

## LESSON 20

### APTITUDE, INTEREST AND JOB REQUIREMENTS

#### SUMMARY

One of the important areas of psychology is to study individual differences in various attributes. We differ not only in physical appearance but also in our habits, feelings, personality, thoughts, and behaviours.

Effective educational, personal and vocational decisions demand knowledge of individual differences. Psychologists use various assessment procedures to measure psychological traits to help persons choose careers according to their aptitudes and interests, keeping in mind the requirements of specific job.

#### Aptitude

**Aptitude** is a special potential in a certain field of performance. It indicates a special ability, acquired or innate, to learn or develop knowledge of a skill in some specific area. It involves prediction of the probability of success of a person with training in a certain type of work/job/vocation. It is the result of both inherent and the environmental factors.

It involves the following:

Readiness to acquire some skill or knowledge

Ability to acquire those skills/knowledge

Ability to derive satisfaction from those activities

Knowledge of aptitude can help us to predict an individual's future performance. With proper training these abilities can be enhanced.

Aptitude can be assessed and the aptitude tests are available in two forms – specialized aptitude tests and general aptitude tests. Differential Aptitude Tests (**DAT**) and General Aptitude Tests Batteries (**GATB**) are well known Test Batteries.

#### Interest

**Interest** may be defined as a tendency to choose one activity in preference to another, or to seek out an activity or object. It implies preferences or likes and dislikes for specific activity or a group of specific activities. It is generally manifested in the way one likes to spend one's leisure time and it also provides emotional pleasure.

Interest is categorised as

**Intrinsic** - If the emotional pleasure of the interest area is attached to the activity, it is intrinsic interest. Liking an activity without any reward is intrinsic.

**Extrinsic** - If the emotional pleasure is attached to some reward and praise, it implies extrinsic interest.

Techniques to measure interest are - self ratings, interviews, questionnaires, checklists and

inventories. Interest inventories have been primarily used in vocational and educational guidance.

Strong Vocational Interest Blank (**SVIB**) and Kuder Preferences Record are some of the well-known inventories for measuring interest.

## Ability

It is commonly known as intelligence. It is the innate capacity to act and helps in the solution of a problem. Abilities help to accumulate knowledge but those should not be confused with knowledge itself. These abilities increase efficiency in the person. Environment can develop abilities but cannot produce them within the person.

There are various approaches to conceptualize intelligence. Initially it was limited to cognitive or intellectual domain only. The contemporary view, such as given by Gardner, is that there are multiple intelligences and people can have intelligence in cognitive, musical, kinaesthetic (bodily) interpersonal and other areas.

## Mental Age and IQ

Mental ability is developmental in nature. It increases with age. Therefore, psychologists have developed age related scales. Each scale comprises a series of questions which are normally answered correctly by a majority of children of that age. To compare the child's mental age with his actual or chronological age the concept of IQ is introduced.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is a ratio of mental age (MA) and chronological age (CA) multiplied by 100.

$$IQ = \frac{MA}{CA} \times 100$$

It may be noted here that –

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When MA and CA are the same, IQ is 100  
(average)

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When MA is greater than CA, IQ is over 100  
(above average)

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When CA is greater than MA; IQ is below 100  
(below average)

However, the concept of MA does not apply beyond 18 years, since mental ability is usually fully developed by that time. The current practice is to create a profile of a person in different types of abilities.

## Importance and relationship among aptitude, interest and ability

It is important to make job decisions consistent with one's abilities, aptitudes and interests as the right career decision brings happiness and job satisfaction.

Therefore, job decisions need to be made in the light of accurate, reliable and up to date information, regarding the requirements of the job and about the individual's intelligence, aptitudes, and interests.

## **Analysing and communicating job requirements**

Job descriptions serve several purposes. A job description aims to inform the applicants about what an employer wants them to do and the knowledge and skills that they will need to bring to the job in terms of aptitudes, interests and abilities to perform a job. It serves its purpose when it attracts the right applicants with right aptitude. The job descriptions mainly provide information on the nature of work, the salary and other benefits, work timings and holidays, as well as the kind of intelligence level, aptitude and interest required.

### **Evaluate yourself**

1. Describe the role of aptitude, interest and abilities in making educational and vocational choices.
2. Explain the concept of Mental age and IQ.
3. Define intrinsic and extrinsic interest.