

CHAPTER I

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Problem, Context and need of the present study:

The main problem of the present investigation is to study 'some aspects of patterns and determinants of human aggression' in the Cultural context of Gujarat.

This investigator got interested to work on 'human aggression' while he was working at a Mental Health Institution where he witnessed a mass agitation in Gujarat during the year 1974. Gujarat, the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi is one of the major state in the Indian Republic. It is located in the western part of the country and has its own distinct language, culture and way of life. Ahmedabad, known as 'Manchester of the East' is not only the biggest town but it is also an important educational, cultural, commercial and political centre of the state. College students of Ahmedabad while protesting against high mess bills triggered an agitation which lasted for two and half months from January 1, 1974 to March 15, 1974. The agitation soon turned into a general protest and violence

(Vagrecha, 1974), ultimately leading to the resignation of the then Chief Minister and dissolution of the State Assembly. This agitation was organised by 'Yuvak Nav Nirman Samiti', a body comprising mostly of students, teachers and of youths. However, the movement had popular support from the cross sections of the community. Samiti's branches were spread all over the State, having Ahmedabad as its Headquarter. During the agitation section 144 of Indian Penal Code was imposed frequently, police restored to lathi charge, bursting of tear gas shells and firing on several occasions in order to disperse the unruly mob. Curfew was clamped very often. Several people have sacrificed their lives and hundreds were injured. Property worth of crores of rupees were damaged or destroyed. Ultimately in Ahmedabad and in many other towns of the State law and order problem was handed over to the army as civil administration was unable to cope with the situation.

Observations during this agitation contains so many corroborative examples of the relationship between frustration and aggression and the 'frustration-aggression hypothesis' appears to be one of the more tenable hypothesis in understanding such human behavior.

However, Gergen (1973) suggests that the value of social psychology does not lies in perfecting general laws of social behavior, but rather in application

to social problems of immediate concern. The social psychologist has been engaging in stage manipulations that are mere demonstrations of obvious linear relationship; the time has come for the researcher to turn away from belaboring the obvious and toward sorting out the complexities of the real world. (McGuire 1973). The present investigation is a small attempt in this direction as it studies aggressive responses of real world. The variety of possible behaviors which we may label aggressive and the limitations of investigating many of these in laboratory situations forces us to make distinctions between aggressive responses as a dependent measure in the laboratory and aggression as a social problem. Aggression is found here to be a diverse and complex social phenomenon which can be studied through observational as well as experimental approach. And a better understanding of patterns and determinants of aggressive responses in Gujarati culture may be used to lessen the problem of aggression in this culture or elsewhere.

The Concept of Aggression:

Animals' mode of aggression can be counted on the tips of fingers; biting, clawing, hugging, squeezing, hitting, stinging, kicking, butting and spraying etc. All these behavior patterns share the common thread of harming another living creature or some object.

Aggression in an animal is physical and direct (Buss, 1971). The aggression of human being need not be so. "Human aggression" is an amorphous term and it has been used to describe various forms of behavior manifestations. Violence and warfare are the manifestations of extreme aggression and perhaps the most obvious forms of aggression in mankind. Many other common forms of behavior can be instantly recognised as an act of aggression by the observer who belongs to a particular culture in which they are displayed. A wall writing (Vagreacha, 1973), a malicious rumour and a verbal castigation may be as sharp as the sword's edge. Threat and ultimatum are other forms of aggressive behavior. Generalised destructive and re-monstrative out-bursts, lynchings, strikes, bundhs and civil disobedience; certain reformist campaigns, public demonstrations and processions; and certain symbolic ceremonies, acts and rituals are clear forms of aggression as well. Occasionally inaction itself is an aggressive act. Masochism, martyrdom, suicide and even the practice of 'non-violence' to fight against injustice and violence are also another forms of aggression.

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Definitions of aggressive behavior :

Thus "a behavior which intent to hurt or injure someone" (Sears, Maccoby and Levin 1957) or 'behavior which attempts to deliver noxious stimuli' (Buss, 1971) is an aggressive act. Psycho analytically

speaking 'it is surface manifestation of underlying angry affect' (Fenichel, 1945) and frustration-aggression theorists (Dollard et al 1939) implicitly assume that 'all aggression occurs in context of anger' and define aggression as "an act whose goal response is injury to another organism..." Aggressive event thus may be defined as intentional physical, manipulative and/or verbal response which is directed towards an object, person or self and has the capacity to damage or injure in physical or psychological sense.

Protest behavior :

Protest behavior is a mild form of aggressive behavior or assertive behavior which includes processions, parades, demonstrations and other activities which involves public display. These activities include uniforms, placards, slogans and other dramatic trappings. In general they meet an important need for recognition and provide visibility, admiration and respect to participants. They also serve as a common symbol in enhancing group affective identity. When one sees one's potency and role in danger, one participates in public display and makes an attempt to regain it and thereby tries to reassure one self. When people are bitter but below the threshold of violence they adopt this sort of communication to convey their discontent and to evolve public opinion to pressurize the frustrator to remove the frustrating conditions.

Protest movements are often quicker to emerge visibly than antagonistic movements simply because it is usually easier to know what one is 'against' than to know what one is 'for'. The genesis of a social movement often lies within personal discontent and frustration and their distinguishing feature is the commitment to voice protest against some threatening or frustrating condition.

Some protest movements are essentially expressive in nature, aimed only at displaying publicly the sentiments of the protesting persons. Protest movements, although negative and antagonistic in their origins, often eventually transform into positive antagonistic movements. Following the phase of expressing protest and action against some threat or frustration, the movement may eventually generate positive goals and programs of action to achieve a more desirable situation than the one that inspired the protest. A truly effective protest movement does not cease with destroying the old order, but continues to create and achieve a new order that is more acceptable. Aggression can be distinguished from anger and hostility as follows:

Anger Anger is a response with facial-skeletal and autonomic components. It may be conceptualised as a drive state.

Hostility The instrumental response of aggression and the emotional response of anger each occupy brief temporal intervals. The attack is made and is over; anger rises to a pitch and then subsides. Hostility is an attitudinal response that endures.

Delimitation of the terms used in the definitions :

The dictionary definition and consensual meaning of "aggression" involves three elements : Intent, damage or hurt and interpersonality i.e. interpersonal aggression, as commonly understood by person concerned therewith, involves the intent and attempt to hurt or damage another person. These elements required a critical examination.

In some definitions of aggression the central concept is "intent" to do harm. There are reservations from some quarters about inclusion of the term "intent" in the definitions of aggression. First, it implies teleology, a purposive act directed towards a future goal, and this view is inconsistent with the behavioral approach. Second, and more important, is the difficulty of applying this term to behavioral events. Intent is a private event that may or may not be amenable to verbalization and to derive inferences is superfluous in the analysis of behavior. The accidental delivery of noxious stimuli does not fall under the heading of

aggression. If the attack is accidental, an examination of the reinforcement history of the response in the context of the two people involved (aggressor and victim) should reveal no consistent relationship. There are, of course, "accidents" that are not accidents. Accidents are by definition random occurrences, manifesting no pattern of consistent behavior.

The element of damage or hurt equates aggression with destructiveness only. However, conceived as generically or essentially self-assertive, aggression can be viewed as affirmative or negative, constructive or destructive in effect. In many technical theories of aggression it is practically considered synonymous with hostility or destructiveness. However, "aggression" is broad enough to embrace both constructive and destructive behavior.

The degree of legitimacy of aggressive behavior :

A further delimitation

There are certain behaviors that are ordinarily not labeled as aggressive, though they do involve the delivery of noxious stimuli. These are behaviors whose reinforcer is a socially acceptable goal; e.g., a dentist may hurt his patient while repairing a tooth, a doctor may cause pain when giving an injection, a parent may hurt a child when punishing him. It is important to understand the basis for excluding such behavior

from the class of aggressive responses. It is generally recognised (by society) that the administration of noxious stimuli is carried out temporarily in the hope of greater good resulting in the long run. The individual who administers the painful stimuli does so in a clearly recognised social role. On the other hand, when noxious stimuli are delivered in the context of an inter-personal situation and/or with no long-range social good as a likely consequence, the response is aggressive. The degree of legitimacy can be conceptualised as a continuum, ranging from fully legitimate on one pole to completely illegitimate on the other. For analysis, this variable may be dichotomized into two classes : (a) illegitimate aggressive behavior and (b) legitimate aggressive behavior.

a) The average person, when asked about violence, automatically views it as negative behavior, violence to most people means illegitimate behavior - behavior that is contrary to the mores or against law, behavior that exceeds the tolerance limits of the society or community, War murder, assault, rape and child beating are apt to be mentioned. Illegitimate violence is not limited solely to physical violence. A man who uses his wife as a verbal scapegoat for all of his problems during the day and a grocer's putting his competitor out of business by unlawful manipulation are both using illegitimate aggressive behavior.

(b) A great deal of aggressive behavior in society is legitimate, i.e., is positively sanctioned. Many occupations allow for and even require violence in one mode or another. Policeman, boxers, wrestlers, bouncers, soldiers, prison guards, judges, salesman, etc. Each has the mandate to use violence under certain conditions. War, possibly the most violent activity of all, has been legitimized by all of the social institutions. Parents are expected legitimately to use violence on their children, i.e., spank them or scold them.

The difference between legitimate and illegitimate behavior is frequently a matter of degree. A further analytical distinction can be made between offensive and defensive legitimate aggressive behavior.

Frustration Many theorists consider that frustration is a pre-condition for an aggressive act to take place. Thus it will be useful to elaborate the concept here before we proceed further. Frustration is commonly used to refer to instances where the satisfaction of a need is blocked or interfered.

Chronologically, experimental studies on frustration have been undertaken later than the clinical approach to it. The experimentally oriented research on frustration gathered momentum from the pioneering work done by Dollard et. al; (1939), stemming from the work particularly of McDougall (1923) and Freud (1920).

The Iowa school spearheaded by Lewin (1941) and the Yale school represented by Dollard et al (1939) offer contrasted view points on frustration. However, a variation from the above two currents of thought has been proposed by Maier (1949) in his treatise on "the study of behavior without a goal".

The term frustration has been defined in different ways by different psychologists. According to Freud (1920) Frustration occurred whenever pleasure seeking or pain avoiding behavior was blocked. Generally speaking, the definitions of frustration can be classified into two categories i.e. frustration as a state of an organism and frustration as a hypothetical construct. Most of them, however, agree in emphasizing the role of interference in goal response in producing frustration. The following are the typical definitions in this regard. "As that condition which exists when goal response suffers interference" (Sears, 1944) "the blocking or interference of the satisfaction of an aroused need through some barrier or obstruction" (Symond 1946) "the blocking of drive evoked behavior" (Davitz, 1942) "the interference with goal directed behavior or more simply blocking or preventing a person from achieving the things he desires" (Angelino, 1951); blockage of motivated action" (Murphy, 1964). or thwarting of goal attainment" (Krech and Crutchfield, 1965) "Not getting what one desires, or interference with a wish

or with a gratification (Maslow, 1941) and "by a frustrating situation will be meant any situation in which an obstacle physical, social, or conceptual, personal or environmental prevents the satisfaction of a desire (Barker,^{et.al.} 1941). According to Lewin (1941) "frustration refers in a vague way to a multitude of different settings rather than to one conceptually definable type of situation". Maier (1949) defines frustration as a change in the condition of the organism and through it a different set of behavior mechanisms is put into operation. On the other hand Amsel (1962) defines frustration as a conceptualization of a hypothetical implicit reaction elicited by non reward after a number of prior rewards, "Brown and Farber (1951) outlined an approach in which frustration was treated as a hypothetical construct. The topological psychologists (Barker, Dembo and Lewin, 1941) define frustration "as a state of emotional tension resulting from the opposition of forces acting upon the person".

In the present study frustration is understood as it is commonly used to refer to instances where the satisfaction of a need is blocked or interfered. This is the definition of Rosenzweig also.

Patterns of aggressive behavior :

Erich Fromm (1973), in his book 'The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, recognizes two types of aggression.

One, he describes as biologically adaptive, life-serving, phylogenetically programmed and is common to animals and humans. An example of this, according to Fromm, is the impulse or attack of flee when vital interests are threatened. The other type, malignant aggression, i.e., destructiveness and cruelty, is biologically non-adaptive and malignant. This type of aggression is seen most notably in the behavior of such men as Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, and others like them and it is common only to humans and arises out of the conditions of human existence. The facts do not support such a theory of aggression. There are many forms of aggression, and these are briefly described below :

patterns and determinants of aggressive behavior in animals :

In animals a variety of forms of aggression have been recognised. Each form of aggression is classified on the basis of the stimulus situation that will evoke it.

- 1 Predatory aggression : Evoked by the presence of a natural object of prey.
- 2 Antipredatory aggression : Evoked by the presence of a predator.
- 3 Territorial aggression : Defence of an area against an intruder.

- 4 Dominance aggression : Evoked by a challenge to the animal's rank or desire for an object.
- 5 Maternal aggression : Evoked by the proximity of some threatening agent to the young of the particular female.
- 6 Weaning aggression ; Evoked by the increased independence of the young, when the parents will threaten or even gently attack their offspring.
- 7 Parental disciplinary aggression : Evoked by a variety of stimuli such as unwelcome suckling, rough or over extended play, wandering and the like.
- 8 Sexual aggression : Evoked by females for the purpose of mating or the establishment of a prolonged union.
- 9 Sex related aggression : Evoked by the same stimuli which produce sexual behavior.
- 10 Intermale aggression : Evoked by the presence of a male competitor of the same species.

- 11 Fear-incuded aggression : Evoked by confinement or cornering and inability to escape or the presence of some threatening agent.
- 12 Irritable aggression : Evoked by the presence of any attackable organism or object.
- 13 Instrumental aggression : Any change in the environment as consequence of the above types of aggression which increases the probability that aggressive behavior will occur in similar situations.

patterns of aggressive behavior in humans :

In human being also aggression has usually been defined in terms of physical force resulting in physical injury. For research purposes, a broader and more comprehensive definition might yield more significant findings. Aggression need not be limited solely to physical behavior. Aggression can also be conceptualised to include non-physical behavior resulting in social or mental injury, such as damage to one's self-concept or to one's reputation. When a large business forces a small firm out of business it constitutes aggression in principle just as much as if actual physical forces had been used.

At a minimum, there are three modes of aggression : Physical aggression, manipulation of others (involving material, social or mental damage) and verbal attack (without threat of physical force). Any given violent act could combine any or all of the three general modes of behavior. But for analytical purposes, each may be considered separately.

(a) Physical aggression may be defined as an assault against an organism by means of body parts or weapons. Assault may have two kinds of consequences. The first includes overcoming or removing a barrier and eliminating the source of noxious stimulation. The second kind of consequence of physical aggression is pain or injury to another organism.

Physical aggression includes two sub types :

(1) The actual physical behavior itself wherein someone is physically injured by forceful behavior (such as a fist fight, a murder, a war), and (2) the threat of physical violence. Often, the threat of violence precedes the actual behavior, but this is not a necessary order of events. Either form of physical violence can (and often does) occur without the other.

(b) The manipulation of others constitutes aggressive behavior when there is either the intent or the consequence of economic, social, or mental injury. Much manipulative

violence constitutes power struggles among individuals, groups, organisations, states or nations.

(c) Verbal aggression without the threat of physical force may be the most common mode of violent behavior. In fact, this behavior, in varying degrees, may be a common basis for much of the interaction in an other directed society in which prestige is commonly gained through "one-upmanship", witticisms (often at the expense of others), and "informal" debating ability. Verbal aggression is defined as a vocal response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism. The noxious stimuli delivered in physical aggression are pain and injury; the noxious stimuli delivered in verbal aggression are rejection and threat. There are three types of verbal rejection. The first is direct and un-varnished dismissal, the second type is hostile remark. The third type of rejection includes three sub-categories; in order to increasing intensity they are criticism, derogation and cursing. Verbal threat is a response that symbolizes, substitutes for, or is anticipatory of subsequent attack. The recipient learns that threats are noxious stimuli by a process of classical conditioning. The best mode of aggression is that which avoids counter attack. Indirect aggression solves the problem by rendering it difficult to identify the aggressor. Indirect aggression may be verbal (spreading nasty gossip)

or physical (a man sets fire to his neighbour's home). Most aggressive responses are active. However, noxious stimuli may also be delivered in the absence of an active response by aggressor; he may aggress by preventing the victim from achieving a goal. Passive indirect aggression is rare, but it does occur, e.g., the hunger strikes by Mahatma Gandhi against British in India.