

Theoretical Underpinnings on Eastern and Western Perspectives on the Concept of Chakras

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the importance of intertwining theoretical shreds of evidence that exist in the West with that of the Vedic philosophy of the Chakra system in the East to bring forth cultural similarities. The paper attempts to explore a different and culturally sound perspective that presents evidence of how the Chakra system shares commonalities with various theories of the West such as that of the Mind-Body theory. A comparison is also made between Chakras and the personality theories proposed by Erikson, Maslow, Jung, and Freud. For this purpose, secondary data analysis of research papers, journals, and books was done to gain deeper knowledge and insight about the topic. This paper also reveals the importance of spiritual awakening which in turn helps cultivate overall well-being, and self-growth which are important factors that contribute towards a positive and moralistic development among people.

Keywords: *Chakras, Indian Psychology, Personality theories, Eastern and Western Perspective*

The fundamental notion of knowing oneself has been a center for scrutiny through the ages. Throughout centuries many subtle and abstract explorations have been done to help understand the self better, for instance; Physiology focuses upon the different roles that our hormones and organs play in bringing about changes in our body. Research done by anthropology and sociology explains self in terms of bio-cultural and societal ways, Philosophy sheds light on abstract and existential considerations of reality while Psychology has its theories that provide a picturesque view of personality through behavioral and mental aspects. Tayal & Sharma (2020) pointed out that even Religion plays a vital role in finding answers about the concept of personality and self at a transcendental level.

Murty (1993) has used Sayana's definition in his book on Rig-Veda, to define Veda as, "That by which the means of obtaining the transcendental goal of a man are known". The Vedic scriptures provide a means for transcendental growth which is deemed as being desirable for self-expansion and going beyond a prior form of self. Different schools of Hindu Philosophy viz, Mimamsa and Vedanta schools suggest that Veda is an eternal and infallible source of Dharma knowledge. The Vedic scripts are noteworthy because they

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include a large number of books and scriptures that contain roots of Indian philosophy. One such bearing is the concept of Chakras or the “Wheel of Dharma” as defined by the Vedas.

In his explanation of Chakras, Sherwood (2002) stated that the study of human psychology and that of humans would be incomplete without an understanding of the human energy system, sometimes known as the ‘Psyche’. Many researches show that the inability to freely radiate energy causes human problems on many levels including; physiological, emotional, and mental regions (Suchandra et al, 2021; Richardson, 2019). The concept of Chakras in the Western world was first introduced by John Woodruffe in the 1900s in his book, *The Serpent Power* and later many different authors and scholars have since worked on the concept of the Chakra system such as Alice Bailey, Carl Gustav Jung, and Kurt Leland among others.

Concept of Chakras

Chakra System as a psychic energy system was first introduced in Yoga Upanishads (600 B.C.) and then in Patanjali (200 B.C.) however the roots of Chakras were present in India even before when ancient texts were not available (1500 and 500 B.C.) and the only source of knowledge was through Oral transmission (Schneider, 2019). Chakra is a Sanskrit concept that literally means “Wheel”. This wheel of life plays a vital role in maintaining the focal points in our body. This “whirling disk” consists of the human body's psychoactive energy centers or vortexes (Majumdar, 2018). There are many Chakras in our body out of which there are 7 major types; each chakra has a physical and psychological (mental and emotional) significance. Majumdar points out that all Chakras have their own colors and aura with a specific frequency range which plays an important role in terms of understanding how an individual perceives the world around them and makes decisions based on their aura.

The focal points have been well defined as per the traditional roots of psychology within the framework of the “Mind-Body” problem. Philosophers and scientists have tried to understand the connection between mind and body through centuries and different theories and models have been provided for the same (Westphal, 2016).

In the 20th century, Sir John Woodruffe pointed out that there are seven Chakra points in our body. It is said that Chakras are considered as a meditational aid and a sense of spiritual essence is internalized as a yogi starts with the lower chakras and works their way up to the upper chakras, flowering to the crown of the head. There is a rhythmic flow that happens up and down the body via the pathway (Nadi). This flow connects the body clocks governing our circadian rhythm, sleep cycle as well as ultradian rhythm (Ray, 2017).

Ancient texts and research suggest that each Chakra signifies a defined color, health, number, immunity, and emotion (Schneider & Cooper, 2019; Drapkin et al, 2016). Baghel & Pradhan (2015) in their study suggested that these seven points of Chakra's make the Vortex of psychic energy system which helps provide a balance in one's mental, physical and emotional states. Furthermore, Ray (2017) has given a detailed view pertaining the Chakra system stating that Chakra is the thriving center that distributes energy through pathways of life energy which are called as *Nadis*. A free flow of chakras through nadis ensures realization of true self while any blockage causes disturbance may cause different psychological and physical disturbances like; anxiety, stress, depression, lethargy, arthritis, constipation, etc. Ray mentioned the importance of Meditation stating that each Chakra is seen as a bud of a flower which represents energy connections and as we meditate each bud keeps opening hence leading to a new awakening taking place.

Types of Chakras

There are many different forms of Chakras and Nadis in our bodies (Baghel & Pradhan, 2015; Ray, 2017; Clarkson, 2020). There are as many as 114 Chakras and 72000 Nadis which are of prominence as has been stated by Ray (2017). These 114 Chakras are further divided into 7 major, 21 minor, and 86 micro Chakras. Two Chakras among these 114 Chakras are located outside our body. Ray (2017) also mentioned that all the chakras are not active all the time rather they keep switching such that some are prominent while others are dominant and vice-versa.

Baghel & Pradhan (2015) in their research paper explained the psychological and physical connotations of 7 Chakra;

- 1. Muladhar or the Root Chakra-** This Chakra is found in the pelvic region and is essential in fulfilling fundamental needs such as food, water, shelter, safety, and emotional fears. From a psychological standpoint, a person with an uncontrolled focus of energy at this chakra has anxiety issues, nightmares, poor bladder control and is continually scared of being hurt or has a strong desire to hurt and injure others. Muldhara Chakra is the densest among all the Chakras hence it is symbolized in Red (Hale, 2022).
- 2. Svadhishthan or the Sacral Chakra-** Sacral Chakra or Svadhishthan Chakra is located below the navel. It is mostly in charge of sexual and creative functions. It elicits pleasure, desire, and happiness (Stelter, 2016). This Chakra is associated with reproduction, genitals (ovary and testes) and sexual hormones (Majumdar, 2018). Blockage of this Chakra causes poor sexual impulses, low mood, and a decrease in creativity. This Chakra is symbolized by an orange color (Hale, 2022).
- 3. Manipura or the Solar Plexus Chakra-** This Chakra stretches from the navel and up to the ribcage and so has a biological importance in metabolism and digestion (Majumdar, 2018). Psychologically, this Chakra gives rise to self-esteem, determination, and dedication. Low levels cause a lack of responsibility, poor self-control, and a decrease in willpower (Stelter, 2016). Solar Plexus Chakra is characterized by the color Yellow (Hale, 2022) because it is said that yellow symbolizes the sun which connotes power and motivation.
- 4. Anahata or the Heart Chakra-** This chakra covers the heart, breasts and lungs. It significantly deals with emotions like; love, anger, sadness etc. Therefore, blockage or reduction in the flow of energy through this chakra may cause dismay, jealousy, anger and other emotions of the like. Park (2020) provides a guide which helps explore ways to heal childhood emotional wounds by working on the heart chakra through Chakra therapy. Besides this, Anahata Chakra also acts as a source of compassion, empathy and altruism. Due to its centric role in emotions, heart Chakra is considered to be feminine in its representation. Anahata or Heart Chakra is symbolized in green color (Hale, 2022).
- 5. Vishuddha or the Throat Chakra-** This Chakra is located in the throat, larynx, mouth, tongue and neck. Vishuddha or the Throat Chakra mainly manifests in the form of communication and creativity. Any blockage may result in both psychological and physical symptoms which include lack of trust, fear of getting rejected and throat infections. Blue color reflects this chakra (Hale, 2022).
- 6. Ajna or the Third Eye Chakra-** It is located in between the eyebrows, eyes, head and the brain region specifically the pituitary gland (Stelter, 2016). This chakra governs an individual's intuition, consciousness, and introspection (ability to see within). Disturbance in the flow of the energy system may cause physical symptoms like headache and dizziness and psychological symptoms like difficulty grasping,

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retaining, and learning new material. The indigo color represents this Chakra (Hale, 2022).

- 7. Sahasrara or the Crown Chakra-** This Chakra is located in the head and it is portrayed as the center of spirituality, actualization, and enlightenment. If attained, this Chakra helps attain a sense of divinity or *Samadhi* (Baghel & Pradhan, 2015). Violet color reflects the Crown Chakra as according to popular beliefs, Violet signifies a path to spirituality (Hale, 2022).

Table 1: Table showing a summary chart of the 7 Chakras

CHAKRA	ROOT	SACRAL	SOLAR PLEXUS	HEART	THROAT	THIRD-EYE	CROWN
COLOR	RED	ORANGE	YELLOW	GREEN	BLUE	INDIGO	VIOLET
LOCATION	Pelvis/Base of the spine	Navel	Navel to Ribcage/Gut	Heart, breasts and lungs	Throat, larynx, mouth, tongue and neck	Eyebrows, eyes, head and the brain region specifically the pituitary gland	Top of the head
PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE	Associated with Kidneys, adrenal glands, anus, and genitals (ovary and testes)	Associated with reproduction, genitals (ovary and testes) and sexual hormones	Associated with digestive system, pancreas, liver and stomach.	Associated with maintenance of the circulatory system	Associated with the thyroid gland	Associated with the pineal gland (circadian rhythm) and Regulation of hormones (Serotonin and Melanin)	Associated with the nervous system, pituitary gland and pineal gland
PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE	Survival, food, water, shelter	Sexuality, passion, and creativity	Wisdom and Confidence	Regulation of emotions	Communication and Regulation of mood	Inner wisdom and creative intelligence	Spirituality and transcendence
IF BALANCED	Peace with future	Joy, passion and good sex life	Self worth and higher purpose in life	Loving self and others, compassion, empathy, altruism and forgiveness	Assertiveness and Genuineness	Higher self connection, and intuitive thoughts	Feeling of oneness and enlightenment
IF NOT BALANCED	Greed, materialism and restlessness	Either heightened or extremely low Libido	Judgmental behavior	Relationship issues	Indiscreetness, imprudent behavior	Self-doubt and skepticism	Isolation, Segregation from self and the world
DISORDERS RELATED TO DEFICIENCY	Hoarding disorder, depression, anxiety, loneliness, anger, eating disorders	Disorders related to sexuality, OCD, Menstrual problems, infertility issues	Anxiety and Digestive problems	Attachment issues, heart problems, blood pressure issues	Phobias, fear, Dissociation, and hyper/hypothyroidism	Depression, anxiety disorders, insomnia, sinusitis, and eye diseases	Schizophrenia, Learning disabilities, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, stroke, psychosis, nihilism

Bridging the Eastern and the Western Perspective

Louise Pastor rightly quoted, “*Science knows no country, because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world*”.

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For centuries, a subtle but profound thread of connection has woven an enduring thread that seamlessly connects the East and the West has been spun across centuries, connecting distant cultures in a profound dance of exchange and influence.

Lord Krishna said, “The embodied soul, who has controlled his nature having renounced all actions by mind dwells at ease in the city of nine gates, neither working nor causing work to be done” (Bhagavad Gita, 5-13). Barnhart (2020) in his article has mentioned a linkage between the Bible and the Bhagwat Gita on the ground of “City of nine gates”. According to the Vedas, our body is to be viewed as a city of nine gates which is beautifully described in the form of a story that makes a comparison between a man’s body and a city that contains nine gates. These nine gates represent the entrance and exit system in form of parts of our body and soul. Vedic scriptures describe these gates as follows; two eyes, two ears, mouth, nostrils, anus and genitals. The city comprises of a king who signifies consciousness, the Queen represents intelligence and both married together in this city. The queen (intelligence) has bodyguards which reflect our senses vis-à-vis smell, vision, hearing taste, touch. The bodyguards are said to have wives that signifies pleasure or desires. Finally, the city has a cobra snake that is the guardian and is considered to be the basic life force. This life force is also called as prana. The Bible gives a similar account by comparing the body with a city. The Christian standard bible states that a man devoid of self-control is akin to a city that has broken walls and is hence unprotected (Proverbs 25:28). Ray (2017) has mentioned in his book about the city of nine gates and has said that there exists a tenth door called *Dasam Duar* which is a psychic door and it remains closed due to attachment or dualities of an individual. It is said that as the Crown Chakra is purified through the divine sound of Om, it detoxifies all the negative energy hence opening the tenth door which eventually leads to a state of pure bliss.

The timeless knowledge of Indian psychology blends with Western psychological theories in the rich tapestry of psychological exploration, which reveals a profound connection that cuts across cultural boundaries and deepens our understanding of human behavior. The following section reveals a longstanding connection between the intricate system of chakras and the depths of psychological theories.

1. Mind-Body Problem

The mind-body problem, as pointed out by Rowlands (2009), is an age-old debate concerning whether the mind and body are a separate entity or are the same thing. The mind is more inclined toward mental processing and the conscious-unconscious aspects along with the person’s thoughts while the body comprises physical aspects (McLeod, 2018). Giving an anecdote on the origins of the mind-body issue, Klein & Thorne (2006) pointed out the concepts of Monism and Dualism, wherein Monism posits that there is just one reality that exists either the mind or the body while Dualism suggests that both mind and the body exist. Rene Descartes (1649) was the chief architect of interactionism (a part of the dualist approach). He viewed mind-body as working together and this interaction is made via the pineal gland (Abraham & Roy, 2012; Klein & Thorne, 2006). The Indian concept of personality believes a lot in holism. This has been pointed out by the traditional Indian philosophies such as Vedanta, Samkhya and Yoga sutra which provides a different vertical with the concept of Dualism. Ancient concepts as per Sri Aurobindo’s, “levels of consciousness” and the Ayurvedic postulates of personality emphasize the fact that there is an interaction between our mind and the body (Srivastava, 2012). The Chakra system is believed to be working in a similar fashion wherein the mind plane (psyche or the upper chakras) corresponds with the physical body (lower chakras).

2. Freudian Psychosexual stages

Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis, gave the concept of personality development which, according to him, starts during childhood itself and that this development takes place in 5 psychosexual stages viz; Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latency and Genital stage. Much of what has been described by Freud in these stages can go in sync with the Chakra system (Edwards, 2021)

- i. **Oral Stage vs. Muladhar (Root) Chakra-** This stage starts at birth and lasts for a year. It is marked by sucking and feeding and the energy is centered around the mouth. This stage aims to transit the individual from complete dependence to self-sufficiency; this goes in line with the concept of the Muladhar (Root) chakra since it also acts as the primary base on which other chakras flourish further.
- ii. **Anal Stage vs. Svadhishtan (Sacral) Chakra and Manipura (Solar Plexus) Chakra -** Freud's anal stage is marked by the child's control over bowel movements. This stage reflects the development of confidence and self-esteem. Svadhishtan chakra happens to shape up our levels of creativity while Manipura Chakra helps in boosting tenacity and esteem.
- iii. **Phallic Stage vs. Anahata (Heart) chakra-** The phallic stage is typically marked by the development of feelings and attachment as this is the time when the child develops a love interest in parents of the opposite sex. If properly carried, the child develops a good and healthy relation later in life otherwise not. This concept parallels the notion of the heart chakra which also evidently balances out our emotions, love interest, and feelings of compassion.
- iv. **Genital Stage vs. Vishuddha (Throat), Ajna (Third-eye) and Sahasrara (Crown) chakra-** This stage is marked by the development of an individual into a more mature being. Here, the individual is inclined towards developing a love interest, marrying, accomplishing goals in life, etc. The higher chakras like the throat, third-eye, and crown chakra set a similar opinion. The throat chakra sparks a sense of genuineness and communication, the third-eye chakra embarks on having a vision about self and to see through others and lastly, the crown chakra provides a higher sense of being through which one takes a deeper digging at wisdom and understanding their purpose in life.

3. Erickson's Psychosocial Development Stages- Erik Erikson (1997), an ego psychologist, inspired by Freud's work on psychosexual stages gave the concept of psychosocial stages to help understand the personality of an individual at different milestones of life. Erikson's theory, unlike Freud's psychosexual stages, described the impact of social experience across the lifespan. Erikson was fascinated by how human development and growth were influenced by social contact and relationships. Each stage is marked with conflict therefore if an individual succeeds in this conflict they pave the way towards developing psychological strengths otherwise they fall prey to certain repercussions as described within each stage.

Research evidence supports the view that the life developmental models can be related to the concept of Chakras. Best (2010) gave a Chakra system model of Lifespan development in which she explained each Chakra to theories given by Erikson, Piaget, Kegan, & Nelson. Erikson's 8-stage model can be said to be somewhat similar to the 7 Chakra systems as described in the traditional Indian literature;

- i. **Trust vs. Mistrust and Muladhar (Root) Chakra-** As has been mentioned before, the Root chakra mainly governs security as well as is linked with survival. This goes in line with what Erikson defined in the first stage of development wherein the child

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- is utterly dependent on the caregivers. The stage suggests that if the development of a child takes place successfully; security as well as survival is guaranteed along with that the child is able to earn the trust of the caregivers otherwise mistrust ensues. The root chakra, similarly, symbolizes a transitional stage of development due to the carefully defined parameters of its functionality (Best, 2010).
- ii. **Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt and Svadhishthan (Sacral) Chakra-** Children are just beginning to obtain some independence at this stage of development as described by Erikson. They are beginning to take basic actions on their own and make simple selections about their preferences. Among the eight characteristics of the sacral stage, according to Nelson (1994), is the establishment of self-boundaries. Although these boundaries are still shared to some extent with parents but start to define a sense of "I-ness." Sacral Chakra also entails more than a period of experimenting with separation from the caregiver. Piaget's view on "egocentrism" develops in the Preoperational stage which starts around the age of 2 and lasts till the child is 7 years old. Egocentrism refers to the tendency to view the world through one's perspective while neglecting the perspective of others (Shaffer, 2008). Piagetian view on egocentrism goes in line with the features of the Sacral Chakra as it entails a period of experimenting with separation from the caregiver. Thus, the sacral stage is a transition phase from dependency to autonomy.
 - iii. **Initiative vs. Guilt and Inferiority and Manipur (Solar-Plexus) Chakra-** The individual starts getting devoted to the process of individuation. They are preoccupied with defining a self-idea that supports self-esteem. If they view themselves to be unsuccessful in any way, they will become consumed with this endeavor. In the 3rd stage of development too, the child starts functioning partially independently. Here, the child slowly starts developing self-esteem and begins to discover individuality. An important aspect commonly observed during the 4th stage, industry vs. inferiority, is that the child becomes more ambitious and achievement-oriented. The Solar plexus chakra governs confidence and achievement orientation, and it further aids us in striving for success. In Identity vs. confusion, the individual is fully devoted to the process of individuation. Therefore, slowly, the child starts focusing more on the experiences drawn internally (Best, 2010).
 - iv. **Identity vs. Role Confusion and Manipur (Solar-Plexus) & Vishuddha (Throat) Chakra-** It depicts the struggle of coming to terms with one's individuality while also feeling uncertain about one's place and role in society. The Solar Plexus Chakra may aid in the formation of a strong and genuine identity by giving the confidence and inner strength required to meet the obstacles of this developmental phase. The throat chakra can help people express who they are and share their values, feelings, and opinions. Good communication lowers the possibility of being unclear about one's place in relationships and society and strengthens one's sense of self.
 - v. **Intimacy vs. Isolation and Anahata (Heart) Chakra & Vishuddha (Throat) Chakra -** Erikson's sixth stage constitutes Intimacy vs. Isolation which starts around middle adulthood. This stage is marked by developing intimacy and loving relationships. Success brings proximity, trust, and a successful bond between people while failure causes loneliness, guilt, and depression. Best (2010) also described in her paper about how a striking similarity can be observed between Erikson's 6th stage of psychosocial development and the upper Chakras. Heart Chakra, as explained before, happens to govern our emotions and helps in enriching love and intimate relationships. Heart Chakra falls as part of the upper chakra system and so it overpowers the lower 3 systems and is more mature as compared to them. Unlike the lower Chakras that are surrounded by cravings and affection (Nelson, 1994) Heart

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Chakra, on the other hand, showcases a sense of selflessness, compassion, empathy, and altruism. Parental commitment and partner intimacy happen to be an important task during middle adulthood. For the healthy development of the child, (Bakiera, 2018) parental Generativity is essential. This marked contribution by parents happens to be unconditional and selfless. Wiesner (2019) suggests that the Eastern approach including yoga has helped couples develop a sense of reconnection, repair sexual relations, and reclaim intimacy during middle adulthood.

The Throat Chakra is crucial for communication, and creativity, and is linked to self-expression and effective communication. To build profound connections with people in an intimate setting, open and honest communication is essential. A person's capacity to communicate their ideas, emotions, and desires is essential to establishing and preserving close relationships. Keeping this in mind, Erikson's 6th stage also embarks on the mentioned aspects that fall as part of the Throat Chakra.

- vi. **Generativity vs. Stagnation and Ajna (Third-eye) Chakra-** Marathe & Acharya (2020) claimed that as we move towards the upper chakras, the energy gets diverted towards the self unselfishly and more generously. There is a shift from selfish egoistic concerns to societal concerns during young adulthood wherein the individual is full of creativity and productivity. Thus, people are more "other" oriented than being "self" oriented. This corresponds to Erikson's seventh stage of psychosocial development, which embarks on Generativity, wherein the individual is driven towards benefitting others and doing good to society. The upper chakras closely resemble this stage. Shi, Ardelt & Orwoll (2017) found that wisdom and creativity are two major routes for attaining life satisfaction during old age. Third-eye Chakra is related to this stage of development, keeping in mind that personality isn't solely identified with ego in this stage of development and is rather more inclined towards the society in forms of nurturance and creativity (Rama, Ballentine & Ajay, 1976). The fact that even the third eye Chakra helps develop our sense of knowing and wisdom (Richardson, 2019) goes in sync with this stage and suggests that it shows that it develops during older age.
- vii. **Integrity vs. Despair and Sahasrara (Crown) Chakra-** This stage is marked during old age wherein the person reflects on their life achievements. Here, the major emphasis lays on what the individual could fulfil throughout their lifespan. The highlight is on the word "Integrity". Crown Chakra is characterized by this integrity in the form of; non-attachment, spirituality, and transcendence.

4. Jung's Analytical theory on Personality

Carl Jung is recognised as the first notable Western psychologist to include a multicultural perspective in his theory (Scotton, Chinen, & Battista, 1996). When most theories in Psychology were centered around behaviorism, positivism, and psychoanalysis, Jung came up with a novel model of understanding Personality that the Western world had not seen before. He focused on providing a cross-cultural explanation of inner experience (Shamdasani, 2012). Jung devoted a lot of his work to understanding the self and connected it to the notions of the Eastern perspective especially in the context of the Indian subcontinent. Many authors have tried to draw attention to the comparative relationship between Jung's theory on the psychospiritual development of personality and Patanjali's Yoga (Coward, 1995; Whitney, 2018).

Jung's work took a groundbreaking toll with his introduction of Kundalini yoga to the Western world. He gave importance to the symbolic as well as the psychogenic explanations to define the development of consciousness. Kundalini is signified as a serpent that is coiled

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around the base of the spine (Muladhara Chakra). Yadav and Anita (2022) stated that the Kundalini consists of all seven chakras; it crosses them through channels called as nadis (ida, pingala and sushmana). It is believed that through ritualistic practice and meditation, Kundalini can be awakened which eventually leads to the transformation of personality (Dwivedi, 2017)

Yoga is said to be one of the ways to activate the Chakra system (Batalha, 2018). It also turned out to be an essential component of Jung's understanding of personality as it represented a storehouse of symbolic depictions that reflect inner experiences (Shamdasani, 2012) which is important for the process of individuation. In Jung's theory of individuation, the mandala—a symbolic geometric figure typically depicted as a square with a circle and various shapes inside it—plays a crucial part.

5. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In the Western world, the concept of Humanistic school has emphasized a lot on the optimization of well-being and utilization of creativity to foster ways for healthy development and generate creativity to help benefit others (Bland & Derobertis, 2017). Humanists like Maslow have given great emphasis on the philosophical understanding of human existence. Abraham Maslow in his book, *Motivation, and Personality* (1954), discussed conditions in which humans can grow and reach higher levels of potential. He gave a hierarchy of needs in which he explained the needs that motivate humans which range from being basic such as food, shelter, water, and sex to being more abstract such as Esteem and actualization (Hopper, 2020). Maslow emphasized the fact that people who are motivated to Self-Actualize tend to follow a Holistic pattern of thinking (Sathiyaseelan & Sathiyaseelan, 2016).

A vast array of Vedic literature defines Hinduism as a “way of life”. It is holistic as it isn't just making the individual get connected to the inner self but with nature and surroundings as well. Beshara (2013), in his paper, pointed out that Maslow's hierarchy of needs along with many other theories given by various psychologists including Jung and Leary have been inspired by the Chakra system. Stoler (2018) explains how there is an obvious similarity between the two concepts. Much like the Chakras characterize a person's inner psychological and physiological demands hierarchically, Maslow similarly defined his hierarchical needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the 7 Chakras have parallels, according to an article published by Bruedigam (2018). The author points out that not just the hierarchical structure, but also the hues represented in both are nearly the same; for example, the bottom half is red, orange, yellow, and green, while the upper half is blue.

Although there are no direct references that connect Maslow's pyramid of needs with the Chakra system (Moffatt, 1976) but there are research papers that suggest that there exists a similarity between Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the Chakra system (Tetu, 2007; Gosar, 2019)

- i. **Physiological need, Safety needs vs. Muladhar (Root) Chakra and Svadhishtan (Sacral) Chakra-** Basic needs such as food, sleep, sex, and water are included under the Physiological needs while Safety needs represent a need for a safe environment. This need is met once the physiological needs are met (Hopper, 2020). Maslow's last two needs in the pyramid are connected to the Root chakra (Tetu, 2007). Moffatt (1976) suggested that the Maslow's hierarchical model has striking similarities with

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the Chakra system. Moffatt's paper highlights quotes given by Baba Ram Dass (formerly known as Dr. Richard Alpert) which is based on a talk held at the Menninger Foundation (1972) in which Baba Ram Dass claimed that the base Chakras are linked with basic and survival-based needs.

- ii. **Love and belongingness need vs. Anahata (Heart) Chakra-** Love and commitment-based needs emerge once the lower needs are fulfilled (Uysal, Aydemir & Genç, 2017). Love and Belongingness needs include a variety of relations such as groups, clubs, business associations, etc (Seeley, 1988). Tetu (2007) insinuated that the need for love and belonging could be connected to the fourth-level Chakra or the Heart Chakra.
- iii. **Esteem needs vs. Manipur (Solar-Plexus) Chakra and Vishuddha (Throat) Chakra** - Esteem needs exist in the form of self-respect, self-appreciation, and respect by others Maslow (1943). A closer look at the characteristics of the solar plexus and the Throat Chakra reveals that the Solar Plexus (Tetu, 2007) also connotes self-esteem, power, and self-control. The throat chakra is in charge of expression and communication. To satisfy esteem demands, one must be able to communicate and express oneself well to feel competent and respectable.
- iv. **Self-Actualization vs. Ajna (Third-eye), and Sahasrara (Crown) Chakra-** Self-actualization as realizing or reaching one's full potential and embodying one's talents and abilities. Realizing one's full potential as a human being and becoming the most optimal version of oneself are its goals (Maslow, 1943). The Third Eye Chakra is believed to be linked to enhanced inner wisdom, insight, and intuition. The desire to overcome one's limitations and establishing a stronger connection to the larger human experience may be in line with the Crown Chakra's associations with transcendence and unity. Within the framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, trusting one's inner guidance and intuition can be a fundamental component of navigating the road to self-actualization.

Implication and Suggestion

Due to the philosophical character of chakras, there were very few research representations available for analysis. Chakras is a concept derived from theoretical texts with little empirical backing hence a comprehensive investigation would be helpful to broaden the understanding of human behavior. Furthermore, the implications of this paper suggest that psychologists can make use of the theoretical understanding of the Chakra System and can further apply it as a therapeutic intervention to help cultivate a sense of positive transformation and overall well-being within an individual.

CONCLUSION

The article aimed to understand the concept of Chakras from the perspective of both Eastern and Western Psychology. The exploration helped in gaining insight about the importance of understanding people in diverse ways. The investigation of Chakras in conjunction with other psychological theories has revealed an intriguing point of convergence between traditional Eastern knowledge and contemporary Western psychological theories. By attempting to close the gap between these distinct paradigms, the current study sought to highlight a comprehensive understanding of human nature.

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