Chapter 2
Conceptual Framework

In the words of McAdams and Pals (2006), the goal of Personality psychology has been to provide an integrated framework for understanding a person as a whole while keeping in mind individual difference. Two perspectives of psychology, both Indian and Western, have made several attempts to accomplish such ambitious goals. In Western psychology, personality theories like Tripartite theory, Eysenck's Personality Theory, Cattell's Trait Theory and Allport's Trait Theory; descriptive methods like Self-report, life-history data and projective methods; and approaches like psychoanalytical approach, humanistic approach, behaviouristic approach etc. were few of such attempts. Among them, the Trait approach has been considered as contemporary, easy to implement and understand, objective and accentuated on measuring personality traits with statistical methods. It has a development and biological basis of existence (DeYoung, 2010).

Indian psychology has *triguna,* also known as three primal qualities of matter, as an ancient and the most distinguished concept of personality, explains the mind-body complex. As mentioned earlier, it is derived from *Rgveda*, and later adapted by *Atharva Veda, Sankhya Darsan, Yoga Darsan, Bhagavad Gita* and *Ayurveda*. The *Sankhya* philosophy of personality i.e. *triguna* theory has wide empirical and philosophical acceptance. According to *Sankhya Darshan*, every living and non-living being is made up of three *gunas- sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*. Different combinations of *triguna* form the basic elements of everything in this universe. So, all species of living and non-living beings are composed of same *triguna*, differing in their arrangements and combinations. *Sankhya karika* enumerated that *prakriti* is the carrier of *triguna*. *Sankhyan* philosophers characterize *prakriti* as the ultimate cause of universe and creation, as matter, *maya*, subtle and be visible only from its creations. Under the influence of *purusha*, the eternal spirit or pure consciousness, *prakriti* causes the

evolution of every form of living and non-living being in-universe. Each *guna* in *Triguna* has specific and unique characteristic qualities such as *sattva guna* has illumination, *rajas guna* has passion and *tamas guna* has inertia.

Among the modern studies, *triguna* as personality has been explored by various scholars. Sinha (1915) claimed *triguna* to be eternal and in permanent conjunction with one another. They are mutually overpowering, supporting, producing, and intimately mixing with one another. The *gunas* and their qualities were claimed to be inherited (June, 2001) like the mental and physical traits (B.G. 4.13; Saxena, 2016). Studies have deliberated *triguna* as the temperament that is biological nature of human being (*Atharva Veda* 8.12; Bahm 1970; Kapur, 2016). *Bhagavad Gita* (7.12) enumerates that three *gunas* are inseparable and have dynamic nature. An individual can oscillate between three *gunas* and their qualities under various physical, psychological and social influences. Changes in environment, surroundings, situations and family conditions could bring alterations in the dominance of any of the three *gunas* and their qualities. Studies by eminent scholars support the dynamic nature of *Triguna*. Wolf and Abell (2003) reported an increase in *sattva guna* by chanting *Hare-Krishna maha-mantra*; while Sedlmeier, Eberth, Schwarz (2014) linked the dominance of *sattva guna* with psychological well-being in comparison to *rajas* and *tamas guna*. Shilpa and Murthy (2012) branded *gunas* as psychological attributes responsible for the manifestation of behaviour and bringing differences in personality.

The studies of personality in Indian psychology have conceptualized *triguna* as type, traits, and temperament. They have highlighted the biological basis, dynamic nature and psychological nature of *triguna*, but have grappled minimally with the 'characteristic qualities of *triguna*' to formulate a model of personality. The absence

of such formulation of trait-based model led to the development of SRT-trait model of personality in Indian psychology. The next section would unfold the process of making of SRT-Trait model of personality in Indian psychology by exploring trait approach in Western psychology with studies and models.

2.1 Trait Approach in Western Psychology

In the light of trait approach, personality could be envisioned like a constellation of traits. These traits function as the basic unit of personality which manifest in habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion. For convenience the studies related to exploration of traits were clustered in current study in two groups.

The first group includes the studies that have defined characteristics of traits. Traits are the specific response to specific stimuli and a result of integration of numerous specific habits that were expressed as a characteristic mode of the individual's reaction to his surroundings (Perrin & Klein, 1926; Allport, 1927). These characteristics of traits helped in predicting behaviour and personality. In 1937, Allport added that traits were neuro-psychic structure that defined and manifested behaviour. Bouchard and McGue (2003), Fleeson (2001), Fleeson and Gallagher (2009), and Riemann, Angleitner and Strelau (1997) suggested that traits were probable descriptions of the frequency and intensity with which an individual exhibited various behavioural, motivational, emotional, and cognitive states. Individuals with a high degree of dominance of traits experienced its manifestation more often and more intensely than an individual with a low dominance of the same trait. For example a person high in Extraversion would be talkative, outgoing, and excited more often than someone low in Extraversion, but even the person low in Extraversion would experience those states occasionally (DeYoung, 2010). Hence,

traits are the pattern of behaviour, thoughts and actions and responses to specific stimuli.

The second group included studies related to the development of trait theories and models. Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) was one of the first scientists who proposed a lexical hypothesis to identify personality traits. He suggested that significant characteristics of people can be reflected in form of words and such words can be used to define personality. Various psychologists turned to language as a source of attributes for a scientific taxonomy (Allport & Odbert, 1936; Baumgarten, 1933; Klages, 1926) because lexical hypothesis posits socially relevant and significant personality characteristics that were encoded in the natural language. Allport adapted lexical hypothesis for building a strong rationale for selection of attributes those defined personality (Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2009) and found 17,953 words in the English language which could be referred as personality traits (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). Allport and Odbert (1936) organized this list into four major categories- personality traits, temporary states, personal conduct and physical characteristics. Later, Allport classified personality traits into three main categories, cardinal traits, central traits and secondary traits. He claimed that only a small number of traits dominated a person's behaviour and these traits were Central Traits. The less influential aspect of a personality were the secondary traits, such as disliking being in closed spaces or crowds.

The list of trait names suggested by Allport influenced many researchers in trait psychology to look for more significant personality traits. Varied number of personality traits emerged down the line as an attempt to accurately define maximum aspects of personality, like Cattell's sixteen trait model, McCrae and Costa's big five and Eysenck's three-factor model.

Eysenck (1965 and 1967) developed an influential model of personality that determined personality traits in four levels of hierarchy. At the bottom of this hierarchy lied the specific behaviours, which vary according to stimuli and environment. Repetition of specific behaviours as a normal response made them habitual responses, the next in hierarchy. Habitual responses when repeated, formed another level in hierarchy i.e. lower order trait. The lower order traits on repetition formed super-trait or higher order traits, the highest level of a hierarchy. Eysenck gave three higher order traits- 1) extroversion-introversion, 2) emotional stability-neuroticism and 3) psychoticism. To understand the dynamics to these hierarchy levels, consider an example where Introversion, a higher order trait was a combination of lower order traits like shyness and habitual and specific responses like avoiding public settings, limit social activities, few friends etc. Eysenck related personality traits with the functioning of the autonomic nervous system and genetic inheritance (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985).

Cattell (1950) defined personality as a predictor of what a person would do in a given situation. He categorised traits as- source traits and surface traits. He claimed that source traits were more influential than surface traits in describing a person. Cattell (1943) used Allport and Odbert's list for his multidimensional model of personality. As the size of the list was too large, Cattell (1943, 1945) reduced them into 4500 and then to 35 using semantic and empirical clustering procedures (John, 1990; John, Angleitner & Ostendorf, 1988). Cattell (1945) conducted several oblique factor analyses and obtained 12 personality factors, which eventually became part of his sixteen personality factors (John & Srivastava, 1999). He acclaimed a large number of surface traits like unselfishness, sharing, and non-greedy to form sixteen source traits like altruism through clustering. Source traits formed the structure of

personality and their knowledge provided predictions about behaviours (Engler, 2014). Cattell's pioneer work and the availability of a relatively short list of traits, stimulated other researchers to examine the dimensional structure of trait ratings (Ashton, Lee, Perugini, Szarota, Reinout , Di Blas, Boies & De Raad, 2004; John & Srivastava, 1999). Cattell and Eysenck differed on two grounds, firstly Eysenck's model of personality was based on neurotic and psychotic patients hence it was insufficient to comprehend the behaviour of normal people. Secondly, he emphasised the necessity of a large number of traits to get a complete picture of personality (Eysenck, 1991).

Fiske (1949) created a simplified descriptions of 22 traits from Cattell's list of traits which were highly similar to the Big Five.

Tupes and Christal (1961) re-analysed correlation matrices from eight different samples and found strong and recurrent five-factors. These five-factor structure of personality was replicated and postulated by Botwin and Buss (1989); Borgatta (1964); Conley (1985); DeRaad, Mulder, Kloosterman, and Hostee (1988); Digman and Inouye (1986); Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981); Field and Millsap (1991); Goldberg (1981, 1990); John (1990); Norman (1963); Peabody and Goldberg (1989); and Saucier and Goldberg (1996b).

Costa and McCrae (1976) subjected Cattell's 16PF to cluster analyses and it resulted into three broad personality dimensions: neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience. Later, they included agreeableness and conscientiousness and announced the Big Five dimensions of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1985; McCrae & Costa, 1987).

The above mentioned trait theorists believed that traits were inferred from patterns of behaviour and experiences, and cannot be directly observed. Hence, each of the big five factors had six facets to measure behaviour and experiences, and define personality. Traits were not evident to the same extent or had identical manifestations, but any trait could be observed in a subset of situations (DeYoung, 2010). The concept of a trait in Western psychology has been explained as a response to conditioned stimuli, an element of behaviour, motivation and cognition. Personality models based on traits were prepared using the lexicon method, hierarchical representation of traits, correlational matrices and cluster analyses. Trait approach to personality were well etched in Western psychology, unlike in Indian psychology.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, most of the studies on *triguna* has explained personality in a typological framework (consisting of three *gunas*) where the qualities of *triguna* are used as an adjunct to understand each type. A couple of studies have concluded *triguna* as traits. Few used the qualities of *Triguna* to prepare personality scales to measure *guna* (*sattvic, rajasic* and *tamasic*) personality. In the development of the SRT-Trait model of personality, the qualities of *triguna* were used and designated as traits of *triguna*. It is an effort to adapt trait approach (like Western psychology) in Indian psychology. The first step included a collection of 689 traits i.e. personality defining words from ancient scriptures and previous studies through lexical approach. These traits were abridged by the semantic method, text clustering method and factor analysis. Further, structural equation modelling analysed the empirical fitness of the 'SRT-Trait model of Personality'. The following section contain details about the preparation of the conceptual framework of the Trait Model of Personality in Indian psychology.

2.2 The SRT-Trait model of Personality in Indian Psychology

In the ancient Indian knowledge tradition, personality has been referred as '*svabhava*'. This term explained different facets of personality such as emotions, thoughts, feelings, behaviour and temperament. The *Upanishads, Sankhya darshan, Yoga Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Ayurveda* and *Vivekchudamani* were selected as principle Indian scriptures because they explained personality through the *Guna* theory. According to the *guna* theory, *purusha* and *prakriti* are the reason for the existence of every being and *prakriti* acts as a carrier of the three *gunas*. These three *gunas- sattva, rajas* and *tamas guna* govern the psychological and physiological processes of an individual. Each *guna* contains a few characteristic qualities, which are indicators of the presence of *guna* in behaviour. From the above-mentioned scriptures (in English and Hindi versions), traits of each *guna* were collected through the lexical approach i.e. use of natural language led to extensive, socially relevant, scripture dominant, specific and significant personality traits. For e.g. from the *sattva guna,* purity, illumination etc. were collected as *sattvic* traits. Appendix A on page 151 contains the list of traits. These traits were condensed in order to predict and measure specific behaviour in a given situation. In the following sections a detailed procedure of development of the theoretical framework of the 'SRT-Trait Model of Personality in Indian Psychology' is mentioned.

2.2.1 Lexical study of Traits of personality in Indian psychology

Various psychologists have turned to natural language as a source of attributes for scientific taxonomies (Allport & Odbert, 1936; Baumgarten, 1933; John & Srivastava, 1999; Klages, 1926), by extracting personality relevant terms from the dictionary. The natural language has been regularly used in daily interaction to define attributes of an individual. Hence, personality expressions recorded in the natural language offer an

extensive and finite set of attributes (Goldberg, 1981). Appendix A on page 151 contains 689 personality relevant terms from the *Sankhya Karika, Yogasutra, Vivekcudamani, Ayurveda, Bhagavad Gita* and previous studies on *triguna* as taxonomy of personality.

For a systematic organisation of these traits, they were sorted in following three categories- the first category included frequently mentioned traits, the second included set of similar meaning traits and the third category included those traits which weren't on the first and second category. Traits from the first category were reduced to singles. In the second category, traits with similar meaning were grouped as one term. Rest of the traits were put in the third category. After this sorting, the list contained 125 traits. After a discussion with the subject experts, the number of traits were recommended to be condensed using methods like text clustering. Text clustering is a scientific method to reduce these traits further in an organised, small and manageable number. Wei, Lu, Chang, Zhou and Bao (2014) found it a useful technique because it kept the semantic relation of words intact while reducing them to meaningful text. With this method, semantic relations between the traits were found in the current study. This semantic relation was formed considering the closest link that could connect them. So, these 125 traits were sorted in a way which was different to the traditional methods of categorizing as mentioned earlier in this section. The result of this sorting is mentioned below.

The five traits of *sattva guna* were formed by grouping traits that could semantically be related and whose inference could be interpreted in a common direction. The traits- stainless, purity in self, actions and thoughts, blissful, cheerful, follows *yama* and *niyam*, control over organs, firm, self-control, patience, unattached to worldly matters, absence of greed and generous were combined and grouped under

'*Sattvic* habits', because they influence behaviour or habits. This trait drives a person to maintain a clean and healthy body and mind (not because of any illness but by choice). Also, they prefer vegetarian and nutritious food.

Gentle, kind, non-egoistic and humble were conjoined as 'Empathy' because they hold a close meaning to empathetic behaviour. This trait drives a person to be understanding and affectionate to others and regulate their behaviour with patience and politeness.

The trait 'Maturity' contained traits – to have regulation of emotions, not acting on wishes, not moved by joy and sorrow, content, free from dejection, devoid of all expectations, virtuous, wise, compassionate, acts according to principles, courageous, modest, fearless, and eloquent. These qualities were combined as 'maturity'. This trait drives a person to be down to earth, modest, help and acknowledge the contributions of others and believes in the presence of spiritual forces as contributing in life.

Inclined to self-realisation, reads *'shastras'*, devoted to God, practice austerities as guided by scriptures, serves the teacher and is attached to happiness were grouped under *'Sattvic* knowledge' because they indicate inclination for *sattvic* knowledge. This trait directs a person to understand the mysteries and purpose of life, and the materialistic world and spiritual world through reading and practice, to have faith in supreme power, feel connected to nature and the higher self and pay respect to living and non-living beings.

Calm, serene, tranquil, and peace-loving and stays away from spite were combined as 'Tranquillity' because together they define a sense of contentment. This trait brings a conscious self-regulation directed towards spirituality in a person. It

makes them regulate their desires, be self-satisfied and happy and maintain equipoise in situations like success, failure, happiness and sorrow.

Altruism (Keown, 2000; B.G.3.21) and non-violence (Subbarayudu, Rambai & RamaKrishna, 2012) are important aspects of *sattva guna*. They are included because of their significance in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the above mentioned two studies. The trait 'altruism' nurtures an unselfish regard for others and directs a person to perform *nishkaama karma*. It makes a person dedicated to the growth and welfare of others. The trait 'non-violence' brings lack of violence and aggression in speech, thought and actions of a person. They do not cause injuries to any living and non-living being.

The seven traits of *Rajas Guna* are Passion, Boastful, Opportunist, *Rajasic* Habits, Emotional Fluctuation and *Rajasic* Knowledge.

'Passion' consisted of following traits - action-oriented, attached to action, ambitious, passionate, and motivated. All these traits indicate a behaviour in which a person is full of plans and keeps shifting from one task to another before finishing previous plans. This trait brings high motivation for the achievement of wealth, fame etc.

'Boastful' consisted of- being proud of oneself, arrogant, egoistic and pretentious. These traits drive a person to talk highly about the own self and one's family achievements and material gains. They tend to display authority and only show concern about things that are related to their own self and significant others.

'Opportunist' consisted of- constantly planning new actions for one's self-interest only. This trait makes a person an opportunist, who tends to be selfish and

look for personal interest instead of the group. They apply values according to their own requirements.

'Rajasic habits' consisted of -putting faith in God for luxurious life, being full of desires, jealous, and envy. This trait brings in the tendency to put faith in Gods and demi-gods only to gain praise, honour and materialistic gains.

'Emotional fluctuation' consisted of – discontentment, intolerant and impatient, high on emotions specially anger, aggression, joy and sorrow. These traits bring extremity of moods, feelings and emotions in small fractions of time.

'Rajasic knowledge' consisted of - accepting knowledge that helps in earning materialistic pleasures, prays for self-gain only, wants to earn profit from every action, and stays attached to worldly things. These traits make a person inclined to materialistic desires and pleasures like being presentable and focused on making a good impression, spending too much money, showing inconsistency in eating and sleeping patterns.

Pessimism, *Tamasic* habits, Lethargy, Immorality, *Tamasic* Knowledge and Procrastination belong to *Tamas Guna*. These six traits of *Tamas Guna* were formed in the following manner:-

'Pessimism' was formed by grouping - disappointed, hopeless, and irrational. This trait brings a dominance of negative emotions, such as greed, anger, guilt, frustration, complaining nature and a gloomy view of the environment.

'Tamasic Habits' consisted of – a desire to get easy money, avoid hard work, practice austerity that are forbidden by scriptures, desires to hurt other beings without reason. This trait brings disorder and a lack of discipline in all spheres of life such as being addicted due to lack of knowledge and prefer stale, partial or overcooked food.

Torpid, lazy, inactive, inertia, lethargic, pass time by sleeping, dull and indolence were grouped as 'Lethargy'. This trait explains the lack of inclination for any activity in a person.

'Immorality' consisted of – unreliable, dishonest, deceitful, and immoral. This trait makes a person leap over moral values, become corrupt, exploit the law, be selfish and insensitive towards everything and not think of the welfare of the family.

'Tamasic knowledge' consisted of – ignorant, devoid of far-sightedness, delusional and obscure. This trait veils one's intellect and makes one a believer of dark knowledge, ghosts and black magic, perform austerity with an intention of causing pain and destruction to one-self and others.

'Procrastination' included - stay far behind time, postponing most of the tasks, taking more than the required time to complete a task, insubstantial in doing any work seriously and pays no attention to work. This trait makes one unwilling to take up responsibility and if taken then postpone it without any suitable reason.

Table 2.1 in Appendix B on page 165 showed the list of 19 traits as a result of the text clustering in brief. The Trait model of personality in Indian psychology was conceptualized with 19 traits. Operational definitions for each trait were mentioned in Table 2.2 in Appendix B on page 167. These operational definitions provided a functional pattern of each trait. These definitions were framed under the guidance of the supervisor and previously mentioned experts.

The knowledge and information of Indian psychology and Indian philosophy could not be thought without constantly referring to the ancient language in which they were written and practised. It was noticed during the whole time of the study, that English was not the only language in which the study could be conceptualized

and conducted. Hindi and Sanskrit language played a very important role in it. Hence along with English, Hindi (devanagari) language was used for naming the traits. This version was added after the traits were named in English. The purpose was to tap the essence of the Indian knowledge system.

The 19 traits provided the theoretical structure of SRT-Trait model of personality. However, theories and ideas were more acceptable with testing and experimentation (Ellis, Abrams & Abrams, 2009). Also, the study and research on human personality must include an objective and the empirical method to reach a point in which psychology is able to predict human behaviour more accurately. Thus, a questionnaire was prepared with items tapping the operational definition of 19 traits. With an appropriate set of data, collected with this questionnaire, several trials of oblique factor analyses were conducted to identify a stable structure of the trait model. The following chapter includes the methodology to check the empirical qualities of the theoretical SRT-trait model and development of SRT-trait scale of personality in Indian psychology.