

# Culture-fairness can impact the accuracy of assessments

Towards a reform of the educational system, governments are making it mandatory for would-be and existing employees to undertake aptitude tests whereas and at workplaces, many organisations are making it obligatory for would-be and existing employees to undergo personality screening before being accepted for training, employment or employment continuation. Countries like Finland have introduced aptitude, personality and resilience assessments for accepting students to be trained as teachers. However, a question that arises "Is India ready to adopt such models? Do we have enough resources, understanding, and maturity to undertake such measures?"

Psychological assessment is very complicated. It is often undertaken to screen a person's behavior, personality or performance. The assessment often uses a numerical scale that is in form of a questionnaire. They are initially administered to a large number of people to statistically check for the consistency, stability, uniformity, legitimacy, and rationality of the test. Assessments are not always accurate as often people try to respond in a socially desirable manner or tend to give a neutral responses as they are fearful of being caught through their responses.

Assessments enable to screen mental health issues, understand the performance of children, increase productivity at workplaces, and show a path of improvement and assists in the identification of strengths and weakness of people. Assessments are done from birth till old age to screen out mental and physical disabilities or impairments. It is very rare that parpopulation. ents



■ A large pool of available assessments are constructed on nonIndian population PHOTO/HT

## CULTURE FAIRNESS AND LANGUAGE APPROPRIATENESS ARE FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE FINAL SCORE

will undertake cognitive screening of their children. At the workplace, assessment helps to assign work duties, recognize strong personality attributes, help employees to overcome weaknesses and design training modules.

A large pool of available assessments are constructed on non-Indian population. However, very few psychological assessments have been constructed on Indian population. Assessment scores are highly sensitive to how a person responds, the environmental conditions present and language and cultural context of the questions or statements.

Culture fairness and language appropriateness are important factors that impact the final score. There is a high demand to establish the consistency and rationality of the tests for Indian population. An increasing demand prevails in constructing new assessments for Indian population.

Few of western screening and assessment tests have shown contrasting results on the Indian population. When the errors in the assessment were statistically corrected for the Indian population, the results were much more acceptable. However, many trained psychologists and untrained professionals from allied fields of psychology use the assessment tests without adjusting it for statistical errors.

Lack of check on consistency and rationality of assessments is largely attributed to psychological training imparted in colleges. Most of the times, the westernized assessments are adjusted for statistical errors for Indian This

does not take care of culture fairness and language appropriateness. For example, Indian psychologists have undertaken the adaptation of former intelligence tests which is insufficient because they fail to address the diversity of language and culture, complexity of school systems, and infrastructural inadequacies in school. Intelligence tests are presently used to identify disability, assess well-being, and account for gaps in potentiality and performance in school, rehabilitation, and guidance. Primarily I. Q. tests are undertaken in schools which focused on general intelligence. A child can be good in spatial orientation or musical ability and hence, it is recommended that parents and teachers should assess specific area of intelligence. Apart from intelligence, developmental problems such as specific learning disability, and autism spectrum disorder. However, there is a need to develop indigenous intelligence assessments that are based on Indian educational system and child's growth and development parameters.

Lastly, the need of the hour is to train psychology students with rigor in assessments and prepare them to construct more indigenous assessments.

A new trend in Indian psychological research that has come to surface in last decade is to construct new indigenous assessments. However, many of these assessments lack statistical robustness and hence are not free from biases.

Psychological assessments need to be handled ethically and in the right way to avoid incorrect labelling and identification of mental health issues.

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