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Facets of Personality from the perspective of Ayurveda: A dive into the Indian Knowledge System

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ABSTRACT

The study of personality has been an area of interest for researchers in the field of management and organizational behaviour for a long time. Worldwide, various theories of personality have been studied and considered to assess the various personalities from an organizational perspective. Foreign researchers and authors develop most of the theories considered. Although personality is a global concept, different nations have different theories on personality. The ancient Indian text of Ayurveda has had different theories of personality for ages, yet it is an unexplored area. Ayurveda is considered by many as an ancient alternative science of medicine. But it is much more than that; it is a lifestyle and defines various techniques towards leading a healthy and wholesome life. In this research paper, the authors talk about the origin and history of Ayurveda and the different personality theories, such as Panch Mahabhuta, Tridosha, Triguna, and Prakriti theories, as mentioned in the ancient text, and their relevance in the modern globalized world, along with research implications.

Keywords: Panch Mahabhuta, Tridosha, Triguna, Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Satvik Guna, Rajasik Guna, Tamasik Guna



1.Introduction**1.1 Tridosha**

Ayurveda may be defined as a system of medicine which studies medical phenomena in terms of the three-life factor theory, or the theory of “Tridosha”. The theory says that there are three basic elements of life which help with the metabolism of the body. The three elements are Kapha, Pitta and Vata, also known as water, fire and air respectively. The theory of Tridosha implies that all physiological and pathological imbalances in the human body occur due to an imbalance in the above-mentioned three factors of life(Joshi et al., 2022). But the science of Ayurveda is not just limited to medical studies. Ayurveda is a lifestyle. It tells us about the nature (physical and psychological) of human being since birth. According to Ayurveda, every person has one or two of the tridoshas as their describing factor. It identifies not only the diseases that a person is likely to have; it also describes the exact nature of the person based on the imbalance of tridosha.

The founders of Ayurveda postulated a theory in this context, called as “Tridhatu theory” or the three–life factor theory. This theory is considered to be the framework of Ayurveda (Pt. Shastri & Chaturvedi, 2021). The Tridhatu theory says that the metabolism of body is carried on about by three basic elements of life. As long as the three elements remain in perfect balance and harmony, the person remains healthy. Any sort of imbalance or disorder in the Tridhatu causes diseases in a person. Ayurvedic treatment revolves around restoring balance and harmony among the three factors. (Shilpa & Venkatesha Murthy, 2011b)

The three factors, as discussed above are known as Kapha, Pitta and Vata

Kapha – The growth factor

It is known that every cell of the body grows, multiplies, reproduces, renews and repairs itself. The cells and tissues manage to defend themselves by producing defensive substances like antibodies and other hormones etc. In Ayurveda, all these formative and defensive activities are



considered to be the function of the work of the growth factor. Apart from physical growth, mental abilities and qualities like courage, insight, endurance, steadfastness, and endurance to disease are also the work of this factor.

This growth factor in Ayurveda is known as ‘Kapha’ or ‘Kaphadhatu’ which means the water of life.

Pitta – The Consuming Factor of Life

The second factor is called the Consuming factor of life. This consuming factor regulates the metabolic activities of the human body. This is known as Agni or Pitta or the fire of life according to Ayurveda. Besides keeping the body warm, it keeps the skin, vision and intellect clear and is responsible for the qualities of cheerfulness and bravery in a person.

Vata – The Motive factor of life

The third outstanding feature of life is its physical or dynamic activity. As per Ayurveda, this is caused by ‘Vayu’ or ‘Vata’. According to Charak, ‘Vayu is the very life of living things.’ Ayurvedic scholars consider Vayu as the motive factor, the dynamic factor, bioelectricity or electrical potential. It is present in present in every cell.

Ayurveda states that all types of sensation, voluntary or involuntary motion, circulation, respiration, electrical waves of the heart and brain, and the abilities of the brain like thinking, memory, intelligence, speech, sleep, courage etc. are the functions of the Vata. (Pt. Shastri & Chaturvedi, 2021)

1.2. Triguna

Another form of identifying the personality of people using the ancient Indian method is the theory of Triguna in Ayurveda. Like Tridosha, Triguna is also the inborn qualities of a person. While Tridosha is the qualities of a person’s body, Triguna is the integral component of a person’s mind.

As per Ayurveda, nature and surrounding and every matter on earth is manifested through Prakriti.

Prakriti consists of three qualities of nature. The word Prakriti consists of three root words:

Pra – Satvik Guna

Kr – Rajas Guna

Ti – Tamasik Guna

(“What Is Trigunas? Types (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) of Trigunas,” n.d.)(<https://www.himalayanyogaashram.com/blog/2021/01/01/what-is-trigunas-types-sattva-rajas-tamas-of-trigunas/>)

The five elements of the body, also known as the Panch Mahabhutas are a combination of different Trigunas in different compositions.

Triguna / Combination of Triguna		Predominant Elements of the Body
1	Sattva	Akasa (Ether)
2	Rajas	Vayu (Air)
3	Sattva + Rajas	Agni (Fire)
4	Sattva + Tama	Jal (Water)
5	Tamas	Prithvi (Earth)

Fig.1 (“Trigunas (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas): 3 Gunas to Know Your Personality,” n.d.)<https://www.fitsri.com/yoga/trigunas>

Characteristics of Trigunas

1.2.a. Satvik Guna – Satvik Guna is the state of balance between activity and inertia. It is characterized by happiness, wisdom, compassion, spirituality, lightness in body and mind, self-control, concentration, gratitude and selflessness. It is symbolized by white colour.



1.2.b. Rajasik Guna – Rajas Guna is known for its fickle and active state among Trigunas. It is characterized by desire, fear, depression, workaholism, anxiety, selfishness, ambition, chaos, restlessness and anger. It is symbolized by red colour.

1.2.c. Tamasik Guna – While Rajasik Guna is overactive and Satvik Guna is balanced, Tamasik Guna is characterized by its underactivity, dullness, laziness, greed, confusion, attachment and heaviness. It is symbolized by dark colour.

(“Triguna Theory of Ayurveda ,” n.d.)(<https://www.planetayurveda.com/triguna-theory-of-ayurveda/>)

1.3 Prakriti

Both Tridosha and Triguna are formed of the Panch Mahabhuta. While Tridosha indicates the physiological characteristics of a person, Triguna helps in identifying the psychological characteristics of a person. Both Tridosha and Triguna are determined in a person right from birth and remain the same throughout the life of the person. Tridosha and Triguna together may be called Prakriti. According to **Dr Raghuram Y.S. (MD) and Dr Manasa (BAMS)** in their paper on Trigunas, everything on earth is made up of the three qualities of Satva, Rajas and Tamas and the Panch Mahabhutas. Vata, pitta and Kapha are made up of air, fire and water and earth predominantly respectively and due to such predominance of the elements, Vata is made up of Rajas quality, Pitta of Satva and Rajas quality and Kapha of Tamas quality. Thus, the tridosha are made of Triguna and form the true nature or Prakriti of a person.



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2. Review of Literature

S. No	Title of the Paper	Author Name	Journal	Year of Publication	Summary
1	A REVIEW ON FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRAKRITI	Milind C. Kirte, Priyanka L. Kasar and Sampada S. Sant	World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research	2018	Researchers have iterated that the Prakriti of a person is affected by Prenatal and Post natal factors. This further goes on to show that the Prakriti of a person is determined right from the stage the child is conceived and is impacted by factors like Shukra Prakriti (sperm), Shonita Prakriti (ovum), Kala prakriti (time or season), Garbha Shaya Prakriti (condition of the uterus), Matura Har - Vihar Prakriti (diet and behaviour of mother) and Mahabhutavikar prakriti - all the prenatal factors and the post-natal factors being Jatiprasakta (racial peculiarities), kulaprasakta (familial predisposition), deshanupatini (demography), kalanupatini (seasonal effects), vayonupatini (natural changes according to age), pratyamaniyata (personal habits and individuality).



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2	Prakriti Analysis in Ayurveda: Envisaging the Need of Better Diagnostic Tools	Sanjeev Rastogi	Evidence-Based Practice in Complementary and Alternative Medicine	2011	The need for having a test to analyze and acknowledge the Prakriti of a person for research which may be useful both in the field of academia and industry is addressed by the author. The author takes into consideration various physical characteristics to form a prototype test to determine the Prakriti of a person. The prototype questionnaire has details about characteristics based on Charak Samhita. The characteristics can either be interrogated or inspected.
3	Understanding Personality from Ayurvedic Perspective for Psychological Assessment: A Case	Shilpa S., C. G. Venkatesha Murthy	AYU	2011	The relationship that exists between Tridosha and Triguna to form the Prakriti is studied in the paper. Both Tridosha and Triguna are formed of the Panch Mahabhuta. Our entire body is made up of Panch Mahabhutas, and hence there can never be a state wherein any one of the dosha or guna is completely absent from a human body. Tridosha provides information about the physiological aspect of the human body, whereas Triguna focuses more on the



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						psychological aspect of the human mind. Both of these together form a person. As per the study, the mind is affected by any factor that affects the body.
4	Development and standardization of Mysore Tridosha scale	Shilpa S., C. G. Venkatesha Murthy	AYU	2011		Researchers in their paper have developed a self-assessment scale to determine the dominant Tridosha of the respondents. In the paper, the researchers have created a scale called the Mysore Tridosha Scale to determine the personality and characteristics of people by incorporating questions about the physiology and psychology of different people
5	Assessment of Traits and Types on Personality: An Indian Psychological Perspective	Shilpa S., C. G. Venkatesha Murthy	Indian Journal of Psychology	2014		Researchers have developed the Mysore Tridosha scale and the Mysore Triguna Scale to assess personality from the Ayurvedic perspective of Tridosha and Triguna, and have merge the two scales to study psychology from both Tridosha and Triguna perspectives. The researchers find 189 basic characteristics traits based on Triguna and Tridosha.



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						These 189 characteristics are part of the 16 Classical Personality types based on the Triguna. So, it is concluded that the personality from an Ayurvedic perspective can be considered a combination of Tridosha and Triguna - called Prakriti.
6	Integrated Understanding of Personality Based on PrakĀti: Evidence-based Analysis Towards A Wellness Philosophy	Dr. Shilpa Datar	Journal of Psychosocial Research	2020		The authors have written about the 16 Classical Personality types and 189 characteristics of different kinds of Prakriti based on Tridosha and Triguna and its importance in the field of psychology both from a scientific and academic point of view. The author gives a brief of the characteristics of different kinds of personalities and how using the knowledge of the domain of Ayurveda and Prakriti can expand the horizon about personality and psychology
7	Combination of Trignas in Different Groups of People	Shilpa. S. and C.G. Venkatesha Murthy	Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology	2012		Authors have administered the Mysore Tridosha Scale and the Mysore Triguna Scale to a group of Teachers, IT Professionals and Police Officers, and



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						used one way ANOVA test to get to the Prakriti of the respondents. Teachers are found to be more Sattvik in nature and homogenous group have similar characteristics
8	SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENT OF PERSONALITY ON THE BASIS OF DOSHAJA AND MANAS PRAKRITI	Dr. Lalit Tiwari, Dr. Shashi Kant Tiwari	International Journal of Research in Medical Sciences and Technology	2019		The researchers have written about the different kinds of personalities based on Tridosha and Triguna basis the text available in various Ayurvedic texts and Psychological books. The researchers have explained the psychology of people based on Doshaja Prakriti - Vataj, Pittaj and Kaphaj tridosha and Manas Prakriti - Pure Sattva, Rajas Sattva and Tamas Sattva (each having different types as well) to create a theoretical paper.

3. Conclusion

Based on the study of existing literature, the researcher finds the following personality types:

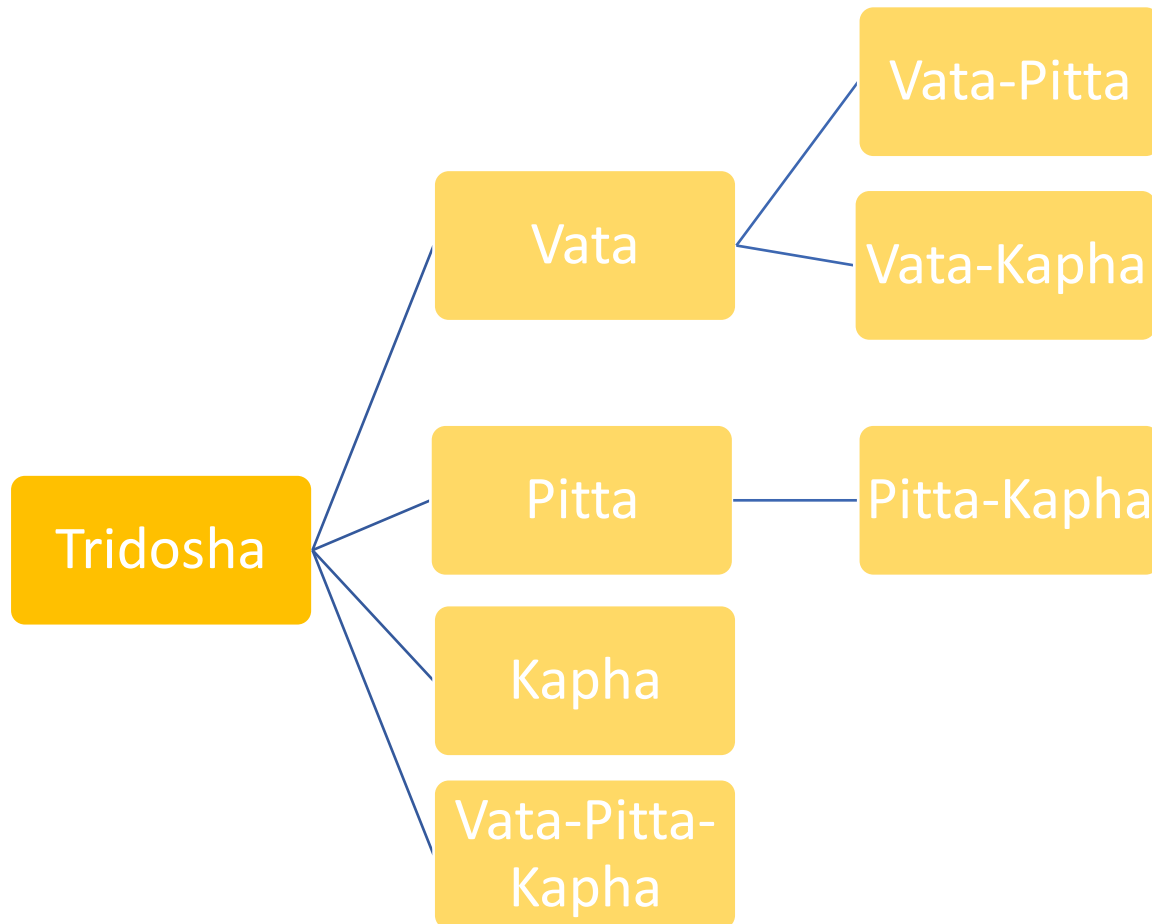


Fig.1. Tridosha and different combinations of tridosha

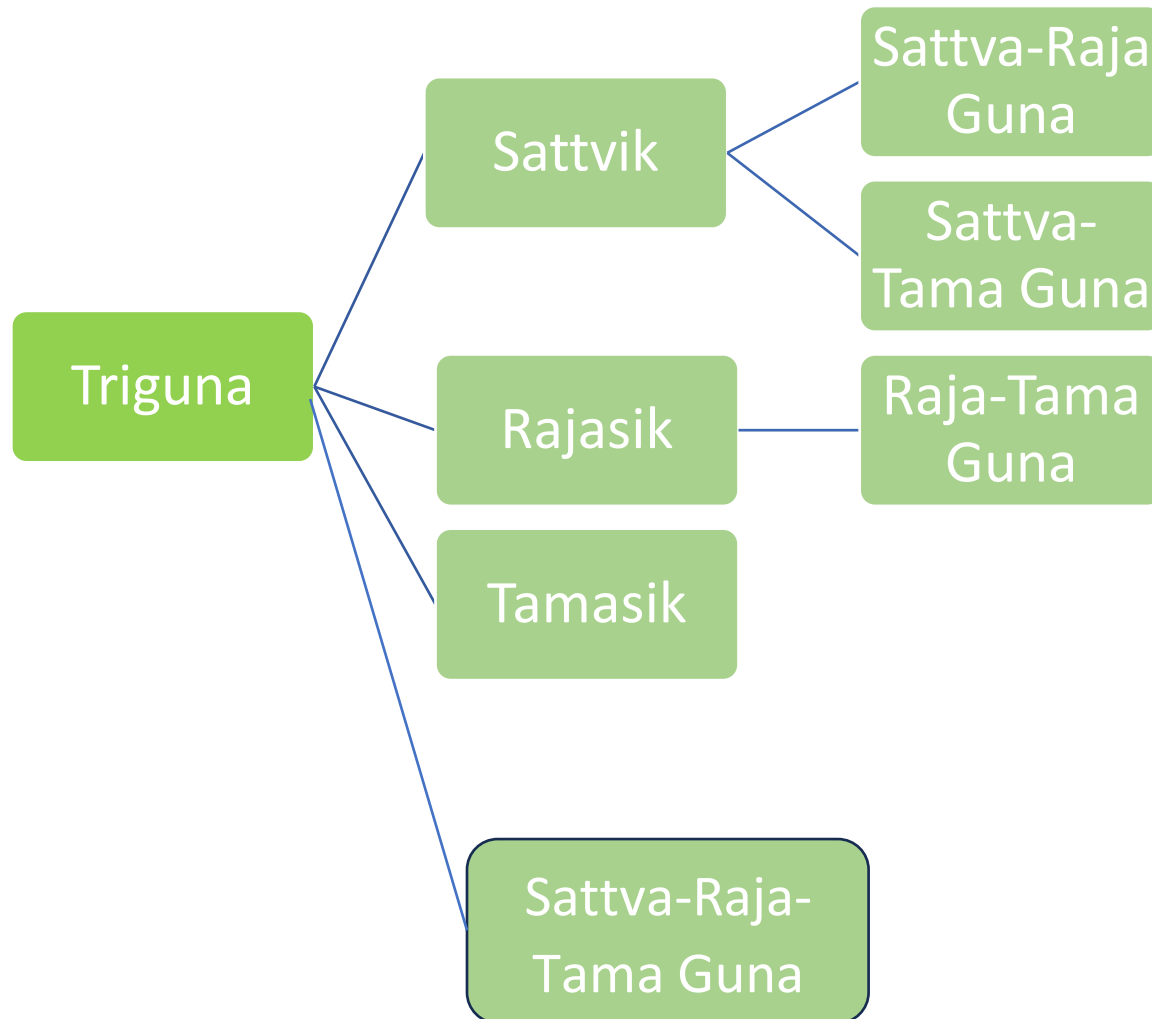


Fig.2. The image shows the combination of different types of Trigunas

The above figures show a combination of different types of tridoshas and Trigunas, respectively.

Fig.1. shows the three tridoshas, namely, Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, are individual personality types,

along with a combination of two personalities, resulting in a dual personality, with the first personality showing slight dominance over the other, like Vata-Pitta, Vata-Kapha, Pitta-Kapha, etc. and the third personality type – a perfect combination of all the three tridoshas, showing a balanced personality – Vata-Pitta-Kapha type.

Fig.2. shows the three Trigunas, namely, Sattvik, Rajasik and Tamasik personality types as individual personalities, with dual personalities like Sattva-Raja Guna, Sattva-Tama Guna, etc. and the third personality type – a perfect combination of all the three Trigunas, showing a balanced personality – Sattva-Raja-Tama Guna.

The combination of the tridoshas and Trigunas result in Prakriti – the 7 combinations in each tridosha and triguna combine to form Prakriti. The resultant combinations of personalities are as follows:

Tridosha	Triguna	Combination
Vata	Sattva	Vata-Sattva
Vata	Rajas	Vata-Rajas
Vata	Tamas	Vata-Tamas
Vata	Sattva-Rajas	Vata-Sattva-Rajas
Vata	Rajas-Tamas	Vata-Rajas-Tamas
Vata	Sattva-Tamas	Vata-Sattva-Tamas
Vata	Sattva-Rajas-Tamas	Vata-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Pitta	Sattva	Pitta-Sattva
Pitta	Rajas	Pitta-Rajas
Pitta	Tamas	Pitta-Tamas
Pitta	Sattva-Rajas	Pitta-Sattva-Rajas
Pitta	Rajas-Tamas	Pitta-Rajas-Tamas

Pitta	Sattva-Tamas	Pitta-Sattva-Tamas
Pitta	Sattva-Rajas-Tamas	Pitta-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Kapha	Sattva	Kapha-Sattva
Kapha	Rajas	Kapha-Rajas
Kapha	Tamas	Kapha-Tamas
Kapha	Sattva-Rajas	Kapha-Sattva-Rajas
Kapha	Rajas-Tamas	Kapha-Rajas-Tamas
Kapha	Sattva-Tamas	Kapha-Sattva-Tamas
Kapha	Sattva-Rajas-Tamas	Kapha-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Pitta	Sattva	Vata-Pitta-Sattva
Vata-Pitta	Rajas	Vata-Pitta-Rajas
Vata-Pitta	Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Tamas
Vata-Pitta	Sattva-Rajas	Vata-Pitta-Sattva-Rajas
Vata-Pitta	Rajas-Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Pitta	Sattva-Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Sattva-Tamas
Vata-Pitta	Sattva-Rajas-Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Kapha	Sattva	Vata-Kapha-Sattva
Vata-Kapha	Rajas	Vata-Kapha-Rajas
Vata-Kapha	Tamas	Vata-Kapha-Tamas
Vata-Kapha	Sattva-Rajas	Vata-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas
Vata-Kapha	Rajas-Tamas	Vata-Kapha-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Kapha	Sattva-Tamas	Vata-Kapha-Sattva-Tamas

Vata-Kapha	Sattva- Rajas- Tamas	Vata-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Pitta-Kapha	Sattva	Pitta-Kapha-Sattva
Pitta-Kapha	Rajas	Pitta-Kapha-Rajas
Pitta-Kapha	Tamas	Pitta-Kapha-Tamas
Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Rajas	Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas
Pitta-Kapha	Rajas- Tamas	Pitta-Kapha-Rajas-Tamas
Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Tamas	Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Tamas
Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Rajas- Tamas	Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Sattva	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Sattva
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Rajas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Rajas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Tamas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Rajas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Rajas- Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Rajas-Tamas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Tamas
Vata-Pitta-Kapha	Sattva- Rajas- Tamas	Vata-Pitta-Kapha-Sattva-Rajas-Tamas

Table 1. Different combinations of Tridosha and Triguna to form Prakriti

The table above depicts the different personality types according to Ayurveda.

4. Managerial Implications

The study of these personality types can help in further research in the field of management, related to psychology, job performance, employee engagement, job satisfaction, psychological capital, personality-job fit, etc. This can further assist in understanding employees better and result in successful working and management of an organisation.



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