

## **The Roles Appropriateness and Hierarchy on Cultural Conscience: Therapist's Perspective**

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### **Original Research Article**

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**Abstract:** This research paper is an attempt to understand how the cultural and social dimensions which operates in the Indian Cultural Context. The research has coined a term called “Cultural Conscience” in order to get a clearer picture of how the various dimensions interact and its effect on the psyche the term has been introduced. The aim of this research is to see how these mould the psyche of the individual and it is being explored through the perspective of the therapist. The sample size for the study was Clinical and counselling psychologists. 10 psychologists were interviewed. The tool used for data collection was semi- structured interviews. The analysis for the data was done using thematic analysis. Four global themes were arrived at. The global themes identified were Identity Crisis, Identity Formation, Self- Sacrifice in Clients and Shame and Guilt in Therapy. The manner in which the cultural factors influence one's way and nature of relationships that is formed with the external world is also studied in this research.

**Keywords:** Cultural conscience, cultural and social dimensions, identity crisis, identity formation

### **INTRODUCTION**

The practice of psychology can be better understood if the context in which it operates is understood properly. The focus of this research paper is to identify the cultural system in the context of India and see how and in what ways these systems and its various fault lines have contributed to the molding of one psyche is and in turn helped build the cultural conscience which is very much a part of one's psychological existence.

The tradition, which as a nation and as sub cultures with difference as well as fundamental similarities, has contributed to the creation of a set of unspoken rules around which the entire tradition functions. How the conscience is shaped by the various aspects of culture such as hierarchy, religion, gender and its associated roles and how does this influence the psychological disorders which the clients present themselves with are the two main research questions which are explored in this study. These questions will be addressed from the perspective of the therapist.

The focus of this research study is on how the paradigm in which mental health functions currently does not provide a right framework where the problems can be understood properly. The way to approach this issue is by trying to understand those conflicts which various sections within a culture have tried to sort out or sometimes unwillingly comply to. In order to put this in a better frame, I will take the example from one of the most oppressed communities in our society. In a situation where a Dalit woman walks into the clinic with depression, let us explore how one has to deal with

this situation. The woman in this scenario has multiple identities. Being a woman sets a particular role and appropriateness which the society demands from her. Being a Dalit, a community which has the longest history of oppression, is another factor to be sensitive to while understanding her case of depression. In this particular case, the disorder or the problem cannot be separated from the context from which it stems. In order to understand and help this particular client it is important to be aware as well as sensitive to the social and cultural dimensions which body her existence. The efficacy of psychotherapy can be understood from a perspective which is not so familiar to western medicine. The western approach looks at a disorder from a very rigid medical perspective. The ancient healing practices in the Indian tradition had practitioners who were aware of the social, religious and cultural dimensions of each of the individuals who came to meet them. The therapeutic approach was based on the needs and suitability of the methods on each individual. It was a holistic approach. The first task of this research paper is to identify some of the common fault lines that are

present in our culture and see the integral role they play in pathology.

The cultural context which this paper tries to capture is the “Cultural Conscience.” This is the essence in our culture. All the decisions are based on this powerful factor which is learnt from the family and the community the individual lives in. Broadly this falls under another popularly known and shared attribute “Indianeness.” Kakar [1]. This will set the context to the problem that we will be trying to explore and understand. There are a few specific questions which this research paper will try to explore. What brings an individual to the clinic? And how do these problems unfold in a therapeutic session? How does the therapist work with the client towards resolving the conflict? And lastly where is the therapist placed in this picture? Is the therapist and his reality any different from his client’s reality?

The main texts which were referred were the books by Indian Psychoanalysts Sudhir Kakar and Salman Akhtar. Salman Akhtar’s book “Freud along the Ganges” is the main text that has been used to validate the relevance of the questions will be explored through the research paper [10]. Salman Akhtar talks about the concept of the “familial self” and the role of elder’s other than the parental figures in one’s life. This is quite significant for this research as it tries to explore the nature of the relationships that one forms with say one’s spouse, children, peers etc and how the various aspects of the culture like hierarchy, religion, gender, family shape the nature of these relationships. “Multiple Mothering and the Familial Self” by Alan Roland explores multiple identities and how the psyche is in a constant state of conflict in our cultural situation where one person has various duties or rather functions as an individual. The concept of the joint family which is a characteristic feature of our culture is also understood from various dimensions in this chapter. Sudhir Kakkar’s book, *The Indians*, also tries to make sense of this familial system. The extended family is a psychic reality now in our fast-moving urban world. Even in its absence its power can be felt in our everyday decisions. It becomes an integral part of our conscience.

The pattern of problems which enter the clinic in this context has its roots deep down in the psyche and it’s largely layered by the cultural dynamics of the situation the client is constantly placed in. The assumption on which this research question is based is that the cultural context in which this study is conducted is already grappling with conflicts around gender roles and in its constructions when positioned in the larger family centered network of hierarchy and relative positions. The value systems which this structure provides are assumed to be embedded in the

psyche and becomes an integral part of the conscience which is the main factor in this research study.

The main goal of this paper is to bring to the attention of the people those issues in say families, or community or society at large that are sidelined. These factors mound and shape one’s perspective about the world and the relationship one forms with others. Hence it becomes quite important to identify those factors which negatively shape the psyche and puts added pressure on the individual.

**A few of the previous studies have been referred for this research study and they mentioned below**

According to Nandy [2], it is the non – paradigmatic crisis, which points to a loss of context which we experienced in our culture post the colonial rule which is ta the heart of the problem at hand .Hence, the problems which reach the clinic does not even fall into the paradigm present. It’s totally outside the existing paradigm. The pre - colonial traditions in the area of mental health was a holistic approach where the individual’s familial context, cultural, religious and historical background was given as much importance as the problem he came with. It is an interaction between the two which helps the client. However in the present scenario, the paradigm is not flexible enough to accommodate any of these problems or their contexts In such a situation, Nandy would call it the non-paradigmatic crisis. It is a situation where the existing paradigm is not able to identify the problems which it has to work around [3], talks about the cultural specificities affecting the behavior of the people. The time period in which one operates also has a huge influence on one’s attitude. Ramanujan gives the story of two people who go to Yudhishtira with a specific land issue. However the two men experience a change in the attitude with a sudden flip in the time period. Yudishtra responds then to this change as the beginning of Kalyuga. This is an analogy to our own conflict with our previous generations with regard to the attitude, values and even our religious beliefs that we stand for. It is the difference in the time periods in which the different generations grew up which causes the confusion and conflict. Ramanujan also talks about “the familial self” which is a characteristic of the Indian identity. Indian tradition and morality operates in a contextual manner. The ethical norms our Vedas propose are at some level in sync with the universal principles however the Vedas and other ancient Indian texts have a context within which these guidelines are also understood. This emphasis on context is extended to a larger understanding of any particular issue. This is the same approach which this research study emphasizes to extend in the discipline of psychology. Daya [4] brings out the importance of the cultural part of the personal identity in management spaces as well. The attitudes, values and social appropriateness are all

imbibed as we grow up and are hard wired in our brain. There is evidence for this from modern neuroscience as well. Hence this article brings out the relevance of secure relationships in childhood and secures familial and social support mechanisms as a mandate in our smooth functioning at organizational levels. Chakkarath [5] explores through his works how western psychology has constructed Indian and eastern psyche and how this has been influenced by the stereotypes that are present in the European mind set about the orient. This has been used to differentiate between the west and the east and has been important informing the foundation for the current established theories about the west-east differences. This is a paper which explores mostly the stereotypes which exist about the Orient. This explores the current social and cross - cultural perspectives which exist on the Indian context. These theories lie at the core of the foundation of the theories on East- West differences. While trying to understand the cultural norms and traditions, it is quite essential to understand how our traditions are perceived by other cultures and how this has over the last decades affected our perception of our culture. Collins [6] is a study on cultural psychology in urban India. It specifically examines the personal and cultural trauma in Mumbai, India's financial Capital. The study looks at the lives in Mumbai slums and how trauma is viewed in this context. What comes out of the study is a sense of hope and faith which stays at every layer and segment in our culture. This can be closely tied to the religious as well as the cultural teachings which are embedded in each of us who are a part of this shared culture called "Indianeness" irrespective of class, caste or gender. This article explores the Indian psyche through two movies, "Slumdog Millionaire" and "Salaam Bombay." They deal with a certain sense of optimism which exists at the core of our culture. This optimism is interestingly colored by one's emotional attributes. The Indian cinema is a much more elaborate version of the individual psyche. The Indian movies show how important the character becomes and the plot plays more of a supporting role. The essence of the movies comes down to the characters and what they represent. It could be loyalty, responsibility towards one's family or the community one belongs to or a cause that one stands for. It could be any number of things. However, the contrast with this and the west comes with the values and themes that are brought out. In the Western concept, emotions take a back seat and success becomes the mantra. The Indian cinemas also show success, however the way certain concepts and ideas are portrayed explain a lot about the culture that it represents. In the Indian context success is closely tied to the wellbeing of one's family and community. In fact the purpose of success itself is in this context. The study also shows how the different layers of tradition are so deep rooted in the psyche. The other article that was reviewed includes Sarin [7] which is an interview with

Sudhir Kakar, one of the leading psychoanalysts in India. Sudhir Kakar talks about how he had to make a few modifications in the analytic techniques that his western education had taught him. This is a point of interest in our research because this is exactly what this research study wants to achieve at a wider level [8] is a review of the famous book by Sudhir Kaka,' The Indians: Portrait of a people.' It emphasizes the role caste, religion, conflict, hierarchy, family, gender and health has on the Indian psyche. In fact this shows how these are the underlying aspects of the psyche. This is the same direction which the current research has also chosen [9], is an article concerned with secularism. The question that this article tries to explore is "What is it that today in India we are less tolerant than ever before." This becomes relevant as it is deeply rooted in our religious and politico- cultural dynamics which designs the way one's psyche and in turn how one's conscience should react in varying situations. In a religiously and politically heated context as India, the role of secularism in drawing the boundaries where there is mutual respect and autonomy for individuals from different socio- religious contexts within the same culture is quite crucial. It is a balancing forcing which prevents propagandas and other communally active stimulants from poisoning the psyche. This particular dimension is quite important while trying to understand the psyche and what shapes one's conscience. The religious divide is now a dominating aspect of our cultural context. Although the research does not directly focus on this perspective, it is important for the therapist to be aware of the religious and political dynamics.

These articles therefore suggest that the filed needs a therapist who is culturally, socially, politically and religiously sensitive and takes care of the minutest details and work out how the dynamics of these aspects affects the client. The one area which was commonly lacking in all of the articles that were reviewed was the perspective or approach to the same issue from the client's perspective or rather from a common man's perspective.

## **METHODS**

This research study is a qualitative study. Interviews will be the major source of data collection. Therapist's majorly clinical psychologists will be interviewed. The interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis which is one of the tools in qualitative research analysis. Thematic analysis will help in pulling out those aspects which support or contradict the various themes and goals which this paper will try to focus on. The interview will be a semi- structured interview. The role of thematic analysis in this research is to identify the major themes. This will be an effective aid in the qualitative analysis. This will give us a better picture of the various dimensions involved and hence

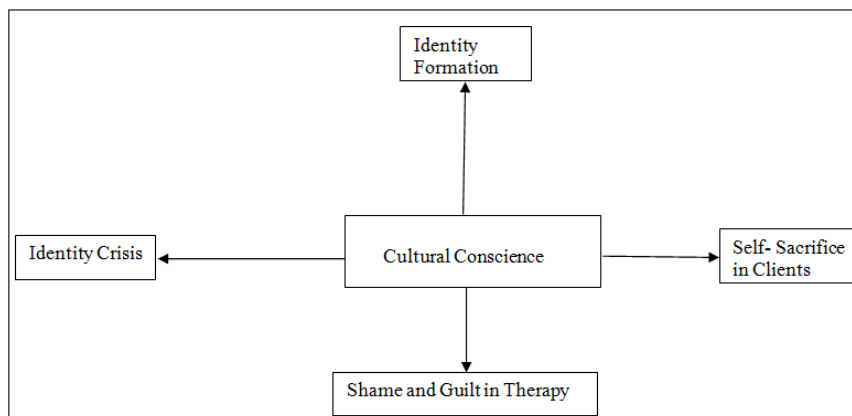
will give a better understanding of the hypothesis. The advantage of using semi- structured interview is that the questions are quite broad and accommodating. Hence there is a greater freedom to go beyond any set boundary. This gives the interviewee the agency to take the lead and come up with themes which can take the research to greater heights. This can also open up the interviewer to contexts and situations which he/she would never have thought of doing. Thematic analysis would help the interviewer encode the interviews with more clarity.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The research study is a qualitative study. The tool used for data collection is semi- structured interviews. The method of analysis used is thematic analysis. The aim of this research is to see how the conscience is shaped by the various aspects of culture such as hierarchy, religion, gender and its associated roles. Description of the participants

The participants interviewed for the study are clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists practicing for a minimum of three years in India. All of them have a wide range of experience in the field of psychological practice in India. The reason qualitative approach was taken lies in the nature of the research study. The aim of this research is to understand the interplay of the cultural factors in shaping the conscience and how this immediate environment teaches the psyche about the dos and don'ts of the external world.

The transcriptions of the semi- structured interviews were used to code the data. The process of analysis helped in arriving at four global themes. The global themes are the major findings. They are Identity Crisis, Identity Formation, Self- Sacrifice in Clients and Shame and Guilt in Therapy. These four global themes are certain phases and reactions which are commonly seen in an individual's life in the specific cultural context that exists in India.



**Fig-1: Experience of Cultural Conscience as Perceived by therapists**

The first theme is identity crisis. This research has shown the importance of the individual to belong. The factors which shape one's identity are mainly the social agents. The main two social agents that have come up in this research finding are religious teachings and the values taught by family." My perspective is mostly a reflection of my family's perspective. At the same time, I have my own perspective and my interest in observing people is something I picked up later on and this also has a huge influence in my life especially as a psychologist." This is an excerpt from the transcription of the interview by a clinical psychologist at the district hospital, Kottayam. This accommodation of new perception into the existing system of strong beliefs is something which lies at the center of this theme. The addition of new beliefs and ways of thinking can disrupt an already existing system of schemas and this has shown to impact the conscience of the individual. The few themes which have helped me arrive at the global theme "Identity Crisis " are Social agents shape identity, Sense of belongingness , Morality

instilled in the psyche , Dissonance in perception and Contradicting selves within. The first organizing theme is "Social Agents shape the identity." The two social agents which have a very strong influence in shaping the identity of the individual as per the research findings are religious teachings and the teachings of the family All these rules are laid out the moment an individual is born. The pressure of socially and religiously appropriate behavior is inevitable in our culture.

The next organizing theme which helped in arriving at the global theme is "Morality instilled in the psyche." The religious and familial teachings are so embedded and a very visible part of one's upbringing that these moral principles and values get inscribed in the psyche. Most of the girls are taught from a very young age that they should only marry from within their community. This gets so inscribed in the psyche that once they grow up and experience new ways of thinking and get involved in relationships, it causes a lot

of turmoil from within. The next organizing theme is "Sense of belongingness." The reason to please one's family, neighbors, friends and the community at large comes from a need to belong to a particular group. This is the main reason why people fall into the pressure of being appropriate all the time, even if it means sacrificing what they believe to be right. Culturally appropriate behavior validates one's membership in a particular group. And this gets disturbed when an individual experiences new situation and learns new things from those experiences. This results in forming new perceptions which can strongly influence the decisions one makes in one's life. In a situation like this the conscience which is colored by religious and cultural teachings can prick the individual. This results in a dissonance. The next organizing theme is "Dissonance in Perception." Here the new perceptions can upset the existing system of beliefs and can really disintegrate the individual. There is an excerpt from the interview with Clinical Psychologist S.K.S., Yes. Many a "times, culture is what our family, parents taught us. From that view point, teaching of Hindu principal or going by that value system or taking the assumption that all are equal, I had situations where I took decisions, or not even that I acted on that and as a result I was separated from my family for quite some time as a consequence. These steps were literally opposite the cultural settings my parents had set. Often we believe that our parent's values are our cultural standards. We oppose our parents at some point in our lives. So in my

personal life, in short I took some steps which were in total opposition to what my parents believed and I started living a life that was separate from theirs. But the point of guilt and anxiety was there till the point where my parents and my family got united. I have made that kind of decisions which were against the so called cultural value systems however there was more pain of being separated than guilt. This event was there for almost two years. However, this was resolved later when parents also agreed that my step was right. The acceptance and approval made me more relaxed and confident."

The first global theme covers a wide range of issues that are faced by people. One of the major findings here is the cultural and religious beliefs instilled in individuals from a very young age, and the ideas of morality forced on people and how the exposure to new experiences and people changes and challenges what has been taught. This has been shown to cause dissonance within an individual. The conflict within can cause an identity crisis. Identity crisis is a common theme which comes up in the clinical scenario. It is commonly seen in the adolescent population according to the interviews given by therapists selected for this study. This concept will get more clarity when the next global theme gets explained. It talks about identity formation. In- depth analysis of how this works helps in getting a clearer picture of the extent to which identity crisis can affect an individual.

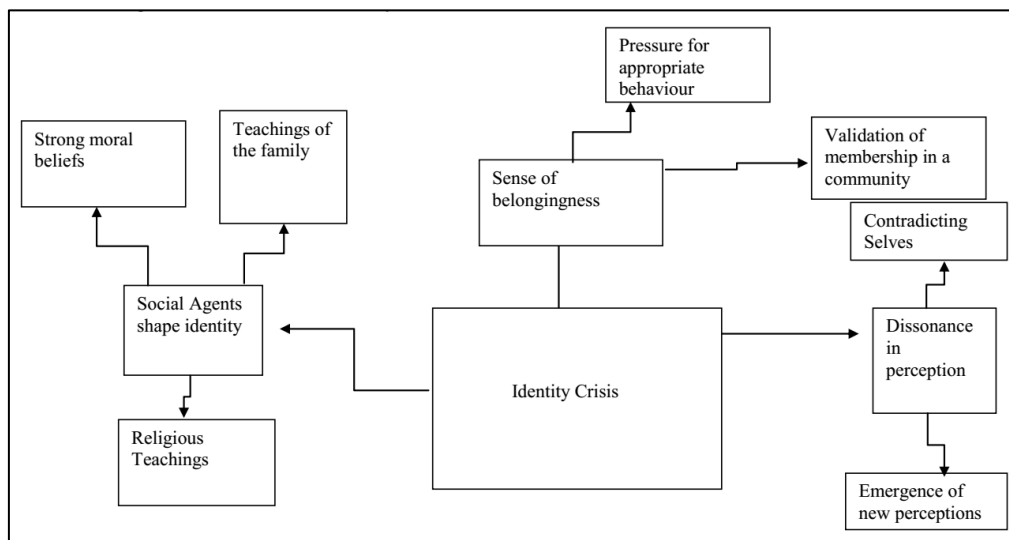


Fig-2: The Global Theme of Identity Crisis

The second global theme is Identity Formation. This theme has been arrived at with the help of three organizing themes and they are role of parents, conflicts with the familial values and space within the family. The role of parents in identity formation has been seen as one of the crucial factors in the lives of both the therapists as well as that of the clients. The teachings of the mother figure and he rules dictated by

the head of the family are some of the factors that seemed to have influenced the clients as well as therapists quite a lot. This is one organizing theme. The familial values seem to play a strong role in shaping one's identity. An excerpt from S.K.S's interview points out the influence of family and upbringing in influencing identity formation.

“Yes, the eye within our mind. The inner eye that sense of right or wrong, when that sense develops and becomes a factor which guides our activities and behavior, at that point when it develops, it becomes important. Here the age is important where it develops. For example, someone at seventy years of age may not develop this sense of conscience, whereas a seven or even five years may despite having a great idea and behavior which does not contradict with the child’s conscience. Why is this difference? And here the cultural and familial strength comes in. I would say when we are emotionally black- mailed these senses develop. Right from childhood, kids are taught, God, Devil, Satan, Ghosts etc develop. This is also a product of guilt feeling. Conscience sets the boundary. The right and wrong gets set. The point where cultural affiliations start getting too significant and tend to dominate our lives, we get into the trap of guilt and always checking on our conscience.”

Conflicts with familial values are another theme which comes up usually for individuals during their adolescence. Adolescence is a period where a lot of conflicts arise within oneself, with the family, culture, school authorities and with the larger social system. This is also phase where a lot of new ideas and experiences tend to shape an individual’s identity. This is also a transition to adulthood. One of the excerpts from the interview with the therapist shows that the shift from childhood to adolescence is largely characterized by rebellious thinking or thinking that is normally disapproved. And “a space within the family “to discuss these conflictual views will ease the stress and confusion in the individual. Space to discuss conflicts with the family has seen to be very important

in the way individuals mould their perceptions about the world. It also affects the extent of confidence they have in themselves.

The extent of family support during the transition from childhood to adolescence helps the individual create a secure base from which to explore the world. The confidence and extent of confusion will get reduced to a large extent if there is an adequate support base from the family. Children need a space to discuss their innovative ideas. This space is quite lacking in our culture where we believe that family should run on hierarchies. If the distance between parents and children is reduced and where a space where both the parties can discuss their insecurities concerning each other, much can be worked out. Most of the working out cannot happen on an individual basis between the therapist and the client. Sometimes taking therapy home and beginning from there is essential. The family members and their approach towards the clients need a drastic change. This is very important in the case of adolescents because this is the phase where the identity formation begins to take shape.

The analysis of the second global theme shows the strength with which identity formation happens in a child’s life. It also shows how this strengthened identity and its ideas get threatened in adolescence. The problem of identity formation comes up here as well. The therapists in the interviews emphasized on the need of spaces within the family where the adolescent does feel secure and safe to discuss anything. This is a very crucial aspect in the process of identity formation. This is one factor which helps many adolescents face and grow through the identity crisis successfully.

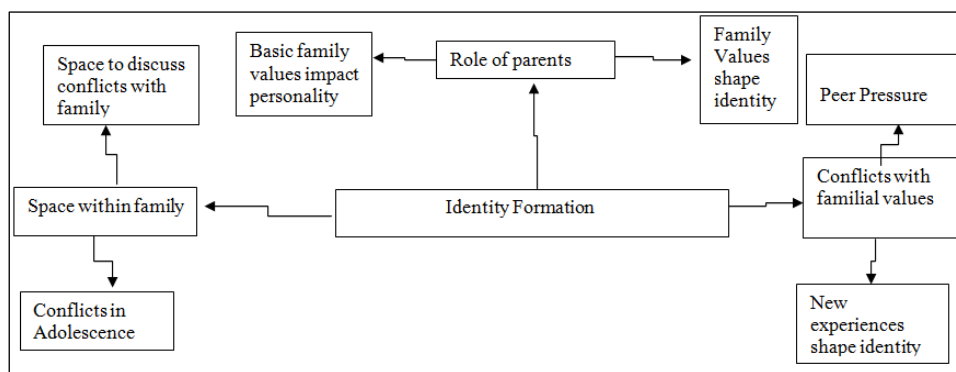


Fig-3: The Global Theme of Identity Formation

The next global theme is self- sacrifice in clients. The most common theme which comes up in most of the therapy sessions is self- sacrifice. There are various reasons why a lot of people ending sacrificing way too much than what they can actually handle. Cognitive dissonance is one the direct impact of self-sacrifice. This is one of the organizing themes in this section. When what we really want and what we

actually end up doing are two different things that will create a lot of dissonance within. All the therapists have reported disproportionate rates of self- sacrifice in their clients. Most of them have not experienced any form of recognition or reward for the self- sacrifice. In fact dissatisfaction rebukes and in some cases domestic violence are unfortunately the accepted forms of thanksgiving in our culture.

An excerpt from the interview with S.K.S., is “Self- sacrifice is more in women. Again, it is the cultural and social demands and expectations that a woman should be passive, submissive and forgiving. It is interesting to see this taking shape. For example, when a girl is brought up, she is repressed, “adichamarthiumbol”, kids also learn that style. They are attuned for that. You are supposed to be in this way. You are under me or under him. When that child is brought up, it is difficult to break out of that pattern. Once that person gets out or is forced to get out of that, that person will find discomfort. Once I have been cage and then suddenly if I have to get out, it is difficult to find my foot. Because I have not been trained for that. Suppose a time comes when I have to go out of the cage and find a way out for myself, it becomes a very difficult task. In our culture, for a woman sacrificing becomes another way of finding satisfaction. That lies in the way she has been brought up. Does that make sense?”

The next organizing theme is “Unrealistic Expectations.” This happens a lot and is mainly the reason for such a high rate of self- sacrifice in clients.

The clients who come are not usually sacrificing of their own happiness. They do this to meet the expectations set by society, family, culture etc. The need to belong also comes here. The clients always complain of trying to fit in. This need to fit in comes from the need to please the external environment. This is linked to one’s sense of belongingness. This need for acceptance and approval comes from a need to belong.

A lot of clients who come into the clinic would have a lot more ways of doing things if given an option, however they chose to go with the expectations set on them even if it was unrealistic to fulfil them. The reason is they would get more acceptance and approval from family, community and sometimes would be in sync with their religious values. This kind of self- sacrifice is purely in the fear of the external environment as well as in the desire to be liked and loved and approved by everyone. Self- sacrifice as the excerpts from the transcripts show has been causing a lot of psychological disturbances and has definitely been one of the major root cause or sometimes accompanying other factors when clients present with psychological complaints.

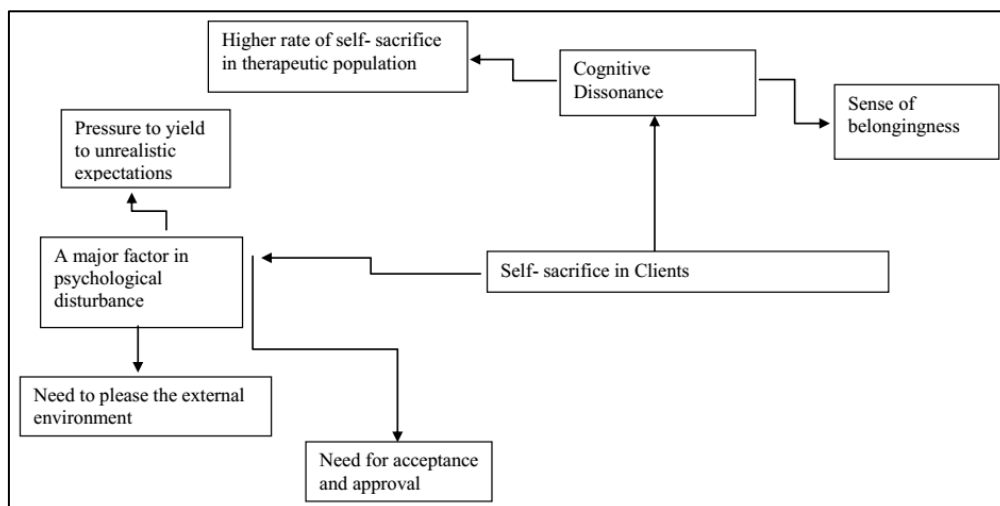


Fig-4: The Global Theme of Self- Sacrifice in Clients

The fourth global theme is Shame and Guilt in Therapy. This theme has been arrived at with the help of two organizing themes. They are strong religious and cultural values and cultural and religious taboo. The first organizing theme is the strong religious and cultural values which are present in our culture and in most of our psyche. These value systems mould the belief structure and offer a strong and sometimes the ultimate perspective from which an individual is supposed to see things.

One of the excerpts from a therapist called Dr.M.P, “I was born and brought up in a Christian family with prayers and church activities. My childhood was with my grandmother. There were a lot hymns and

prayers etc. I was also involved in the church youth group. It was very important in our family to be honest, truthful and lying was a big sin. But as a grew up, I studied in Delhi, all those time till 12th, I was in a highly protected environment and then I went to Delhi, as I got admission in All India Institute of Medical Sciences. It was a very different atmosphere. It was academically oriented and multi- cultural. I happened to have Punjabis as my friends. I used to go to their homes. That totally influenced me. What struck me the most about their way of life was that life can be taken easily etc. That exposure gave a me lot of confidence plus very strong cultural values, ethically values. Gave me a strong back up. How to be honest and have a strong moral base where I can be the only person

responsible for my actions. I was taught as a child that don't get married to any other culture, and that is why when I was in Delhi I did not even think of getting into any relationships. I thought that I shouldn't be doing that. That influenced me a lot”

These excerpts show that the role of religion, family and culture have a strong impact in shaping the character and personality of the individual. The next organizing theme is the cultural and religious taboos. There are many religiously disapproved actions and behavior that are taught to us from a very young age. However, as we grow up we begin to realize these either consciously or unconsciously as id impulses. Many clients come in for anxiety, depression, somatic complaints etc. And the root cause in many cases has seen to be shame, guilt or fear induced psychological disturbances. Taboos on a lot of natural instincts have been one of the common themes which come up in therapy.

This is one excerpt which talks about the role of religious and cultural taboos in psychological disorders. “One of the cases I got years back of a forty-year-old lady whose husband is in Gulf. She had guilty feelings. When he comes to India where she lives, she develops body pain and gets admitted to the hospital. And I enquired about her past. And what came up was that she had a lesbian relationship when she was 22 years old. Actually, she had these only two or three times. But her guilt and anxiety is what caused somatic symptoms every time her husband comes down for holidays to visit her. And I just gave her a counselling and also a space to bring out her anxiety, fear and guilt feelings. After the sessions got over, now she is doing really well. And after five six years she came back to my clinic with her daughter who has some anxiety related symptoms. So she just needed that space to open

up. These types of problems are being created by our value systems. We act as ventilators or shock absorbers.”

The guilt and shame while going against the expected norms is a very predictable outcome in the Indian context. Our task as researchers and psychologists should be to provide them a space where this can be accommodated without interfering with their functioning in the society .As mentioned in the previous theme when one goes against what is given and strongly ingrained in the culture, one can face disapproval and even ostracization in the extreme case scenario. These situations or their mere possibility can disintegrate the psyche. Shame and guilt are the two acceptable ways in which these actions can even be made sense of. Shame, guilt and fear are the acceptable ways in which clients can react to their own actions which are considered as unforgiving. This is a common case which is seen in the clinical scenario. The results show the presence of strong components of religiously and culturally sanctioned ways of behavior which if defied can break the individual psychologically. The impact of these beliefs on the psyche is stronger than one's imagination. In the case of OCD, clients who have thoughts which go against what they have been taught as right feel the guilt and that's what leads to compulsive actions. Most of the classic cases of OCD which comes to the clinic are examples of the guilt and shame embedded and the compulsive actions are ways to overcome these thoughts and the shame and guilt which accompanies them. If a lot of clients come up with guilt, shame and fear over breaking these rules or even the thoughts of breaking them as seen in Obsessive compulsive disorders, are we as a culture preserving our tradition or creating more and more disintegrated psyches which find it almost impossible to function.

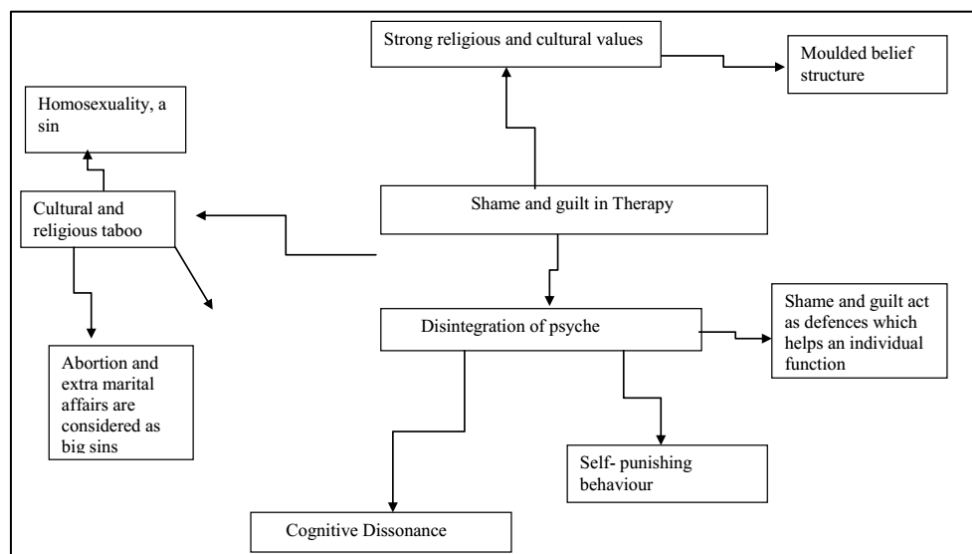


Fig-5: The Global Theme of Shame and Guilt in Therapy



## CONCLUSIONS

Research findings show that the social and cultural dimensions do play a huge role in shaping an individual's life, whether it be in his personal decision making and the interviews with the therapists have given the evidence that these factors play a crucial role in psychological disturbance and in some cases, play a huge contributory role in severe psychiatric illness. Therefore, as researchers in the field of psychology heightened awareness of the socio-cultural scenario is very important while trying to understand a mental health issue.

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