3.1 Statement of the Problem

The psychology as an independent discipline of inquiry focused on the psychological problems facing human beings assuming the contents of human flourishing as the subject matter of religion and ethics along with the motivation to make itself as a science like other natural sciences unknowingly ignored a very important aspect of human behaviours. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP), literacy and life expectancy have been failed in explicating the true nature of human well-being which compelled the policy makers to look on the other side of human functioning and to incorporate the measures of well-being in their indices of development (Diener et al., 2010; Weijers & Jarden, 2013).

The current status of the research demonstrates that very little research has been done to uncover the individual strengths and positive community and social institutions to help the individuals or their social life well and an over emphasis was on the psychological problems and their remedies. According to Seligman (2002), the human flourishing and mental constructs were understood only by those factors which acted as restraining forces as opposed to the human strengths. It has been argued that psychology could not produce knowledge of what makes life worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). These arguments led to think the researchers of new branch of psychology which emphasises on the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions (Gable & Haidt, 2005) and pay more attention to build the best qualities in life instead of repairing the worst things in life (Seligman, 2002).

The arguments led the psychologists to undertake human potentialities and human strengths of human flourishing, an important construct that is attracting the researchers of recent years (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Human flourishing refers to living within an optimal range of human functioning, associated with wellness, generativity, performance,
growth, and resilience (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Larsen & Prizmic, 2008). Human flourishing instigates experiencing major aspects of social psychological functioning such as “relatedness, optimism, self-acceptance, feeling competent, having supportive and rewarding relationships, contributing to the happiness of others, being respected by others and it involves both psychological, social well-being and social-psychological prosperity (Diener, et al., 2010). Further, human flourishing may also be conceived as a condition which facilitates an optimal psychological and functioning of the individuals (Keyes & Haidt 2002).

The researchers have shown that the Big Five factor model has high predictive validity on many other dimensions, such as emotional experience and experiences of happiness (Cloninger, 2013). The positive or negative experiences are determined by the personality dispositions of the individuals (Kirkpatrick, 2015). The researchers have reported that the Big Five model especially neuroticism and extraversion significantly predicts happiness. It has been reported that the individuals high in extroversion inclined to report experience more positive emotions. In the same manner, the extraverts are explicitly happier than those who score lower on this variable (Cloninger, 2013). It was reported that the individuals with low level of neuroticism exhibit higher happiness and life satisfaction as compared to those who are high on this trait (Cloninger, 2013). Thus, it can be argued that personality attributes of the individuals are significant predictors of happiness as these traits determine affective level and environmental responsivity of the individuals (Corr, 2008; Revelle, 1995). These conclusions are also true for the individuals across age, gender and culture (Kirkpatrick, 2015). In a study of Holder and colleagues (2012), children in India with social, active, and less shy personality attributes were found happy. There are some conflicting findings regarding the role of extraversion and neuroticism in happiness which might be due to cultural differences (Kirkpatrick, 2015).
The above discussions on the role of personality in shaping the nature and extent of happiness clearly demonstrate that culture and cultural conceptions of personality might be acting as the mediating and moderating role in determining the nature of the interactions between these two psychological constructs. In India, there has a long debate over the usefulness and applicability of the American and Western conceptions of personality and other psychological constructs to explicate and understand the behaviours of people having a different religious, social philosophical, cultural and spiritual upbringing (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock & Mishra, 1996). It has been argued that the reductionistic ontology of personhood of the Western cannot be applied to understand the psychology of the people having their roots of socialization in the society having spiritual ontology (Das, 1999).

The researchers have studied the relationship of personality and goal orientations and found that the Big Five had a multiple correlation with the motivation criteria and proved the important role of five-factor model of personality in performance motivation. The goal orientation theory is rooted in goal-as-motives theory which argued that all actions are given meaning, direction, and purpose by the goals that individuals seek out, and that the quality and intensity of behaviour will change as these goals change (Covington, 2000). In a meta-analytic study, it was reported that very few studies have been included goal orientation theory, a motivational theory that describes the mental framework for how individuals interpret and respond to goal attainment situations which carry important motivational implications for training and task performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Thus, this area is characterized by only a limited work that has examined the linkages between personality traits and goal orientation. Additionally, there is no evidence of pursuance of research on Trigunas theory of personality and goal orientations. Thus, there is a strong need to carry out this research in Indian setting.
In India, the Vedic literature is a depository of knowledge relating to all fields of human endeavor, from physics and psychology to medicine, art and aeronautics (Goswami, 1977). The Vedas literature says that all material elements are infused with the modes of nature, or gunas-sattva, rajas and tamas. According to Dasgupta (1961), gunas are the universal characteristics of all kinds of mental tendencies. The Vedic theory assumes that our psycho-physical disposition consists of mixtures of the gunas (Prabhupada, 1976). According to the Vaisnava or personalist approach of Vedic philosophy, the material personality is expressed through the gunas which is a covering of the original spiritual personality of the living entity. This theory conceives personality as a continuum of past, present and future. Developing an understanding of the gunas is relevant for the social and mental health sciences to have a full and true nature of people of India (Das, 1999).

The researchers have shown that self-compassion is associated with psychological health including increased positive outcomes such as happiness and life satisfaction and decreased negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Barnard & Curry, 2011; MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Zessin, Dickhauser, & Garbade, 2015). Self-compassion can be viewed as a useful emotional regulation strategy, in which painful or distressing feelings are not avoided but are instead held in awareness with kindness, understanding, and a sense of shared humanity (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Isen, 2000). It can also be an important aspect of emotional intelligence, which involves the ability to monitor one’s own emotions and to skilfully use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and may results into better mental health outcomes and lower incidence of anxiety and (Blatt, Quinlan, Chevron, McDonald, & Zuroff, 1982), decreased feelings of isolation (Wood, Saltzberg, Neale, & Stone, 1990), or over-identification with thoughts and emotions (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991).
The researchers have exhibited that mastery goals lead the individuals towards curiosity, standardize performance and acceptance of their mistakes and intrinsic motivation which entails increased persistence in tasks, willingness to seek help and enjoyment (Neff et al., 2005). On the other hand, people with performance goals tend to fear being outperformed, fear mistakes and are motivated to achieve to enhance their self-worth. Neff et al. (2005) conducted a study on 110 undergraduate students and found self-compassion to be positively correlated with mastery goals and with intrinsic motivation and negatively correlated with performance goals. Contrarily, another study of 91 students could not replicate these findings (Williams et al., 2008). Thus, there is a strong need to conduct further studies with effective measures to develop insight into the relationship of self-compassion with achievement goal orientations.

The researchers have argued that personality traits and goal orientations may have interdependent functions in the motivational process (Elliot & Thrash, 2002). Personality traits are assumed to act as energizers whereas goal orientations are viewed as specific and cognitive forms of regulation that shape the direction of these general propensities. In the other words, goal orientations of the individuals are developed in the consonance of their specific personality traits (Wang & Erdheim, 2007). It has been reported that goal orientation and general personality traits are related but distinct constructs (Zweig & Webster, 2004). There is lack of studies which look at the relations between personality traits and goal orientation (Wang & Erdheim, 2007). The research also lacks on Trigunas theory of personality and goal orientations. Thus, there is a strong need to carry out this research in Indian setting.

The study on self-compassion, a construct based on the philosophy of Buddhism, got popularized just before a decade ago with the work of Neff (2003). The review indicated that there are plenty of studies in compassion but the studies on self-compassion are limited. The
previous researches have shown that self-compassion is associated with increased levels of psychological health, happiness and life satisfaction as well as decreased negative mental health outcomes of anxiety and depression (Zessin, Dickhauser, & Garbade, 2015). It has also been argued that self-compassion is an emotional regulation strategy through which painful or distressing feelings held in awareness with kindness, understanding and a sense of shared humanity (Isen, 2000). It also acts as a component of emotional intelligence through which one monitors one’s own emotions and skilfully guides one’s thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Thus, the construct has been found to be a very important having curative, preventive and promotive roles in the mental health outcomes. In spite of its usefulness and proved effectiveness, there is a dearth of research on self-compassion in relation with human flourishing and academic goal orientations in terms of indigenous personality theory of Trigunas. In addition, the findings regarding gender difference in self-compassion are mixed. One view argues that females possess more interdependent sense of self (Cross & Madson, 1997; Gilligan, 1988) and to be more empathetic than males (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983; Zahn-Waxler, Cole, & Barrett, 1991), so they may be more self-compassionate than men. The other view suggests that females tend to be more self-critical and to have more of ruminative coping style than males which results in lowered level of self-compassion in women (Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hertzog, 1999).

The above discussion demonstrates that the researchers have accepted the importance of the scientific study of self-compassion and human flourishing especially in cross-cultural settings with this acceptance that there is a dearth of research on self-compassion, human flourishing and achievement goal orientations across the globe. It is also evident that most of the researches on self-compassion, human flourishing and achievement goal orientations have been conducted adopting Big Five model of personality which were confined to the Western and American societies whereas Indian conception of Trigunas personality may provide
conclusions having higher as well as relevant theoretical and practical values. The research on personality, human flourishing and achievement goal orientations can also be argued to be incomplete as the previous researches did not provide satisfactory explanations as to why personality differences cause different level of occurrences of self-compassion, human flourishing and achievement goal orientations in the individuals. In this backdrop, the present research has been proposed to conduct a study to understand the role of Trigunas theory of personality and self-compassion in determining the nature and dynamics of human flourishing and academic goal orientations of the male and female participants.

3.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed to be tested through the data of the present study:

1. The sattvics will achieve higher mean scores on self-compassion and human flourishing as compared to tamssics.
2. The average and high scoring self-compassion participants will show higher mean scores on human flourishing and academic goal orientations as compared to their low scoring counterparts.
3. The male participants will achieve higher mean scores on self-compassion, human flourishing and academic goal orientations as compared to their female counterparts.
4. The sattvics will show higher mean scores on mastery as compared to the tamssics whereas the tamssics will show higher mean scores of performance approach and performance avoidance as compared to the sattvics.
5. The average and high scoring self-compassion participants will show higher mean scores on mastery as compared to the participants with low self-compassion whereas the participants with low self-compassion will show higher mean scores of performance approach and performance avoidance as compared to these two groups.
6. The male participants will show higher mean scores on mastery as compared to their female counterparts whereas the females will show higher mean scores of performance approach and performance avoidance as compared to the male participants.

7. The scores on self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness components of self-compassion and human flourishing of the sattvics and tamssics will show positive correlations whereas there will be negative correlations among the scores of self-judgement, isolation and over-identification components of self-compassion and human flourishing of the sattvics and tamssics.

8. The scores on self-compassion and human flourishing of the sattvics and tamssics will show positive correlations with their scores on mastery and negative correlations with the scores of performance approach and performance avoidance components of academic goal orientations of the participants.

9. The scores on self-compassion of the sattvic will account for more variance in the scores of human flourishing, academic goal orientations and their components as compared to the participants with tamssic personality attribute.

3.3 Methods and Procedure

The present research endeavour employed a correlational research design. The convenient sampling method was used to recruit the participants in the present study.

3.3.1 Sample

Five hundred undergraduate and postgraduate students with equal number of male and female served as the participants in the present study. The biographic details of the participants were obtained through a questionnaire. The participants with age range from 17 to 25 years were allowed to take part in the study. The age of the male participants ranged from 17 years to 25 years (M = 20.13, SD = 2.15) whereas the age of female participants
spanned from 18 years to 25 years (M = 19.89, SD = 1.85). The number of participants with low (M = 20.01, SD = 2.09), average (M = 19.84, SD = 1.86) and high (M = 20.19, SD = 2.06) scoring self-compassion were 183, 162 and 155, respectively. The number of sattvics (Mean Age = 20.05, SD = 2.07) and tamssics (Mean Age = 19.90, SD = 1.93) were 265 and 203, respectively.

3.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The participants with apparent normal physical and mental health were included in the study. The participants with age ranging from 17 to 25 were allowed to participate in the present study.

3.3.3 Tools

All the scales employed in the present were first translated by three researchers from English to Hindi followed by retranslation from Hindi to English. In addition, their face validity was established by the competent researchers of the field according to the basic constructs before the final decision to use these tools was taken. The researchers had gone through the various constructs and validated each item of the scales. Following psychometric tools were employed to collect the data of the present study:

3.3.3.1 The Vedic Personality Inventory

The Vedic Personality Inventory (VPI) standardized by Wolf (1998) was employed to measure personality in terms of Indian conceptions of Trigunas. The researchers have used this questionnaire extensively across the globe. The questionnaire has been well researched and validated psychological assessment tool based on the three Gunas (Wolf, 1998). It consists of 56 items with seven point scale (1-Very Strongly Disagree, 2-Strongly Disagree, 3-Somewhat Disagree, 4-Neutral, 5-Somewhat Agree, 6-Strongly Agree, 7-Very Strongly Agree) which includes 15 items for Sattva guna, 19 items for Rajas guna and 22 items for Tamas guna. Wolf (1998) reported that VPI has good internal consistency ranging from $\alpha =$
0.70 to 0.92 for the three Gunas (Wolf, 1998). Reliability coefficients of the questionnaire reported by the researchers range from 0.74 to 0.79 (Das, 1999).

### 3.3.3.2 Self-compassion Scale

To assess the self-compassion of the participants, Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003) was employed. The scale explicitly represents the thoughts, emotions and behaviours associated with the various components of self-compassion. It includes items that measure how often people respond to feelings of inadequacy or suffering with self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification. It consists of 26 items comprising self-kindness (items-5, 12, 19, 23, 26), self-judgment (items-1, 8, 11, 16, 21), common humanity (items-3, 7, 10, 15), isolation (items-4, 13, 18, 25), mindfulness (items-9, 14, 17, 22) and over-identified (items-2, 6, 20, 24) with five point scale from almost never to almost always. There is ample evidence for the reliability and validity of the SCS. The internal reliability of the SCS has been found to be consistently high in studies across a wide variety of populations suggesting that all SCS items are inter-correlated in a satisfactory manner (Allen et al. 2012; Neff & Pommier 2013; Werner et al. 2012). The large majority of translations have replicated the six-factor structure of the scale across the cultures (Arimitsu 2014; Azizi et al. 2013; Castilho et al. 2015; Garcia-Campayo et al. 2014).

### 3.3.3.3 Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF)

Human flourishing was measured with the help of Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2005). The scale is based on the model of flourishing having theoretical origin from three sources: studies on emotional well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999), studies on hedonic (subjective or emotional) well-being and eudaimonic (psychological) well-being (Ryff, 1989) and studies on social well-being (Keyes, 1998). The scale consists of 14-item. Each item is scored according to respondents’ experiences over the last month on a 6-point Likert scale (‘never’, ‘once or twice’, ‘about once a week’, ‘2 or 3
times a week’, ‘almost every day’, or ‘every day’). Three items represent emotional well-being, six items represent psychological well-being and five items represent social well-being. It has been reported that internal consistency reliability for each of the three sets of measures-emotional, psychological, and social well-being-in the MHC short and long forms have all been > .80 (Keyes, 2005a).

3.3.3.4 Achievement Goal Orientations Scale

The Achievement Goal Orientation Scale developed and standardized by (Midgley et al., 1998) was employed in the present study to measure academic goal orientations of the participants. The scale was translated by three researchers from English to Hindi followed by retranslation from Hindi to English. This scale has three subscales: task goal orientation, ability-approach goal orientation and ability-avoid goal orientation. The three subscales aim to measure mastery goals, performance-approach goals and performance-avoidance goals. The task goal orientation subscale contains six items representing concern with understanding and learning class material, the ability-approach goal orientation subscale contains six items reflecting concern with trying to outperform others in order to demonstrate one’s own ability and the ability-avoid goal orientation subscale includes six items representing concern with not looking incompetent or inferior to others. The responses on the scale were recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from 1= almost never to 5= almost always. Previous researches have shown good internal reliability, test-retest reliability and construct validity (Midgley et al., 1998). The internal reliability for mastery, performance approach and performance-avoidance were reported to be $\alpha = .81$, $\alpha = .81$, $\alpha = .86$, respectively (Neff, Hsieh & Dejitterat, 2005).

3.3.4 Procedure

The data collection for the study was started after the procurement of the questionnaires and selecting the sample. For the sake of convenience and accuracy, the whole sample was divided into 20-25 groups. Before conducting the actual study, an integrated
strategy was developed and a thorough study of the questionnaires and other details including the precautions and instructions were read and understood. The researcher read the instructions aloud along with the pace of the participants to control the time of presentation of each item of the scales. Various scales were administered and the scoring was carried out as per the guidelines depicted in their manuals. The raw scores so obtained were arranged as per the design of the study. When the task of data collection was over, the same were treated with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a software programme to analyse the data. The mean scores, standard deviations (SDs), coefficients of correlation and coefficients of regression analysis were computed. The details of the results have been presented in the next chapter.