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Book Review

Updesh Kumar (ed.). (2016). The Wiley Handbook of Personality Assessment. Wiley-Blackwell. Price: Rs. 9568.59 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-1119173441

The Wiley handbook of Personality Assessment is an edited volume that brings together 70 contributors in the field of individual differences over the course of 30 chapters and addresses several conceptual, methodological and ethical issues in personality assessment research and practice. Chapters are authored by researchers, scholars and practitioners from 17 countries of five continents around the globe. Like its authors, the text is diverse in that it comprehensively covers the emerging issues and recent trends in personality assessment while attempting to expand critical perspectives in understanding research advances and future developments in the associated fields. The book is divided into two main segments viz., Section-I: 'Emerging conceptual trends' subsuming initial 12 chapters and Section-II: 'Emerging assessment perspectives and methodological issues', which includes the remaining 18 chapters. More familiar topics like paradigms in personality assessment, methodological and research issues associated with usage of self-report and performance-based assessment tools, cultural and diversity issues in assessment, applicant faking behaviour and response biases got their legitimate space in the volume. In addition, novel topics like utility of network analysis in conceptualization and measurement of personality, assessment of dark and aversive personality features, utilizing virtual reality in personality assessment, participants reactions to personality assessment, potential utility of experience sampling method (ESM) in personality assessment, applicability of therapeutic assessment, Suicide among military personnel, etc., have been dwelt upon in details in this handbook. While this handbook will be helpful to researchers, academics, psychometricians, human resource practitioners, clinical psychologists, forensic psychologists, social workers and other professionals, it would serve as a significant reference material for personality researchers and students alike.

A closer engagement with the chapters would provide readers with various takeaways, depending on what one is looking for. The initial chapters clustered under Section-I provide a good launching ground for readers to get acquainted with the key aspects of theory and measurement along with the contributions made by the popular measures. They also highlight the controversies and challenges encountered by the existing constructs as well as critiques of the measures of the construct and provide directions for paradigm shift in existing approaches. Two chapters in this context are noteworthy. The authors of Chapter 5 (Viswesvaran & Ones) mapped test scores of 'Integrity' onto the big five personality dimensions and suggested through empirical and theoretical evidences across cultures that integrity could act as a higher-order factor and deserves a closer attention. With moral character or trustworthiness of individuals hitting a new low in our contemporary society, the chapter provides a strong scientific basis for integrity testing and its applications. Similarly, in curiously titled chapter 'Measuring the dark side of personality', the authors (Southard & Zeigler-Hill) review the existing empirical literature in the area of assessment of dark and aversive personality features, largely reflecting tendencies like interpersonal manipulation, exploitation, and a general lack of concern. With subclinical levels of dark personality features more commonly witnessed in general population, this chapter provides enough groundwork for personality researchers and psychometricians to expand their ambit and assess socially aversive behaviours. The subsequent chapter (Chu, Maruyama, Elefant & Bongar) provides a critical evaluation of multicultural personality assessment and is especially relevant to Indian context witnessing increasingly higher instances of uncritical use of personality assessment instruments developed in other cultures/ countries. The particular sub-section on cultural idioms of distress reminds us that "assessment results

should be understood within the cultural context of the clients' lives" (p. 140). The noteworthy contribution of this chapter lies not only in drawing our attention towards the 'why' (needs) of culturally competent personality assessment but also that of 'how' by providing us guidelines for practice and future research.

The section-II of the book is a practitioners' delight. Some of the chapters in this segment not only introduce readers to new and emerging perspectives in personality assessment and the associated methodological issues, it also provides illustrative case examples to bring the process alive to the readers. Flow-charts, diagrams and empirical data-tables elucidates the newer perspectives in a reader-friendly way. Practicing clinical psychologists would find some chapters in this section extremely useful due to their focus on clinical/therapeutic assessment issues (Chapters: 17, 19, 21, 23, and 24). Personally speaking, two of these chapters (Systematic treatment selection and Integrative clinical assessment of sexual and gender minority clients) have potentiality widened my own clinical perspective. These chapters could possibly add to our existing knowledge-base and therapeutic skills in choosing the appropriate intervention modality with specific clients and in sensitively handling our clients belonging to sexual minority groups. Forensic psychologists would also find Chapter 19 (Gacono, Kivisto, Smith & Cunliffe) informative and illuminating where the authors make a case for comprehensive multi-method personality assessment in forensic setting with illustrative assessment data.

Another chapter deserves special mention. Prakash & Kumar in Chapter-22 (Personality assessment paradigms: Issues and challenges) consolidated the ground of personality assessment for any newcomer in the field by providing a comprehensive review of the various personality assessment research paradigms and meticulously pointing out their advantages and disadvantages.

As section-II of the volume enhances curiosity among readers, one starts noticing the divergences in the themes across the chapters. However, with 12 and 18 chapters clustered around two large sections, one wonders if there was a more reader friendly way to organize the chapters under smaller and more thematically-focussed sections. Such re-arrangement of the chapters would also have brought to focus some of the chapters which came very late in the edition and somehow got lost in this voluminous book. Chapters 22, 29 and 30 - all dealing with more fundamental themes like paradigms, pedagogies and ethics related to personality assessment might have been placed much earlier in the volume as they provide the essential grounding to discuss subsequent chapters. One cannot help but notice that all the contributors of these chapters are from India.

The contributors of the edited volume are from various countries with a mix of both seniors and new-comers in the field. Barring a few, most of the chapters had multiple authors. It is not an easy feat to collaborate with 70 different authors spread across countries and ultimately produce an edited volume which shows a high degree of scholarship. The editor needs to be congratulated for this tremendous job. One just wishes that a few sporadic chapters here and there had scope for further quality improvement through a rigorous editorial gaze. For example, Chapter 20 on Holtzman Inkblot Technique is dated with its cited researches being mostly from 1960s and 70s, which brings to mind questions about its contemporary relevance in research and practice.

Coming back to the issue of multinational authorship, a closer look at the authors' affiliating institutes makes it evident that a significant majority of them belong to a few centres, primarily located in United States and Europe. Some of these centres have come to be known as hubs of research-excellence by virtue of their focussed and synchronized work in personality psychology, thus reflecting the effort of the editor to provide a state-of-the-art reading of contemporary research in personality assessment. Yet, a reader who picks up a handbook on personality assessment may be equally inquisitive to know what has been happening in Latin America, Africa, Middle-east Europe, Arab countries, East and South Asia, Australia and so on and so forth. There are, of course, some significant contributions from South Africa. For example, Chapter 11 by Sumaya Laher (Future directions for personality assessment: An African perspective) is an outstanding contribution where the reader gets a glimpse of development of personality assessment and research, especially in the background of political and cultural turmoil during and after

the apartheid regime in South Africa. Pushed by post-apartheid egalitarian legislatures, researchers there critically engaged with the etic notion of 'Five Factor Model' (FFM) and realized the need to expand its conceptualization to include a more social-relational element. The author not only introduces the readers to two emic-inspired instruments like SAPI and CAPI-2, but also invites us to look closely into South African concept of 'ubuntu'('a person is a person through other persons'(p.155) to enhance our understanding of the complex notion of personality in collectivist cultures. Nevertheless, it would have been a real feast for us to see some home-grown researches in areas like personality assessment in clinical settings, personality constructs and assessment tools based on Indian Psychology, emerging data on military suicides getting a space in the volume. Of course, we have to admit that an editor of a book of a limited size is not the magician in the fairy tale who may fulfil readers' every desire. Finally, a few comments about integration of the chapters. The editor provides a very apt overview of the volume in the preface and mentioned about "slowly widening the scope of the volume" (p.xxxiv). However, the widening net needed to be gathered back for us to see what we gained at the end of the volume. A final chapter, perhaps from the Editor himself, weaving through the diverse themes and indicating a way forward in terms of future directions would have wrapped up this excellent piece of scholarly work in the field of personality assessment.

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Psychology for India (2015) By Durganand Sinha with an introduction by Girishwar Misra and Ajit K Dalal, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Pp. 221 , Price : Rs.695 (Hardcover). ISBN 978-93-515-0367-5

TShould psychology in India be for the Indian people? By being disengaged from its own social and cultural milieu, will it not continue to be of little use in helping and healing the Indian psyche? Most of us will answer affirmatively to these questions. Need for making the discipline of psychology in India relevant for and connecting to the Indian scenario has been realized much earlier by the fraternity of psychologists in India. But there are very few scholars, who devoted their academic lives for arguing and advancing the cause of a psychology for India. The name and fame of Professor Durganand Sinha stands tall among the advocates of Indian perspective in psychology. Professor Sinha was an architect of a new kind of psychology for India not only through mainstream research and mentoring of many scholars including Ajit K. Dalal, Anand Prakash, R.C. Tripathi, R.K. Misra, Janak Pandey, Girishwar Misra, U. N. Agrawal, Meera Verma, Nisha Dhawan and many more, but also by making endeavours to convince the policy-makers, inspiring colleagues, building bridges of understanding with other sister disciplines, innovating measurement techniques for various psychological phenomenon, creating an ideal teaching-research programme, establishing international affiliations, and carrying psychological explorations to the doors of disadvantaged sections of Indian society.

Against this backdrop, Psychology for India brings out theoretical and methodological issues for indigenization of psychology in India, imparts research-based knowledge of human development in Indian society, and elaborates concerns for applying psychology in Indian scenario. It presents a comprehensive selection of Professor Sinha's writings on various issues and concerns particularly of interest to those psychologists and social scientists who aspire for developing 'socially connected psychology ingrained in the meanings and practices of the Indian culture in all its' variety, complexity and splendour' (page no. viii). With an introduction and well-thought compilation by two distinguished

senior colleagues Professors Girishwar Misra and Ajit K. Dalal, this volume covers Professor Sinha's multifaceted and profound work organized in three sections i.e. : rethinking psychological paradigm, human development and applied concerns.

Although, in view of the vastness of scholarly engagements of Professor Sinha independently and in collaboration with professional colleagues from diverse cultural, academic, and societal contexts, it cannot be expected that this volume would contain all of his ideas and contributions. This work has made a commendable endeavour to choose research articles charged with deep-rooted concerns, issues and challenges for developing psychology for India. Part I titled 'rethinking the psychological paradigm' articulates the agenda for a contextually-sensitive psychology. The articles in this section elaborate the major phases of research in the developing part of the world, identify hidden potentials of Indian thought, and provide know-how for carrying out indigenization and using culture sincerely in our research endeavours through many illustrations. Research scholars from India and other developing countries may specially find the chapter titled as 'Indigenization of Psychology in India' of great value for research journey along Indigenous concepts and ideas. They may find substantial tips for designing their work focusing on indigenous notions. Sometimes influenced by our zeal for Indigenous research, we make some pseudo efforts or do something which may be inimical for the growth of psychology. This chapter cautions against and makes us aware about all such potential pitfalls.

India, being a developing country, is undergoing metamorphosis in its socio-economic processes, concerns and challenges of human development. But we do not find any substantive or particularly definitive psychological work on identifying trajectory of these changes and their influences on individual Indian psyche, inter-generational differences and Indian identity. The second part of this volume tries to throw light on some of these issues. A chapter titled 'The Family Scenario in a Developing Country and Its Implications for Mental Health: The Case of India' presents an integrative review on the studies related to the pattern of changes in nuclear and joint Indian families and influences on child-rearing, individuation and absence of role models. I would like to mention that we need such periodical reviews from time to time. Thus the emergence of newer phenomena like live-in relationships, possible psychological effects and patterning of leisure activities, and lifestyle related alteration in familial scenario need attention. Professor Sinha presents empirical findings of his studies in two chapters; of which in a chapter titled 'Socialization, Family and Psychological Differentiation', he delineates the interaction patterns responsible for development of psychological differentiation. In the chapter on 'The Young and The Old: Ambiguity of Role Models and Values Among Indian Youth' he presents findings of studies on generational differences by using ingenious methods and measures. The last chapter entitled 'Basic Indian Values and Behaviour Dispositions in The Context of National Development' might be of great interest for social scientists from other disciplines. By addressing the knotty question 'what it means to be Indian', it indicates utility of many of the indigenous values and modes of behaviour for the developmental goals of the Indian society.

Psychology is often criticized for its over concern for particular sections of society. Professor Sinha tried to dismantle this notion by expanding the contours of psychological research to farmers and rural people. Those researchers, who want to study the problems of disadvantaged sections of society, for example slum-dwellers, farmers in natural calamity affected areas, may get greater familiarity with a new approach for studying these problems in chapters on 'Towards An Ecological Framework of Deprivation' and 'Interventions for Development of Poverty' in the third part of the book. In the background of Lewin's concept of 'life space' and Bronfenbrenner's idea of concentric layers of ecology, Professor Sinha expands the conception of 'experiential base for the development of perceptual skills of various kinds' (cited from page number 139). The next chapter on 'Motivational Syndrome of Farmers, Education and Rural Development' sheds light on the causes of failure of Government programmes for farmers and strategies to overcome the same.

This book, however, due to space constraints is limited in scope as it has not included Professor Sinha's writings on well-being, leadership patterns, student agitation in India, organizational behaviour and risk taking, motivation and dynamics of caste tension. Perhaps that needs another volume. The Editors must consider bringing out such a volume.

Overall, this book successfully presents the case for promoting relevant studies for building a psychology for the Indian people. It may offer fresh ideas to social scientists for interdisciplinary studies of Indian society. It is a useful reference book for psychology courses in Universities. The chapters contained in the book are enticing to read and reflect on issues of growth of psychology and to innovatethe methodology for carving a model of psychology for India as well as other developing countries. My salutations to the great academic leader of psychology in modern India!

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