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### **TITLE**

**THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST (TAT)**

### **AIM**

To assess personality dynamics of an individual by using Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

### **INTRODUCTION**

“Personality is the dynamic organisation within the individual of these psychological systems that determine his/her unique adjustments to his/her environment” - Allport.

Many psychologists have given their definition of personality based on their own understanding of it. “Personality is a relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations which characterize a human life” - Harry Stack Sullivan.

“Personality is the organizing or governing agent of the individual. Its functions are to integrate the conflicts and constraints to which the individual is exposed, to satisfy an individual's needs and to make plans for the attainment of future goals” - Henry Murray.

Personality has been studied in a number of different ways. Some have developed broad theories to explain the origin and make up of personality, while others focused only on one or two issues such as the influence of heredity and genetics on personality of an individual.

Personality can be assessed in a number of assessment tools, one of the important tools is Thematic Apperception Test (TAT).

TAT is used to assess an individual's needs, desires, emotions and sentiments as well as their interaction among themselves and with the social environment.

TAT is a projective technique which intends to evaluate a person's pattern of - thoughts, attitudes, observational capacity and emotional responses to ambiguous test materials.

This test helps in personality evaluation. Its special value lies in its power to expose the underlying inhibited tendencies of the individual which he/she may not explicitly admit. Thus, through the various story cards, the subject may reveal his/her expectation of relationships with peers, parents, subordinates and other social relationships. This test has been found in many comprehensive studies of personality.

It has also been found useful in psychosomatic illness, neurosis and psychosis. This technique is especially recommended as a preface to a series of psychotherapeutic interviews or to a short psychoanalysis.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST**

Murray and Morgan from University of Harvard (USA) formulated in 1935. It is purely a projective test of personality and is used widely to measure the deeper layers of one's personality. The original test contains 31 cards including one blank card. On each picture the subject is asked to make a story which is nothing but the projection of the narrator and his projection is an aspiration of the feelings and sentiments or needs and drives of the subject or objects of the outside world. In TAT pictures, the subject generally identifies himself/herself with one or more characters in the picture. While identifying with some characters the subject projects his/her ideas while reflecting his/her inner personality. He/she also reveals he/she would not generally admit because he/she is not aware of them. In other words, whatever is stored in unconscious and subconscious mind is reflected through the stories of the subject,

he/she frames the picture presented to him or her. In view of the fact that the original pictures are essentially foreign in content, it was considered essential to modify them so that it may facilitate identification by individuals coming from Indian background have been Indianised as far as possible, without spoiling the stimulus value of the original pictures. The Indian adaptation of the test is formulated by Dr. LP Malhotra in 1993. This adapted TAT consists of 11 pictures plus a blank card. The cards are used in various combinations depending on the age and sex of the subject. Some are gender common cards while others are gender specific cards i.e. only used to be used with male subjects or only to be used with female subjects.

The person being examined is told that its a test of imagination, that he/she has to make up a story regarding every card presented to him/her. There is no right/wrong response.

There is no time limit as such.

Important aspects of TAT are as follows:

- a) **The Hero** - Hero of the story is the central character around whom the entire story revolves. It is the hero with whom the subject identifies himself/herself. He/she is the one who plays the main role in the story. According to Murray, a story may have more than one hero also.
- b) **Motives, trends and feelings of the Hero/Heroes** - This analyses the overt behaviour of the hero because these overt behaviour reflect the needs and emotions of the hero. Murray has given a list of 38 needs some of them being aggression etc. Murray suggested that the manifestation of these needs should be rated on a fine point scale, scale with measuring to mild and 5 belonging to intense form. After the story ends are scored, a total of score of each need is summed up and is compared to its standard score.

- c) **Forces of the Hero's environment** - Here the emphasis upon the environmental variables or forces which can either facilitate or interfere with the gratification of needs of the hero. Special attention is paid to objects and persons included which are not in the picture but created by the subjects. The strength of each force is rated on a five point scale like need, the criteria are intensity, duration, frequency and significance in story. Total scores are then compared against the standard.
- d) **Outcomes** - Outcomes refer to how the story concludes. There may be happy endings or unhappy ones. The magnitude of frustrations and hardships shown by the hero as well as success and failure in handling those situations is also analyzed.
- e) **Themes** - Themes refers to the interaction of needs of the hero with the environmental forces. The purpose of themes is to study the different types of forces in their relationship and to determine the most important problems of the subject from the interaction of needs and factors leading to gratification of those needs.

### RELIABILITY

TAT reliability has been studied in three ways:

- a) Extent of agreement interpreters of the same stories response to traits of the person being examined, studies response coefficient ranging approximately to  $+.30$  to  $+.90$ .
- b) Similarity between stories reported examination of the second person, greater the time taken, lower the reliability.
- c) Split half method, correlating intensity and frequency and needs expressed in the stories, the relative coefficients are  $.48$  and  $.46$ .

### **VALIDITY**

Several methods of studying the validity of TAT have been employed.

- a) Comparison with the past history or with results obtained through an intensive case study.
- b) Comparison of characteristics of individuals or groups with their TAT records.
- c) Comparison of TAT findings with other clinical materials and subject records.

### **MATERIALS REQUIRED**

11 TAT Cards  
Response Sheet  
TAT Manual  
Paper  
Pencil  
Eraser  
Stop Watch

### **SUBJECT'S PROFILE**

<b>NAME</b>	Rupesh Pandey
<b>AGE</b>	29 Years
<b>GENDER</b>	Male
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Graduate
<b>OCCUPATION</b>	MBA

## **PROCEDURE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Preparation:**

Material required to carry out was arranged and kept ready.

### **Rapport:**

The subject was called inside the room and was asked to sit. Rapport was established by having a comfortable conversation with the subject. Subject was told about the test, its procedures etc. The subject gave his informed consent to carry out the test.

The subject's queries were resolved, also he was assured about the confidentiality of the result and his identity.

### **Instruction:**

The subject was given proper instructions. He was told that 11 cards would be shown and the subject has to write a story for each card. The subject has to write in detail as who is the main character, what is happening in the story, what other characters are feeling and what will happen at the end of story. Afterwards the subject was shown each card turn wise and was asked to follow what has been instructed to him.

### **Introspective Report:**

The subject was very excited and interested in taking the test. When shown the first card, the subject felt a bit nervous and fumbled. The subject took time to understand it and began writing. With the subsequent cards, the subject became comfortable and felt at ease. The subject showed keen interest and observation while performing the test. The test went smoothly.

### **Scoring and Interpretation:**

Scoring and interpretation was carried out once the subject finished the test and submitted his response sheets. Interpretation can be done in following stages:

- ➔ **Analysis of forms** - refers to how the story teller told the stories.
- ➔ **Analysis of content** - where the focus is on 5 major aspects viz., the hero, need of hero, forces from hero, forces emanating from the environment, outcome and theme of the story.
- ➔ **Dynamic structure of content** - where ego structure is derived out from the content of the story of the subject.
- ➔ **Ego structure** - subject's ego is not able to compromise between his needs and demands of reality of one hand and commands of superego on other. Subject is self centred and dislikes independence.

### **Analysis of forms -**

- a) **Power of plot** - plot was structured, appropriate and complete and original.
- b) **Organisation** - good development of theme. Subject didn't jumble up the events in the story. Parts of story i.e. beginning, middle part and end are organised properly and coherent and relevant to the story.

### **Fantasies**

- **Imagination** - is matured, reality oriented, practical
- **Language** - usage of language is good. Emphasis has been given on use of action words indicating subjects needs and desired.
- **Observation of details** - satisfactory, as every detail of the picture has been included in the story.

**EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS**

Card No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Score/ Rating
Anxiety	5	2			3	2		3	1		2	18 significant
Dejection	4	3	4	5	2		4	5		4	5	36 highly significant
Jealousy Guilt	2	3	4						2	3		14 significant
Inferiority Fear & Insecurity	4		2			3		1		2		14 significant
Anger			1	3				2	1			
Love affection			5	4	5		3	4	2		5	28 Highly significant
Pity					2			1		4		7 significant
Independence					1	3	2			3		9 significant
Ambition	3	4			2	4	3					16 significant
Determination		3	2		2		3					10 significant
Shame		2	1									3 slightly significant

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**ANALYSIS OF NEEDS**



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Card No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Score / Rating
Abasement	2		4	4		2					3	15 significant
Achievement	4		3		4		2				4	17 significant
Aggression Emotions		3	2	5			5	4	3	2		24 significant
Verbal Physical	3					3			4			13 significant
Social		3		2		5	4	2			2	18 significant
Destruction Dominance	2						3					5 significant
Intra aggression Nurturant Passivity		3			2		3	5			2	17 significant
Sex	3		3	4	3	3	4	3	5			28 significant
Conflict	4	5			4	4		4				21 significant
Emotional Change		2		2		3	4	4	3			18 significant
Dejection	4	2	5	3	2		4	3		5	4	32 highly significant
Acquisition			3	4			4	3		3		20 significant

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**ANALYSIS OF CONTENT**

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Picture	Hero Identification Level	Hero Identification Type	Type of content
1	Complete	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
2	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
3	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
4	Complete	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
5	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
6	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
7	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
8	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
9	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
10	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive
Blank Card	Adequate	Same Sex Same Age	Positive

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**Discussion:**

- **Intellectual level** - The subject has above average general intelligence. His verbal ability is good. Expression of thoughts is also good.
- **Emotional maturity** - The subject is emotionally mature according to his age, his roles and responsibilities but has some hints of negative emotions as well.
- **Personal adjustment** - It is not satisfactory. He is a man of negative emotions. His inferiority dominates the inner dynamics of his personality to a large extent. Family adjustment of the subject is not satisfactory. His relationship with family members are not satisfactory; the subject has potential and creative imagination though.

**References:-**

Hall, C.S. Lindsay, G, and Campbell I.B. (1957), Theories of Personality (4th Ed.), pg 225, 174.

Murray MA Thematic Apperception Test Manual.