Positive psychology emphasizes the role of identification and applications of positive traits that are seen as linked to positive adaptational outcomes. The study of positive traits received an impetus after Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a system of classification of character strengths based on a review of historical and contemporary literature across multiple fields such as ethics, philosophy and psychology. In their system, virtues refer to the core characteristics ‘valued by moral philosophers and thinkers across ages’ while character strengths refer to ‘the psychological ingredients (psychological processes and mechanisms) that serve as distinct routes of manifesting specific virtues’ (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Several studies have since been undertaken to examine the profile of strengths and their socio-demographic correlates using VIA taxonomy of strengths in varied samples across nations (e.g. Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006; Shimai, Otake, Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006; Linely et al., 2007; Proctor, Maltby & Linley, 2011). Although many of these studies are international/ cross-cultural in nature, non-western nations have been poorly represented. Moreover, in several of these studies, the sample is restricted to internet users. There are only few studies from India on character strengths, their correlates and assessment issues (e.g. Singh & Jha, 2008; Singh & Choubisa, 2009; 2010; Banth & Singh, 2011; Mehrotra, Tripathi, & Banu, 2012). The VIA taxonomy of strengths was developed with the goal of providing a universal system of classification of strengths, applicable across cultures. But recent literature is pointing towards the possibility that certain strengths that are valued in some cultures, especially eastern cultures may have been neglected (Shimai et al., 2006; Mehrotra et al., 2012). The development of strengths is viewed as involving processes that are deeply embedded in the individual’s culture (Smith, 2006). Cultures can vary in term of the availability of nurturing or