Personality Assessment - Need for an Amalgamated Tool

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The uniqueness of an individual is most clearly reflected in her or his personality. It represents characteristic patterns of behaviour, thought processes and emotional responses. One's personality determines the manner in which one responds to the world. Several factors contribute to its evolution, among which genetics and environment are primary. Personality is relatively stable; hence, an individual may broadly be associated with a particular type.

It is the distinct combination of traits that differentiates one person from another. Responses to situations, including stress, are largely determined by personality. Interactions with others are similarly influenced and reflected through personality.

Indeed, life itself is shaped by personality. Career choices and performance, relationships and social life, physical and mental health, behavioural patterns and adaptability, and the ability to take risks and make decisions are all influenced by personality. Susceptibility to physical or mental illness, academic performance, and resilience during critical phases of life are also related to personality traits.

There is no single term in ayurveda that exactly corresponds to the modern concept of personality. Bodily constitution, represented by prakrti, and psychological temperaments such as saattvika, raajasa and taamasa reflect different dimensions of individuality that together approximate the concept of personality. Mind and body are inseparably related; their division is primarily for observational clarity. Mental attributes are included among the indicators of prakrti, while physical characteristics are also considered in descriptions of maanasa-prakrti. Indicators of sareera- prakrti may even encompass certain socio-cultural and behavioural traits. Susruta's postulations on kaaya provide yet another perspective relevant to personality. These domains show areas of overlap and conceptual convergence. Research may therefore be meaningfully directed along these lines. So far, most studies have focused on correlating maanasa- prakrti with personality constructs. [1,2] Very few have examined possible relationships between deha- prakrti and personality. However, to assess personality in its true and comprehensive sense, an amalgamated tool that incorporates all these dimensions of individuality is necessary.

An evolved ayurvedic assessment tool may be compared with conventional systems in terms of validity and sensitivity. Such tools could be used by teachers to assess students, enabling the adoption of tailored teaching strategies. The likelihood of pre-examination stress may be anticipated, and appropriate remedial measures implemented. At a later stage, students themselves may be trained to use such a scale. Through peer application and self-assessment, they may cultivate introspection and monitor growth in terms of personality development.