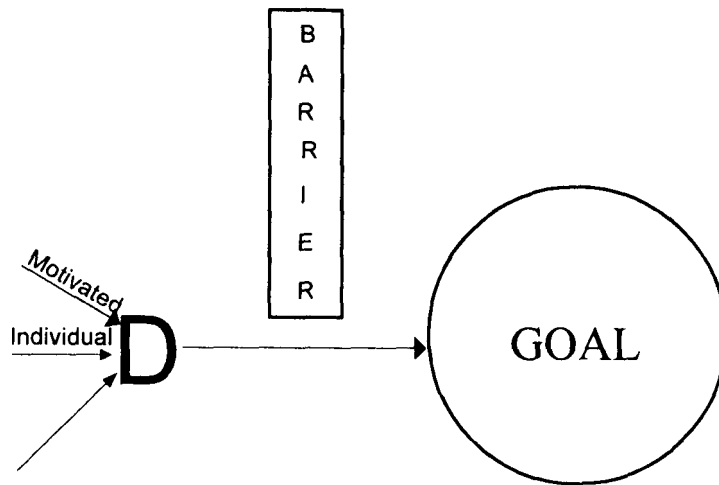


Fig. 6

ILLUSTRATIONS

The sub-inspector to the suspect: "you tell me the truth, otherwise you will be coerced to speak the truth". Here the suspect cannot tell the truth, for if he tells so, he will be prosecuted. At the same time, he cannot keep silence in which case he is afraid that the police may use third degree methods. He is in a mental conflict.

Mental conflicts can be four kinds and they are called :

1. Approach - Approach conflict
2. Approach - Avoidance conflict
3. Avoidance - Avoidance conflict
4. Circular - Conflict

MENTAL CONFLICTS

(Fig: 7)

In Approach- Approach conflict, the goals are attractive, but the individual cannot opt for any e.g. A job in Dubai and another job in Abu Dabi for one and the same person. In Approach- Avoidance conflict, the goals are attractive and repelling to the individual as one and the same goal has positive and negative valence to the individual e.g. a suspect wants to surrender to the police in which case, the police will not come to his house in search of him and disturb his family members; but at the same time, prosecution procedure will be initiated. This is on one side. At the same time he does not want to surrender before the police for he is afraid that he may be beaten by the police. Here he avoids arrest, but the police continue coming to his house every now and then and harass the parents and family members.

Bureau of Police Research & Development

MENTAL CONFLICTS

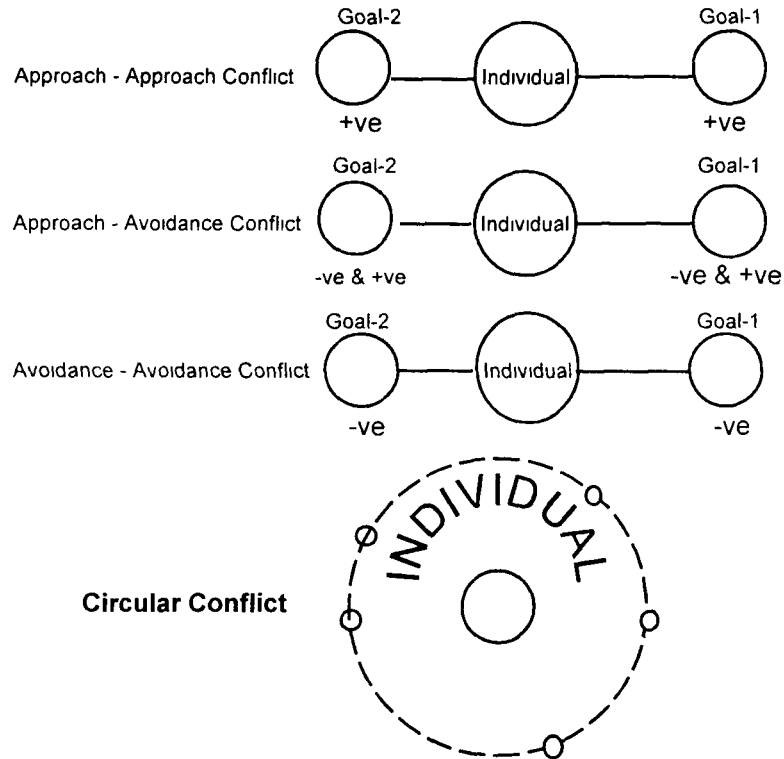


Fig. 7

In Avoidance- Avoidance conflict, the individual does not want both goals because the goals are repelling, yet he has no option but to select one of them. He is in between the devil and deep sea here.

In Circular conflict the individual cannot get out of the conflict and the stress caused by it. e.g. the sub- inspector addresses a person with an epithet - Bastard and he is in a Circular conflict He wants to do something, but he cannot do it. Hence, he murmurs against the police.

HOW DOES MAN BEHAVES HE HAS FRUSTRATION OR MENTAL CONFLICTS

Man resolves his conflict and frustrations by resorting to various defence mechanisms which can be

1. rationalisation
 2. Projection,
 3. repression
 - 4 suppression,
 - 5 regression,
 6. compensation,
 - 7 identification,
 - 8, interjection.
 9. tolerance,
 - 10 withdrawal,
 11. aggression etc.
- These defence - mechanism are important to understand human behaviour

particularly during the interrogation of suspects or during the interviewing of witnesses by the police. This will also help the police officer to understand better his own behaviour, behaviour of his superior and subordinates.

CLASS ROOM EXERCISES

1. Enumerate the projected personality traits that you see in some of the police officers whom you have seen functioning or whom you have contacted.
2. Write down a paragraph about how police training help to develop positive or negative personality traits in police officers.
3. Police-Each letter may represent a particular trait. For example, P for politeness, pertinence, perseverance etc. on the positive side Likewise, it can also well show the negative personality traits

Human Values and Police Behaviour
8

such as partiality, parochialism, pseudo-authoritarian, partisans etc. Now you may draw the positive and negative personality traits you see in police personality.

<p>Positive Traits ☒</p> <p>-----P</p> <p>-----O</p> <p>-----L</p> <p>-----I</p> <p>-----C</p> <p>-----E</p>	<p>Negative Traits ☒</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
---	---

"You may write as many traits as possible under each category.

4. DISCUSSION

1. Learning as a method for developing personality traits during the training period.
2. Influence of police sub- culture and learning of personality traits.
5. Write down some specific situations in which the police face frustrations or mental conflicts as the case may be during-

1. Law and order management
2. Communal conflicts
3. Labour disputes
4. Student unrest
5. Political agitation
6. other Areas

NOTES

1. James C. Colemena, Abnormal Psychology and Modern life. D.B. Taraporevia Sons and Co. Private Ltd. Bombay, 1970. and also Dr. James Vadackumchery, and K.T. Varkey, Human Relations in Banking : How To Get along Better with People ? Santha Publishing House, Cochin, 1988.
2. James D. Page, Abnormal Psychology: A Clinical Approach to Psychological Deviants. Tata Mc Graw Hill Publishing Co. L td. New Delhi.
3. James C. Coleman G. Cit.