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This article makes an effort to conceptualise the emerging field of scholarship called Indian Psychology (IP) in the backdrop of the disciplinary developments. After situating IP in the disciplinary matrix, the article articulates the meaning and scope of IP, its critical features and misconceptions about its conceptualisation. It is argued that IP is a school of psychology primarily rooted in the diverse Indian thought systems with panhuman appeal. It has potential to offer an encompassing vision which covers the vast expanse of the human consciousness from a dynamic experiential vantage point. As a theory and practice, IP is practical and transcendental in nature. While IP chiefly addresses the existential issues from a first person perspective, it is inclusive in approach and does not ignore the mundane concerns of everyday life and social welfare.

The Core and Context of Indian Psychology

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The Core and Context of Indian Psychology

***Indian Psychology* (*IP*)** has its roots in the diverse traditions of knowledge deliberated upon in various texts (*Shastra*), as well as the practices, artifacts and meanings embodied in various forms, shared by the people (*Loka*) in the zone of Indian civilisation. It is part of a living tradition which has continued unabated since time immemorial. As Thapar (2002) has remarked "at certain levels there are aspects of cultural traditions in India that can be traced to roots as far back as a few thousand years" (p. xxv) (see also Basham, 1954). Therefore, IP is different and broader than the academic psychology as it began in India in the beginning of the last century under the aegis of the scheme of Western domination. IP characterises the Indian psychological viewpoints which are rooted in the Indian civilisation. IP has evolved through rigorous observation, experimentation and reflection, through training under Gurus, continuous contemplation and sharing of personal accounts of inner experiences. This knowledge base has grown, diversified and survived through many challenges and upheavals. It still continues, in a plural mode, to shape in explicit, as well as, implicit ways the dominant cultural ethos of the Indian people.

The thought systems and practices of IP, however, are panhuman in their basic conceptual orientation (Nakamura, 1997). Integrally bound with Eastern philosophies, IP has evolved not as a moralistic but as a cultural discourse on world views and epistemologies, which offers an alternative to the logico-positivistic enterprise of Western psychology. Though originated in the Indian subcontinent, the concern has been to free human beings from bondages and suffering, wherever they are located and whatever their sources are. This discourse has grown around the essential nature of one's being and the various paths through which one comes to know about it. IP has endeavoured for creating choices, finding out one's own *dharma* (duty) and pursuing one's own path of evolution in a wider time–space framework. It situates human functioning in the cosmic context within which are embedded the personal, interpersonal and communal level engagements. Such an ethos tends to promote democracy in ideas. It offers freedom to engage in diverse modes in a spirit of pluralistic enquiry and engagement. Indeed IP is built on the edifice of diverse schools of materialistic/realistic as well as idealistic thoughts. They offer disparate perspectives on understanding life and its potential for participatory growth and evolution in an interdependent

world of existence. Menon (2005) takes the view that IP has expanded the conventional definition of psychology from the "science of human behaviour" to "human possibility and progress". It has nurtured a world view informed by continuity, interdependence and connectivity across all life forms. It emphasises an inclusive notion of field rather than individual as the centre of reality. The field (*Kshetra*) and knower of the field (*Kshetrajya*) are not mutually excusive. By situating humans in a wider space–time continuum, this tradition offers a whole range of theories and concepts pregnant with many exciting hypotheses about human nature, their life course and modalities of worldly engagements.

Indian sages and thinkers were struck by the immensity of the universe and the empirically inexhaustible mystery of life. This wonder of existence is portrayed in the hymns of the Vedas, which attribute divinity to the striking aspects of nature (Radhakrishnan, 1953) and the human mind (Sri Aurobindo, 1939/2006). In the Vedic texts it was held that the universe has evolved out of *One*. This first principle of "that One" (*tad ekam*) is considered uncharacterisable. It is without qualities or attributes, neither positive nor negative. Any attempt to describe it is to delimit and bind that which is limitless and unbounded. All gods and deities are of late or secondary origin (*Ṛg Veda*, Nasadiya Sukta 10:129). What is important here is the view that holds continuity (*Avyaya Bhava*) and complimentarity in various forms or manifestations of reality. It leads one to perceive unity in diversity and seeing no contradiction between the opposites. Thus, though all later thinkers derived their inspiration from the Vedas, they were open minded and exercised freedom to interpret and elaborate the text(s) in different ways. The Upanishads are not the thoughts of a single thinker; they evolved over a period of time through scholarly discourses and contemplation. In the Upanishads, the interest shifted from objective to the subjective, from outside world to self in whose infinite depths the universe is reflected in its entirety. The Upanishads give in some detail the path of the inner ascent, the inward journey towards ultimate reality. The Upanishadic seers extended the tenets of spirituality to the utmost bounds of human existence. The diversity of ideas, concepts and visions encapsuled in the verses of the Upanishads has inspired generations of thinkers and has laid the foundations of IP.

It may be mentioned in this context that the Vedic seers admitted in all humility that their proposition of the creation was only a surmise, for it is not possible to be sure of the events that occurred in the distant past. They also conceded that the perfect and absolute cannot be known

through the imperfect human mind. What is known about life and existence is therefore conjectural, logical and intuitive in most of the cases. Skepticism and questioning is very much built-in in the mode of inquiry in the *Ṛg Veda* itself. It is said of Indra, "Of whom they ask, where is he? Of him indeed they also say, he is not." (the *Ṛg Veda* II 12). Such doubts are frequently raised throughout the classical texts and subsequently a whole system of inquiry called the Nyāya was developed to ensure errorless thinking. Systematic dialogue (*Samvād*) has been a potent method of advancing understanding about life and the universe. In the case of testing premises about self and transcendental knowledge, self-verification by using first-person experiential methods, like meditation, was considered to be the best option. This tradition of questioning and free thinking provided impetus to IP for centuries, and with many ups and downs, and setbacks it kept prospering till the recent times. In what follows, we present a brief history of IP and then note the changing perceptions of IP. We trace the disciplinary contours of IP and note its distinguishing features. To clarify the nature of IP we then discuss what is not the core of IP, before concluding the article.

Brief Historical Background

For the last 100 years of its existence, the contents and practices of teaching–learning of psychology in India has been dominated by the Euro-American tradition. The first department of psychology established at Calcutta University in 1916 was a discipline imported from the West but was supposedly universal in contents and theories. This incarnation of psychology was imbued with a Western spirit of objective knowledge and other-oriented methodology. Even after the political independence of India in 1947, psychology continued to grow in the same institutional framework and learning paradigm with its anchor deeply entrenched in behaviourist ideology. It has been alien in the sense that the teaching was primarily in terms of sharing and propagating the Euro-American principles and practices, rather than applying and linking to social reality with an open mind. Though it did expand rapidly in the Indian universities and institutes of higher learning and professional training, it mainly served the purpose of substantiating and illustrating the principles of Western scientific psychology taking Indian samples with little contribution to the (supposedly universal) body of knowledge pool called psychology. While some scholars did try to relate to Indian ethos and attended to explicate

indigenous sources of knowledge they did that privately, and the public face projected in curriculum and teaching programme did not incorporate that as legitimate and worthwhile. The idea of psychology and its preferred way of categorisation and conceptualisation was held pre- or a-cultural and culture was given no place in the constitution of psychological materials or elements. For example, motives, drives, needs, perceptual learning and various cognitive phenomena were kept separate from the cultural tradition. The dynamics of creating a niche for a new discipline and the pressures to form a identity amid physical science disciplines might have led to this. By the mid-1970s, discontentment was brewing among some Indian psychologists who cared for application and relevance of their efforts (Dalal, 1996). To the vast majority, a psychology patterned after physical science model was treated as intrinsically universal in which there was no scope for Indian or for that matter any other non-Western perspective.

The trinity of materialism, quantification and objectivity of Western psychology and commitment to the very goal of science to control and manipulate others fascinated Indian psychologists. This ethos of a new science of psychology was so captivating that most of the courses became immune to the cultural context. For instance, the courses offered at Masters level had a compulsory component of history of psychology but they were silent about Indian contributions, nor was there any disciplinary engagement with Indian culture and society but Greek, British, other European and American philosophical contributions captured the entire space. Such a decontextualised training could survive merely on the ground of metatheoretical suppositions of the universality of the basic principles of psychology, its way of categorisation and understanding. It subscribed to a mechanistic and reductionist framework supported by an empiricist methodology.

It may be noted that the growth of scientific psychology has resulted in losing the essential constituents, such as psyche and consciousness, and making the enterprise an empirical discipline, which is composed of things borrowed from various disciplines and nothing of its own. As such psychology is so disintegrated and fragmented that a meaningful definition of the discipline is next to impossible. Today psychology is experiencing fragmentation and its diverse applications make it contingent on variable contexts (Misra & Kumar, in press). The illusion of developing grand empirically derived theories and principles of human behaviour and action could not sustain for long. One finds distinct changes in the academic scenario in the field of psychology that have created avenues for an engagement with culture. The emergence of cross-cultural, ethno, indigenous and cultural psychological approaches

brought into focus the significance of culture in understanding psychological processes. Also, the supremacy of physical science as the prototype of inquiry into human affairs has been questioned by the philosophers of science (Derrida, 1982; Foucault, 1977; Gergen, 1989). This has led to revision of the nature of understanding of science and scientific enterprise. A related development has been the increasing use of qualitative methods which rely on subjectivity, human experience and a constructivist approach to human understanding. These developments facilitated the emergence of a critical look at the disciplinary affairs and various possibilities have emerged.

The realisations within the community of psychologists in India emanating from self-reflection and growing discomfort with the limitations of academic engagements within the received paradigm, at conceptual as well as societal planes, led to nationwide reflection and debate among Indian psychologists. The result was a distinct clamour to indigenise the prevailing Euro-American discipline and to make it culturally sensitive. D. Sinha (1965) gave a call for integration of modern psychology with Indian thought. Many significant works involving critique and reconstruction have come out in the following decades. Sinha's writings (1981, 1986, 1997, 1998) persistently endeavoured to make the point that psychology has to be culturally relevant and called for indigenisation of the discipline. A large number of publications have come out during this period critically reviewing the state of psychology in India and urging psychologists to make it socially relevant and compatible with the Indian ethos (Dalal, 1996; Gergen et al., 1996; Misra & Gergen, 1993; Misra & Mohanty, 2002; Misra et al., 1999; Pandey, 2001, 2004; D. Sinha, 2000). Amid much confusion and lack of self-confidence the move to articulate and nurture psychology with Indian concepts and theories took considerable time in gathering momentum. However, these efforts to rejuvenate psychology in the ancient texts intensified in the 1980s and 1990s. Some notable publications of this period are by Paranjpe (1984, 1998), Chakraborty (1995), Saraswathi (1999) and Rao (1988, 2002a, 2002b). This stream has built not only on the interpretation of traditional concepts and theories in contemporary idiom, but also on their integration within a broader, global perspective. A comprehensive approach to IP involves issues of justice and *dana* (Krishnan, 2005), poverty (Misra & Tripathi, 2004), interpersonal relationship (Kakar & Kakar, 2007), organisational development (Singh-Sengupta, 2001, creativity (Bhawuk, 2003), concept of self (Bhawuk, 2005), pain and suffering (Anand, 2004, 2006), emotions and affect (Bhawuk, 2008a; Jain, 2002; Misra, 2004, 2005; Paranjpe, 2009)

religious behaviour and devotion (Paranjpe, 2006) and peace and well being (Bhawuk, 1999; Dalal & Misra, 2006; Kumar, 2004), to name just a few.

In more recent times, efforts to build IP as a vibrant discipline have intensified. Several conferences (Puducherry, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kollam, 2001; Delhi, 2002, 2003, 2007; Vishakhapatnam, 2002, 2003, 2006; Bengaluru, 2007) have given impetus to this movement of IP. The publication of the *Journal of Indian psychology* since 1976, National Academy of Psychology (NAOP) Conventions at Kanpur (2007) and Guahati (2008), refresher courses in IP at Mysore, courses at IP Institute at Puducherry for the last four years, publications, such as Misra and Mohanty's *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology* (2002), Joshi and Cornelissen's edited volume, *Consciousness, Indian Psychology and Yoga* (2004); Rao and Marwaha's *Towards a Spiritual Psychology* (2005); Rao, Paranjpe and Dalal's *Handbook of Indian Psychology* (2008) has made rich source material on IP available.

The newly emerging psychology is rooted in traditional Indian thought and practices that have existed at least for the last 2,500 years as a holistic human science. The plurality of the Indian intellectual tradition and an ethos of accommodating diverse thought systems extend immense opportunity for creatively building a new psychology. As stated in the Pondy Manifesto (Cornelissen, 2002), "*Rich in content, sophisticated in its methods and valuable in its applied aspects, Indian psychology is pregnant with possibilities for the birth of new models in psychology that would have relevance not only for India but also for psychology in general.*" This manifesto signed by the delegates at the IP conference at Puducherry was a landmark event in the history of IP.

It needs to be made explicit that the purpose of identifying, developing and testing Indian concepts and theories is not to prove their intrinsic superiority. It is a theoretical and methodological movement towards contemporising Indian theories and testing their relevance for enhancing human potential, enhancing well being and making this world a better place to live. It is against this backdrop that IP is gearing itself to usher into a new era of many exciting possibilities.

The Changing Perceptions of IP

Ostensibly, there is a change in attitude and perception of IP in the last decade or so. That IP is growing in popularity among academic psychologists

as well as among practitioners is evident from the quantum of research and professional activities in this field. Three factors that have contributed to this change in attitudes towards and perceptions of IP are discussed here.

First, Western psychology has failed in dealing with the societal problems that are faced by the people in non-Western world. It has increasingly been realised that psychology driven by the positivist paradigm only provides a fragmented and superficial account of human feelings, behaviour and the dynamics of action of an isolated individual (Nandy, 1988). The growing problems of social and family violence, mental ill health, moral decay, etc., have brought out the gross limitations of the mainstream Western psychology to the Western scholars also. The concept of human being as epicentre of the universe and container of myriads of psychological attributes (e.g., abilities, motives, interests, goals, dispositions, cognitions, aptitudes) is flawed as it does not capture the totality of existential context of life. The principles thus derived were largely framed within a deficit model and ignored certain important and affirmative human phenomena (e.g., religion, spirituality, suffering, values, authenticity, creativity, love, collectivism, forgiveness), which have emerged under the rubric of positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). As a movement within positivistic epistemological tradition, positive psychology too is not equipped to handle inner, personal, cultural and subjective aspects of life. These issues were either left unattended or appropriated in a trivial fashion that made them less appealing.

It is interesting to note that the limitations of the practices of positivist psychology were noted in the Western world too. For instance, Worchel and Cooper (1989) had discussed the crisis in modern social psychology and its limitations in dealing with the contemporary social problems. Humanistic and transpersonal movements in the 1960s were largely protest movements against scientism which is primarily concerned about control and prediction, ignoring phenomenological perspective in psychological research (Wertz, 1998). Modern psychotherapies too are going through a crisis of identity and a debate is raging about their goals, philosophy and moral vision (VandenBos, 1996). A need is felt to bring back spirituality and religiosity in psychological research and theorisation (Bhawuk, 2003), which was banished from psychology for about a century (see special issue of the *American Psychologist*, January 2004). All these contemporary developments are in response to the acutely felt limitations of psychology developed and practised within the framework of modern science. Modelled on the mechanistic–reductionistic paradigm of physical sciences, Western psychology

is very restrictive in its assumptions about human nature and cannot deal with larger human concerns. A rethinking has led to the emergence of new perspectives and paradigms in psychology (i.e., in terms of feminism, social constructionism, postmodernism) (Gergen 2007, 2009; Stanley, 1990), which in certain ways bridges the gap between Eastern and Western understanding of human nature.

Second, there is growing popularity of Yoga and other spiritual systems in the West. In the past few decades, more and more people with spiritual training and experiences from India have been visiting other countries and have acquired a large following. They have been responsible for disseminating the Indian spiritual tradition. Among them, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Swami Rama who have been able to draw the attention of academic psychologists are prominent. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and Integral Psychology have attracted worldwide attention (Sri Aurobindo, The Integral Yoga, The Life Divine in 2 volumes). Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation (TM) went through rigorous experimental testing at Harvard and other universities. Swami Rama offered himself to extensive medical testing at the Menninger Foundation Laboratory, New York, where he demonstrated many yogic feats (Swami Ram et al., 1976). These Indian masters were able to demonstrate convincingly the power of mind over body and have contributed significantly towards evoking interest in the explication of Indian perspectives. The presence of Ram Krishna Mission, Swami Narayan, Shivanand, Muktanand and Sikh saints and many who settled in the West have also contributed to generate interest in IP. Publications of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry, and the Himalayan International Institute for Yoga Sciences, Philosophy, and Religion in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, founded by Swami Rama, are valuable for their significant role in expounding the psychological insights of Vedanta, Yoga, Samkhya and other systems of Indian thought. These and many other accomplished spiritual masters of the Indian tradition have played an important role in popularising IP across the globe (Paranjpe, 2006). Mahatma Gandhi's life and works have also inspired modern thinking on peace, development and conflict resolution (Bondurant, 1965; Horsburgh, 1968; Pelton, 1974).

Though rooted in Indian scriptures and philosophical texts, IP does not promote any religious faith, nor is it based on any particular metaphysics; rather it has a quality that transcends all religious boundaries and does not offend any faith or ideology. Various schools of thought within Indian

system cover the whole range of theistic and atheistic (for example, *Sankhya* and *Charvak*) postulates of life. Also, IP has drawn not only from ideology and scriptures of Hinduism but also from other schools of thought, including Buddhism, Jainism and Sufism. Yoga and meditation, for example, are not limited to any particular religious faith and can be tested and practised by the people of all faiths anywhere. IP has much to offer in terms of self-growth, independent of any specific religious tradition. How to liberate human beings from the bondage of ignorance, suffering and to create a social order of harmony, peace and personal growth constitute its major agenda. A human being in such a conceptualisation is not merely an intelligent live structure interested in survival and self growth. Instead he or she is an active and responsible part (or partner) of nature and its growth and survival are contingent upon the growth and survival of other co-inhabitants of this universe. To this end one's consciousness itself operates as a great asset. In the West, interest in the study of altered states of consciousness since the 1960s and the founding of transpersonal psychology as a sub-discipline encouraged psychologists to examine some of the indigenous perspectives. It was recognised clearly that Western psychology has nothing to offer regarding the spiritual/transcendental dimension of human nature, to understand others or for self-realisation (Tart, 1975, 2009).

Third, with India emerging as a major economic power in the world, there is a renewed interest in Indian thought systems, values and practices, as well as in the strength and resilience of Indian society. Till the 17th and 18th centuries when India was one of the richest countries in the world, European opinion about India was unequivocally positive. Indian philosophy, mysticism, art and literature were looked upon with awe and appreciation. It was in the later period when Indian civilisation was in decadence and became impoverished due to colonisation, reducing India to one of the poorest countries, that the Western indologists (Mccaulay 1835/1972, James Mill[1]) started debunking Indian culture and philosophy for India's poverty and backwardness. Western scholarship had unique reading of Indian culture that attributes India's underdevelopment to the lack of traits

[1] James Mill (1848), in an influential book on the history of British India, throughout referred to Indians as "rude", "lazy", "timid", "ignorant", and "prone to flattery". These claims to Hindu inferiority and British superiority, as reflected in Mill's (1848, republished by Atlantic Publishers, London, 2007) work, were largely based on cultural and religious comparisons rather than on racial or physiological differences.

and characteristics found in the industrialised Western societies. Thus, low n-Ach (McClelland, 1961), dependence proneness (Doi, 1973), hierarchy and relational orientation (Hofstede, 1980) were treated as negative attributes. Interestingly the situation has changed in recent years. The same Indian culture and its philosophy are now seen behind India's economic success. With Indian economy going from strength to strength and with the visibility of Indian IT professionals at strategic locations worldwide, the attitudes and perceptions about the Indian way of thinking have changed (Varma, 2004). The number of courses taught in American and European universities on Indian culture, philosophy, spirituality, art and music has increased significantly. Indian research acquired greater respectability and is now taken more seriously by the Western psychologists and as a consequence (ironically), by Indian psychologists themselves.

The Disciplinary Contours

What is *Indian* in IP? In terms of field, content and methodology IP maintains distinct position, which differs from the widely held assumptions of Western psychology. Even when consciousness, mind and intuition are included as the subject matter, IP stands as a body of knowledge rooted and pursued with different ontological and epistemological premises. More than materialistic–deterministic aspects of human existence, IP takes a more inclusive spiritual-growth perspective on human existence. In this sense no clear distinction is made between psychology, philosophy and spirituality,[2] as conjointly they constitute a comprehensive and practical knowledge or wisdom about human life. Another point to be noted is that IP has originated and prospered in the larger geographical region of Indian subcontinent and is compatible with the cultural and social life of the people, it has, never been restricted to any given region. It fashioned itself on an existential plane which aspired for the upliftment of humanity in general instead of the people of Indian origin only. IP thrived on protest movements, as Buddhism and Jainism were and

[2] In this article, a distinction is made between spirituality and religion. Whereas religion is an organised, institutionalised activity, spirituality is taken as an individual's quest to know own-self and to carve out their own path to liberation. This has created confusion in Western psychology in which these two terms are used interchangeably. If we can replace religion with spirituality, a synthesis of science and spirituality is a possibility.

also on other philosophies of the region, such as Zoroastrianism and Sufism. Its influence in the ancient times was far beyond the borders of greater India, Tibet, China, Japan and Korea and in the south up to Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia. In the west, Afghanistan, Iran and up to middle Asia came under its influence (Winternitz, 1927). IP was in communion with other contemporary philosophies of the East, such as Tao, Zen Buddhism; and this mutual influence is very much visible even today. They provided the intellectual and spiritual firmament to generate new ideas and explanations as evident in post-Upanishad texts (such as Shankar's non-dualism). Theories and practices of IP address wider existential issues and are relevant for the humanity at large in an inclusive manner. Though the term "Indian Psychology" implies a psychology of Indian origin, or a psychology that has grown in the Indian subcontinent, it functions at a level of abstraction which covers the humanity in general. It is only a coincidence that the term Indian Psychology is used by the pioneers in this field, like Jadunath Sinha who brought out three volumes entitled *Indian Psychology* (1933–1958), Rhys Davids's book, *The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism* (1936/1978), Raghunath Safaya's *Indian Psychology* (1975) and Kuppuswami's book *Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology* (1985) . The latest in this sequel is *Handbook of Indian Psychology*, an edited volume by Rao, Paranjpe and Dalal (2008). The term IP has thus come to stay.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, although no clear distinction was made between psychology and philosophy in the earlier times, IP is *psychology*, not just pure philosophical exposition of truth and intellectual debates. It is an applied and practical science which leads to testable hypotheses and experimentation aiming at inner transformation. As a science of a multi-layered being, comprising subtle inner being, physical being and social being (Bhawuk, 2005, 2008a; Kumar, 2008); its propositions could not be tested by the accepted empirical methods of inquiry alone but require a broad spectrum of methodologies, calling for a wise and balanced deployment of first person, second person and third person perspectives (Bhawuk, 2008b). The process of knowing is informed by an encompassing world view and pattern of social life weaved with the threads of the Self and the sacred/divinity. From this vantage point, IP is a living science, formulated, tested, modified and contextualised in the course of challenges encountered during struggles and tensions experienced in real life. It is an enterprise concerning spiritual development with rich epistemological tradition. It grew in tradition of critical examination where scholars and sages continuously

proposed, analysed, interpreted, refined and transmitted knowledge to the worthy disciples. It is remarkable that these institutions survived all along without much state support. Apparently IP is a complex field of knowledge comprising philosophy (*Darshana*), life science (*Āyurveda*), principles of personal and social conduct (*Dharma Shāstra, Neeti, Artha Shāstra, Kāma Shāstra*), spirituality (*Ādhyātma Vidyā*), Jain and Buddhist scriptures, and texts of various socio-spiritual movements. The Muslim influence, particularly that of Sufism and Bahai, is also visible.

After centuries of unabated growth, the new educational policy in British India in the nineteenth century brought forth a wholesale replacement of Indian "knowledge-culture" by the Western, in the field of education particularly (Dharampal, 2000). When universities were established in India on the British pattern, the concerns and contents of IP survived in some of the philosophy departments. As Cornelissen (2003) has observed, as long as philosophy and psychology were considered two sides of the same quest, there were philosophy departments where psychologists could possibly have access to the Indian tradition. But in the late 1950s when philosophy and psychology departments separated in Indian universities, psychologists turned en-mass toward Freud and behaviourism, and even this weak link was severed. Psychology as a discipline confined itself to the analysis of the visible world of concrete behaviour like any static, non living physical object that can be measured and manipulated without any resistance.

The endogenous psychology, which underlines the contemporary relevance of cultural heritage and native theories is what constitutes "IP". The plurality of Indian tradition and an ethos of accommodating diverse thought systems (e.g., Vedānt, Sāmkhya,Yoga, Āyurveda, Mimānsa, Jainism, Buddhism, Sufism, Sikhism) offer a gold mine for building a more comprehensive and efficacious psychology. The precepts of IP encompass the entire range of human concerns and it is not possible to enumerate all of them here. However, as a point of departure from the accepted Western framework it seems in order to briefly mention a select few of them.

1. The four *Purusharthas* (life pursuits), which are *dharma* (virtues and rightful obligations/duty), *artha* (material prosperity), *kāma* (fulfilment of desires) and *moksha* (liberation) cover the entire range of human possibilities and strivings, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. For a happy and fulfilling life these strivings should be pursued in harmony with *Dharma* (social ethos). To this end it is held that the

pursuit of goals like *artha* and *kāma* have to be made compatible with the requirements of *dharma*. Also, the idea of equanimity with respect to life experiences, positive or negative, is a major learning in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Attachment with worldly objects and experiences are purely temporary and are of binding nature. Attachment to them ultimately destroys one's life. The *Bhagavad-Gita* draws a temporal sequence of mental events as: Attachment → Desire → Anger → Mindlessness → Loss of memory → Loss of life (Bhawuk, 1999, and also in this issue for a psychological model that captures these ideas).

2. It studies consciousness in its multifaceted manifestations and retains the core identity as a basic attribute. It recognises multilayered existence (*Panch Koshas*) of human being, which has the potential to evolve and move towards higher levels of existence. The mere physical level (*Ānnamaya kosha*) is the lowest level, and gradually through other levels *Prānamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijñanmaya*, it goes to the level of *Ānandamaya Kosha*. The true identity (Ātman) of *sat-chit-ānand* entails the highest level of existence (for a synthesis of *pancha kosha* and physical, social and metaphysical self, see Bhawuk 2008a). The contingent and acquired identities/superimposed attributes (*upādhis*) need not be confused with the core identity (*Ātman*) which remains unaffected and functions as a witness (*sākshi*) (*see Shankara in Vivekchudamani verse 501*). This is the reason why there has been an emphasis on wise discrimination between permanent and impermanent (*Nityanitya Viveka*). The apparent existence is often considered as illusion (Māyā/Prakriti) within which normal life is carried. It is the manifestation of the *Ātman* that is often given independent and greater significance than *Ātman* because of misunderstanding (*avidyā*). This *avidyā* is the main cause of attachments and consequent suffering. The existence of the same *Ātman* in every human being offers a new way to see the prospects of humanity that deemphasises the differences and draws attention to the intrinsic oneness of the humanity. It furnishes a rich ground for a spiritual psychology with *Jiva* (embodied *Ātman*) as the functioning unit. Its deliberations aim at developing principles that transform human beings for higher level of evolution.

   The purpose of knowledge in traditional terminology, therefore, is liberation (*mukti*) from various attachments and overcoming the various kinds of suffering (*kleshas*) and ignorance. This, however, is not

"otherworldly" as the ideal personhood is to be *Jivanmukta*—living a life with liberation. Expansion of identity for making it more encompassing and inclusive is the core of learning in this thinking. This implies that one must transcend the boundaries of ego since ego is not the real/true identity of a person. Coming out of the grips of egoistic attachments and engaging with non-egoistic or spiritual pursuits is a proposition, which is worth considering in the context of global challenge of sustainable development. Indian classical theories provide insight into the crisis caused by competition, consumerism and selfishness.

3. IP recognises the interplay of the manifest and unmanifest parts of our existence in shaping the events in this world. This makes room for going beyond strict determinism, accepting the emergent nature of reality. It suggests plausible explanations and strategies to deal with uncertainty. An important illustration of this is found in terms of classification of human action (*Karma*) in terms of *Sanchit* (accumulated) and *Prārabdha* (in-action) *Karma*. This classification implies that human action/behaviour is an evolving process, one that unfolds in the course of time. Also important is the idea of distributed notion of locus of control. IP has also expanded the notion of causality beyond self and non-self (internal–external) categories of perceived causes. Any action depends on the contribution of five factors, i.e., *kartā* (agent), *karma* (action), *adhisthāna* (body), *karana* (instruments) and *daivam* (*providence*)—*The Bhagavad-Gita* (Ch. 18.14). The actor is one of them and contributes just a part of the total. This is in contrast to the usual categories of internal and external attribution, which lies within the domain of egoistic self.
4. IP emphasises an organic view often explained in terms of the metaphor of seed and tree. This implies that continuity and transformation are inherent characteristics of life processes. In a major departure from linear mode of thinking this metaphor underlines non-linear or cyclical mode of life functioning. It also implies the significance of unmanifest in shaping one's life.
5. The human experience is complex and its study requires multiple methods, including the third person, second person and first person methods. IP is not opposed to empirical methods as *pratyaksha* (perception) is one method (*pramāna*) accepted by all the schools of Indian thought but it is certainly not sufficient, particularly when we

aim at both *parā* (self) and *aparā* (empirical) *vidyas* (knowledge). Being and knowing become one once we venture towards transcendental realm. The empirical methods are not enough to address the entire range of human experiences.

6. IP does not view human action as neutral, value free or a-moral. Instead it brings out the essential interdependence and interconnectedness of the worlds of human experience in which human beings are responsible players. At one level it proclaims essential unity and asserts that self and non-self are identical in their constitution (i.e., *yat pinde tad brahmande*). This expands the scope of a discourse on human action.
7. While explaining human action, IP takes into account not only the actor but also the linkages among the person, time and place. With emphasis on *dèsh* (space), *kāl* (time) and *pātra* (participant/person) it recognises the non-linear and emergent nature of action that defies simple descriptions in terms of binary categories of cause and effect (e.g., independent and dependent variables, predictors and criterion). It is largely discursive and narrative, and cannot be reduced to simple binary categories. It is supplemented by the position taken by one Indian school of thought that assumes continuity between cause and effect (*satkarya vada*). It is reflected in the principle of Karma held by a vast majority of the Indians that refers to the sequence of actions constituting cause and effect. Thus, actions necessarily entail certain consequences. This scheme also empowers the actor to shape the future course of events by engaging in a responsible action. One lives life in obligational relationship (*ṛinās*) with (*guru, ṛish, pitri, bhuta*). Life therefore is a kind of sacrifice (y*ajna*), a sacrifice of one's desires and ego.
8. Instead of merely describing reality, IP emphasises on and promotes self positive qualities through personal training and practice. The goal of such training is to nurture a balanced personality, which primarily involves *sātvik, rājasic* and *tāmsik gunas* or qualities. Interestingly enough the objects in the surrounding environment also share these three properties and finally transcend them. Therefore, the life style should involve a harmonious relationship with one's environment and not by subjugating the environment. Such a relationship is mutually supportive for person and environment and does not tax any one of them. The *Āyurveda* talks of this harmony at the level of diet, action

and leisure to maintain health. Health is a state of balance (s*amatva*) and a healthy person is one who is self-anchored (s*wastha*) in a world of flux (*samsār*) with a body (*sharira*) that decays. It must be noted that while everyone has all the three *gunas,* they exist in different combinations leading to a state of (im)balance reflected in the choice of actions and ensuring the health of mind, body and spirit. A distinction has also been made between godlike and demonic qualities (*daivi* and *asuri sampat*) and it is recommended to evolve in the direction of godlike qualities. One's well being requires adhering to a personal and social conduct rooted in virtuous life (*sukhasya mulah dharmah*—Chanakya).

9. The aspiration for transcendental existence helps overcome the body-centred egoistic strivings and offers a decentred view of self. It has implications for work and social relationships. It allows one to be motivated to treat work as a natural duty (*dharma*) to be performed with reference to the demands of the location in one's life space rather than any extrinsic incentive. It is one's humble contribution to the worldly operations. Instead of emphasising on the outcome or reward outside the work context, this kind of thinking promotes competence in action as yoga (*yogah karmasu kaushalam*). Such competence requires sustained and detached action (*anasakti*). As indicated earlier, any action is made possible by several factors therefore attributing causality to self is ignorance. A person is a mere instrument (*nimitta*) of divinity and, therefore, it is heightened egotism, which assigns personal causality.

Some Distinguishing Features of IP

Despite all diversity and distinctiveness, there are some features common across all systems and schools relevant to IP. Some of these common features, which give IP a distinct identity, are briefly discussed here.

IP is deemed to be a *universal psychology.* It cannot be subsumed under the labels of indigenous, folk or cultural psychology, if that purports to delimit the scope of psychological inquiry. For want of a new term it has been also labelled as Greater Psychology (Dalal, 2000). The vast expanse of IP attends to the perennial issues of human existence (e.g., human strivings, virtues,

self-understanding, self-control, Yoga, meditation, human conduct, pain, misery, *kleshas*, happiness, bliss, health, well being, justice, morality, conflict) which are not bound by any geographical region or time period. Centuries back the sages and thinkers were raising questions and attempted to address problems that are pertinent even today. In this sense, IP is both ancient and contemporary at the same time. Indeed, the use of the term "Indian psychology" is more of a convenience; may be a more appropriate term is "psychology of Indian origin" (Rao, 2008). While the roots of IP are decidedly Indian, it was never proposed as the psychology of *the* Indian people. For instance, Buddhist psychology,[3] which is an integral part of IP, flourished in Sri Lanka, Tibet and Japan among other countries. Most of these theories are propounded as trans-historical, dealing with the intrinsic state and ways to enhance the human potential. It can be mentioned in this context that the teachings and training in IP are not intended for any particular class, caste or creed, but people from all strata of the society can make themselves worthy of these pursuits (Radhakrishnan, 1953). Contrary to the misperception that traditional wisdom is accessible to men or Brahmins only, many women and non-Brahmins have attained the highest level of knowledge. The declaration "*aham bramhāsmi*" (I am *brahman*) is always followed by the phrase "*tat tvam asi*" (you are the same), which refers not only to all mankind but also to all living beings.

Another important feature of IP is that it primarily deals with the *inner states* of a person, taking consciousness as the primary subject matter of study. Instead of emphasising numerous contingent and non-contingent variations in acquired role-related behaviour, the stress is on unchanging identity. In the *Upaniṣads* consciousness as a state of being is not an object but is conceived as undifferentiated subjectivity (*Chit*) without any content (Radhakrishnan, 1953). In the Indian tradition, consciousness happens to be the ground condition without which no reality is conceivable. It is the knowledge side of the universe, more than being a light source for apprehending sensations. The *Chandogya Upanishad* expounds four states of consciousness—waking, dream, deep sleep and *turia* (illumined), the most desirable one being the last one. When the mind withdraws itself from participation in sensory processes by deliberate intent and empties itself of all content, it would be the illumined

[3] It may be interesting to note that the term Buddhist Psychology was first used in the translation of Buddhist texts by British Indologists. Goleman expressed it as follows, "It was news that Buddhism—like many of the world's great spiritual traditions—harbored a theory of mind and its workings" (2004, p. 72).

state of consciousness. When this happens there arises unmediated direct knowledge, characterising *knowing by being*. It involves identity with existence and its knowledge. As the *Upanishadic* saying goes, "to know *Brahman* is to be *Brahman*" (The Mundaka Upanishad III 3.2.9). Buddhism refers to the stream of consciousness as the basis of subjective feeling of continuity and identity which affects our perceptions, thoughts, actions and emotions. While formulating five modes of knowing in Buddhism the focus has been on inner transformation, with the ultimate goal being liberation (Premasiri, 2008). The five modes of knowing are: sensory, extra-sensory, holistic, insightful and ethical. According to Buddhism, the knowing should not be based on authority, faith, belief or speculation, but on personal experience.

Sensory experiences leading to phenomenal awareness are intentional, i.e., they are of objects. Distortions in this case are due to active interference of mind and body, which limits our awareness, and obscures our knowledge and feelings. The goal of life is to attain a state of pure consciousness where knowledge is direct, immediate and intuitive, and not mediated by sensory inputs. Human consciousness is considered hierarchical, the highest state being that of truth, pure consciousness and bliss (*Sat, Chit* and *Anand*). Yoga and meditation are the processes for movement towards this transcendental state of pure consciousness. The engagement with pure consciousness makes IP transcendental in its orientation. Transcendence is a movement from mundane to sublime, from sensory to intuitive and from self (ego) to Self (enlightened). It is a psychological process of rising from narrow, personal reference of a problem that causes suffering to a transpersonal, holistic understanding, wherein the problem loses its sting. The transcendental view implies a position of self (ego)—decentring and taking into consideration the whole range of progression in past, present and future. It draws attention to non-egoistic and non-body centred encompassing vision of life and its processes. It enlarges or expands one's identity to incorporate others or anything or everything that exists (Self or all encompassing Brahman!). The *Upanishadic Mahavakyas* (great sentences) like *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*) or *Sarvam khalvidam Brahman* (Everything is only *Brahman*) emphasise the value of ever expanding and inclusive identity. It sets the stage of an evolutionary journey in which the division of self and other or I/Me and you/they becomes meaningless as there is no other except one single I or Brahman. Transcendence, therefore, transforms the person in totality and engages in a sincere seeking of higher order truth. Transcendence and state of pure consciousness are held as attainable experiential realities, giving one a

sense of freedom and liberation. Both transcendence and spirituality are aspects of the same reality and share this common pursuit. Spirituality furthers development of comprehensive theories of human existence to understand creativity, intuitive thinking and extraordinary achievements (Bhawuk, 2003). Spirituality however goes with the sacred and divine, as Indian thought does not maintain any dichotomy between science and spirituality. They are grounded in the experiences of many and are attainable for anyone who follows systematic procedures and practices. Though transcendence and spirituality are at the core of most of the Indian theories, these are not bound by any particular faith or ism, and serve to provide a secular account of human nature.

IP is based on *veridical* methods. It should be clear that as a human science of consciousness its methods are ought to be different from the methods of natural/physical/material sciences. This, however, does not make it a less stringent science. Methods of observation and experimentation have also evolved to study the inner functioning of a person. In these methods of self-observation, no distinction is made between experience and observation, where true knowledge is not considered as abstract and impersonal but as realisation of one's being (Rao, 2008). There are methods of direct observation (e.g., intuition) in contrast to methods that rely on sensory and mental mediation. These methods rely on the blending of first person and second person perspectives (collective). Taken together, these two perspectives allow personal, subjective and non-relational verification and in-group inter-subjective validity. These methods work well within Guru (second person)–*Shisya* or pupil (first person) methodologies.

Needless to say the methods of Yoga and meditation have been used for centuries to test, experiment and experiential validation of the higher mental states. The various systems of yoga in India have developed rigorous and effective methods of enquiry in the domains of consciousness studies and psychology that may help us to find answers to our deepest questions regarding values, truth, love, meaning and beauty. They can offer to modern science not only a wealth of philosophical and psychological theories, but also a rich store of practical techniques to raise our individual and collective levels of consciousness.

It is relevant to mention here that in the Indian tradition a distinction is made between *parā vidya* (knowledge of the Self) and *a-parā vidya* (empirical knowledge). *A-parā vidya* constitutes the knowledge of social-physical world we live in and includes science and technology. This knowledge is also

relevant to the problems and challenges of the world we live in. The methods of knowing in the empirical world (*pramāna*) are diverse and treat mind (*mānas* or *antahkaran*) as one sensory channel, which allows the understanding of pleasure and pain. They include methods such as perception (*pratyksha*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), verbal testimony (*sabda*), attribution of meaning (*arthapatti*) and historicity (*aitihya*). The system of Vedanta proposes methods of *sravana, manana* and *nididhyāsana,* which correspond to sense-based knowledge, intellect-based knowledge and intuitive knowledge, respectively (Rao, 2008).

IP is *applied* in its nature and objectives. It is not just concerned about testing theoretical positions or engaging in speculative metaphysical inquiry. It raises important questions about the ideal state of being and deals with the methods one can follow to attain that state. It discusses the practices through which people can transform their own lives to attain perfection, and thereby change the world they live in. The goal of IP is to help a person move from a conditioned state (mechanical and habitual thinking and responding) to an unconditioned state of freedom and liberation. This transformation, in more mundane terms, implies becoming more objective, discretionary, equipoise and aware about the potential sources of distortion. IP extensively deals with the ways of handling human suffering and leads one on a path of growth, which does not create any hurdle for other co-travellers. The techniques of yoga and meditation have contributed significantly towards self control of mind and feelings. Such techniques are diverse to suit people of various orientations. Thus, *Bhakti* (devotion), *Karma* (action) or *Jnana* (knowledge leading to renunciation) yoga can be used by any person depending upon his or her temperament or dispositional orientation (*svabhāva*) (see Bhawuk's article on methodology in this issue). The theories and practices of Āyurveda are fine examples of how the mundane can be blended with the transcendental. The plurality in constitution, action and context is enunciated with the help of the theory of *trigunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

However, it should not be misconstrued that IP is only concerned with inner transformation and does not deal with the mundane problems of this world. It has a vision of a social order in which conflict, violence, injustice and exploitation have no place. It offers mechanisms to address the problems arising from human greed, attachment and egotism, which culminate in poverty, injustice and pain. IP is equally concerned with the challenges of education, mental and physical health, and social institutions and have offered alternative models and methods. IP does not dismiss the empirical approach in

these areas but by being positioned at an appropriate level provides a broader perspective within which its findings would make sense.

What is Not the Core of Indian Psychology?

As mentioned earlier, a distinction is generally made between *Indian Psychology* (Psychology of Indian origin) and *Psychology in India* (academic/western psychology in India), though there is some overlap in the usage of these two terms. Part of the problem stems from the fact that in other social sciences such a distinction is of little consequence. For example, Indian sociology or Indian philosophy is same as sociology or philosophy in India. These terms were coined by the British scholars who were engaged in studying Indian society and philosophy in the later part of the eighteenth century. Moreover, Indian sociology and Indian Philosophy as academic disciplines have a long history of more than 150 years and there is no misconception about their subject matter. This is not so in the case of IP. *Psychology in India* has a history that spans the beginning of the last century, but in comparison IP has yet to re-establish itself in the academic portals. Psychological knowledge has a long tradition and a clear identity as an independent field of inquiry. As mentioned earlier, though there were writings in this area for many decades, it has emerged as a domain of serious research in academia only in the last decade or so. We still do not have any critical historical document about the beginning and growth of IP, though we have many writings in the case of psychology in India. Another reason for confusion about the usage of the terms is that courses on IP were introduced in many Indian universities (e.g., BHU, Mysore, Jodhpur, Andhra Universities) in the mid-1960s. These courses were primarily imported from philosophy and their subject matter and pedagogy were incompatible with the general ethos of psychology departments, which was more tuned to laboratory research. Courses on IP therefore could not survive for long and within a decade they were withdrawn from most of the places. Incidentally, the view still persists that IP is nothing but Indian Philosophy. This is yet another reason why IP is not part of the academic curriculum at most of the Indian universities.

In this backdrop it is quite natural to encounter many misconceptions about what IP stands for, or does *not* stand for. To define IP as psychological knowledge rooted in Indian cultural heritage and scriptures dating back to more

than three millennia and relevant to the contemporary world is not enough. As a growing science of Indian origin, IP is often held as a conglomeration of several, sometimes even contradictory fields of investigation. IP maintains its distinct assumptions about ontology, epistemology and content. To arrive at some clarity about the subject matter of IP there is a need to engage in a dialogue about "what constitutes IP and what does not". We have already discussed what IP is; next we propose to discuss what IP possibly is not.

IP is Not Just a Psychology of Indian People

Due to common historical, social and cultural background, it is natural that Indian people share many dispositional and behavioural characteristics. On the very grounds, Indian people would differ from Americans, Chinese or any other ethnic group. Study of these cultural differences has been a very productive area of research in cross-cultural psychology. Being primarily a methodological field, cross-cultural psychology has taken the *etic* approach to establish equivalence of psychological phenomena for cross-cultural comparisons (Berry, 1989). On the other side, there is the *emic* approach which is employed when culture-specific phenomena are investigated. Gergen et al., (1996, p. 501) stated, "Cross-cultural psychologists were unable to abandon mainstream scientism in general and remain loyal to empiricism and test western theories with 'culturally' (i.e., geographically) diverse data."

Both cross-cultural psychology and cultural psychology have examined how Indian people differ from other cultural groups. The findings are often empirical generalisations and tend to make sweeping statements about the populations under investigation. Given India's vast ethnic diversity, these studies often fail to unravel enduring patterns and differences. Such research often ends up creating stereotypes about cultural groups. A good example is the debate about collectivism–individualism, in which countries are put in these two dichotomous categories (Triandis, 1984). As J.B.P. Sinha (2000b) has argued individualism–collectivism is a matter of sampling situations or persons and involves co-existing orientations (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). In the absence of theoretical advancement and cultural constructs to interpret the results, such findings often remain tentative. Making such comparisons and cataloguing psycho-social, emotional and dispositional characteristics of the Indian people have been attempted in many studies. Kakar's work on

Indian psyche (Kakar, 1996; Kakar & Kakar, 2007) is a case in point in which the psychoanalytic framework has been used to interpret the findings. Such studies are at best tentative—interpretable only within a space–time matrix. On the other hand, IP endeavours to identify enduring human attributes and help people discover their essential nature and their relationship with the transcendental. IP strives to unravel a-temporal and trans-cultural models of human ontology.

IP is Not Indigenous Psychology

D. Sinha (1996) has reminded us about two types of indigenisation. The first is an outcome of adaptation of the mainstream (Western) psychology to a different cultural setup. This adaptation is along the lines argued by John Adair (1989). A large body of research in India can be included in this kind of indigenisation in which cultural concepts and practices are examined employing Western theories and approaches. A large number of Western tests of personality, intelligence, motives, values, health and well being are indigenised taking this approach. Such indigenisation is likely to continue in a global world where there is a constant flow of models and concepts across cultures, particularly from the west. The other kind of indigenisation is that which is based on a systematic analysis of culture-bound concepts and categories. Such indigenisation focuses on the contemporary relevance of cultural heritage and native theories which comes within the rubric of "IP". Misra and Mohanty's volume (2002) *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology* includes Indian research that belongs to both the categories. Srivastava and Misra (2007) have undertaken the study of intelligence which is an example of the second kind of indigenisation. They use multiple sources, i.e., traditional texts, popular idioms and lay people's understanding and usage to develop a new model of intelligence. Indigenous psychology, in this sense, is synonymous to folk psychology, a disciplinary knowledge that has evolved in a particular societal context, which is used by lay people to organise the conduct of their lives.

Many psychologists believe that "*Indigenous psychologies*" is a more apt term in this context. The plural term takes in its fold tribal, subaltern and other communities that differ in their history, beliefs and social practices. Indigenous psychologies offer models and theories that can enrich our understanding of human psychology across cultures. Not acknowledging it

is akin to conceding to the position of Western psychologists that only they are developing universal theories, others are special cases of their theories. IP is more than such indigenous (or folk) psychologies for the reason that it offers psychological models and theories, derived from classical Indian thought, that hold promise of panhuman interest.

IP is Not Faith Psychology

It is argued that science builds on doubting and questioning. It is part of the training of a scientist to be a skeptic and question the veracity of the existing findings, i.e., not to accept anything unless it is empirically tested. Faith has no place in scientific diction, "when you observe you trust". IP takes a position that its reverse is also true: "when you trust you observe". For example, when you trust that there is an observer (*purusha*) inside you who is watching everything you tend to experience it. Similar is the case of the sixth sense; when you believe in its existence, then you notice it. This is how faith works.

It can be argued that all scientific theories have some basic assumptions at the core. There is no inquiry that is not based on some assumptions. Western science (psychology in particular) has also built on a long tradition of socio-religious beliefs and practices. These assumptions are never questioned but without understanding them many theories would make no sense. For example, hedonism (that man seeks pleasure and avoids pain) is at the core of many social learning theories. Any assumptions can be held as a statement of faith and the two terms have the same connotation for research. Assumptions lead to metaphors, which determine the methodology to be employed and conclusions to be drawn. The behaviouristic psychology considered man as a machine, which suited its mechanistic models of learning and behaviour. The metaphor of the "man as computer" changed the concerns and methodology of research, taking the human being as information processor. Similarly, the "man as soul" metaphor holds human being as capable of rising above their physical limitations and attaining their transcendental state. Within this framework, the *Bhagavad-Gita* propositions based on this metaphor in IP should be testable and experientially verifiable. The "Man as soul" metaphor calls for a different ontological and epistemological position in formulation of research questions but it certainly does not render IP as faith psychology.

IP is Not Otherworldly

IP is not obsessed with otherworldly matters as it is often misunderstood. It does transcend the boundaries of the mundane and does not draw a rigid line between the physical and metaphysical. But still the life after life is not the subject matter of IP, nor is it a discourse on metaphysics. The primary focus is on how people can lead a purposeful and wholesome life. Both *parā-vidyā* (knowledge of the Self) and *a-parā vidyā* (empirical knowledge) are considered necessary to live a harmonious life in this world. Even transcendence, which is often taken in an otherworldly sense, has worldly aspects. In mundane terms, it signifies transformation of an individual such that one is able to know the truth, become objective by freeing oneself from biases and mental conditioning. In this sense, transcendence implies overcoming the existential constraints of one's mind–body complex (Rao, 2008). It is always considered possible to attain the highest state of consciousness (*turiā*) in this life itself.

Self-growth is a major objective of IP but not in an otherworldly sense. IP deals with existential issues here and now even though it sees the relevance of the past experience for the present condition and the consequences of the present situation for the future, keeping open all possibilities without foreclosing any in haste. IP recognises that physical processes influence mental functions, but it also stresses that mental functions influence bodily processes. It emphasises the integral connection between consciousness, mind and body. Therefore, neurophysiological studies are not considered irrelevant to IP, but are regarded as insufficient to give us a complete understanding of human nature.

IP is Not a Prescriptive Science

All social and psychological theories are shaped by the cultural firmament. The values, priorities and ethics of that culture provide the ingredients on which these theories are built and sustained. No social science can thus be prescription-free. Many of these prescriptions could be implicit in hypotheses, designs and interpretations of the findings. For example, an innocuous experiment of Asch (1951) on social conformity in which the effect of peer pressure upon modification and distortion of judgement on a perceptual task was studied. Asch demonstrated that when there is group pressure (other members are deliberately making wrong judgements) the subject tends to make distorted judgements. His work apart from demonstrating social

conformity has a clear message that conformity is bad as it results in wrong judgements. Western theories are the product of a value system of individualism, capitalism and materialism as IP is a product of Indian value system of idealising another social order. IP which grew in a different historical and cultural context is also a prescriptive science, having a vision of an ideal society and an ideal person. Accordingly, the methods that are developed are also designed to attain that desirable state. Keeping that in view, IP is sacred and spiritual, yet endorses a secular cultural ethos that highly values a transcendental state of being. The goal of Indian self-psychology is to examine one's state of consciousness and understand the metamorphosis that one goes through.

Notwithstanding, IP is as descriptive and confirmatory as any other social science could be, it has evolved a well laid out methodology to test and describe human conditions and conditioning. It has sophisticated theories of mind and consciousness that are based on intersubjective validations. The process of understanding the reality, which is not mediated by sensory inputs or the conditioned mind, gives rise to the ultimate knowledge. This knowledge transcends, according to IP, the prescriptive–descriptive dichotomy, as well as all language barriers, as one understands the truth at a direct intuitive and experiential level.

IP is Not Just a Study of Ancient Wisdom

IP is not merely a historical documentation of the ancient Indian wisdom. Scriptures dating back thousands of years are, of course, a vast treasure-house of wisdom that has remained hidden and inaccessible to academic psychology. As academic psychology in India has begun to explore this symbolic and conceptual resource, it has opened up varied possibilities of exciting research propositions. It may be relevant to add in this context that this ancient knowledge has been extended, elaborated, even questioned in the long history. Thinkers and sages of modern times have added and commented on what we know from Vedas, Upanishads and different schools of thought. Sri Aurobindo, Ramakrishna, Krishnamurthi, Gandhi are names of a few modern thinkers who have vastly contributed to this ancient wisdom and have been able to present it in a language, which we understand.

IP is not revivalist, if revivalism means reassertion of the ancient order in the present world. It cannot be an exercise to reconfirm the theories propounded in the ancient texts through scientific methodology, nor does it

aim to establish its superiority over other knowledge systems. The challenge before IP is to carve out the core of this ancient wisdom and develop testable propositions. The study of ancient human science is not merely an academic exercise but it aims to transform self and build a happy, healthy and harmonious social order. IP is part of a movement toward contemporising Indian theories and testing their relevance for enhancing human competencies and well being. It is the a-temporal nature of IP and its proximity to our essential human nature across ages and geographies that sustain its appeal in the modern times.

IP is Not a Distinct Branch of Psychology

It may be posited here that IP does not aspire to be a distinct branch of psychology, like social, personality, clinical and the like. Confining IP to a specific content domain will do injustice to its vast potential and may deprive psychology of its diversity and richness. IP covers the whole range of human possibilities and, therefore, as a school of thought has relevance for all branches of psychology. It creates new possibilities of looking at the age-old human problems of social conflicts and violence, emotional and mental health, human greed and need for individual growth.

Should IP be bracketed with other cultural psychologies, like Chicano Psychology, Chinese Psychology, African Psychology, Filipino Psychology, etc.? It may eventually put it in an absurd situation in which there are a plethora of psychologies competing with each other for recognition. As discussed earlier, IP is not conceived as the psychology of Indian people, as many other cultural psychologies are. Second, IP spills over to all other branches of psychology and as a holistic field covers the entire psychology tree, be it health, social, mental health, organisational or any other branch. It is concern about human growth and welfare to which other psychologies can equally contribute.

Summary and Conclusion

IP is as old as the Indian civilisation but its history as a modern discipline is also as old as that of the Western psychology in India. The new beginning of IP in the modern times can be traced in the work of Swami Vivekananda,

Ramana Maharishi and Sri Aurobindo in the early part of the last century. Subsequently, the monumental work of Jadunath Sinha (1958) on IP, a compilation of psychological concepts and theories in scriptures and other ancient texts, laid its firm foundation. However, it took much longer time for IP research to build up. It is only in the last decade or so that research in this area has picked up momentum and many important publications have come out. Looking at the plethora of research and publication activities going on at present, it is likely that IP will have a critical mass sooner than later. As discussed earlier, it is a misnomer that Western psychology is universal and IP is not. IP is neither competing nor striving to replace Western psychology as universal science. It only intends to offer an alternative perspective. Whereas Western science has focused on the human problematic, IP primarily looks at the growth aspects, i.e., on how human beings can actualise their full potential and can free themselves from their mental conditioning. In this sense, Western psychology and IP can complement each other by bringing into the fold of research a whole range of human possibilities. It is in this respect that IP claims its legitimate place in a truly global mainstream psychology.

However, despite all possibilities and provocations, IP is still struggling to make inroads into the academic citadels of Indian universities. There are hardly a few places where courses on IP are being taught, and there is still a good deal of resistance to the introduction of IP into teaching programmes. Ostensibly, a larger body of Indian psychologists is still wary of the nature and agenda of IP. There are wide ranges of apprehensions which have stalled the acceptance of a psychology of Indian origin. Some such misconceptions are briefly noted here.

First, Indian theories of mind and consciousness are often held to be subjective and not amenable to scientific testing. Consequently, IP is considered as not amenable to empirical research using the established scientific methodology. As such, IP is considered a regressive step, which may reduce the science of psychology to a non-scientific enterprise. Second, the bulk of Indian psychologists are concerned about keeping pace with advancements in empirical research methodology and statistical techniques, which give psychology the status of a highly sophisticated scientific enterprise among all social sciences. Indian psychologists are trained in positivistic methods and are more at ease in employing them. Third, scientifically minded psychologists still consider IP as part of a religious (worse, revivalist) movement. Many are of the view that the subject matter of IP is esoteric, mystical and metaphysical. Therefore, there is an anxiety that including IP in the academic curriculum

would undermine the secular credentials of their scientific pursuits; that such a move may offend the sensibilities of the scientists of other faiths. Fourth, working within the domain of IP will cut them off from the rest of the world and may label them as being parochial or ethnocentric. This may deprive their research wider trans-national recognition and may foreclose the possibilities of international collaboration and support. In fact, many yoga research institutes like SVYASA, Bangalore, are getting international attention on par with the best research institutes in the world. Lastly, there is a practical reason for sticking to Western psychology in academia. There is no tangible incentive to the academic community to change their areas of specialisation. It may be more rewarding to do research, for example, in the area of emotional intelligence than, say, detachment. IP requires sustained efforts to re-educate themselves, which is hard without peer support, reading material and training programmes. Nandy (1995) has argued that conducting experiments, developing and adapting psychological tests, mindlessly replicating Western research is what has kept Indian psychologists occupied without any clarity of purpose. These Indian psychologists are often aware that the psychology they are pursuing does not address the real issues of change and development, both at social and individual level. They know that no in-depth analysis of the socio-psychological problems of Indian society will yield from this endeavour. A discontentment is brewing among the psychology fraternity about the state of psychology in India. An urgent need is felt to reorchestrate the processes of teaching, training and research in psychology with an open mind and cultural sensibility.

Despite all resistance and setbacks, the IP movement seems to be gathering momentum if attendance at IP conferences, workshops and research publications is taken as an index. There is a good deal of excitement and sense of purpose in the section of psychologists who are pursuing IP. It can be easily discerned that this newly emerging science of IP calls for a paradigm shift. We need a serious and sustained debate on nature, characteristics and implication of this new paradigm. A dominant view is that the Western and the Indian paradigms are irreconcilable and cannot have a meeting ground. Indian concepts and theories are grounded in different notions of the human nature, epistemology, values and world view, than the Western ones. However, the range of problems suggests the need for both the paradigms. Whereas the methodology of Western psychology focuses on the study of the "other" person, IP (as other Eastern psychologies) focuses on the study of one's "own-self". We need both first person and third person approaches to

bring about the desired changes in human condition. IP's experiential basis of knowledge generation is common to the theories and practices of many other Eastern philosophies, including Zen, Tao and Buddhism. The proponents of this position hold that building a more harmonious and conflict-free world order where people are able to actualise their inner potential can be a valid goal. It is hoped that turning towards IP would help the discipline by expanding the scope of psychological inquiry and offering technologies for self-transformation leading to a better quality of life.

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