

for milk when it is hungry. Although, this cry is based on reflex, this later on leads to development of awareness that 'I am hungry'. This biological self in the context of socio-cultural environment modifies itself. While you may feel hungry for a chocolate, an Eskimo may not.

A distinction is made between 'personal' and 'social' self. The **personal self** leads to an orientation in which one feels primarily concerned with oneself. We have talked above how our biological needs lead to the development of a 'biological self'. But, soon a child's psychological and social needs in the context of her/his environment lead other components of personal self to emerge. Emphasis comes to be laid on those aspects of life that relate only to the concerned person, such as personal freedom, personal responsibility, personal achievement, or personal comforts. The **social self** emerges in relation with others and emphasises such aspects of life as cooperation, unity, affiliation, sacrifice, support or sharing. This self values family and social relationships. Hence, it is also referred to as **familial** or **relational self**.

COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF SELF

Psychologists from all parts of the world have shown interest in the study of self. These studies have brought out many aspects of our behaviour related to self. As indicated earlier, all of us carry within us a sense of who we are and what makes us different from everyone else. We cling to our personal and social identities and feel safe in the knowledge that it remains stable in our lifetime.

The way we perceive ourselves and the ideas we hold about our competencies and attributes is also called **self-concept**. At a very general level, this view of oneself is, overall, either positive or negative. At a

more specific level, a person may have a very positive view of her/his athletic bravery, but a negative view of her/his academic talents. At an even more specific level, one may have a positive self-concept about one's reading ability but a negative one about one's mathematical skills. Finding out an individual's self-concept is not easy. The most frequently used method involves asking the person about herself/himself.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is an important aspect of our self. *As persons we always make some judgment about our own value or worth.* This value judgment of a person about herself/himself is called **self-esteem**. Some people have high self-esteem, whereas others may have low self-esteem. In order to assess self-esteem we present a variety of statements to a person, and ask her/him to indicate the extent to which those statements are true for her or him. For example, we may ask a child to indicate the extent to which statements such as "I am good at homework", or "I am the one usually chosen for the games", or "I am highly liked by my peers", are true of her/him. If a child reports these statements to be true for her/him, her/his self-esteem will be high in comparison to someone who says "no".

Studies indicate that by the age of 6 to 7 years, children seem to have formed self-esteem at least in four areas: *academic competence, social competence, physical/athletic competence, and physical appearance*, which become more refined with age. Our capacity to view ourselves in terms of stable dispositions permits us to combine separate self-evaluations into a general psychological image of ourselves. This is known as an overall sense of self-esteem.

Self-esteem shows a strong relationship with our everyday behaviour. For example,