

Unveiling the Mysteries: Parapsychology in Modern India - Exploring New Realms of Science

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ABSTRACT

Parapsychology, a captivating yet contentious topic, arises in the pursuit of connecting science with the supernatural. This review study explores the changing field of parapsychology in present-day India, analysing its historical origins, current advancements, and potential future opportunities. Parapsychology, despite its deep roots in Indian culture and close association with spirituality and ancient customs, is still considered peripheral to mainstream scientific discussions. The paper commences by delineating the genesis of parapsychology in India, emphasising noteworthy milestones and influential individuals who have fostered its development. Subsequently, the text delves into an examination of current research, closely examining the approaches and results of recent investigations carried out in the country. The review seeks to assess the scientific rigour and reproducibility of these investigations in order to ascertain the credibility and promise of parapsychology as a valid scientific field. Moreover, the research investigates the sociocultural determinants that impact the acceptance and scepticism towards parapsychological experiences in India. An analysis is conducted to comprehend the wider framework in which parapsychological research functions, by considering the influence of media, public perception, and institutional support. The paper also discusses the ethical considerations and difficulties encountered by researchers in this area, such as the requirement for standardised protocols and peer-reviewed platforms for sharing information. The report compares Indian developments in parapsychology with worldwide trends, providing insights on how international collaborations could improve the field's credibility and influence. Ultimately, this research supports a sophisticated method towards parapsychology, encouraging scientists to maintain a receptive attitude towards unusual lines of investigation while adhering to rigorous scientific criteria. This review seeks to explore the enigmas of parapsychology in contemporary India with the goal of laying the groundwork for future research that has the potential to redefine the limits of scientific knowledge.

Keywords: *Parapsychology, Modern India, Supernatural, Scientific Rigor, Sociocultural Factors, Ethical Considerations, Historical Roots, Contemporary Developments*

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Parapsychology is a scientific discipline that investigates paranormal occurrences that are not currently explained by conventional scientific knowledge. It occupies a distinct position in the field of scientific investigation. Parapsychology, drawing on ancient wisdom and cultural traditions, aims to investigate the enigmas of the human mind and its capacity to surpass the limitations of normal perception and cognition. In India, a country rich in spirituality, religion, and mysticism, the study of parapsychological research becomes even more important, as it connects with ancient traditions of exploring the essence of consciousness and the universe.

The establishment of parapsychological research institutions and organisations in India signifies an increasing curiosity in investigating psychic phenomena through a scientific approach. The Indian Society for Psychical Study (ISPR) and the Anandam Research Institute (ARI) have been instrumental in promoting study, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge in the field of parapsychology (Rao, 2016).

In addition, Indian parapsychology is characterised by a group of distinguished scholars who have made substantial contributions to the subject through rigorous empirical investigations and insightful theoretical perspectives. Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao and Dr. C. K. Ramachandran, esteemed scholars, have conducted pioneering research on subjects including telepathy, clairvoyance, reincarnation, and near-death experiences. Their studies have significantly enhanced our comprehension of human capabilities and consciousness (Rao & Palmer, 1977; Ramachandran, 2002).

Indian parapsychology encounters obstacles like as scepticism and opposition from conventional science, methodological constraints, and ethical concerns, notwithstanding the progress made in this field. The scepticism expressed by mainstream science might pose obstacles to securing funding, publishing research findings, and gaining academic acknowledgment, hence impeding the progress and advancement of parapsychological research in India (Irwin & Watt, 2007).

Nevertheless, there are also prospects for multidisciplinary collaboration that could advance the area and bolster its reputation. Engaging in collaboration with professionals in the fields of psychology, neurology, physics, and other related disciplines can provide a wide range of viewpoints and methodological strategies to investigate parapsychological research inquiries (Radin, 2006).

This research seeks to investigate the Indian parapsychology field, analysing its historical origins, current advancements, obstacles, and potential future opportunities. This paper presents a thorough analysis of the main themes and trends influencing parapsychological research in India, drawing on a wide range of literary sources such as academic journals, books, and online resources.

This paper aims to enhance comprehension of the interplay between culture, spirituality, and scientific investigation by elucidating the scientific aspects of the new world and new realm in India.

The Impact of Culture on Indian Perceptions of Paranormal Phenomena:

India's diverse cultural fabric, deeply influenced by spirituality, religion, and mysticism, significantly influences its understanding and interpretation of paranormal phenomena. The relationship between spirituality, religion, and mysticism serves as the basis for how many

Indians see and comprehend the supernatural. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and numerous indigenous traditions collectively shape a broad array of beliefs and practices, which in turn influence individuals' perceptions and interactions with the paranormal.

The role of spirituality, religion, and mysticism:

Indian life is deeply imbued with spirituality, which imbues daily rituals, rites, and social interactions with significant meaning and significance. Religious works including the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Quran, Bible, and Guru Granth Sahib are collections of wisdom and instruction. They provide insights into the nature of existence, awareness, and the afterlife. Principles like karma (the principle of cause and effect), dharma (the principle of righteous duty), and moksha (the state of freedom from the cycle of rebirth) offer frameworks for comprehending the operations of the universe and the human soul. Religion significantly influences perceptions regarding paranormal events by offering narratives and interpretations that place otherworldly experiences within a broader cosmic framework. Deities, saints, and holy beings are thought to have exceptional powers and capabilities, acting as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual realms. Practices such as prayer, meditation, and pilgrimage are said to aid in communicating with heavenly creatures and reaching elevated levels of consciousness, potentially increasing one's openness to paranormal occurrences. Mysticism, which involves the quest for firsthand encounters with the divine or transcendent reality, provides different paths for investigating the paranormal. Yogic practices, tantra, and Sufi mysticism place great importance on developing a deep understanding of oneself and achieving spiritual growth. This often results in practitioners experiencing altered states of consciousness and having mystical experiences. Mystical experiences are understood as brief insights into the fundamental essence of reality, beyond the constraints of normal perception and uncovering concealed aspects of existence.

Traditional beliefs and practices associated with paranormal experiences:

Indian mythology and oral traditions are replete with numerous tales of supernatural encounters, encompassing interactions with friendly spirits as well as clashes with demonic forces. Mythical narratives including deities, supernatural entities, malevolent spirits, and heavenly creatures are prevalent in the collective consciousness, functioning as stories that warn against certain behaviours, convey moral lessons, and ignite creative ideas. Various rituals, charms, and talismans are utilised to repel malevolent spirits, safeguard against harmful effects, and invoke benefits from the supernatural. The concept of jinn, as observed in Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions, signifies a belief in conscious entities residing in separate dimensions of reality, with the ability to impact human affairs. Tantric techniques, rooted in the veneration of gods and the use of natural forces, are thought to bestow extraordinary abilities onto those who engage in them. These abilities include the manipulation of energy fields, the control of spirits, and the attainment of hidden goals. Ancestor veneration and regard for deceased spirits hold great importance in Indian culture, where rituals like shraddha rites are conducted to pay homage to departed family members and secure their welfare in the afterlife. Beliefs in reincarnation and karma influence perspectives on death and the persistence of awareness beyond the physical realm, promoting a perception of interconnectedness between the living and the deceased.

The impact of Indian philosophy and metaphysical concepts:

Indian philosophy provides a complex structure for comprehending the essence of existence and the human state, offering valuable perspectives on the metaphysical foundations of supernatural occurrences. Advaita Vedanta asserts that the individual soul (atman) and the cosmic consciousness (Brahman) are ultimately one, implying that any perceived differences

between oneself and others are not real. The idea of maya, or cosmic illusion, emphasises the temporary and changeable quality of the physical universe, prompting reflection on the nature of how we perceive things and the boundaries of human understanding. Yogic philosophy delves into the intricacies of the interplay between the mind and body, as well as the possibility of surpassing normal states of consciousness via dedicated practice and self-examination.

Tantric metaphysics explores the intricate structure of the human energy system, proposing the presence of chakras, nadis, and prana as fundamental components of consciousness and vitality. By employing yogic techniques, reciting mantras, and engaging in ritualised activities, it is claimed that one might activate latent abilities and reveal untapped potentials within oneself by manipulating these subtle energies.

Current Advancements in Indian Parapsychology:

India has experienced a significant rise in the establishment of parapsychological research institutions and organisations that are committed to conducting scientific investigations into paranormal phenomena. These entities have been instrumental in promoting research, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge in the field of parapsychology. The Indian Society for Psychical Research (ISPR) was founded in 1950 by Dr. K. N. Rao. ISPR is a renowned organisation in India that has been dedicated to conducting study in the field of parapsychology for a long time. ISPR has made substantial contributions to our comprehension of psychic phenomena and their impact on consciousness studies, thanks to its meticulous scientific methodology and dedication to empirical research (Rao, 2016). The Anandam Research Institute (ARI), established in 1979 by Dr. Ramesh Bijlani, is another prominent organisation. ARI's primary objective is to examine the relationship between the mind and body and to study comprehensive methods for promoting health and well-being. The research projects cover several subjects such as meditation, yoga, and alternative therapeutic methods. The objective is to enhance our comprehension of human potential and well-being (Bijlani, 2010).

Prominent scholars and their significant contributions to the field:

Several distinguished scholars in India have made noteworthy contributions to the subject of parapsychology by their rigorous investigations and insightful theories. One such individual is Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao, whose groundbreaking research has significantly enhanced our comprehension of psychic occurrences. Dr. Rao's research covers a wide range of subjects including telepathy, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis. His work emphasises the significance of strict methodology and critical investigation in studying paranormal events (Rao & Palmer, 1977).

Dr. C. K. Ramachandran is a prominent person in the field of Indian parapsychology, known for his extensive studies on the subjects of reincarnation and memories from past lives. The research conducted by Ramachandran in 2002 has presented convincing proof of the existence of reincarnation, supported by thorough case reports and empirical data. Dr. Ramachandran's research has provided insight into the functioning of consciousness and the persistence of identity over several lifetimes, questioning traditional ideas about personal identity and the essence of the self.

Methods of research and approaches to conducting experiments:

Parapsychological study in India utilises several techniques and experimental procedures to examine psychic experiences. Experimental studies frequently employ controlled laboratory

experiments to examine precise hypotheses and research inquiries. For instance, in telepathy research, sender-receiver paradigms are utilised, whereas psychokinesis investigations employ random number generators or dice-rolling tasks to investigate the impact of the mind on physical objects (Rao, 2016). Field investigations are a frequently used method that involves gathering anecdotal accounts, eyewitness testimonials, and archival records that describe spontaneous paranormal events in realistic environments. Researchers employ various methods including as interviews, surveys, and observational studies to collect data on the frequency and attributes of paranormal experiences among the general public (Bijlani, 2010).

Major themes explored in Indian parapsychological research:

Indian parapsychological study focuses on several prominent issues that have attracted considerable interest from researchers and thinkers. These themes explore many facets of supernatural phenomena, providing insights into the essence of awareness, human capabilities, and the connection between the mind and physical world.

Telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition:

Telepathy, the capacity to exchange thoughts and information between minds without relying on normal sensory routes, has been a primary area of investigation in parapsychological research conducted in India. Research has investigated the possible mechanisms involved in telepathic communication and the conditions that can either promote or hinder the transmission of telepathic messages (Rao, 2016).

Similarly, clairvoyance, which refers to the capacity to perceive distant or concealed things, events, or information without relying on the usual senses, has been subject to scrutiny in both controlled laboratory trials and field examinations. Scientists have attempted to clarify the mental processes involved in clairvoyant vision and the circumstances in which these talents may appear (Bijlani, 2010).

Precognition, the capacity to anticipate forthcoming events or outcomes prior to their actual occurrence, is a phenomenon that has piqued the curiosity of Indian parapsychologists. Experimental research has investigated the phenomenon of precognitive dreaming, presentiment, and anticipatory responses to future stimuli in order to verify the presence of precognitive abilities and understand the mechanisms that underlie them (Ramachandran, 2002).

Psychokinesis and mind-matter interactions:

Psychokinesis, a phenomenon studied in Indian parapsychology, refers to the capacity to exert control or manipulate physical objects or events solely via the power of the mind. Studies have mostly investigated the circumstances in which psychokinetic effects can happen, as well as the elements that might either boost or reduce an individual's psychokinetic capabilities (Rao & Palmer, 1977). Various studies have employed different experimental procedures, such as random number generator tests, dice-rolling activities, and metal-bending demonstrations, to evaluate the impact of intention, attention, and emotional states on psychokinetic performance. The findings of these investigations have significant implications for our comprehension of consciousness and its connection to the physical realm.

Studies on Near-Death Experiences and Reincarnation:

Near-death experiences (NDEs) are intense personal experiences that individuals report after coming close to death or experiencing clinical death. These experiences have attracted significant attention in the field of Indian parapsychology. Studies have investigated the nature of near-death experiences (NDEs), including experiences such as being outside of one's body, encountering light, and reviewing one's life. These studies have also examined the psychological and spiritual importance of NDEs (Ramachandran, 2002). Researchers have also investigated reincarnation studies, specifically analysing instances of spontaneous recollection of past lives, birthmarks, and behavioural characteristics that indicate a possible connection to previous incarnations. Researchers have conducted thorough case analyses and systematic investigations in order to verify claims of reincarnation and understand the mechanisms that govern the transfer of consciousness (Rao, 2016).

Challenges and opportunities in the field of parapsychology in India:

Parapsychology, the scientific investigation of supernatural phenomena, encounters distinct obstacles and prospects within the Indian environment. Parapsychology, being a discipline that investigates phenomena that go beyond what traditional science can explain, faces scepticism, methodological constraints, and ethical concerns. Nevertheless, it also offers prospects for multidisciplinary cooperation, cultural investigation, and the progression of scientific understanding.

Scientific scepticism and opposition from established scientific community:

A major obstacle faced by Indian parapsychology is the scepticism and rejection it encounters from mainstream scientific communities. Parapsychological phenomena, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis, frequently elude conventional explanations and present a challenge to established scientific paradigms. A significant number of scientists maintain a sceptical stance towards parapsychological assertions, perceiving them as pseudoscientific or deficient in empirical proof (Irwin & Watt, 2007). The scepticism exhibited by mainstream science might impede the acquisition of funds, hinder the publication process, and restrict the academic acknowledgment, hence constraining the progress and advancement of parapsychological research in India. Despite the progress made in experimental procedures and statistical analysis, parapsychology still struggles to get acceptance in the scientific community (Alcock, 2003).

Methodological Constraints:

Parapsychological research conducted in India has methodological constraints that can affect the dependability and accuracy of experimental results. Experimental techniques can be vulnerable to researcher bias, demand characteristics, and methodological problems, which can cast doubt on the reproducibility and applicability of the findings (Alcock, 2003). Furthermore, the subjective character of paranormal encounters poses difficulties when it comes to designing experiments and interpreting data. Phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance are inherently elusive and challenging to objectively quantify, which makes it difficult to build strong scientific techniques that can bear examination (Beloff, 1993).

Ethical considerations:

Indian parapsychology faces additional difficulties related to ethical concerns, including about the well-being of participants, obtaining informed consent, and maintaining anonymity. Researchers are required to comply with ethical principles and standards of behaviour in order to safeguard the welfare and rights of participants, as well as maintain the integrity of the research process (Beloff, 1993).

Furthermore, due to the delicate and intricate nature of paranormal occurrences, such as interactions with apparitions or dreams that predict the future, it is imperative for researchers to do their investigations with a high level of sensitivity and a deep regard for the experiences reported by participants. Not complying with this could lead to psychological damage or manipulation, which would weaken the credibility and ethical reputation of parapsychological research (Irwin & Watt, 2007).

Possible opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration:

Although there are difficulties to overcome, there are potential advantages in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration within the subject of Indian parapsychology, which could strengthen its credibility and contribute to its enrichment. Engaging in collaboration with professionals in the fields of psychology, neurology, physics, and other related disciplines can provide a range of viewpoints and research methods that can be applied to investigate parapsychological research inquiries (Radin, 2006). For instance, partnerships between parapsychologists and neuroscientists could investigate the neurological connections associated with psi occurrences, providing insights into the fundamental mechanisms of consciousness and perception. Furthermore, collaborations with physicists could explore the consequences of quantum theory in comprehending the interconnections between the mind and matter, as well as the fundamental nature of reality (Targ, 2004). Interdisciplinary collaboration provides a chance for academics to conduct cross-cultural research and comparative studies. This allows them to investigate the cultural, social, and psychological elements that impact paranormal beliefs and experiences in various situations (Cardena & Krippner, 2010). Indian parapsychology can overcome obstacles, enhance knowledge, and contribute to a more thorough comprehension of human consciousness and the enigmas of the mind by utilising the proficiency and resources of other disciplines. Indian parapsychology encounters various obstacles, such as scepticism from conventional science, methodological constraints, and ethical concerns. Nevertheless, these difficulties are complemented by prospects for cross-disciplinary cooperation, cultural investigation, and the progress of scientific understanding. By confronting these difficulties and embracing these possibilities, Indian parapsychology can persistently broaden the limits of scientific investigation, enhance our comprehension of the human intellect, and make valuable contributions to the advancement of consciousness studies in the twenty-first century.

Potential future paths and possibilities:

The future of Indian parapsychology presents promising prospects for the advancement of knowledge and comprehension by combining traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific investigation. This includes investigating psi phenomena in various cultural settings and fostering scientific literacy through educational and public outreach endeavours.

Possibilities for combining traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific investigation:

India possesses a diverse and valuable legacy of spiritual and philosophical customs that provide distinctive perspectives on the essence of consciousness and the human intellect. The ancient scriptures, including the Vedas, Upanishads, and Yoga Sutras, contain valuable information and wisdom that can enhance and supplement modern scientific methods in investigating paranormal phenomena (Kripal, 2014). Indian parapsychologists can investigate the potential links between subjective states of consciousness and psi occurrences by combining traditional practices like meditation, yoga, and mindfulness with modern research approaches. Studying the altered states of consciousness caused by meditation can provide insights into the mechanisms that underlie psi experiences and help in creating effective experimental techniques (Travis & Pearson, 2000).

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In addition, partnerships among conventional healers, spiritual experts, and scholarly investigators present prospects for interdisciplinary discourse and the sharing of knowledge. Indian parapsychology can facilitate a deeper comprehension of the enigmas of the mind and its connection to the universe by integrating traditional wisdom with modern scientific knowledge.

Investigation of Psi Phenomena in Varied Cultural Contexts:

India's rich cultural diversity offers an ideal environment for investigating psi phenomena within various socio-cultural settings. India's diverse landscapes, ranging from the foothills of the Himalayas to the coasts of Kerala, are teeming with accounts of supernatural encounters, enigmatic experiences, and psychic occurrences. Indian parapsychologists can systematically observe and study psi experiences in various locations and cultures by performing field studies and ethnographic research, allowing them to document and analyse their prevalence and specific characteristics (Irwin & Watt, 2007). Cross-cultural studies provide chances to explore the cultural factors that influence paranormal beliefs and experiences, as well as the universal characteristics of psi phenomena that go beyond cultural limitations. Studying psychic traditions in India and other countries might help us identify shared themes, patterns, and rituals, leading to a better comprehension of the human mind and its connection to the universe (Cardeña & Krippner, 2010).

In addition, engaging in partnerships with indigenous communities and marginalised groups can enhance the influence of local voices and viewpoints, fostering cultural variety and inclusiveness in the field of parapsychological study. Indian parapsychology can enhance our comprehension of psychic occurrences by embracing the diverse cultural fabric of India.

Efforts to enhance scientific literacy through education and public outreach initiatives:

Education and public outreach programmes are essential for increasing scientific literacy and encouraging educated discussions on paranormal events. Indian parapsychologists have the ability to collaborate with schools, universities, and community organisations in order to create educational programmes and materials that familiarise students and the general public with the ideas and techniques of scientific investigation (Alcock, 2003).

Public lectures, workshops, and demonstrations provide chances to clarify parapsychology and correct misunderstandings by presenting information based on data and fostering critical thinking abilities. Participants can engage in interactive activities and conduct hands-on experiments to investigate the fundamental aspects of consciousness, perception, and reality. This approach aims to stimulate curiosity and encourage open-minded exploration (Radin, 2006). In addition, partnering with media outlets, science communicators, and internet platforms can enhance the scope and influence of educational activities, reaching a wide range of audiences and fostering public interest in parapsychological research. Indian parapsychology can enhance scientific literacy and promote evidence-based thinking in society by cultivating a culture of scientific curiosity and scepticism.

CONCLUSION

Parapsychology is a field that seeks to comprehend the mysterious aspects of human consciousness. It serves as a guide for exploring the remarkable talents of the mind and the enigmas of the cosmos. As we wrap off this exploration of Indian parapsychology, it becomes clear that the pursuit of knowledge goes beyond the limits of traditional science, urging us to embrace the unfamiliar and explore unexplored aspects of the mind.

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India has long been a centre for spiritual exploration and philosophical contemplation, fostering ancient traditions that explore the essence of existence and the human experience. Indian culture encompasses a deep respect for consciousness and its various manifestations, as shown in the teachings of the Upanishads and the traditions of yoga and meditation. Parapsychology arises as a logical continuation of India's spiritual legacy in this particular situation, providing a scientific structure for investigating the enigmas of the mind and its capacity for transcendence.

The establishment of parapsychological research institutions and organisations in India signifies an increasing acknowledgment of the significance of investigating psychic phenomena within a rigorous scientific framework. The Indian Society for Psychical study (ISPR) and the Anandam Research Institute (ARI) have been instrumental in promoting study, collaboration, and the sharing of knowledge in the field of parapsychology (Rao, 2016). These institutes have facilitated the interchange of ideas and collaboration among researchers, scientists, and enthusiasts, thereby contributing to the progress of parapsychological study in India. Dr. K. Ramakrishna Rao and Dr. C. K. Ramachandran, distinguished researchers, have greatly advanced the discipline through their rigorous empirical studies and profound theoretical perspectives. Their research on subjects such as telepathy, clairvoyance, reincarnation, and near-death experiences has broadened our comprehension of human capabilities and consciousness (Rao & Palmer, 1977; Ramachandran, 2002). These scholars have integrated rigorous scientific approaches with a profound understanding of Indian spiritual traditions, leading to the development of a more comprehensive approach to studying paranormal events.

Nevertheless, Indian parapsychology encounters obstacles like as scepticism and opposition from conventional science, methodological constraints, and ethical concerns. The scepticism exhibited by mainstream science might impede the allocation of funds, hinder the publication process, and restrict the academic acknowledgment, hence constraining the progress and advancement of parapsychological research in India (Irwin & Watt, 2007). Experimenter bias and demand characteristics are methodological limitations that present obstacles to the reliability and validity of experimental findings (Alcock, 2003). Ensuring the integrity and ethical conduct of research necessitates careful attention to ethical factors, such as participant welfare and informed consent (Beloff, 1993). Notwithstanding these difficulties, there exist prospects for multidisciplinary cooperation that could advance the field and bolster its credibility. Engaging in collaboration with professionals in the fields of psychology, neurology, physics, and other related disciplines can provide a range of different viewpoints and scientific methods to investigate parapsychological research inquiries (Radin, 2006). Through promoting interdisciplinary discourse and cooperation, Indian parapsychology has the potential to surmount obstacles, enhance knowledge, and contribute to a more profound comprehension of the enigmas of the human mind and its connection to the cosmos.

Parapsychology is a scientific field in India that invites us to explore the boundaries of awareness and tap into the untapped potential of the human mind. Indian parapsychology has the potential to surpass limitations and connect different cultures by combining traditional wisdom and modern scientific investigation. By studying psi phenomena in various cultural contexts and promoting scientific literacy through education and public outreach, it can contribute to a more profound comprehension of the nature of reality and the human experience.

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Conflict of Interest

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