Self Esteem in Relation to Other Variables: A Review

Abstract

Self-Esteem refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes himself or herself. It is considered to be the evaluative component of the self- concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones. Self esteem has been related to various other variables. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between self esteem and other psychosocial and demographic variables in present times.

Keywords: Self Esteem, High, Low, Global, Achievement, Culture, Individualism, Collectivism, Self Concept, Performance, Indian View

Introduction

In the development of psychology there was a time when it was thought that animal psychology is the real basis to study the human behavior. But very soon the mistake was realized and the social aspect of behavioral study method was revived. In this context it was believed that the human behavior can very well be studied explained, and predicted in their interactional perspective which is the centre point of this study.

The expansion of media gave a new awakening and shape to society by providing the varied information of the different cultures to different people.In other words, globalization created a need to study cross-cultural effects.Consequently it provided its benefits, but it also created problems for social psychologists. Along with it, the developments and the deeper study of the subject put forth a few new concepts which required the need of explanation and clarification for further studies and expansion of the subject.Thus, old concepts were replaced by newer ones and renovation opened with dimensions of new research fields and thus the need to study self-esteem was realized.

Since our country combines different cultures, developed and undeveloped areas, in others words varied population having different values, therefore the need of the hour is to study the behavioral pattern, interactional effect with reference to the concepts and contexts and their effects on society for a better living and adjustment which is the prime objective of research in social sciences.

Indian View about Being

In our old scriptures specially in Bhagavtgeeta a word comes 'Sthit-Prajanya' Meaning Thereby An 'Equanimous' person i.e. the one who keeps his mental balance in favorable and unfavorable situations. This state of mind in new terminology is termed as psychological well-being. How this state can be obtained and what is its role and relationship with self-esteem has been discussed in the present paper. Self-esteem is a desire to obtain success and consequently to get fame or to be known in society. This helps to shape an individual's personality and modify his behavior in cognitive and conative expressions.This construct has become important to discuss because whereas high self-esteem persons are aspirant to place them at upper ladder of the social hierarchy the low self-esteem people suffer with negative attitude towards their own self and remain careless to what other people will think of them.

The study of self-esteem opens the window to peep into the personality of a person. According to social historian Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Self-esteem is rooted in achievement and acquiring new competencies." In other words, we build real and durable self-esteem as a result of overcoming obstacles, acquiring specific tangible skills and achievements, being given and fulfilling progressively increasing responsibilities, and seeking and finding opportunities to give helping hand to.

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Thus, it helps to develop personality and provides shape to people's behavior in cognitive and conative expressions.As a result of feeling good about ourselves and realizing what we are capable of doing, we tend to perform well. Social psychologists have been of the view that a person can be studied properly in his or her social reference and therefore; the cultural study becomes important.The role of culture lies in value formation and cross- cultural interactions influence the patterns of behavior.Self-esteem of an individual is associated with interpersonal relations in society.

Aim of the Study

It is clear from the above discussion that Self esteem is integral part of an individual's psyche. It has been studied extensively by numerous scholars. The present study aims to investigate the relationship between self esteem and various other psycho-social variables in present times.

Various Definitions of Self Esteem

Self-esteem is a socio-psychological onstruct that assesses an individual's attitudes and erceptions of self-worth. Webster's Dictionary (2006) says that self-esteem is *"satisfaction with oneself"*.

Self-esteem refers to the worth or dignity that one ascribes to one self. In German, the word *'selbswertgefuhl'* make this clear. It is a feeling of worth that we have of ourselves. The word "esteem" derived from the Latin word '*aestimare',* denotes an estimation that I make of my own value.

Self-esteem is a widely used concept both in popular language and in psychology. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). The most broad and frequently cited definition of self-esteem within psychology is Rosenberg's (1965), who described it as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self.

The most quoted formula for understanding self-esteem-is self- Esteem = success/ aspiration formed It has been defined by Lowe (1961), 'as one's attitude towards self and by Panderson (1965) as" an organized configuration of perceptions, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and values which the individual views as a part of characteristics of oneself". The identification of one's self or the attainment of a self-concept , begins early in life and is surely one of the most important concept that an individual ever forms. Awareness of self is surely central to all acts of self-control.

The Basic Behavioral Science Task Force of the National Advisory Mental Health Council (2004) offers a fuller explanation: "Self esteem begins to develop early in life and has been studied in children as young as seven years old of age. As children learn to describe aspects of themselves, such as their physical attributes, abilities and preferences, they also begin to evaluate them. Researchers conclude that contrary to intuition individuals have not one but several views of their selves, encompassing many domains of life, such as scholastic ability physical appearance and romantic appeal, job competence, and adequacy as provider".

The ultimate expression of the development of a living system is to maintain its special and temporal integrity and to maintain itself against the flux of the environment likely more than anything else.

The self concept contributes to this maintenance and gives continuity to our experience throughout our waking hours. The person with a highly integrated and stable self-concept may be less dominated than others by external events. The self-concept must surely be one of the most automated of all concepts because it begins early in the life and is shaped continually throughout life. Koffka (1935) writes,"It is probable that the ego is first formed in organism, which proceeds on the conscious level, but after it has been formed bit becomes more and more stable, more and more independent of momentary conditions of organizations, so that eventually it is a permanent segregated part of our total psychophysical field".

Sub- Systems of Self-Esteem

Lewin (1948) proposed that the self-concept might be a complex schema consisting of many integrated sub-systems. These sub system are sub concepts that are related to different spheres of one's life but are never the less affected by momentary condition of the whole self-system. Examples of such sub concepts are one's physical appearance, one's social role, and one's intellectual ability. Thus if a person has a poor opinion of himself, or a poorly integrated self concept, his postural schema may be affected along with the entire self concept. Research has demonstrated that individual differences in self esteem affect behavior in diverse content areas as competition, conformity, attraction, causal attribution, achievement and helping (Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie 1974, 1979).

Self-esteem is generally considered to be the evaluative component of the self- concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991). While the construct is most often used to refer to a global sense of self-worth, narrower concepts such as self-confidence or body-esteem are used to imply a sense of self-esteem in more specific domains. It is also widely assumed that self-esteem functions as a trait, which means it is stable across time within individuals.

Self-esteem is an extremely popular construct within psychology, and has been related to virtually every other psychological concept or domain, including personality (e.g. shyness), behavioral (e.g. task performance), cognitive (e.g. attributional bias), and clinical concepts (e.g., anxiety and depression). While some researchers have been particularly concerned with understanding the nuances of the self-esteem construct, others have focused on the adaptive and self- protective functions of self-esteem (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

Self-esteem or self-worth includes a person's subjective appraisal of himself or herself as intrinsically positive or negative to some degree. People with high self-esteem feel good about themselves, feel competent and anticipate success.

Well adjusted people have some appreciation of their own self-worth and feel accepted by those around them.They are comfortable with other people and are able to react spontaneously in social situations. "Self-esteem is appreciating, my own worth

and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsible towards others" Podesta (2001). When asked to define self-esteem, almost every one answered on one of the three ways, Podesta (2001)

1. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves.
2. Self-esteem is how much we like ourselves.
3. Self-esteem is the amount of confidence we have in ourselves.

Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. Rosenberg (1978) defines self-esteem as positive or negative orientation towards oneself.Self-esteem is the overall attitude that a person maintains with regard to his own worth and importance. He conceptualizes self-esteem as unitary personal disposition. Healthy self-esteem means liking yourself, for the most part, as you are.It means thinking as highly of yourself as you think of your peers.

People are motivated to have high self-esteem, and having it indicates positive self-regard, not egotism.It is one of the components of self-concept. Besides self-esteem,self-efficacy or mastery, and self-identities are the important parts of the self-concept. Self-esteem is generally a stable characteristic of adults. So it is not easily manipulated as an outcome in experimental designs.It is unrealistic to think that self-esteem can be "taught" rather it is developed through an individual's life experiences.

Self-esteem is the emotional aspect of self and generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves.Self-esteem is often affected by how well or poorly a person performs, particularly in comparison to others. A healthy sense of self-esteem is crucial for determining how they will approach life and interact with others.Self-esteem represents an individual's need to belong and feel loved unconditionally,it is not just a happy positive idea about oneself,but rather a reflection of one's character and self-respect.

Relationship with other Relevant Variables

Self-esteem has many aspects and develops within the context of a child's evolving sense of identity and the ever-changing life tasks and challenges he/she faces.It is a lifelong process whose roots are established in early childhood.A child's sense of identity is developed through his or her view of acceptance, power, control, competence and moral virtues.

Self-esteem has been related both to socioeconomic status and to various aspects of health and health-related behavior,as has a related construct, self-efficacy.Self-efficacy,a term associated with the work of Bandura, refers to an individual's sense of competence or ability in general or in particular domains.

Self-esteem is the sense of being worthy and the confidence to face the world, has to be nurtured with positive reinforcement from significant adults in the child's life-mainly the parents. Many researchers agree that parental nurturance, support and participation have a positive effect on self-esteem. Self-esteem stands for pride. Self-esteem involves both self- relevant beliefs and associated self-relevant emotions. It also finds expression in behavior.

Self-esteem is generalized evaluative attitude towards the self, influences both moods and behavior, interestingly, the belief in the impact of self-esteem on performance across many situations has led to a congressional appropriation in California (1987) to establish a self-esteem commission.Its task is to discover ways in which self-esteem can be enhanced to benefit both individuals and society.

Individual assessments of self-esteem are formed through two interrelated processes.First, individuals compare their social identities, opinions, and abilities with others.To the extent that individuals feel that they are inferior to those with whom they interact,their self-esteem will be negatively affected.

Second, individuals assess themselves through their interaction with others.People learn to see themselves as others believe them to be. If significant others do not think highly of an individual, that individual will come to think poorly of himself or herself.This is referred to as the "reflected appraisal" of one's self-worth (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978).

One area in which self-esteem appears to exert especially powerful effects is with respect to people's reactions to self-relevant feedback or information (Jones,1973).High self esteem people accept only positive consistent information, whereas low self esteem people accept and are affected by both positive and negative information (Campbell and Fairey, 1985). Self esteem differences in subsequent expectations and performance within the success and failure conditions,self esteem differences were negligible in the conditions of success, but under failure conditions,low self esteem subjects exhibited substantially lower expectations and performance than did high self esteem subjects.More importantly, explaining a hypothetical success increased the expectations and performance of both low self-esteem and high self-esteem subjects,whereas explaining a hypothetical failure decreased the expectations and performance of only low self-esteem subjects.Thus we can say that high self esteem people exhibit:

1. More extremity and self-reported confidence when rating themselves,
2. More temporal stability in their trait ratings after a certain time interval,
3. More congruence between their self-concepts and their situation- specific behaviors, and
4. More internal consistency and increased self rated confidence than low self esteem subjects.

Funder(1995) and Bushman and Baumeister (1998) found that people with high self-esteem are egoists. People high in self-esteem seem to know more about themselves and their preferences. They can furnish longer lists of their likes and dislikes, and they are more confident about the self-ratings. They are also more self-serving; they are more likely to take credit for their successes and blame outside sources for their failure. Self-esteem is also correlated with emotional stability. People with low self-esteem experience negative moods more often and report more fluctuation in their moods.

A person with high self-esteem is more likely to view an insecure work situation as challenging than as threatening and therefore avoid experiencing job insecurity. Brockner(1988)has advanced a hypothesis that persons with low self-esteem are generally more

susceptible to environmental and, in particular, organizational events than are persons with high self-esteem. Ryff (1999) proposes that some factors of wellbeing in particular self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life are highly correlated with self-esteem.In occupational stress studies self-esteem has also been regarded as an outcome variable. As Judge and Bono (2001) have stated, self-esteem may be more susceptible to situational influences than other traits. According to Major, Cooper, Cozzarelli ,Richards and Zubek (1998)self-esteem may be through of as a core resource that contributes to a resilient personality.A person with a resilient personality has a positive view of him or her, a sense of control, and an optimistic outlook on the future. Although there could be many correlates of self-esteem, they present research endeavor focuses on well-being, resilience, and happiness as its major correlates.

Types of Self Esteem

Psychologists generally split the self-esteem into two types; earned and global self-esteem (Covington, 1989).

1. Earned self-esteem is the self-esteem that people earn through their own accomplishments-satisfaction from having scored well on an examination, for example. Barbara Lerner, says that earned self-esteem is based on success in meeting the tests of reality measuring up to standards at home and in school.
2. Global self-esteem refers to a general sense of pride in oneself.It is not grounded in a particular skill or achievement.This means that under achieving student can still bask in the warmth of global self-esteem, even if the door to earned self-esteem is shut.Advocates say that this feeling of self-worth will inspire academic success.The reality is different.At best, globalself-esteem is meaningless. At worst, it is harmful.

The ideal of earned self-esteem says that achievement comes first and the self-esteem follows. Global self-esteem theory says that they self leads the way and achievement trails behind.Global self-esteem is artificial and required active intervention on the part of teachers, parents and others. Whereas earned self-esteem develops naturally.

Covington (1989) also distinguish between *given or earned* self-esteem. 'Given' refers to the self-esteem which is based on the reflected appraisal of others. Earned self-esteem refers to one which is a result of the individual's appraisal of his ability to cope with an impartial world so as to obtain desired goals by his own international acts.

Branden Nathuniel (1994) identified three specific types of self-esteem. Global self-esteem (resulting from a general evaluation), specific self-esteem (related to a situation or role such as work) and task specific self-esteem (related to competence in particular activity).

Covington (1989) conceives self-esteem as having two interacting dimensions: outer self-esteem (which gives rise to feelings of self-worth),and inner self-esteem (which gives rise to feelings of power and competence)."Inner self-esteem refers to the self-esteem which is acquired one's own and outer self-

esteem is acquired by other's appraisal of one's success" (Gecas and Seff, 1990).

Implicit self-esteem refers to a person's disposition to evaluate themselves positively or negatively in a spontaneous, automatic, or unconscious manner.It contrasts with explicit self-esteem, which entails more conscious and reflective self-evaluation. Both explicit self-esteem and implicit self – esteem are subtypes of self-esteem proper.

Role in Personality Developement

The strongest and most convincing general formulations of the antecedents of self-esteem were expressed by James (1890) and Mead (1934). James (1890) in 'Principles of Psychology' concluded that human aspirations and values have an essential role in determining whether one regards oneself favorably. According to him, one's achievements are measured against his/her aspirations for any given area of behavior. If achievement approaches meet aspirations in a valued area, the result is high self-esteem, if there is wide divergence, and then we regard ourselves poorly. James views the self as "the sum total of all the material possessions, family members, his reputation and work." If they wax and prosper, he feels 'triumphant', if they dwindle and die away, he feels 'cast down'.

'An individual internalizes the ideas and attitudes expressed by key figures in his life and this holds true for attitudes and actions expressed towards himself as well as towards external objects" (Mead 1934).He develops self-attitudes consistent with those expressed by the significant others his world.From Mead's formulation, one can conclude that self-esteem is largely derived from the reflected appraisal of others. If he places high value on himself, there have been key persons in his life who have treated him with respect.

David Myers (1963) asserts that the self develops in social interactions, and that significant others, such as parents, play a role in this process. Behaviors of significant others are perceived by the child as symbols of his/her worth. Rogers (1980) argues that permissive atmosphere which permits free expression of ideas and does not resort to harsh or frequent evaluative comparisons,enables the individual to know and accept himself.Conflicts can be averted if parents and significant others accept the views and values of the child, although, they need not necessarily agree with him.

Various Studies and Outcomes

So what does self-esteem cause? In psychological language,what are the outcomes of self-esteem?You might have heard that high self-esteem leads to better academic achievement and less bad behavior like aggression and teen pregnancy.However,a large body of research suggests that this is not the case.Self-esteem does explain about 5% of the variance in school achievement, a small but statistically significant effect.

However, as in any correlational study, there are three possibilities. High self-esteem could cause school achievement, school achievement could cause high self-esteem, or a third variable (such as income level) could cause both.To use a common analogy, the horse could be pulling the cart,or things could be reversed and the cart has been put before the horse.

A third variable resembles the horse and the cart being toward on a flatbed truck. Neither the cart nor the horse is causing the motion in the other even though they are moving together.

Most studies have found that achievement leads to self-esteem, not vice versa. Another set of studies finds that controlling for third variables (such as family income) eliminates the correlation.This occurs because rich kids are both higher in self-esteem and do better in school.Self-esteem is also not consistently correlated with alcohol and drug abuse or teen pregnancy. Some studies have found that high self-esteem actually predicts earlier intercourse among teens. Overall, self-esteem does not seem to cause good outcomes for kids; the two are unrelated.

Despite this research, numerous school programs aim to increase children's self esteem.A 2006 Google search showed that more than 300,000 elementary schools mention self-esteem in their mission statements. Most of these say that they seek to encourage or develop children's self-esteem. Some of these programs promote self-esteem without rooting it in achievement, in the belief that children should feel good about themselves no matter what they do. Although the results of these programs are continuing to be debated, it seems likely that they will not have much impact if self-esteem does not cause achievement and good behavior (which appears to be the case).

Marsh (1992) showed that the relationship of self-esteem to school achievement is very specific. By using Linear Discriminate Analysis, Byrne (1990) showed that academic self-concept was more effective than was academic achievement in differentiating between low track and high track students. Hamachek (1995) also asserts that self esteem and school achievement are positively related.If academic achievement leads to self-concept/self-esteem,but self-concept is a better predictor of being a low- track or high-track student,it would appear that there is some intervening variable. James(1890) states that the intervening variable is personal expectations. His formula is:

Self-Esteem = Success/Pretensions

That is, increasing self-esteem results when success is improved relative to expectations.An interesting corollary to this equation is that expectations and self-esteem limit success

Success = Pretensions X Self-Esteem

This equation states that success, especially the limits of one's success, can be improved by increasing expectations and/or self-esteem.

Seligman's (1996) work on explanatory style suggests that the intervening variable connecting self-esteem and achievement is the student's level of "optimism" or the tendency to see the world as a benevolent (good things will probably happen) or malevolent (bad things will probably happen).

While psychologists have been interested for decades in the way individuals think and feel about themselves, the most recent surge of interest in the concept, is being shown by different psychologists in different countries,which has involved the formation of self-esteem councils the dissemination of classroom curricula,began in 1990 with the much-publicized report of a state-funded task force in California.In addition to issuing its own report,the task force commissioned a group of scholars at the University of California to review the available research; their monographs were published under the title "**The Social Importance of Self-Esteem**".

In a careful review of **128** studies on this topic, two Australian researchers,B.C. Hansford and J.A.Hattie,found that over and over again,one encounters the assertion that :

1. Self-esteem and academic achievement are positively associated, followed by the conclusion that,
2. Therefore, it makes sense to try to raise students' self-esteem if we want them to perform better.

One group of researchers at the University of Minnesota has made a strong case that two variables-social class and academic ability adequately account for most of the variance in self-esteem and in performance.Thus, self-esteem and academic achievement were "related as they shared the background variables…. as common causes". Even Robert Reasoner, president of the International Council for Self-Esteem and a long-time champion of self-esteem programs in his days as a school superintendent in California, has remarked that "efforts limited to making students 'feel good' are apt to have lasting effect because they strengthen the internal sources of self-esteem related to integrity, responsibility, and achievement".

Neil Smelser (in his introduction to the California research anthology) remains convinced that self-esteem is a meaningful construct and an important reality, and traditional research will produce more encouraging results.

Much research has been conducted in the area of developing self- esteem in children. Martin Seligman claims that in order for children to feel good about themselves, they must feel that they are able to do things well. He claims that trying to shield children from feelings of sadness, frustration, and anxiety when they fail robs them of the motivation to persist in difficult tasks until they succeed.It is precisely such success in the face of difficulties that can truly make them feel good about themselves. Seligman believes that this attempt to cushion children against unpleasant emotions is in large part responsible for an increase in the prevalence of depression since the 1950s,an increase that the associates with a conditioned sense of helplessness.

Some parents spend more time criticizing their children than praising them. These critiscisms and negative comments may reduce a person's ability to develop good self-esteem.Sometimes peers and other members in the society create hurtful remarks due to racial and ethnic prejudice which can result in low self-esteem in an individual.

Coopersmith's (1967) original work was designed to assess the origins of self-esteem in children.The results of this work in which children filled out the Self-esteem Inventory and provided ratings of their parents,staff members interviewed mothers and mothers filled out questionnaires, indicated that "external indicators of prestige [of the parents] such as wealth,amount of education, and job title do not have as overwhelming and as significant

an effect on self-esteem as is often assumed" (Pervin, 1993).

According to J. Fraser Field (2002), the idea of increasing the student's sense of self-worth, or improving their respect and confidence in their own being certainly has merit.

There has recently been some debate about whether low self-esteem leads to antisocial behavior.Experimental lab studies consistently find no correlation between self-esteem and aggression.

Two recent correlational studies, however, found that low self-esteem was correlated with delinquent behavior in a sample of adolescents, even after controlling for academic achievement, income and parental support. Other variables, such as associating with delinquent friends, might explain the effect, which accounts for about 4% of the variance in delinquent behavior. Overall, the evidence suggests that self-esteem is not correlated with aggression, but that low self-esteem is linked to a slightly higher incidence of delinquent behavior.

Some evidence also indicates that low self-esteem is linked to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. However, low self-esteem only predicts eating disorders when women are perfectionist and feet overweight. Low self-esteem might also follow, rather than precede eating disorders. People might starts to feel badly about themselves after they develop an eating disorder.

One thing that self-esteem does strongly predict is happiness.People who are high in self-esteem report being happy and they are also less likely to be depressed.However, these studies have not proven causation and ruled out other third variable explanations, so further research needs to be done.It is not yet known if self-esteem causes happiness, happiness causes self-esteem, or if some other variable causes both.Self-esteem also leads to greater persistence on tasks,though the causation is not known here,either and self-control is a better predictor of persistence. Self-esteem is also correlated with greater relationship confidence.High self-esteem people who experience a threat to their self-worth are subsequently more certain of their partners' regard for them, in contrast,low self-esteem people begin to doubt their partners feelings, which can cause problems in the relationship ( ).

The stability of self-esteem also plays a role. People whose self-esteem fluctuates wildly, of whose self-esteem heavily depends on a particular outcome are more likely to be depressed and anxious. Stable self-esteem, and self-esteem that does not depend on certain things happening is correlated with better mental health.

An important context for the development of one's self-esteem is the family and the kinds of interactions that occur among family members.Wylie (1961) points out that all personality theorists who are concerned with study of self,give great importance to parent-child interaction in the development of self-perception.

The extensive studies by Coppersmith (1967) on American pre-adolescent children have indicated that there are three important parental treatments which act as antecedents to children's self-esteem.They are:

1. Total or nearly total acceptance of the children by their parents.
2. Clearly defined and enforced limits.
3. Respect and latitude for individual action that exists within the defined limits.

Parental support and parental willingness to grant autonomy and freedom to their children are positively related to high self-esteem among the children.The parents of low self-esteem boys are critical and rejective of their children. High self-esteem adolescent boys have parents who are democratic but also less permissive than those of low self-esteem boys (Baumrind, 1991).Low self-esteem boys have parents who are sometimes permissive but occasionally harsh when their children go beyond the limits they will tolerate.Sometimes the parents are too restrictive and inconsistent in their discipline (Hill, Russel & Frank, 1980).

Podesta (2001) states that most parents believes that if they praise their kids regularly, it should be enough to keep the child's self-esteem in one piece. Yet many parents who make a point of avoiding constant criticism and who use complements and encouragement as much as possible still find themselves face to face with children they love dearly but who do not have much self-confidence.

Most of the studies have shown that there is consensus among researchers that parental nurturance, support, participation and allowance of freedom within well-subscribed limits have a positive effect on adolescent's self-esteem, and serve controlling behaviors have been found to be negatively related to self-esteem.

Culture and Concept of Self

What people actually mean and understand as the self is dramatically different in some cultures. The sense of self we define in individualist culture is not necessarily the same sense of self as that defined by other collectivist cultures.Just as our sense of self has powerful influence on our lives,the sense of self of other people in other cultures influences their lives just as much.Our self-construals can be totally different from those of another culture.Yet, we do not think about these differences often because we are not very aware of our own sense of self and how much it influences our behavior.We only see these differences in the clashes that occur when people with different sense of self interact with each-other.These divergent forms of self are tied to differences in what people notice and think about, how they feel and what motivates them (Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

In Individualist way, the self is seen as a bounded entity consisting of a number of internal attributes in navigating his or her thought and actions in different social situations. A noted anthropologist, Clifford Geertz(1975), observed two decades ago that self is seen as,"a bounded, unique,more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe,a dynamic center of awareness, emotion,judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set constructively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background."Here, people routinely credit their success to trusting their instincts, self-confidence and the ability to make decisions and stick by them.There is a strong belief in separateness of an individual.The normative task in these cultures is

to maintain the independence of the individual as a separate entity, know his/her rights, assert him/her self when needed, actualize inner self and develop strong self-esteem to achieve personal goals.

A fundamentally different view of self is collectivistic concept where the self is composite self, in which an individual is viewed as inherently connected or interdependent with others and inseparable from social context.In Indian context, external attribution and feedback dominate the way the sense of self is formed.Individuals in these cultures are socialized to adjust to an attendant relationship or a group to which they belong, to read each-other's minds, to be sympathetic and to occupy and play their assigned roles to engage in appropriate actions. Individuals strive to meet duties,obligations and social responsibilities.The most salient aspect of conscious experience is inter-subjective, one rooted in, finely tuned interpersonal relationships.This is indicated by overlapping of self with relevant others. This flexible and context specific approach self often leads to poorer self-esteem in individuals in collectivist cultures than their individually oriented counterparts.

Of course, considerable variation on independent and interdependent construals of self and self-esteem also occur within a single culture (Gilligan, 1982; Markus and Tafarodi,1992).These intra-cultural differences are also important when considering cultural differences and construct of self-esteem.

Thus, we can conclude that people living in individualist cultures have very well developed sense of self, leading to better scores on measures of self-esteem in comparison to people living in collectivist cultures.

Finally, we can sum –up the paper by saying that, Healthy self-esteem is – understanding oneself accurately, acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses, trying to bring out the positive qualities in oneself and accepting oneself without reservations or conditions. Childhood experiences that help develop healthy self-esteem consist of appreciation, being listened to, being spoken to respectfully, getting attention and having trustworthy friendships.

High self-esteem is nurtured by challenging goals,motivational feats that require dexterity and courage. Confining people to the familiar and challenging serves to weaken self-esteem(Branden, 1994).The higher the self-esteem, the better people are equipped to muddle through difficulties in their personal lives, the faster they are to pick themselves up after a failure and seek a fresh start with renewed energy, overcome setbacks to look for opportunities that help them survive.

Higher self-esteem enriches people's lives, makes them more ambitious not just in terms of material achievements,but also in terms of experiences in life – emotionally, intellectually, creatively,romantically and spiritually.The lower the self-esteem,lower the aspirations are, and such people are less likely to achieve any success. Either way, whether high or low self-esteem, tends to be self reinforcing and self-perpetuating, thus increasing the effect of original way.People with higher self-esteem tend to have stronger ability to express themselves without any fear.They are more open and honest in

their dealings and communications,reflecting the sense of richness and self worth. Whereas, people with lower self-esteem want to prove themselves at every step and forget themselves by living and mechanically.They are uncertain about their own thoughts and their behavior can portray evasiveness and anxiety.

Higher self-esteem results in nourishing relationships and healthy life style. This vitality and expansiveness in people with high self-esteem make them naturally appealing to others thus driving them to insecurity and destructive relationships.

Perhaps the most famous investigation into the relationship of self-esteem to socio-economic status is Rosenberg and Pearlin's (1978) assessment of social class and self-esteem among children and adults. In an effort to clarify decades of inconclusive work on that many thought would be an obvious connection between one's social status or prestige and one's personal sense of worth, they suggested that age was a critical factor in tearing apart this relationship. Indeed,they found virtually no association between social class of parents and self-esteem among young children,a modest association among adolescents,and a moderate association among adults based on their social class.Rosenberg and Pearlin argued that the extent to which the sense of inequality is inherent in the meaning of social class is mirrored within individuals is not the same for children as it is for adults.

Conclusion

The above review of researches indicates that self-esteem is a complex phenomenon which influences, and in turn is influenced by many variables.Culture, class and economic level are no exceptions, rather, they are more important than other variables and provide root to nurture the self-esteem of individuals. Individualist and collectivist orientations of culture with their specific attributes will provide different chances and opportunities for the nurturance of the idea of self and self-esteem of their members.

Family,school and peer- groups are powerful indicators of development of high or low self esteem in an individual.Therefore,it becomes very important for parents and teachers alike to provide healthy and nurturing environments to younger generation so that they try and develop stable and high self esteems and be successful in their lives.

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