

PREFACE

Psychology, as both a discipline and a profession, continues to evolve globally, but its conceptual roots and practical applications often reflect the cultural soil in which they grow. In India, a civilisation enriched by millennia of philosophical inquiry and social diversity, psychology takes on distinctive contours that differ markedly from Western traditions. This textbook, *Psychology: Theory and Practices in Indian Context*, is a humble yet focused effort to present psychological knowledge that is both globally informed and locally grounded.

Designed primarily for undergraduate students, this book aims to bridge the gap between Western psychological paradigms and Indian cultural realities. While Western psychology often emphasises individualism, autonomy, and analytical reasoning, Indian traditions highlight interconnectedness, duty (dharma), self-realisation (atman), and holistic thinking. This divergence is not a point of conflict but a source of enrichment, allowing students to appreciate the pluralism of human thought and behaviour.

The chapters explore a wide range of psychological topics—from the foundational theories and contemporary practices to indigenous perspectives rooted in Indian philosophy, spirituality, social norms, and healing systems. Special emphasis is placed on topics such as the Indian conception of self, emotional regulation through aesthetic experience (rasa), the dynamics of family and community, and culturally attuned mental health practices such as Ayurveda and Yoga.

Each section is carefully curated to blend theoretical rigour with contextual relevance. Real-life case studies, indigenous research, and comparative insights with Western psychology are used to deepen understanding and application. Visual aids and a glossary of key terms have been added to enhance comprehension and accessibility.

We hope this textbook will inspire undergraduate students not just to learn psychology, but to see it as a living discipline—one that must reflect and respond to the cultural narratives of the people it seeks to understand and serve. As India continues to redefine itself in a globalised world, so too must its psychology—rooted in tradition, responsive to change, and reflective of its unique moral and intellectual heritage.

This book is the result of collaborative thinking, teaching experience, and a deep respect for the psychological wisdom embedded in India's ancient and contemporary traditions. It is our sincere hope that it will serve as a valuable companion for students embarking on their journey to understand the human mind within the Indian cultural landscape. This textbook emerges from a deep need to re-imagine psychology education in India—an education that speaks to our cultural contexts, philosophical heritage, and lived realities. For far too long, mainstream psychology curricula in Indian universities have remained tethered to Euro-American epistemologies that, while robust in their own right, often sideline indigenous frameworks, relational ontologies, and culturally embedded knowledge systems. This book is a humble yet determined attempt to address that imbalance.

Our aim is not to reject Western theories but to decentre them, placing Indian knowledge systems on equal footing. Drawing on traditions such as Sankhya, Vedanta, Buddhism, Ayurveda, and the lived practices of Indian communities, this textbook foregrounds a cultural psychology and personality science that is context-sensitive, pluralistic, and ethically rooted. In doing so, we embrace a vision of psychology as a global discipline enriched by local meanings. A central emphasis of this textbook is the decolonisation of psychology pedagogy. Decolonisation, in this context, refers not merely to the inclusion of Indian names or concepts, but to a systematic reworking of how psychological knowledge is framed, interpreted, and taught. It challenges the universality of Western categories and integrates Indian ways of knowing—whether through the cyclic understanding of self, the embeddedness of emotion in ritual, or the complex relationality that underlies Indian constructions of identity and well-being. Aligned with the

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this textbook integrates key pedagogical shifts advocated by the policy:

- A holistic and multidisciplinary approach to psychology.
- Emphasis on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).
- A focus on value-based education rooted in cultural and ethical awareness.
- Enabling students to become reflective, contextually grounded practitioners and researchers.

The chapters are written in a lucid, engaging style, designed for graduate students across Indian universities. Each unit offers a balanced view—introducing classical Western models alongside equally rigorous Indian perspectives, followed by empirical studies, classroom exercises, and visual aids to facilitate meaningful learning. This book is not just a textbook. It is a call to reclaim our intellectual heritage, critically engage with the global canon, and cultivate a truly Indian psychology that is dialogic, democratic, and deeply human.

We hope this work serves as both a teaching resource and a catalyst for a new generation of psychologists who are not only competent in theory and method but also rooted in the moral and cultural soil of the society they serve.

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