Transforming Classrooms with Indian Educational Psychology: A New Approach to Learning

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Abstract
This research explores the transformative potential of Indian Educational Psychology (IEP) within modern educational contexts, emphasizing its roots in ancient Indian wisdom and traditions. IEP views consciousness as fundamental encompassing the unity of absolute existence, consciousness and joy (saccidānanda) contrasting with Western psychology's focus on neuro-physiological processes. It acknowledges various levels of non-physical existence and inner worlds, accessible through introspection and intuitive knowledge. This perspective underscores the importance of self-realization, self-discipline and moral values such as truthfulness, non-violence, and compassion integrated into educational practices through storytelling and experiential learning.

The methodology employs a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of teachers and students engaging with IEP in classrooms. Key findings highlight IEP's potential to foster holistic development—physical, mental, moral, and spiritual among students. This is exemplified in texts like the Bhagavad Gita and Yoga Sutras which advocate for balanced growth through self-discipline and ethical conduct. Additionally, IEP's emphasis on consciousness-based learning complements modern educational goals by nurturing students' inherent potential and preparing them for meaningful contributions to society.

Introduction
The future of students is shaped in the classroom, where the formal teaching-learning process takes place under the guidance of the teacher. As the coordinator of this process and a future builder of children, a teacher needs to embody the qualities of a psychologist. By understanding children's behaviour through the lens of psychology, teachers can identify educational challenges and facilitate learning using diagnostic and remedial methods, providing appropriate advice for individual issues. Here is the huge stress on the fact of Guru's responsibility and role in education which means *Guru is the Supreme Brahman, Guru is*

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the goal, Guru is ultimate education and Guru is the ultimate wealth. Adding to this Guru is Ultimate desire and Guru is supreme refuge. As he is the one who gives that (knowledge, guidance, etc.), there is no one greater than the guru. -

gurureva paraṃ brahma gurureva parā gatiḥ ।

gurureva paraṃ vidyā gurureva paraṃ dhanam ॥

gurureva paraḥ kāmaḥ gurureva parāyaṇaḥ ।

yasmāttadupadeṣṭāsau tasmādagurutaro guruḥ ॥[3]

When a teacher is an Indian educational psychologist, they can contextualize children's behaviour within their lineage, environment, culture and civilization. As said in this subhashita -

ākārairiṅgitairgatyā ceṣṭayā bhāṣaṇena ca |

netravaktravikāraiśca lakṣyate'ntargataṁ manaḥ ॥[4]

It means, *the internal mind of a person is perceived by his appearance, indications, movements, behaviour, speech and the changes observed in his eyes and face*.

The phrase " **girati siñcati jñānavāriṇā śiṣyahṛdayakṣetram**[5] " means *the teacher irrigates the student's heart-field with the water of knowledge*. Such a teacher, well-versed in the Indian education system, from Vedic literature to Vedanga, Puranas and classical poetry, can apply the psychological principles embedded in these texts to address educational problems and shape a promising future for the students. Teachers who possess this deep knowledge of Indian traditions and educational psychology can truly be called Indian educational psychologists. Till now, psychological theories taught in India have predominantly originated from the United States, Germany and Austria. For Indian educational psychology to gain its rightful place in classrooms, it must incorporate the essence of Indian knowledge and tradition.

By integrating Indian educational psychology into the curriculum, the field of psychology will acquire a distinctly Indian character. This integration is crucial for the future of the country, as Indian educational psychology holds significant importance and will continue to do so. An integration is well versed in this Vedic Verse:

samānī va ākūtiḥ samānā hṛdayāni vaḥ |

samānamastu vo mano yathā vaḥ susahāsati ॥[6]

Means *United be your purpose, harmonious be your feelings, collected be your mind, in the same way as all the various aspects of the universe exist in togetherness, wholeness.*

Methodology:

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[3] गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म गुरुरेव परा गतिः ।
गुरुरेव परा विद्या गुरुरेव परायणं ॥
गुरुरेव परा काष्ठा गुरुरेव परं धनं ।
यस्मात्तदुपदेष्टाऽसौ तस्मादुरुतरो गुरुः ॥ – अद्वयतारकोपनिषत् १७-१८

[4] आकारैरिङ्गितैर्गत्या चेष्टया भाषणेन च।
नेत्रवक्त्रविकारैश्च लक्ष्यतेऽन्तर्गतं मनः॥ – पञ्चतन्त्रम् - ४५

[5] गिरति सिञ्चति ज्ञानवारिणा शिष्यहृदयक्षेत्रम्

[6] समानी व आकूतिः समाना हृदयानि वः।
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति॥ – ऋग्वेदः ८.४९.४

This study will utilize a Qualitative approach to understand the lived experiences of teachers and students as they engage with Indian educational psychology in the classroom. This approach will help uncover the deeper meanings and implications of integrating these traditional principles into modern education.

- Conducting a thorough review of ancient Indian texts (Vedas, Vedangas, Puranas, classical poetry) to extract educational psychological principles.
- Analysing existing research on the application of educational psychology principles in contemporary settings.
- Using the constant comparative method to compare data from different sources (interviews, focus groups, observations) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Indian psychology is an approach to psychology based on the Indian ethos, the characteristic spirit of the Indian civilization. One could also say that it is a psychology rooted in the consciousness-based Indian worldview, yoga and a life-affirming spirituality[7]. Unlike Western psychology, which primarily focuses on the physical and social dimensions accessible to ordinary consciousness, Indian psychology considers the spirit, or the unity of absolute existence, consciousness and joy (saccidānanda) as the fundamental reality. Western psychology often views consciousness and subjective experiences as secondary to physical processes and relies heavily on objective, third-person methods and rational analysis. In contrast, Indian psychology acknowledges various levels of non-physical existence and inner worlds, accessible through non-ordinary states of awareness and direct intuitive knowledge. Here in the following shloka by Adi Shankaracharya, we can see a striking feature of the materialistic world and Human fondness towards it:

nalinīdalagatajalamatitaralaṁ tadvajjīvitamatishayacapalam। viddhi vyādhyabhimānagrastaṁ loka śokahataṁ ca samastam।।[8]

Which means, "*Earthly existence is as unsteady as a drop of water on a lotus leaf. It is nothing but ego and a bundle of diseases. The world is hooded with dark grief and ends in destruction.*"

Indian psychology regards objective sense-based knowledge as a minor form of understanding placing greater value on higher sources of knowledge and inner wisdom (vidyā). It accepts the influence of non-physical realities and parapsychological phenomena considering the individual consciousness as interconnected and extending beyond physical boundaries. Research in Indian psychology prioritizes sophisticated first-person methods and aims at self-mastery and transformation.

The fundamental differences between these two approaches lead to distinct perceptions of psychology's purpose and methods. Western psychology, with its physicalist bias, focuses on behaviour and mental processes within the neuro-physiological apparatus often dismissing non-physical realities. Indian psychology, however, sees consciousness as primary and pervasive encompassing space and time and embraces the existence of an eternal soul and non-physical phenomena. This divergence in perspectives has historically led to misunderstandings and mutual distrust with each system viewing the other's foundational assumptions as fundamentally flawed.

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[7] What is Indian Psychology - India Psychology Institute, Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry

[8] नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलं तद्वज्जीवितमतिशयचपलम्।

विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तं लोक शोकहतं च समस्तम्॥ – भजगोविन्दस्तोत्रम् – ४

At the core of this approach lies the emphasis on self-realization and the recognition of the inherent potential within everyone. It highlights the importance of self-discipline, introspection and the cultivation of a strong moral and ethical foundation. The Indian knowledge system views education as a transformative process that goes beyond mere acquisition of knowledge and skills, aiming to nurture the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the student.

The guru-shishya relationship is a central element of the Indian knowledge system. The guru is not merely a transmitter of information. The guru helps the student navigate the path of self-discovery, encouraging questioning, critical thinking and the application of knowledge in practical life. This crucial role of Guru is explained in this verse which means *I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who with the torchlight of knowledge has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance*. –

ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya
caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri-gurave namah[9]

The Indian knowledge system emphasizes the cultivation of values such as truthfulness, non-violence, compassion and selfless service. These values are considered essential for character development and are integrated into the educational process through storytelling, moral instruction, and experiential learning.

By incorporating these traditional Indian concepts into educational psychology, this approach aims to create a learning environment that nurtures the holistic development of students. It seeks to awaken their inherent potential, foster self-inquiry and encourage the development of a balanced and harmonious personality. Through this holistic approach, Indian educational psychology based on the Indian knowledge system strives to prepare students not only for academic success but also for leading a meaningful and fulfilling life contributing to the well-being of society and the world at large. The creators and expositors of the Vedas, scriptures, Puranas and poetry used to include many psychological elements while instructing their disciples. Therefore, there is no objection in mentioning Indian psychology as Indian educational psychology.

- Consciousness in Indian Psychology –

The Indian view of consciousness, deeply rooted in Vedic texts (3000–1000 BCE), is described as a profound science of self or "ātmavidyā."[10]

pūrva tāvad aparavidyāyā viṣayapradarśanārtham ārambhaḥ taddarśane hi
tannirvedopapatteḥ

It means that *the rise of this latter knowledge is in a great measure helped by a careful study of the sciences which deal with phenomenal existence*. This perspective centers on the concept of Brahman, a unitary reality that transcends the mind/matter dichotomy and equates to cosmic consciousness. Vedic literature, including the Rigveda, the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads, provide a rich framework for understanding consciousness, emphasizing that reality can only be experienced, not fully described due to the limitations of language.

Indian philosophy classifies knowledge into higher (concerning consciousness) and lower (concerning objects). The higher knowledge attainable through intuition and meditation complements the analytical lower knowledge of standard sciences. The Vedic worldview posits a recursive and tripartite reality

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[9] श्रीमद्भागवतम् Purport-8-3-25

[10] पूर्व तावदपरविद्याया विषयप्रदर्शनार्थमारम्भः । तद्दर्शने हि तन्निर्वेदोपपत्तेः । (मुण्डकोपनिषत् १-- भा.)

reflected in the physical body, breath and mind suggesting a deep connection between inner and outer phenomena.

Six systems of Indian philosophy further explore consciousness with each addressing the self's interaction with reality. Notably, the Sāmkhya and Yoga systems dissect the mind into components like manas (mind), ahamkāra (ego), chitta (memory), buddhi (intellect) and ātman (self) each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of consciousness. Modern parallels can be drawn with quantum mechanics and neuroscience highlighting the timeless relevance of these ancient insights.

- The importance of self-discipline, introspection, and ethical cultivation is a central theme in many Indian philosophical and spiritual traditions -

These ancient texts emphasize self-knowledge (atma-jnana) as the path to liberation. The Katha Upanishad states, "The self-existent Lord pierced the senses to turn outward. Thus we look to the world outside and see not the Self within us".

<div align="center">

parāñcikhāni vyatṛṇatsvayaṁbhūstasmātparāṅpaśyati nāntarātman |

kaściddhīraḥ pratyagātmānamaiṣadāvṛttacakṣuramṛtatvamicchan ||[11]

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Krishna instructs Arjuna on self-discipline (tapas) and introspection. He says, "Let a man lift himself by himself; let him not degrade himself" (emphasizing self-reliance in spiritual growth.

<div align="center">

uddhared ātmanātmānaṁ nātmānam avasādayet[12]

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Yoga Sutras of Patanjali outlines the eight-limbed path of yoga, including yama (ethical restraints) and niyama (observances), which form the foundation for self-discipline and moral conduct.

Yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo'ṣṭāvaṅgāni.[13]

Yama is Ethical disciplines guiding our interaction with the world, encompassing non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, right use of energy, and non-greed. Niyama is Positive observances focused on self-discipline and spiritual growth including cleanliness, contentment, discipline, self-study and surrender to a higher power. Asana is physical postures aimed at creating a steady and comfortable seat for meditation. Pranayama is Breath control techniques to regulate and expand life energy influencing the mind and emotions. Pratyahara is withdrawal of the senses and drawing attention inward to reduce distractions during meditation. Dharana is Concentrated focus on a single point or object to prepare the mind for meditation. Dhyana is Meditative absorption where the mind becomes fully immersed in the focus of meditation beyond active effort. Samadhi is the ultimate state of bliss or enlightenment, where one perceives reality without mental disturbance.

Buddhist teachings *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (Right View), *Sammā Saṅkappa* (Right Intention), *Sammā Vācā* (Right Speech), *Sammā Kammanta* (Right Action), *Sammā Ājīva* (Right Livelihood), *Sammā Vāyāma* (Right Effort), *Sammā Sati* (Right Mindfulness) and *Sammā Samādhi* (Right Concentration) are mentioned in Pali text of the "**Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta**"

Jain texts, particularly the Agamas and the teachings of Tirthankaras (spiritual teachers), provide detailed guidelines on how to implement right conduct in everyday life. This includes not only refraining from

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[11] पराञ्चिखानि व्यतृणत्स्वयंभूस्तस्मात्पराङ्पश्यति नान्तरात्मन्।

कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैषदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥ - Kathopanishad – 2-1-1

[12] उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् । - Bhagavad-Gita 6-5

[13] यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयो- अष्टावङ्गानि – Patanjala Yoga sutra 29

physical harm but also avoiding harm through thoughts, words and actions. The aim is to live in harmony with oneself, others and the environment, fostering a peaceful and compassionate existence.

Thirukkural Tamil classic emphasizes self-control and virtuous living as essential for personal and societal well-being.

Kaalam nadaimurai kandarraan kaamam Maaya kadankann tharum.[14]

This means *Time will degrade one's walk if unchecked, and lust will make false illusions.* This verse from Thirukkural underscores the importance of controlling desires and impulses (especially lust) for maintaining personal discipline and societal harmony. It suggests that unchecked desires can lead to deception and moral degradation highlighting the necessity of self-control for individual well-being and the greater good of society.

* **Holistic Development in Indian Psychology –**

Holistic development, encompassing physical, mental, moral and spiritual aspects is a recurring theme in various Indian texts across different traditions and philosophies. Here are some original references from significant Indian texts that emphasize holistic development:

The Bhagavad Gita is a part of the Indian epic Mahabharata discusses the concept of holistic development extensively. It emphasizes the balance between duty (dharma), righteousness and spiritual growth. Lord Krishna advises Arjuna:

jitātmanaḥ praśhāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ[15]

means *for one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul (Paramatma) is already reached for he has attained tranquility.*

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras as mentioned before are a foundational text of classical yoga philosophy describe the eight limbs of yoga (Ashtanga Yoga). This systematic approach aims at holistic development of the practitioner.

Holistic development in the Upanishads involves realizing the interconnectedness of all existence and achieving spiritual awakening. Manduka Upanishad states that –

nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyo na ca pramādāt tapaso vāpyalingāt.

etairupāyairyatate yastu vidvām- stasyaiṣa ātmā viśate brahmadhāma[16]

means *This Atman cannot be attained by one who is without strength or earnestness or who is without knowledge accompanied by renunciation. But if a wise man strives by means of these aids his soul enters the Abode of Brahman.* This line from the Upanishads emphasizes that holistic development requires strength, earnestness, knowledge, and renunciation. Only through dedicated effort and the integration of these virtues can one achieve spiritual enlightenment and unity with Brahman, illustrating the balance of physical, mental and spiritual growth in personal development.

Written by Kautilya (Chanakya), the Artha shastra is an ancient treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy. It emphasizes the importance of ethical governance, justice and welfare of the people as

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[14] காலம் நடைமுறைக் கண்டற்றான் காமம் மாயக் கடன்கண் தரும். – Thirrukkural, 29

[15] जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः – Bhagavad-Gita 6-7

[16] नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो न च प्रमादात् तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।

एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वां- स्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥ ४॥ - Mundaka Upanisad 3-2-4

essential components of holistic development in society. For Example –

Amātyasampad janapadasampad kośasampad daṇḍasampad mitrasampad iti prakṛtayaḥ[17]
Means - *The essential elements of the state are the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army and the ally.* It outlines the key components of a well-functioning state, emphasizing a holistic approach to governance where ministers (amātya) as the first element, highlighting the importance of capable and moral advisors, country's people (janapada) placing them as a core element of the state thus emphasizing public welfare, 'daṇḍa' (literally "rod" or "punishment") representing the justice system and law enforcement and a comprehensive framework for state administration that balances internal development (country, treasury) with external security (fort, army, allies)

Conclusion
Indian Educational Psychology offers a holistic approach to learning and development rooted in ancient Indian wisdom and traditions.
The core principles of Indian Educational Psychology include:
1. The guru-shishya relationship where the teacher is not just an instructor but a guide for holistic development.
2. Emphasis on self-realization, self-discipline and introspection.
3. Integration of moral and ethical values into the learning process.
4. A consciousness-based worldview that considers the spirit (saccidānanda) as fundamental reality.
5. Recognition of various levels of non-physical existence and inner worlds.
6. Prioritization of sophisticated first-person methods and self-mastery.
7. Holistic development encompassing physical, mental, moral and spiritual aspects.

Indian Educational Psychology differs from Western approaches by considering consciousness as primary and pervasive and acknowledging the existence of an eternal soul and non-physical phenomena. It aims to create a learning environment that nurtures students' holistic development, awakening their inherent potential and fostering self-inquiry.

Key texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras and Artha shastra provide the philosophical foundation for this approach. They emphasize the interconnectedness of all existence, the importance of self-control and the balance between duty, righteousness and spiritual growth.

By incorporating traditional Indian concepts into educational psychology approach aims to prepare students not only for academic success but also for leading meaningful and fulfilling lives thereby contributing to the well-being of society and the world at large. As India continues to evolve educationally integrating these principles into modern pedagogical practices could create a unique and effective educational model. Such a model holds the potential to elevate Bharath to the status of *Vishwa guru* (Universal teacher), fostering a generation that embodies the wisdom and values of Indian psychology while making significant contributions to global progress.

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