

Methodological Issues in Psychological Pursuits of Indian Origin

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Psychologists in India are engaged in laying the foundations of a psychology that aims to explore human experiences in a distinct way and significantly contribute to theory building and application. The primary activity in a new area such as Indian Psychology entails abstraction of concepts; the next important task is acquisition, innovation, and discovery of appropriate methods of enquiry. The presumption is that these methods, in comparison to others, would make Indian Psychology truly an Indian contribution for the exploration of human consciousness in all its manifestations. This process involves three initiatives. First requirement is to underline some important methods, and then describe them in minute details even if they are available in Indian schools of thought. Second urgent task is the improvisation of linkages of the psychology departments of universities and colleges with the centers of spiritualism and religion in India. Lastly, these efforts would require a change in the investigator's mindset—to imbibe an ethos conducive for a mind-science of Indian origin.

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The resurgence of interest in Indian philosophy and religion among psychologists is a visualization of a nascent branch in an ancient banyan tree (*vat vriksha*). In this quest, psychologists in India envision splendid growth of a beautiful tree which will eventually stand on its adventitious roots as Indian Psychology of consciousness. In this way Indian Psychology is envisaged as an independent system of enquiry into human experiences, sharing with academic psychology a goal that the knowledge gained about human mind will be universally applicable. If there is similarity in the goal of Indian Psychology and academic psychology, how do they differ from each other? Obviously, the differences are to be sought in the concepts of Indian Psychology, its propositions of human mind, and more importantly, in the ways of enquiry. And lastly, it is also important to think about whether the knowledge gained will have universal application? Astonishingly, the last aspect may not be a problem, as the knowledge of

Indian origins which forms the basis of Indian Psychology, is already in use almost all over the world in various shades. The challenge for the Indian Psychology therefore is to make new additions in understanding human psyche.

For any discipline to emerge as an independent system of knowledge it is imperative to deliberate on its conceptual and methodological issues. Over a decade, noticeable attempts have been made to outline the concepts of Indian Psychology, and the presumption is that methods would follow. Although compilation of concepts may perhaps not been a formidable task since it involved frugal use of Indian schools of thought, a disquieting aspect is the extraordinary confidence on the use of methods for exploring human mind. This apparent trivialization of actual practice of methods is a matter of concern as it is bewildering for a student of Indian Psychology. Not only is the student unclear about how to begin the exploration of human