


# Chapter 1

## Indian Psychology: Challenges, Strategies, and Prospects in Education

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### ABSTRACT

*Knowledge dissemination has been a hallmark of Indian tradition for millennia, particularly in the area of human biology and behavior. Westernization and globalization, however, have caused a gradual erosion of this rich heritage, resulting in waning interest among the populace. As a discipline, Indian Psychology faces a number of formidable challenges. The number of preconceived biases within society, the Westernized educational system, and the shortage of faculty with expertise in Indian psychology hinder the recognition and dissemination of the field. A dearth of research studies directly related to Indian psychology is also hindering its development and recognition. Emphasis was given on the importance of thorough research to substantiate its contributions to the understanding of human cognition, behavior, and consciousness. Promoting Indian psychology as an important and respected field requires dispelling misconceptions and fostering awareness. Through collaboration and increased research, Indian psychology can rightfully claim its place within the global academic community.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is a derivative of philosophy, and is now an amalgamation of numerous other disciplines. It is predominantly a western concept now. Not just because of its origins, but because of where the records lie or who writes them. Indian psychology means the ideas and approaches can be derived from the Indian culture and philosophies thousands of years back in India (Sharma, 2021). Ancient Indian scriptures have descriptions of cognition, perception, thinking, consciousness, and self-actualization. The Vedas and the Upanishads, dated back to 600 BC, have mentioned the above concepts with steps to achieve them (Sedlmeier & Srinivas, 2016).

Unfortunately, these scriptures have not been used to disseminate knowledge. Instead, it was handed down from the Guru (teacher) to the Sishya (disciple) by word of mouth, specifically to specific communities.. Hence most of the knowledge was lost (Sivananda, 1999). For any scientific discipline, what is remembered is what is taken down. Much history remains unknown to us because no documentation was maintained. What is left out is now understood by only a few people because (1) the language it is written in – Sanskrit, most of us are not trained in this language, and (2) modernization led us to the western world and its knowledge. More preference is given to western education by both students and their parents (Malviya, 2021). On the one hand, we can be proud that modernization and globalization are suitable for broader knowledge. Still, on the other hand, we should not discourage the knowledge of our ancestors and lose it (Mason & De la Torre, 2000).

The philosophies given by our ancestors have their roots in consciousness as well as yoga. Indian literature states how mental status has been examined thoroughly (Avasthi et al., 2013). It takes on a life-affirming worldview. It emphasizes spirituality and is therefore not restricted to individuals of Indian descent but can transcend across borders, encompassing all of humanity. ‘Yoga’ does not refer to the philosophical school or its subsets (such as *raja yoga* or *hatha yoga*). It refers to a conscious effort to be one with the Divine (Rao, 1979). The life-affirming spirituality entails one that is a force used to accept human nature and transcend reality for the Divine to manifest itself. This consciousness-based approach to psychology can make a significant contribution to psychology globally (Cornelissen, 2013). Its principles are being increasingly studied all across the world. The link between emotions, feelings and physiological reactions has been studied well and documented in the Ayurveda. In the past half-century, due to the efforts of the Indian Government and actions of the practitioners western world has accepted Ayurveda and its practices. More people are coming to India seeking Ayurveda treatment (Jaiswal & Williams, 2016).

After 1960 when humanistic psychology emerged in the western world, psychology readers started to pay more attention to the theories, methods, and approaches proposed and practiced by the Indians thousands of years back (CLAY, 2002). One idea had a significant role in linking modern Psychology to Indian traditions and early Indian philosophies – Maslow’s theory about self-actualization and transcendental self-actualization. In his book, Abraham Maslow mentions the derivations of hierarchical need from the Pancha kosha concept (Heylighen, 1992). Pancha kosha is the basic five sheaths of human existence (Müller, 1879). Indian psychology became highly relevant after this. Some branches of Psychology that borrow at length from Indian writings are Parapsychology, Psychology of Religion and Transpersonal Psychology, Psychology of Mysticism, and Psychology of Consciousness. Psychology literature is now infused with terms such as Jain Psychology, Oriental Psychology, Yoga Psychology, and Buddhist Psychology, amongst others. These are indeed significant achievements for streams of Psychology that are not western. Publications in the field of Indian Psychology are indeed increasing,

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