
UNIT 3 COMPONENTS OF SELF*

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3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- *Explain self concept and describe its characteristics;*
- *Describe the concept of self esteem;*
- *Understand the meaning of self efficacy;*
- *Differentiate between self concept, self esteem and self efficacy.*

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Kabir is an engineering student. He is an ambitious young man. His family believes in his capabilities and supports his ambitions. People in his wider circle view him as a smart person and a go-getter. He loves to exercise and keep his body fit. He says “My body is my biggest asset”. He often talks of missing his city and his school friends because now he is in a hostel in another city. Now, he is making this new city his home.

Saina is a banker. She really likes to travel and make friends. She calls herself – a globe trotter. All her friends find her lively and enthusiastic. She has a dream

*Dr. Parul Bansal, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi, Delhi

that one day she will own a farmland in the hills and she will open a small restaurant there.

We all have ideas about our personality traits, our intelligence levels, likes and dislikes, opinions and talents, social roles. Collectively these ideas constitute the “me”. William James (1890), a famous psychologist, discussed the “me” which he called the empirical self.

In its widest possible sense ... a man's Me [empirical self] is the sum total of all that he CAN call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes, and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht, and bank account. (p. 44)

He categorized the empirical self in three parts: the material self, the social self and the spiritual self.

The **material self** refers to all tangible objects, places and people that are called as “mine” or “my”. It includes both the bodily self and extracorporeal (beyond the body) self which can be referred to as extended self (Rosenberg, 1979). Speaking of bodily self, a person refers to ‘my legs’, ‘my head’, as entities constituting who he/she is. Rahul saw his body as ‘his biggest asset’. But self is not limited to one’s body. It also includes one’s pets, one’s house, one’s favourite tourist destination, one’s chair, one’s children etc. Material self refers to the psychological ownership of these tangible entities. These are regarded as ‘my’ or ‘mine’. They are constitutive of self because one is emotionally invested in these entities. For example, Rahul misses his old friends and city. When one’s house is praised by others, one feels good. When one’s favourite chair is sold off, one feels sad. “Not only the people but the places and things I know enlarge my Self in a sort of metaphoric way”, James wrote (p. 308). Interestingly, people show enhanced liking for the letters that make up the initials of their names (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

The **social self** is the self known by others. William James said “‘A man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind’ (1892/1985, p. 46)”. The others are significant to the constitution of self. We often know ourselves as others know us. Our self-image (i.e., how I see myself to be) is influenced by how we think others perceive us. So, we may think of ourselves as intelligent if our teachers and family think of us like that. We see ourselves as reflected in the words and eyes of significant others. Rahul was viewed as smart and Saina as lively by others. We also are different selves in different relationships – obedient in front of parents, carefree in front of friends, caring with children. Sometimes, these different selves in different situations and relationship cause confusion. For example, students often feel flustered when they see their teachers outside the classroom, such as in a mall or in a movie theatre. They are not used to seeing their teachers acting informally or dressed casually. The multiple social selves raise an important question. Is there a core, stable self that is common to all situations, relationships and roles? Opinion is divided on this. While some theorists say that there is no true, real or genuine self apart from the social roles (Gergen, 1982), others maintain that there is a common thread of self that runs through various social roles (Lifton, 1993).

The **spiritual self** refers to the psychological self and comprises of our self perceived thoughts, beliefs, values, needs, motives, feelings, interests and traits.

People think of themselves as reserved or outgoing, people oriented or task oriented, as considerate or inconsiderate etc. Both Rahul and Saina believed themselves to be a 'certain' kind of person.

3.3 THE PROPRIUM

Psychologist Gordon Allport (1955) refers to the self as Proprium. Proprium relates to personal states that are experienced as "peculiarly mine". It is the 'self' as known by oneself, something that is experienced as important and central to oneself. Most of our behavior are according to our qualities and reflect who we are and who we want to be. It indicates expressing our own unique 'self'. This Allport calls as 'proprie functioning'.

The proprium is not innate but develops over time. There are seven aspects in the development of the proprium. The first three aspects make an appearance in the first three years of life. The next two start appearing between the ages of three and six. The last two aspects develop between six and twelve years of age.

1. **A sense of bodily self** – Quite early on, the child begins to recognize that it is an object in a world of objects. The first distinction between me and not me occurs in the realm of body. A baby begins to understand that its hand is separate from its caregiver. It also becomes aware of bodily sensations of hunger, thirst, defecation coming from within.
2. **Self identity** – With language, the child proceeds further to recognize oneself as a distinct and constant frame of reference. One's name becomes an anchorage of one's identity. When asked – 'Who is Saira?', the child points to oneself. Its clothes, bed, toys and other possessions consolidates its sense of identity.
3. **Self esteem or pride** – As the child becomes more capable of walking, running, holding and dropping objects, talking, it begins to experience pride in one's accomplishments. The child becomes more explorative and likes to master and control one's environment. Success in being able to express oneself verbally, pushing a block through the right slot, piecing a puzzle together gives child a sense of worth and achievement.
4. **Self extension** – The sense of self extends to include objects which are not a part of one's bodily self. This refers to a sense of possessiveness about 'my mumma-papa', 'my teddy bear', 'my tricycle'. These are guarded against any loss or takeover by other people. It is around this time that children are taught that 'sharing is caring' because they are jealously protective of their objects – both living and non living.
5. **Self image** – This is dependent on how a child views itself in the eyes of others. The child receives many messages about it being 'good' or 'bad', 'worthy' or 'unworthy' etc. This impacts the way the child thinks and feels about itself.
6. **Rational Coping** – This is the time when the child develops the self awareness that it can cope with its problems through reason and thought. The child is developing moral and cognitive abilities to find rational solutions to daily life dilemmas.

7. **Propriate striving** – It is a striving towards long range goals, a purposeful life. As the child enters adolescence, future becomes important. Propriate striving makes a beginning with the child entering adolescence and takes the form of intentional planning of one's life goals and deriving a sense of meaning from defining and achieving life's objectives.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. Who gave the concept of empirical self? What is the meaning of empirical self?
2. What is the material self?
3. Which aspects of self develop in the first three years, then between 3-6 years and finally between 6-12 years?

3.4 SELF CONCEPT

We have learnt that self has an 'I' that thinks and 'me' which is the content of those thoughts. An important part of the 'me' is the self concept – the idea about who one is, was and will become. In terms of who one is, self concept refers to a person's thoughts, feelings and experiences about the self in a specific behavioural domain such as one's body weight, one academic performance, one's gender role etc. In terms of who one will become, self concept includes ideas about possible selves. These possible selves are personalized, detailed and specific conception of self that one expects, fears, wishes and ought to be in future, such as: 'I will be able to take care of my parents', 'I shall not live for long'.

Self concept is the self knowledge we have about ourselves in various aspects such as physical characteristics ("I have a broad nose"; "I am taller than average Indian woman"), social roles ("I am a student"; "I am an Indian citizen"), personality traits ("I am naughty"; "I go along with other people's opinions"), interest and skill ("I am a music lover"; "I cannot make round chapatis") etc. Thus, self concept is multi-dimensional. One way of capturing the multi-dimensionality of self concept is to see it as composed of:

- **Physical Self concept** – It includes the image of one's body, appearance, its attractiveness, e.g., How do I look? Am I attractive? Which part of the body am I most happy with? Which part of the body I am not happy with?
- **Psychological Self concept** – It includes one's personality traits, abilities, weaknesses, level of adjustment, e.g., Am I smart, rude, anxious, honest, outgoing, good in chess, art, or pathetic in sports? Can I take care of myself?
- **Attitudinal Self concept** – It includes one's values, beliefs, convictions, ideals, philosophy of life, e.g., Am I a cautious spender or a spend thrift? Do I like a life full of excitement and change or safe, secure life? Do I support inter caste marriages or marriages within caste?

3.4.1 Characteristics of Self concept

Let us see the following characteristics of self concept:

1. **It is social and learnt**

Self concepts are formed on the basis of a person's interactions with the environment. They reflect understandings of self made both by the self and others. How do we know that we are shy, good at chess, anxious, or anything else? There are many explanations for this. The Self Perception theory (Bem, 1967) suggests that we form self concept by observing our own behaviour. If we make strong efforts to be on time for meetings and classes, the inference we can make is –we are punctual. Just as we infer other people's values, motivations and traits on the basis of their behaviour, in the same way, we do so by observing our own behaviour. The Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) states that we know ourselves on the basis of our comparisons with others. We know that we are good at chess when we compare ourselves with many other chess players and find ourselves better at the game. Thus, spontaneous comparisons of one's physical appearance, traits, abilities and attitudes with similar others feed into our understanding of ourselves.

How we interpret social comparisons influence our self concept. Comparing oneself with people who suffered from Covid 19 can lead us to make two interpretations – 'Thank God! I didn't get it' or 'I too may get it very soon as everyone is getting infected'. Upward social comparison (i.e., comparing oneself to better offs) can make one feel worse, but it also helps one improve. Downward social comparison (i.e., comparing oneself to worse offs) can make one feel better.

Role played by others and socio-cultural norms in shaping self concept are also very important. Other people's perceptions and judgments about ourselves are significant in the way we perceive ourselves. If others think that we have a good sense of humour, this attribute is likely to become a part of self. Socio-cultural norms such as the cultural emphasis on 'thinness' has led to a large number of normal weight woman having a self concept of being "fat".

2. It is organized

A self concept consists of diverse perceptions related to different aspects of self such as physical, psychological and attitudinal. As a schema, i.e., a broad mental representation, it organizes self relevant information in a hierarchical manner (Markus and Wurf, 1987). The most generalized information such as "I am a good student" is placed at the top. Below it we have categories of more specific information such as –"I attend classes regularly", "As far as possible, I submit good quality work", "Teachers like my performance and behaviour". The lowest level of hierarchy is occupied by specific examples of such statements.

3. It can have discrepant aspects

While, self concepts are organized and lend a sense of unity and coherence to our sense of ourselves; they can also be discrepant and diverge from each other. Psychologist Tory Higgins (1987) explains this in his self discrepancy theory. He says that we all have three selves: the actual self, the ideal self and the ought self.

The **actual self** is who we are currently. It includes our good and bad qualities and what we think others see us as. The **ideal self** is who we would like to be in the future. It is based on who we truly want to become; it is based on our dreams, aspirations and goals. So, if one can have any job, what will it be? How would one like to look like? What kind of lifestyle will I like to lead? The **ought self** is what we think others expect of us. It is organized on the basis of what we think

our parents want us to be like, our friends expect from us, our social world hopes from us and what the cultural norms tell us as appropriate or inappropriate. The ought self is dependent upon the reference group which is important for us at a given moment of time. We have different notions of what our parents expect from us as compared to what our first date or romantic partner expects from us.

Often, these selves do not align with each other. This mismatch between our selves is called self discrepancy. Higgins (1987) found that when actual and ideal self don't overlap with each other to a large extent, i.e., when we don't live upto most of our ideals, we will experience "dejection related emotions" such as disappointment, shame, embarrassment and depression. When actual and ought self don't overlap with each other to a large extent, i.e., when we mostly don't live upto other people's expectations, we will experience "agitation related emotions" such as guilt, fear, self contempt and anxiety.

Psychologist Carl Rogers (1959) points out that a state of incongruence exists when the actual self differs widely from the ideal self, i.e., the self that a person would most like to possess. Due to people's evaluations, a person may deny his or her experiences of actual self. For example, people may deny their anger because it is frowned upon by other people in one's environment. It may lead the person to aspire to become peaceful and calm while suppressing one's genuine feelings. This creates defenses and distortions which affects a person's relationship with other people too. Here the person needs to accept their anger and express it in appropriate manner instead of using defenses.

4. Positive and Negative Self concepts

Self concept can be positive and negative. Positive self concept is a result of self perception of oneself as good, competent, worthy. On the other hand, disapproving, criticizing, blaming and doubting oneself creates negative self concept. There is a two way interaction between self concept and social environment. People with positive self concept express these feelings of self competency in social situations. Others respond positively to the confident, capable self of the person, further authenticating the self concept. This promotes individual's sense of social security and adjustment. The negative views of self affect the way a person behaves and get corresponding reactions from others, further validating negative thoughts about self.

5. It provides self direction

Not only are self concepts shaped by life experiences and cultural norms but they also give meaning, form and direction to behaviours. We act in accordance with the understanding we have of ourselves. Believing the self as kind will make us help others in problems. If we consider ourselves as determined, then we will overcome challenges of our lives.

6. It is stable yet dynamic

Self concepts are stable. They don't change from moment to moment and day to day. We have a relatively consistent sense of who we are. However, it doesn't mean that they do not change with experience. Many experiences of our lives make us learn new things about ourselves, expand our self definitions and give up the self concepts that no longer help us. Sometimes, reading a book, watching

a film, conversing with a friend makes us aware of a part of us we were not aware of earlier.

Self Assessment Questions 2

Fill in the blanks.

- (i) Self concept refers to the _____ part of self.
- (ii) Self concept has physical, psychological and attitudinal aspects. It is _____ in nature.
- (iii) The _____ theory suggests that we form self concept by observing our own behaviour.
- (iv) The _____ theory suggests we know ourselves on the basis of our comparisons with others.
- (v) Self concept is _____ organized.
- (vi) The _____ self, _____ self and _____ self may not always overlap with each other.
- (vii) Self concept is _____ yet dynamic.

3.5 SELF ESTEEM

If self concept is our perception of our traits, beliefs and opinions, then self esteem is our evaluation of self concept as good, bad, worthwhile, useless etc. It is our evaluation of our own worth based on assessment of our self concept. One may have low academic self esteem based on poor feedback on one's performance in school. One may have high social self esteem based on one's popularity amongst school friends. In addition to evaluations about abilities and attributes, self esteem is also defined in terms of one's feelings of affection for oneself. People who like themselves have high self esteem. People who have ambivalent or mildly positive feelings about themselves have low self esteem. Self hate can result in various kinds of mental illnesses. Thus, in a broader sense, self esteem is the extent of liking that one has for one self and the kind of evaluation one makes of one's abilities and attributes. It is not necessary that positive evaluation of self will be accompanied by self liking. A person who considers oneself as attractive or popular may not feel good about herself/himself. Similarly, a person who is poor in academics may still like oneself.

ACTIVITY

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
2. At times I think I am no good at all.
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I certainly feel useless at times.
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Scoring: For items 1,3, 4, 7,10, give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points. For items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 give "Strongly Disagree" 4 point, "Disagree" 3 points, "Agree" 2 points, and "Strongly Agree" 1 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

3.5.1 Characteristics of Self esteem

1. Self esteem has social origins

If we think others value us, we have a positive self esteem. Psychologist Carl Rogers (1979) states that humans have a strong need to be positively valued by others, referred to as need for positive regard. Based on how others regard us, we come to value ourselves. For example, if a teacher thinks I'm smart, then I'm smart. With time and repeated experiences with others, positive or negative self regard develops and becomes a property of the self, somewhat independent of others' evaluations. Important people in the life of a child set conditions of worth for him/her. These are expectations of certain valued behaviours, abilities and traits from the child. These expectations do not allow the child to experience unconditional positive regard from the significant others in his/her environment. The child learns that he/she is worthy only when it behaves and feels in a certain way and not in other way. This results in the child denying aspects of self or having negative feelings about one's abilities and behaviours.

2. Self esteem is both person centred as well as collective

Self esteem is tied not only to one's feelings of liking towards one's self and evaluation of one's attributes, but also with feelings towards and evaluations of the social groups which we are a part of – family, school/college, friend circle, place of work, neighbourhood, nationality, caste/racial status etc. How proud does one feel about one's college? How advanced one thinks one's nation is? How well known is one's organization of work? Do we feel good about these groups? Psychologist Tajfel (1981) defined it as *collective self esteem*. Collective self esteem is "that aspect of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981; p. 255). We often take pride in the achievements of our siblings and members of extended family. We talk about "My sister" or "My distant cousin" to increase our self esteem in front of others. Hard core sports fan proudly wear their team colours following a victory. Clashes between fans of opposing soccer teams can also be understood as injuries to the collective self esteem of fans who feel personally involved in the victories and losses of the teams they support.

3. Self esteem involves feelings of belonging and mastery

Feelings of belonging is based on the feeling that one is loved and valued unconditionally. It is not that one is considered worthy for any particular attribute or reason. This is what Carl Rogers described as unconditional positive regard. Mastery involves the feeling that one is having an impact on the world – not on a large scale always, but in one's daily life also. It's a feeling of being immersed in an activity like writing an academic paper, cooking, or cleaning one's room. It is also the feeling of overcoming some obstacle in one's life.

4. Evaluation in several domains of life determines self esteem

Self concepts are multi dimensional and so is self esteem. People evaluate themselves on several characteristics, such as – attractive, intelligent, popular, kind, artistic, energetic etc. All these characteristics are not equally important to a person. One may think being energetic or artistic is important; while another person thinks that being attractive and intelligent is very important. In such a case, positive self evaluation in unimportant domains and negative self evaluation in important domains is likely to result in overall low self esteem. Psychologist William James (1890) noted that outcomes in domains of high personal importance have a greater effect on self esteem than do outcomes in domains of low personal importance. Rosenberg (1979) also states that qualities valued by the person impact their self esteem more significantly. What characteristics are important depend on both the individual's own judgment as well as what society dictates as important.

5. Self esteem is affected by actual-ideal self discrepancy

The self discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1985) describes the three types of selves – actual, ideal and ought self. The more our current self image matches our ideal self image, the higher the self esteem.

3.5.2 Importance of self esteem

There is enough evidence to suggest that low self esteem is directly or indirectly linked with many adverse social consequences such as:

- Educational underachievement
- Crime and delinquency
- Risky sexual behaviour (contracting sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy)
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Eating disorders
- Depression and suicide

One important area where high or low self esteem makes a difference is how people deal with negative evaluative feedback. When we fail in an exam, are not invited for a party by our friends, criticized by boss and colleagues or underappreciated by parents, we feel hurt and sad. But the emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses to failure vary for people with high and low self esteem. Usually, people with low self esteem take failures more personally; it humiliates

them and makes them feel ashamed of themselves (Brown and Dutton, 1995). Their self esteem is more dependent on the “latest outcome”. They feel they are as good as the last win or success they have. They are more likely to attribute their failure to stable and general factors such as lack of intelligence rather than to a specific ability which was required for that task. Following failure, people with low self esteem disparage their overall worth. Baumeister et.al (1989) found that when confronted with failures, people with low self esteem are more likely to become self protective, choosing to avoid situations that might lead to negative self relevant feedback.

Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003) showed that high self esteem increases initiative. It gives people confidence in their views and abilities to follow their own directions. They are more willing to reject other people’s views, initiate interpersonal interactions, take risks and experiment. The researchers also found that high self esteem feels good. One of the reasons why people with high self esteem can bounce back is because they have a stock of good feelings about themselves which they can use to help themselves during difficult times. Epstein (1980) notes that these stock of good feelings come from secure attachment with loving parent who is proud of the child’s successes and tolerant of its failures. They feel disappointed and saddened by specific experiences but they recover as do children secure in their mother’s love. People with low self esteem, on the other hand, carry a disapproving parent who is harshly critical of child’s failures and feel happy for a short time on the child’s success. Such feelings are then exhibited in the later life when failures are confronted.

3.5.3 Dark side of self esteem

High self esteem can be secure or defensive. A person with secure self esteem do not need reassurance from others to maintain their self view. People with defensively high self esteem are actually harbouring a low self esteem (inferiority complex). They often feel threatened by anyone who questions their self esteem. They need repeated praise and are often boastful and arrogant.

Is high self esteem always beneficial? While it feels good to have a high self esteem but it is dangerous to feel that one is “better”, “superior”, “more deserving” or “purer” than other people. Elevated self esteem bordering on narcissism can be counterproductive and result in prejudicial and discriminatory behaviours. Bullies in schools have high self esteem and they feel the best when they bully their victims. At the level of global politics, we have seen how Nazi unfounded beliefs of they being the ‘superior race’ led to barbaric acts of violence and brutality against the Jews.

Unhealthy narcissism is a personality disorder too. The concept of narcissism is derived from the Greek myth of Narcissus. According to the myth, Narcissus was a hunter. Once out on hunting, he saw his own reflection in the waters of a pond and fell in love with it. He eventually dies because he got so self absorbed in his own reflection that he couldn’t do anything except stare at the reflection of himself with absolute admiration. The moral of the story is that healthy self esteem involves humility. Humility goes a long way in building a resilient and socially productive self.

Self Assessment Questions 3

Mark the statements as true or false.

- (i) Self concept and self esteem mean the same.
- (ii) Self esteem refers both to the feelings and evaluations we have our selves.
- (iii) Conditions of worth helps in the development of high self esteem.
- (iv) Self esteem pertains to personal abilities and characteristics only.
- (v) Both a sense of mastery and belonging gives us a feeling of high self esteem.
- (vi) Positive outcomes in domains of low personal importance have a greater impact on self esteem as compared to positive outcomes in domains of high personal importance.
- (vii) People with high self esteem do not take failures personally.
- (viii) A high self esteem is always a good thing to have.

3.6 SELF EFFICACY

Related to self concept and self esteem is self efficacy. Psychologist Albert Bandura (1977) defined it as the expectation that one can, by personal efforts, master a situation and bring about a desired outcome. Self efficacy affects initiation and persistence of coping behaviour. When people fear and doubt their ability to deal with a situation, they avoid such situations. They enter situations where they have high self efficacy expectations. It also affects how much effort people expend in their choice of activities as well as how long will they sustain efforts in dealing with challenging situations.

Self efficacy can be improved using four strategies:

- **Performance accomplishment:** Actual and repeated experiences of mastery and success in varied situations create strong efficacy expectations. This is especially true when one can attribute success to one's own efforts rather than to other factors.
- **Vicarious observation:** Observing other people succeed with persistent effort also provide support for learning 'what works'. By role modelling the skills and behaviours of successful models, self efficacy improves.
- **Verbal Persuasion:** Encouraging people to believe that he or she can cope effectively is also a good way of improving efficacy beliefs.
- **Managing emotional arousal:** When confronted with a challenging task, one experiences emotional and physiological arousal. Feelings like sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach, anxiety, tension in muscles are commonly experienced. Helping people to recognize these signs of arousal and using them productively to enhance performance is key to success. So rather than feeling bogged down by anxiety, one can think of it as energizing oneself to deal with uncertainty.

Bandura suggested that efficacy beliefs must be understood alongwith outcome expectations. Outcome expectations refer to a person's beliefs that a given

behaviour will lead to a particular outcome. A person may believe that an action such as continuous practice of a task will lead to an outcome. This is outcome expectation. But there may be doubt whether he/she can produce such an action. This is self efficacy belief. When the environment doesn't reward effective performance such as in case of partial attitudes of teachers in a class or discriminatory employment policies, it reduces outcome expectations. In such situations, people with high efficacy will show activism and protest in order to change the attitudes and policies acting as barriers. On the other hand, people with low self efficacy will show apathy, resignation and anxiety in similar circumstances. In another scenario, where the environment rewards effective behaviour, people with high self efficacy will be self assured and active, while those with low self efficacy are likely to be depressed.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Self has two components: I (knower) and Me (known). Self concept is a part of 'me' which refers to the idea about who one is, was and will become. It is the self knowledge we have about ourselves in various aspects such as physical characteristics, social roles, personality traits, interest and skills, e.g., "I am a music lover"; "I cannot make round chapatis", etc. Thus, self concept is multi-dimensional. It develops through experience. It is based on our perceptions of our behaviour as well as our comparisons with others on self relevant criteria. Social influences also contribute significantly to the process. It can be positive or negative, organized hierarchically, is stable yet dynamic. Our self concept is based on understandings of how congruent or incongruent our actual, ideal and ought selves are. Self esteem refers to our feelings and evaluations about the way we know ourselves. Like self concept, self esteem too is shaped by our experiences with the social world. It can be high or low. It is multi-dimensional. It refers to our sense of worthiness based on our own evaluations of ourselves as well as that of the groups we are a part of. Both feelings of belongingness and mastery influence self esteem. It has consequences for our behaviour. Excessively high self esteem bordering on narcissism is counterproductive personally and socially. A related concept is self efficacy. It is defined as the expectation that one can, by personal efforts, master a situation and bring about a desired outcome.

3.8 KEY WORDS

- Proprium** : is a term coined by Allport which refers to the 'self' as known by oneself, something that is experienced as important and central to oneself. It represents the positive, creative, growth-seeking, and forward-moving quality of human nature.
- Self Concept** : is how one perceives one's abilities, traits and behaviour as a result of one's self perception, social comparison and responses of others.
- Self Esteem** : is the subjective sense of personal value and worth held by a person.
- Self efficacy** : refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments.

3.9 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 1

1. William James gave the concept of empirical self. It refers to the sum total of all that the person can call his. It thus includes the material self, the social self and the spiritual self.
2. The material self refers to all tangible objects, places and people that are called as “mine” or “my”. It includes both the bodily self and extracorporeal (beyond the body) self which can be referred to as extended self.
3. Aspects of self that develop in the first three years are – a sense of bodily self, self identity, and self esteem; between 3-6 years – self extension, and self image; between 6-12 years – rational coping, and propiarte striving.

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

(i) me, (ii) multidimensional, (iii) self perception, (iv) social comparison, (v) hierarchically, (vi) actual, ideal, ought, (vii) stable.

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 3

(i) False, (ii) True, (iii) False, (iv) False, (v) True, (vi) False, (vii) True, (viii) False

3.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish between self concept and self esteem.
2. Describe the various features of self concept.
3. Explain how self concept and esteem are multi-dimensional.
4. Reflect on the social nature of self concept and self esteem.
5. When does high self esteem become counter productive?
6. Observe people around you including your family members, friends, teachers, and analyze their behaviour, verbal and non-verbal expressions indicating high or low self esteem.

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