

# THE CONCEPT OF SELF, PERSON AND PERSONALITY: A VIEW OF INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY

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Education, D.S. College, Aligarh***ABSTRACT**Article DOI URL:<https://doi.org/10.36713/epra3213>

*The present article “The Concept of Self, Person and Personality : A View of Indigenous Psychology” aims to explain the nature of self, person and personality in relation to Indian Psychological Perspective. In this explanation, Indian Sath Darshan, Buddhist, Jainism views are included. Researcher analyze, categorize and synthesize the views of Indigenous Psychology and try to find out a new vision of self person and personality. Definitely the Indian meaning of self and person will give a new dimension of thinking as well as to realization of the aims of Education as well as life.*

**KEY WORDS :** *Indigenous Psychology, Self, Jiva, Swabhava.***INTRODUCTION**

“Indigenous Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour or mind that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its people.” (Kim and Berry, 1953) The paradigm of Indigenous Psychology emerge in 2011 when “Hand Book of Indian Psychology” published by Mishra and Others. Some time ‘Indigenous Psychology’ is equated with the word ‘Indian Psychology’. But Indigenous Psychology has broader sense than the term ‘Indian Psychology’, it describe to a certain conception of human nature, it has its own met-theoretical base and involves in a set of broader method to study and transform human nature according to Indian tradition of knowledge.

**SOURCES OF INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY**

The sources of Indian Psychology are the classical text of Psycho-spiritual practices. Rigveda, Upanishada, Shath darshana (Samkhya, Nyaya, Yoga, Mimansha, Vishishika and Vedanta) are more specifically called sources of the Indigenous Psychology. These psycho-spiritual sources describe the Psychology of human mind and life. Sat-chit anand, Jiva, origin and development of human life. Spiritual and practical life events are the major issues discussed in these sources. Apart of these Hindu sources, Indigenous psychology includes Buddhist and Jainism thoughts about human life. In modern time so many of psychologists started to collect and explain the Indian Psychological thoughts with reference to the modern psychological practices. Cardine Rhys Davids wrote, “Birth of Indian Psychology and its development in Buddhist Psychology and an inquiry into the analysis and theory of mind in Pali literature.” (1924). Another early book of interest is ‘Hindu Psychology’ written by Swami Akhilananda.

The most significant effort made by Jadunath Sinha (1933 to 1958) by publishing three volume of Indian Psychology, ‘Development of Psychological thoughts in India’ by Ramchandra Rao in 1962, ‘Indian Psychology’ by Safaya (1976), ‘Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology’ by Kuppuswami in 1985, ‘Buddhist Doctrine of Experience’ by Kochimultom in 1982, ‘Jaina Psychology’ by Mehta (1953), and ‘Some Problems in Jaina Psychology’ by Kalghatgi (1961).

In September 29 to October 1, 2002 more than 150 Indian Psychologists meet in Pondicherry at a National Conference on Yoga and Indian approaches to Psychology. They unanimously proclaimed as ‘Pondicherry Manifesto of Indigenous Psychology’. After this conference a number of edited volume of researches about Indian Psychology published. Some books also published after this conference by Cornelissen (2004), Mavwaha (2005), Rao *et al.* (2008), Cognitive Anomalies, Consciousness and Yoga attempts to develop a comprehensive system of Indian Psychology.

**METHODS TO STUDY INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY**

Indigenous Psychology use several method to study human behaviour more specifically observation, experimental and phenomenological methods. Indigenous Psychology use observation as a main tool for its study and research. Observation may be internal and external events. Observation may be from the perspective of first-person, second-person or third-person, first person is private or subjective, scientific method depend upon third persons experience to make conclusions objective and generalized. Experimental method can be use a behavioural form of yoga, meditation is also a

case of matter to study the mental processes of human being. Phenomenological method also impotent to study subjective experiences and Introspection is one of the common form of phenomenological methods.

Systematic introspection and experimental introspection are the reformed form of introspection. In Indian tradition, introspection is used as a realization not as observation. Husserl (1931 / 62) these method opens up enormous possibilities for studying Neuro-phenomenology of consciousness for psychological studies. Case study, naturalistic observation, and interviews are some others techniques to study about indigenous psychology.

### **SELF, PERSON AND PERSONALITY IN INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY**

The individual as a persons is the basic subject for the studies in the psychology. Transformation of human being is the Aim of Education, this transformation needs to have the knowledge of human behaviour and mind. Since last two centuries the education system of India depends upon the knowledge of western tradition. Specifically in the field of psychology. Modern Indian Education using western psychological theories to transform human being and to solve problems. Recent Research indicates that education is not positively correlates with happiness and meaningfulness of human life. What is the reason behind this? Modern Psychological Practices around the globe are highly influenced by Western Psychology (Animal Psychology) and behaviourism considered human being as a machine or Biological Animal, it ignore the human consciousness and psycho-spiritual aspects of life. Another reason behind this failure of western psychology is the theories and facts of modern western psychology, Origins in a specific culture and geographical area so it represent the materialistic view of life. So it can not be imply in the spiritual Indian society. These are two basic problem with western psychology to solve the problems of human life in Indian subcontinent because we are following a different and specific approach of theories and rules. If we want to solve the problems of human life, we have to adopt Indigenous System of Psychology in Education.

The person is a unique combination of consciousness, mind and body. Consciousness is the source of subjectivity and being, body is the source of natural appetite and mind is the source of thinking, mental process and empirical experiences.

### **THE CONCEPT OF SELF AND PERSON IN INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY**

**Upanishadic View :** Indigenous Psychological thoughts represents three different strands; first strand consists Samkhya-yoga and Vedanta schools explains that self and consciousness are the same. Second strand represents by Nyaya-Vaisesika and Buddhist schools explains self as opposite by denying reality to the self. Third strand represents by Charvaka school, explains self in materialistic way. Indian Psycho-spiritual tradition proclaimed 'Atman' as a centre of whole existence and source of energy. A well known Vedantic text Drg-drashya-Vivek (n.d. 1931) refers 'Atman' as the drk (Drashta) mean one that sees as opposed to drashya. In Upanisadic tradition, the self is neither the thinker nor thoughts but a experience beyond the thought. The self is experienced in a state of awareness that is removed all thoughts. It is a pure state of consciousness which make a distinction between 'I' and 'my' thought characterized by a composite state of

existence, consciousness and bliss (Sat, Chit and Ananda).

In Indian intellectual tradition, Jiva (living being) is often used in place of the Western word 'Person'. Jiva, according to Chandagya Upanishad means a human being as an integral of the cosmic intelligence. Radhakrishnan (1953) interpret that "Human being is the culmination of Animal development, according to Upanishad person are to be seen as a integral part of the entire range of the animate world – and even the inanimate with native."

Svetasvatara Upanishad (5.9) says that "the jiva appears to be tinier thin a hair divided a 100 fold but it has a infinite potential." It is also said in the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad (2.5.1-5) (a dialogue between Yajnavalkaya and Maitreyi) many people love the most Materialistic things or even God they worship but they are not love for their own sake, but for the sake of our own Self (Atman), that's why? He say self Atman is the most important thing that we should try hard to understand.

Self is the topic of greatest interest in Upanishads. The concept of self take various connotation leading to a variety of interpretation of Jiva and the Person by different systems. Upanishad also laid the idea about the nature of Person. In Prasna Upanishad (4.9) describe purusa as a person more specifically as a Seer (drasta), the toucher (sprasta), the hearer (srota) the smaller (ghrata), the Tester (Rasayita), the thinker (manta), the knower (boddha), the doer (karta) and the thinking-self (vijanatanma). In Maitri Upanishad (6.7), the person characterized as a self (atma) who is conscious (ceta) thinks (manta), acts (karta) and enjoys (anandayata) in Upanishadic knowledge the main feature of the person described as : a living self (jivatma) as embodied self (Sariratma) and material self (bhotatma). These idea provides the basis for the model of the person as a composite of body mind and consciousness.

Samkhya-Yoga concept of self is Purusha which develop coincidence with Prakriti. A consequence of this interference is the emerge the person. Sattava, Rajas and Tamas are the three basic attributes of the person which provide a specific type of the person. The embodiment of Purusha and Prakriti results Vikrita (Origin of the Sristi). After this embodiment, cosmic intelligence emerged followed by Ahmkara. Ahmkara receive the attribution from Sattava, Rajas and Tamas after then Mana, five sense organs and five Tanmatras create a Jiva, which is considered as 'Bhokta' in Samkhya-Yoga tradition. So a Jiva is considered similar as Person which is the cause of all human like activities. According to Samkhya, self is the reflection of Purusha in this empirical world.

Nyaya-Vaisesika have a realistic view of self and person comparative to other thoughts. Nyaya-Vaisesika thoughts represent a medieval path between Vedanta and Buddhist thoughts. In Nyaya, matters are independent so our thoughts are based on the independent reality, this is known as Pluralism in short. Nyaya-Vaisesika claims that, the self, mind and consciousness are different, self and the mind are substances but consciousness is the quality which inheritance in the self. According to Gautama, Desire, Aversion, effort, Pleasure, Pain and Cognition are indicative of the soul. Nyayasutra 1.1.10; (Jha 1984, Vol. 1, p. 2017). The self is a synthesizer, the knower, the doer and the enjoyer. The manifest personal identity pre-assume the existence of an enduring self. Vaisesika comments that soul experienced pleasure by coming into the contact of the certain kind of things. According to Nyaya, memory is a part of self because memory can be only of those

things that are objects of cognition, memory, a person centered and memory is always the recognition of ours past. The concept of self is merely similar to the modern concept of self; Nyaya argues that self reveals itself in ones experience of the 'I' ness and the ego sense. The Assess of the awareness of the self first person based on the knowledge of the objects of the world.

There are the two main schools of Vedanta. First is Sankara's Advaita and second is Ramanuja's Visista Advaita, both schools belong to Upanishadic tradition of knowledge. Sankara identify Brahman as only one eternal. The Brahman is identical with the self (Atman). At the level of Person, the self appears limited because of its association with the mind and body. Snakara interprets the Upanishadic statement 'Tat Tvam Asi' as the assertion of identity between the self (Atman) and the Brahman (The Supreme Self). The process of denial all attribution leads us to say that the self is not this and not that (neti-neti). Thus we find the three type of self in advaita – first self refers to Brahman, second refers to 'Saksin' the witnessing self, third is the imperical self (the Jiva). In Visista Advaita the self is the agent of action, it is knower, doer and enjoyer. Self consciousness and wisdom are its attribute. While the Brahman is infinite and all encompassing the self is infinitely small. Ramanuja advocates qualified monism by asserting the all encompassing Brahman, the one Supreme. Comprises of all the individuals 'selves' as well as the material objects in the universe which are equally real. The selves and the material things are related to Brahm as attributes to a substance. In Vishesika self is neither independent nor identical with the God. It is the transformation and manifestation and subject as well as the object of knowing. The self operate mind and mind received information from sense organs.

### DENIAL OF SELF CONCEPT IN BUDDHISM

Buddhist doctrine of Self (Atman) is against the doctrine of Upanishadic thought. According to Buddhist perspective, a Person is not a entity. It is a aggregate of five elements; (i) Material form (Rupa), (ii) Feelings (Vedana), (iii) Perception (Sanna), (iv) Mental Disposition (Samkhana) and (v) Reason (Vinnana). Briefly Buddhist agree on that Self as a permanent, changeless entity is none existence. But Gautama accepts only the empirical self.

Jainism is another prominent schools of thoughts which gave a specific view point about self. It is however, called Jiva and Jiva in Jainism is different from the Jiva understood as a Person. The self in Jainism is a non-material substance, which is of the native of consciousness. It is also an active agent caused to knowing and feeling. According to Jainism the self is studied into two perceptive first; Self such as unsullied by Karma and related with physical body. Second, it is existential condition. Self has the following characteristics : (i) It is essentially conscious, (ii) Self is an agent that undergoes the experience joy and happiness, (iii) Self is limited by the human body, (iv) There is a different self in different animate body.

### PRAKRITI (SVABHAVA) AND PERSONALITY (VYAKTITVA)

According to Indian thought when self (Atman) manifested in the life, it characterize and manifested by Prakirit and constitute a specific type of the personality. Svabhava means a natural condition of state of being. Bhagvat Gita shated about the 'Svabhava'. "Being follow him nature, so how could

resolutions to the contrary succeed?" According to Samkhya, new thing are the three components of 'Prakriti' namely, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These three components extent to conceptualization of Svabhava and personality characteristics. Bhagvat Gita presents a elaborate typology based on three Guna of Prikriti. Before explaining the typology we have to remember the few assumptions about this conceptualization.

1. All three guna's are presumed to exist in everything and all the time.
2. A certain level of dominance of a specific Guna and manifest in that person.
3. The relative dominance of the particular Guna is not permanent forever. This balance may be change according to time and circumstances.
4. Last two chapters of Gita describe the three type of personality. It describe in terms of the food, they eat, the sacrifice they offer, Penance they offer, and gifts they give.
  - The Sattvic Person (Dominance of Sattva) prefer sweet and nourishing food that promote health, vitality and joy, they perform the duty without expectation for reward. Perform penance with a balance mind give gift to worthy persons.
  - The Rajasic person (Dominance of Rajas) prefer bitter sour, hot and harsh food that cause pain and disease, make sacrifice with the expectation of reward prefer penance to gain respect and to give gifts with the expectation of return.
  - The Tamasic person (Dominance of Tamas) prefer state, Putrid, unclean and tasteless food, make sacrifice without regard to rule of proper conduct perform penance to self torture and injury to others and give gifts to unworthy persons and with contempt towards others.

Again in the chapter 18, similar way of comparison of personalities given. Sattvic person described as a viewer of uniformity among the principles underlying the infinite variety of changing phenomena and perform these duties without attachment. Rajasic type persons try to understand the reason for differences among the various phenomenon. They work to satisfy the desires and ego and seeks joy. finally Tamasic type people have the tendency to carryon without trying to understand the reality behind appearance and causes leading to changes. Undertake any thing without reasons. Tamasic people remain stubborn in clinging to unwholesome habits and have addiction to sleep, sloth, negligence.

Apart from the classification given in the Bhagvat Gita one another typological distinction given in Carakasamhita (EC 78). Based on bodily fluids (Similar to Hippocrates) Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These three constitutes are not hypothetical but a real substance with the power to produce, sustain and nourish the body. In Indian thought the mental and physical aspect of human life viewed as belonging to a continuum. So the Constitution of the body according to Vatta, Pitta, Kapha represent body type and persons temperament also. These three also called 'Dosas' of human body. These three dosas determine a pattern of individual appearance, experience and behaviours or the traits of the personality.

"The manifestation of 'dasas' is characterized by specific qualities. Vata is dry, cold, light, delicate, moving, clear and raw; Pitta is greasy, hot, sharp, fluid and acid; and Kapha is heavy, cold, mild, oily, sweet, stable and phlegmatic." Jolly (1994) Individual with Vata Prikriti tend to have slim and

dry-body very good looking, fickle in thinking pattern, talkative, and music loving. Person with Pitta Prakriti have sweaty, yellowish body, medium body strength and span of life, intelligent argumentative and courageous. People with Kapha tend to have good looking and well formed bodies with lot of dark hair and moist skin, respectful, generous, thoughtful and firm opinionist.

After having a detailed glance on the nature of Self and Person according to Indian tradition, we need to conduct much more study to find out the other behavioural dimension of the self and person which will be helpful to determine the aims and process of Education in Indian Subcontinent. The realization of self and typology is the aim of education so it is our duty to find out the basic nature of self and personality types. Without the study of nature of self, we can't be able to frame our education system.

The major aim of education is the all round drawing out of the best within the individual so it is the primary duty of educationist to delimits and determine the nature of 'best' within the man. The true knowledge about self and person enlighten us toward a happy and meaningful life which is also our aim of life.

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