

The self from Eastern and Western perspectives

Jyothsna Kamath B.* and Ashok H.S.**

Abstract

The concept of self has long attracted the attention of philosophers, psychologists, and other social scientists, since understanding the self at the micro level can help in extending the understanding of mankind. Several theories about the self exist in both Eastern and Western philosophy. The Eastern, and particularly the Indian perspective defines the self as a permanent non-material entity, distinct from the visible body, mind and intellect, all of which are considered as only variable adjuncts of the unchanging inner self. Even though the core self may not be scientifically measurable, its expression through these adjuncts may be studied, which form the personality of the individual. In contrast the Western perspective defines the self in objective and measurable terms, focusing on the body, mind, intellect and a sense of separate identity. To investigate the theoretically claimed differences in the self from the Eastern and Western perspectives, the present study uses two self-report measures administered to a sample of 640 working adults of Bangalore city. Correlations revealed relationship between dimensions of self from the two perspectives. The self is also found to vary with demographic variables of age and gender. Findings and implications are discussed.

Keywords : Self, eastern and Western Perspective

* Ms. Jyothsna Kamath B. has a post graduate degree in Psychology. She is a UGC-Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology, Bangalore University, Bangalore

** Dr. Ashok H.S. is a Reader in Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Bangalore University since 1984.