

## Psychology: An Era of Mental Health – Approach or Avoid?

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### ABSTRACT

Indian Psychology unites ancient & spiritual values with Western influences. Despite of historical events & Western psychology being introduced, Indian psychology had sophisticated emphasizing on indigenous perspectives along with Clinical, Counselling & Health Psychology. COVID pandemic had given rise to mental health issues emphasizing the need for improved care, public financing & telepsychiatry. Telehealth adoption had surged but still professional burnout is an issue persisting. Telepsychiatry's elevation had transformed mental health care, virtual health tourism & fostering resilience. Boosting mental health systems & proactive readiness are prominent for any future calamity. Globalization stresses on deciphering mental health requirements & prompting linkage of global mental health with academia. Complexities like inadequate regulation needs incorporation of Indian traditions into modernity. Technology supports evidence-based care via Electronic Health Records & digital therapies. Artificial Intelligence & Virtual Reality bestow innovative gadgets via ethical considerations & technological advancements in exacerbating abuse requires attention. Ultimately, integrating technology with other domains facilitates mental health services' accessibility as well as effectiveness, subsequently leading to greater patient-clinician engagement for best results.

**Keywords:** *Indian, Global, Counselling, Technology, Challenges, COVID-19*

The history of psychological knowledge in India dates to 3000 years to ancient scriptures which stressed on self-realization & eliminating human suffering. In the traditional Indian system, it was found to have developed mind-control techniques to assist inner growth & self-improvement & Bhagavad Gita is identified as an early base text on counselling which portrays how ancient Indian philosophy integrated psychological principles & knowledge into empiricism for addressing issues. Despite disruptions, continuity of psychological knowledge in India continued via centuries, contributing to a unique perspective on human mental process & behaviour. The introduction of western psychology during British rule in India marked a prominent shift with psychology being introduced as part of curriculum design at centres to facilitate the adoption of British educational system (Dalal, 2011).

Indian philosophical traditions differ in their perspectives on the ultimate purpose of life focusing on a metaphysics that questions the presence of a unitary reality. The 'theistic traditions' establish a metaphysics' based on a part-whole relationship with ultimate reality,

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but the 'non-dualistic' traditions believe in all realistic experiential dimensions. Spiritual values in these traditions encourage knowing true self, connecting with the world via ecological vigilance, fostering empathy, emotional well-being, expressing efficiently & creative imagination. The psychological features of these traditions are spiritual openness, welcoming new experiences & deciphering into evolving ideas & lifestyles, all oriented towards self-exploration. The focus of Indian psychology is transformative helping in acquisition of transcendence by surpassing personal, social & spiritual limits leading to mental peace, personal growth, stability & fulfilment (Menon et al., 2018). Schools of thoughts like the Advaita Vedanta, Sankhya Yoga & Nyaya foster spiritual uplift via self-knowledge (Rieber, 2012). Gangadhran & Jena in 2016, explained the concept of epistemological dualism & the model of mind-spirit; Dichotomy v/s Coexistence. The model explains mind as an interface b/w two sources of knowledge i.e., transactional knowledge acquired via senses & transcendental knowledge connected to consciousness. This model explains the two-way exchange of information with mind acting as an interface. This model has a profound impact on higher learning. The purpose of this knowledge is to overcome suffering & pain & raise oneself to a higher level of vigilance & achievement.

The COVID pandemic worsened pre-existing conditions with a higher ratio of people reporting increased irritability, depression, disturbed sleep cycles & apprehension. The Indian health system has many shortcomings in mental health care which could be addressed via public financing, integration of health emergency, mental health policies & telepsychiatry services in rural/urban areas. School-based interventions, public vigilance campaigns & stigma can aid bridge gaps in mental health care in India. The COVID pandemic had significantly impacted the psychological well-being of masses leading to increased irritability, depression & suicide. The pandemic distorted mental health services impacting the homeless & those who are already suffering from mental illnesses (Andhale et al., 2022). Psychological issues following the pandemic include emotional difficulties like appetite disturbance, severe mental disease & substance misuse. During the pandemic mental issues have been prevalent including low mood, fear, nervousness, emotional exhaustion, feeling stressed & sleep disorders. Children & adolescents had also faced mental challenges with schools being closed & their regular schedules being hampered (Aswathy et al., 2021).

The COVID pandemic accelerated the adoption & acceptance of telehealth for therapeutic work with 76% of therapists rendering remote counselling services. However, concerns about burnout among mental health professionals & the need for mental health services continue. Telehealth platforms ought to support the unique work of therapists in creating a safe, secure & healing space for clients (Robledo et al., 2021). The pandemic had affected mental health with mental illness increasing the risk of subsequent infection & a new mental health diagnosis up to 180 days after infection. The pandemic has also led to increased unemployment, socioeconomic effects & financial insecurity causing a rise in treatment needs. Mental health services have thought to have an anticipated increase in demand with the WHO proposing an approach including mental health & psychosocial support (Zangani et al., 2022). WHO & Ministry of AYUSH implemented preventive & remedial measures including handwashing, proper sanitization, & avoiding mass gatherings. The universal digital infrastructure had been seen as a psychological healer against COVID (Jaswal et al., 2020).

Telepsychiatry is revolutionizing the practice of psychology by rendering remote psychiatric care via various technologies. This is particularly significant during the pandemic as travel

restrictions & reduced in-person interactions have prompted the need of telepsychiatry. Advancements in technology can assist build resilience, sophisticate clinical care, facilitate recovery & bestow opportunities for education, administration & research in mental health. The blurring of national & international borders will open international opportunities for psychiatrists in Indi, heralding a novel & unique wave of virtual health tourism (Ibrahim et al., 2020).

Research had shown that avoidance & proactive preparedness are effective in curbing negative emotions & feelings. Emotional resilience & entertainment played significant role. Policymakers should focus on strengthening mental health systems to enhance mental well-being during such crisis (Pandey et al., 2022).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The review is literature research. This article examines the past trends, current status, futuristic notions & issues pertaining to psychological profession by providing a comprehensive overview after scrutinising several databases like Springer, International Journal of Indian Psychology (IJIP), Journal of Clinical & Developmental Psychology, The British Journal of Psychiatry, Nature Reviews Psychology, International Journal of Psychological Studies etc.

#### ***An Indian Perspective***

'Psychology in India' refers to the historical background & status of psychology as an academic discipline or professional career in the country, highlighting the need for further research & development. Psychology is a diverse field that holds various sub-disciplines like as Physiological Psychology, Psychology of Religion, Counselling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology etc. Research in psychology in India has been influenced by West leading to a gap in deciphering the complexity of human nature due to cultural & social variations. Psychologists globally have acknowledged the significance of studying "indigenous psychologies" to decipher behaviour within local & global contexts including in India. Individual differences are evident across cultures in India at micro & macro levels showcasing the influence of culture & environment on behaviour. The cultural diversity in India renders a foundation for psychologists to conduct research & add to the development of indigenous psychology within the nation. Psychology plays a pivotal role in deciphering behaviours at both individual & group level influencing primary & secondary groups. India's rich cultural diversity makes it an ideal site for studying & researching more on indigenous psychology. Psychologists in India are primarily occupied with teaching & research activities in various fields like Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Industrial Psychology, Psychopathology, Human Resource Management, Counselling, Health Psychology etc. They also work in applied fields like School Psychology, Counselling Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Health Psychology Organizational Behaviour etc. They also work in areas like soft skills training, marketing & consumer psychology. In India, teaching methods have evolved over time symbolizing knowledge & engaging students in the classroom (Sushma & Padmaja, 2011).

Ayurveda (a relatively recent entrant into holistic health sector), has gained popularity since the 1970s-1980s. It stresses on optimizing health via lifestyle coaching, dietary advice & nutritional regimen etc. Ayurveda aims at stress-relief, relaxation & rejuvenation. Contemporary Western manifestations of ayurveda (known as 'New Age Ayurveda'), emphasize on spirituality & health-seeking, mental equilibrium, joy, vitality, & self-knowledge (Warrier, 2018).

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Military psychology has a rich history back to World War I & II, when tests like the Army Alpha & Beta tests were developed. The Alpha test (by Robert Yerkes & colleagues in 1917), was made to assess US military recruits during World War I. Research highlights on how psychologists can assist military personnel at the time of psychological distress. Mental health professionals can enhance relationship with Indian armed forces indicating avenues for strengthening support & assistance for military personnel (Sharma, 2021). The psychological thought in India can be divided into 3 periods. The first spans from antiquity to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the second covers British colonial period to independence & the third includes the era after independence. It delves into the integration of Indian philosophies & practices into modern psychological frameworks, showcasing a mix of indigenous knowledge with contemporary psychological theories & concepts. The progressive nature of psychology in modern India, displays a dynamic & diverse approach towards human behaviour, mental processes & elicits resilience & adaptability of Indian psychology in adapting to changing societal landscapes & global effects (Misra & Paranjpe, 2021).

There's a need to emphasize on the significance of rethinking about the modern psychological history in India via critical perspectives & challenging dominant hierarchies to bridge the methodological gap b/w indigenous & Indian psychology to address social issues within the along with a shift towards more indigenous paradigms, moving away from a post-colonial mindset to embracing community-based, interpersonal interpretations of psychological phenomena (Sondhi, 2022).

Clinical psychology in India portrays trends pertaining to empirical growth. Systemic issues comprise of questionable guidelines for clinicians, neglect of ethics codes & premature indigenization campaigns. Practice-level issues hold misinterpretation of data & personal experience. There's a need for creating a national licensing board, expanding existing code of ethics, regulating clinicians & conducting clinical trials to sophisticate the practical base of clinical psychology. In India, Clinical Psychology follows a romanticist tradition combining scientific findings & informal observations. Romanticists approve findings based on clinical validation, while empiricists hold a sceptical attitude. Practice concerns include poor training of psychologists, projective testing, outdated norms etc. The Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP), Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology & national training institutes have made increments. To sophisticate the status of clinical psychology in India, a national licensing board, expanded code of ethics, regulated practitioners for indigenization are suggested (Misra & Rizvi, 2012). But about 25% of trained professionals are abandoning India for better opportunities abroad, impacting sector's growth & expertise to obtain better remunerations & service conditions. The field is facing challenges in attracting talented individuals due to perceived lack of career prospects, low salary perks & social recognition issues etc. leading to stagnation in the sector. Clinical psychologists in India face difficulties due to absence of proper regulation, law enforcement & licensing boards like those in Western countries affecting professional status & growth. The need for optimal government policies & regulations is stressed to sophisticate the status of clinical psychologists enhancing service conditions & render standard salary to retain trained professionals within the nation (Singh, 2015).

Neuropsychology is a developing field in India encountering issues like lack of manpower & training amenities. While other nations have established their programs, India is still in its infancy. The field aims to diagnose & treat cognitive disorders pertaining to brain malfunction. Research & training are important for growth & development of indigenous tools for studying the Indian population. With optimal development, Neuropsychology can

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aid in cost-effective diagnosis & rehabilitation. India requires more trained neuropsychologists to meet the growing demands & for specialized care (Dhikav & Gaur, 2018).

India faces a prominent mental health crisis holding a prevalence of 10.6% in 2016 & one in 20 people suffer from depression. India has the highest suicide rates globally with an estimated 150 million mentally ill people in need of healthcare interventions & services. Factors that contribute to this high burden include high population rates, disruption of the joint family system, poverty, unemployment, high prevalence of alcohol & substance abuse. The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) was launched in 1982 to address this issue but unfortunately its implementation was inadequate. The NMHP stresses on rehabilitation, treatment, prevention & promotion of mental health. However, it has only covered 20% of districts, a shortage of mental health workforce, poor penetration of services at the primary health centre level & poor monitoring plus assessment. For improvement, measures comprise strengthening monitoring, increasing the mental health workforce, increasing coverage, fostering partnerships & using Information & Tech services (Hariharan et al., 2020).

Fashion psychology is a field that studies the impact of clothing choices on how we perceive, judge & evaluate each other. Psychological factors like conformity, variety seeking, creativity, & sexual attraction motivate & inspire us to be fashionable. Fashion can be used as a tool to decipher various concepts like identity, self-esteem & social status. Deciphering the relationship b/w psychology & fashion can render insights about how individuals use clothing & accessories to portray their thoughts, feelings their personality (Dinesh & Divyabharathi, 2023).

Indian psychology is significantly shifting towards psycho-cultural contexts & away from Western theories. It elicits the need for Indian publishers to make local psychology literature available electronically to every Indian citizen. Overall, the UGC-Info Net program has positively influenced research area (Chauhan, 2015). In a scient metric assessment of India's publications during 2020-21, publications emerged from 277 organizations with NIMHANS, PGIMER & AIIMS being the top shareholders. JIPMER, KGMU & MAHE had the highest impact. It elicited a positive impact on India's research output (Grover et al., 2022). Mental health research in India is somewhat lacking but there's evidence of a significant link b/w mental & cardiovascular diseases. Cultural factors, transition in symptomatology, family influences & community care etc. all play prominent roles in mental health. Indian medicinal systems try to aim on visceral functioning & metabolic substrates in psychiatric research. This info highlights the need for comprehensive studies & interventions in mental health (Gupte, 2013). Psychology can assist in effective learning by applying empirical laws of learning & assessing final products. The application of psychological principles in sports can also lead to improved performance & development of athletes (Kumar & Bhola, 2013). Some individuals are more prone to commit crimes because of lifestyle choices, mental illness, & societal conditions. It is important for government to ensure that criminals obtain appropriate punishments to obstruct them from freely committing crimes. Forensic psychologists play a vital role in criminal investigation systems & courtrooms. Their roles encompass criminal profilers, expert witnesses, investigative agents, rehabilitation officers etc. In contrast, India's forensic psychologists currently have limited & undefined roles. Opening more opportunities could significantly benefit the criminal justice system. With one of the highest crime rates globally, India faces numerous challenges in addressing &

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resolving crime. While implementing interventions may seem promising, there's a long way to go before they can be effectively put into practice (Sharma, 2020).

Paediatricians ought to pay special attention to children as the aim of service & consider their psychological factors while treating disorders along with focus on parental factors. By incorporating these into clinical practice, paediatricians can offer more comprehensive care that recognises both - physical & psychological well-being of children leading to improved results & better healthcare delivery (Miao & Shijie, 2023).

Art therapy is a novel form of therapy which integrates mental health & human services via active artmaking, human experience, psychological theories & creative processes. Studies aim to sophisticate mental health during daily commutes in metropolitan cities by forming an interactive platform for people to interact, share & listen to each other's stories about mental health challenges & issues. Art therapy is proven to lift & boost confidence, self-esteem & render a safe outlet for emotional relief (Rathi et al., 2022).

### *A Global Perspective*

The globalization of mental health fields has led to a lack of deciphering of mental health requirement across cultures. Psychology programs are often inadequate in preparing students to meet societal challenges & issues. There's a need for such programs to include global mental health focusing on essential aspects & skills like social justice, advocacy, health management, policy making & leadership. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen significant events like natural disasters, man-made disasters & epidemics like COVID-19, Ebola & H1N, eliciting the need for mental health professionals to render evidence-based, culturally relevant & contextually appropriate mental health interventions & programs. Integrating global mental health disciplines into academic is important especially with under-represented minorities & risk groups. The WHO reports economic downturns, social polarization, public health emergencies, forced displacement, & the growing climate crisis as global threats to mental health. The Mental Health Global Action Program & the Movement for Global Mental Health render evidence-based protocols for healthcare professionals to treat mental & neurological disorders in multiple settings (Khoury & Pecanha, 2023). APA has formed a division dedicated to advancing the field of International Psychology. Contemporarily, there are few international psychology degree programs in the US & abroad. Some institutions offer graduate programs like the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, The University of Denver & Arcadia University. International partnerships are also expanding course offerings in International Psychology (Pasha & Lutz, 2012).

Mental health concerns to global health which estimates that at least 5% of the population is affected by mental disorders. This could mean 300-400 million people are affected globally, majority living in developing countries. Mental disorders also lead to reduced life expectancies with suicide being a leading cause of death in most young adults (Patel, 2014). Psychological disorders are the leading cause of disability but less than 25% of individuals have access to treatment. Global research aims to reduce mental health disparities by preventing disorders & improving access to treatment particularly in low-resource settings. Cross-cultural research has evolved from its colonial roots to a global partnership model stressing interdependency, knowledge generation & shared ownership. This paradigm shift has implications for training the next generation. Technology has enabled researchers to bridge the gap b/w high & low-resource settings, resulting in cost savings, increased efficiency & reduced strain on local systems. This shift has led to periodic visits to maximize productivity & minimize burden. Local researchers play a vital role in funding

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opportunities & their cultural insights can produce valuable insights. Disseminating & implementing science is central to research focusing on system-level uptake & long-term sustainability. However, implementing & disseminating tools across varied contexts is challenging due to cultural differences (Sweetland et al., 2016). Globalization is complex & pervasive in almost aspects (Diaz, 2012).

The increasing globalisation of psychology as a positive science is influenced by cross-cultural research, international conferences & funding initiatives. However, it's crucial to incorporate both etic & emic approaches as well as the expertise of Indigenous populations. However, literature still largely comprise of etic cross-cultural studies driven by western research & universal measures. Further research is required to incorporate emic approaches & Indigenous methods. The globalisation of psychological research can be studied via cross-cultural comparisons & Indigenous approach to deciphering ethnic & cultural groups in both western & non-western countries. Indigenous psychology tries to address social issues & requirements within the Indigenous population incorporating their own deciphering of the cultural context. This approach can aid de-colonize & empower populations & should be applied & politically sound (Crookes & Warren, 2022). The study of cultural globalisation is emerging as a field of research examining local to global cultural interaction. This comprise of acculturation theory, biculturalism, dialogical self & identity theories. An individual's sense of self & belonging is formed via levels of cultural, social & personal identities. Cultural globalisation involves the exchange of cultural behaviours & values via trade, media, technology, migration & tourism. Globalisation has led to deterritorialization making social spaces more diverse, enabling multicultural interactions. Globalisation can be deciphered as a 'form' rather than 'content', interconnecting previously disconnected cultural streams, resulting in homogenisation & heterogenization (Ozer, 2019). Global mental health initiatives produce opportunities for science & therapeutics. They contribute to deciphering the aetiology of mental disorders & promote novel interventions like psychosocial therapies & current traditional medicines. Academic Institutions also offer opportunities for students & junior faculties to work in multidisciplinary groups & develop sustainable programs in low- & middle-income countries (Balon et al., 2016). Global mental health considers the disparities in care & respect for human rights b/w rich & poor countries. The field emerged due to cross-cultural & epidemiological research & evidence of efficacious drug & psychological treatments for mental disorders, countering the nihilistic sets which believe that nothing can be done (Patel & Prince, 2010).

The integration of critical thinking into psychology curriculum has prominently shifted the content & teaching approach of such courses. Teachers are now focus on teaching students to become informed global citizens, deciphering global context of psychological info & using their critical thinking to solve such issues. Teachers must consider student's fluency with language, cultural traditions & learning histories at the time of teaching international students. This shift is crucial for preparing students for living & working in a global society & promoting critical thinking (Buskist et al., 2012). Global psychology is necessary to address the voices of marginalized communities & promote social justice to all (Bakker, 2009). Psychology has often overlooked the study of religiousness. Despite its importance in human history, religiousness had been ignored. However, the field of religion has seen a resurgence in recent years with research on various forms of religiousness, including religious foundationalism, prosocial behaviour, terrorism etc. This trend suggests that psychology should study religion in the same way as other important behaviours (Paloutzian, 2017).

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Internationalization in psychology offers students with unique opportunities to frame a more inclusive, representative & culturally sensitive discipline. Students actively participate in promoting cross-cultural collaborations, international learnings & creation of global networks. The pros of internationalization include fostering scholarship, developing best practices & collaborative learning (Balva et al., 2023). The internationalization of psychology has been a topic of discussion for decades, but unfortunately there is still a lack of progress. 95% of participants in mainstream journal studies are from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic (WEIRD) nations & a large proportion of authors represent North America. This imbalance is well documented across various psychology subfields yet the specific measures & best practices to bridge publication & data gaps across world regions are still vague.

### *Technological advancement*

In the era of globalization, technological advancements & growing mental health faculties is essential to maintain mental health. The 'Digital India' initiative of the Govt of India is taking momentum via novel guidelines, policies & regulations. The use of Electronic Health & Medical Records has been a significant aspect to manage patient health info. Electronic health record serves as a source for patient's official treatment & can be used for shielding malpractice, regulatory action or any complaint. Mental health in India is a major burden of morbidity & ill health with mental, neurological & substance use disorders having increased prevalence. Around 80% affected individuals do not received care after their disorder initiation. To address this concern, health systems ought to be reinforced & responsive to changing health emergencies. The Electronic Health Record (EHR) Standards of India aim to establish interoperable EHRs, enabling evidence-based care (Sharman et al., 2021). Digital mental health services often use psychological treatments like CBT, ACT etc. These models are mainly used in face-to-face therapy & have been frequently used in developing digital mental health interventions (Lattie et al., 2022). Technology-facilitated abuse (TFA) is a growing concern in mental health. TFA involves perpetrators using online platforms & techniques to intimidate, isolate & stalk victims. This form of abuse involving stalking, psychological abuse, image-based abuse & sexual harassment has gained attention because of its growing prevalence. Perpetrators often use technology to monitor emails, send threats, disrupt communications & use victim's email to send false messages. TFA has devastating consequences including psychological distress, emotional distress, self-censorship, withdrawal from social media, problematic alcohol use, suicidal behaviour etc (Usher et al., 2023). The digital revolution has significantly impacted social life, offering social psychologists' novel tools to examine human behaviour & social interactions. Large data sets containing digital footprints produce novel opportunities to enhance deciphering of individuals & societies. However, their analysis produces unique methodological & ethical issues. Computational social science is driving the emergence of big data, which can complement & replace traditional surveys & even psychometric tools (Kosinski, 2023). Researchers had explored Internet-delivered interventions, specifically cognitive behavioural therapy, in routine care & had found that therapists are positive about blended CBT but faced complexities like technical issues & integrating it into daily life.

The psychoanalytical setting has evolved to suit various social contexts & the needs of clients & analyst. The couch has been a distinctive feature of psychoanalysis since 20<sup>th</sup> century while e-psychoanalysis uses virtual platforms & electronic gadgets. Studies have explored the implications & ethical consequences of using technology in psychotherapeutic settings & it renders practical measures for incorporating such technology into psychotherapeutic practice (Eonta et al., 2011). The use of virtual reality (VR) in clinical



psychology is rapidly growing. VR permits individuals to actively perceive their own body within a simulated environment allowing them to experience reality-like events. This permits for the formation of a safe & ecological environment for studying human behaviours that would otherwise not be easily assessed. VR is becoming a popularly established method for treating mental disorders. Advanced applications of VR encompass an integrated human-computer system that processes psychophysiological measures in context to VR fear-relevant scenarios approving for autonomous fear improvisation in home setting & remote control for intervention effectiveness. VR can also be combined with mindfulness which has been shown to improve clinical symptoms (Vicario & Martino, 2022). Brain functioning is affected by mental images & representations of epoch as well. The information processing in brain is different for mathematical, algorithmic & mechanical, making it a late acquisition in development. The integration of brain & mind functioning is hampered by the influence of tech (Popoveniuc, 2013). Interdisciplinary collaborations that use digital approaches without giving up a strong theoretical base will enhance psychological research in future (Ostermann et al., 2021). These technologies can sophisticate access to mental healthcare & treatment by enabling services to individual needs. However, there are gaps in evidence base for these technologies & greater patient-clinician involvement is required to evaluate & improve outcomes (Hollis et al., 2015). Accessible technology has made it facilitative to reach out to community health workers & several capacity-building programs. Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) had played a prominent role in integrating mental health into primary care (Nirisha et al., 2023). The integration of technology into mental health practice is important due to high prevalence of mental issues among youth.

Artificial Intelligence is a multidisciplinary field that stresses on developing & learning about technology that handles tasks that need human intelligence. AI is used in clinical decision-making & biomedical research since 1970s. The use of AI in mental healthcare is escalating, with advancements in technology like virtual reality (VR), language processing, sensing & robotics enabling novel capabilities. Psychologists & other professionals ought to be vigilant of the potential impact of AI in their respective field (Tahan & Zygoulis, 2019).

Technology plays a significant role in our lives & novel upcoming offer a promising site for engaging youth in treatment & improving mental health improvisation. However, there's a lack of evidence on how to use such technology as an adjunct to face-to-face treatment in youth (Montague et al., 2015). The advancement in AI has salient implications which can improve the mental health care field. Psychologists play an essential role in the development, evaluation & ethical use of AI in this field (Luxton, 2014). About 6% of apps are categorized as mental health, 11% stress management, 4% sleep & 2% of them for smoking cessation. Social medias have been the most influential psychological interventions of the last decade which address the need for social connectedness. However, such medias can also pose problems in psychological wellbeing (Morris & Aguilera, 2012).

Cognitive psychology operates with machine learning & AI involving simulation-based learning, intra-group social interaction, CBT & computer-based therapy (Irshad et al., 2022). There's a need to emphasis on developing digital health knowledge, skills & confidence across trainee & Clinical Psychologists. Strategic analysis reveals the need for framework for digital mental health competences across the curriculum & placement experience (Pote et al., 2021). I-MANN is a web-based system for aggregating, integrating, managing & analysing mental health data in India. The system developed by the ICMR (Mental Health Assessment National Network) is based on Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine. It targets to revolutionize digital data aggregation with real-time monitoring of mental health

(Kaur et al., 2020). The issues pertaining to technology-driven capacity building initiatives in mental health in India, particularly remote areas, comprise of limited dedicated space, inconsistent internet connectivity & inadequate digital literacy among community health workers etc. (Maulik et al., 2017).

### ***Role & need of Counselling – A Duo***

Counselling psychology is a specialty that stresses on improving personal & interpersonal functioning across life span, addressing emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental & organizational issues. It includes research & applied work in various domains like supervision & training, career development & counselling & prevention & health. Counselling psychologists serve individuals of all ages & to different cultural backgrounds & adhere to the standards & ethics established by APA. Counselling is a learning process that enables personality enrichment (Suman, 2016). Mental health complexities are often linked to physical health with research focusing on the relationship b/w physical & mental health. Studies have explored the issues of mental health policy implementation, refugee mental health & the impact of military service on mental health. Technological advancements have shifted focus towards mental health services (Chen et al., 2022). Online counselling has emerged as an alternative to traditional services, influenced by technological advancements & socio-economic impacts. This has led to a shift in counselling services towards creative & innovative thinking. Online services enable relationships to occur quickly & effectively. While not meant to replace face-to-face psychotherapy, online counselling is an alternative source for assistance in dealing with problems of living with a pro of belonging. However, there are still limitations of online counselling including ethics that need to be examined by practitioners. As technology advances, counsellors should master the knowledge in conducting online sessions to ensure that services remain relevant & constantly evolve in tandem as per current development (Mejah et al., 2019). Counselling is expected to be genuine & empathetic, work at the level of rapport & explore the client's conscious motives. The perspective of counselling could vary from counsellor to counsellor, but the basic idea remains the same.

### ***Challenges***

Certain groups like the females, children, adolescents, older individuals with chronic medical conditions, calamity survivors & industrial workers are more prone to mental disorders. The burden of such disorders globally is prominent accounting for about 12 % of the global burden of disorders. The burden of mental & behavioural disorders ranges from 9.5 to 102 per 1000 population in India. The prevalence is particularly high in females, the elderly, disaster survivors, industrial workers, children, adolescents & those with chronic health conditions. Improving living conditions, political commitment, enhancing primary health care & promoting women's empowerment are salient for addressing mental health issues effectively (Venkatashiva et al., 2021).

Cancer is a potentially life-threatening illness that affects patients' physical as well as emotional well-being. Breast cancer is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most prevalent type of cancer & it's the most frequent cause of deaths in women. Psychosocial co-morbidity is prevalent among breast cancer patients with 43% & 26% for a probable psychiatric disorder. Up to 1/3 of patients suffer from distress during the year following an initial operation. Adjuvant cancer treatments play a part in psychological adjustment with problems persisting significantly in women up to several years following treatment (Paniharam & Chidurala, 2022).

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Psychosexual disorders are complex problems with multidimensional aspects imbibing biological, psychological, social & cultural factors. In developing countries (e.g. India), the prevalence rates vary, making it difficult to gauge their exact prevalence. In India, care for people suffering from psychosexual complexities is not proper & adequate as many patients visit unauthorized "sex clinics" rather than authorized hospitals. Specialists like dermatologists are often consulted for these problems due to common belief that they are caused by dysfunctions in their genitals. The requirement for advancement in psychosexual medicine is much needed to eradicate other disorders like homicide, suicide, domestic violence & battered wife syndrome. Sexual medicine is an integral part of general health comprising both physical & mental elements. Assessment of patients with sexual dysfunction requires deciphering factors associated & maintaining the dysfunction, including marital discord. Marital discord triggers psychosexual disorders which can lead to a vicious cycle. Group intervention strategies involving mental health professionals can alleviate these problems in early stages, preventing other disorders like homicide, suicide, domestic violence etc. (Solanki & Agarwal, 2020).

Major depression is a leading cause of premature death & disability in India with 50% higher burden of common mental disorders (CMD) in women. Indian women's mental health is a significant issue with social, cultural & economic as influencing factors. Gender disadvantage, poverty, social class, lack of education & social oppression increases women's susceptibility to CMDs. Interventions emphasising on social & economic areas have shown to sophisticate women's mental health in India. Access to social & economic skills strengthens competence & self-reliance which empowers plus improves mental health. However, there is no universal access to mental health treatment in India, it's very poor & varies greatly from urban to rural localities. The WHO's Mental Health Global Action Programme (mhGAP) aims to promote services for mental, neurological & substance use disorders especially for countries with low incomes. In India, children face various challenges including survival, health, nutrition, & protection. Despite the National Plan of Action for Children, fundamental programming for upholding children's basic rights is yet to be implemented at community level. There's lack of clarity on effective strategies for children outside the family safety net. The care system is largely dependent on state & privately supported institutions leading to poor developmental outcomes. The Child in Need Institute (CINI) is implementing a project to foster family-based care in Jharkhand focusing on child participation, inter-sectoral convergence, accountability & preventing separation (Panda et al., 2020).

Integrated teaching in India has been suggested to address the disjointed system of delivering medical education. The current system stresses on individual subjects making it difficult for students to link knowledge across various subjects to acquire patient management skills. An integrated teaching-learning approach has been advised to address this concern resulting in significant improvements in critical reasoning & self-directed learning in students. The aim of such teaching is to expose medical students to opportunities that facilitate retention of relevant & meaningful knowledge becoming a crucial base stone in learning. However, the process of developing such a curriculum can be hectic because of time constraints & resource-intensive with operational issues like scheduling timetables & classes, improving infrastructure & learning resource constraints & recognizing where coordination is missing among involved departments, students & unsupportive faculty members (Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2019).

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India's senescence has grown significantly with a projected 12.4% increase by 2026. Cognitive function deteriorates with age particularly in older adults aged 60 & above. Factors like gender, lower education level, increasing age, less income, no spouse, lack of social engagement, limited activities of daily living etc. are associated with cognitive impairment. However, routine cognitive screening of elderly population is lacking in India leading to significant burden on their caregivers. Elderly population with depression remain undiagnosed & untreated due to lack of vigilance & stigma. Elderly abuse is an undetected issue in many countries & family-based care is the primary provider of long-term care (Bhatia et al., 2020).

Clinical psychology in India witnesses several issues including a lack of a regulatory body, lack of vigilance about mental health & their related professions, an unsatisfying professional environment, licensing of professionals & standardization of practice, inadequate training in psychotherapy etc. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was established in 1993 to register qualified professionals under it but only 10% are certified. The lack of a regulatory body & inadequate training facilities adds to profession's lack of impact on clinical health. The challenges faced by clinical psychologists in India encompasses inadequate training facilities, low remuneration, deficits in research funding & neglectful enforcement of code of conduct (Galundia, 2018). India has high no. of youths below 24 years making them a potential focus for mental health services. Mental disorders often begin in mid & late adolescence/early adulthood with a prevalence of 6.46% in the community & 23.33% in schools. Community mental health workers trained in youth mental health deliver mental health services to youth in educational settings. However, delivering these services hold ethical & professional challenges like safety concerns for women & rendering a safe environment (Raghavan & Sanjana, 2022).

There's need for improved mental health care systems & increased vigilance & education about mental health issues (Singh, 2017). Modern challenges of socio-psychological nature & changes in research, counselling & therapy needs to be considered. Psychological assessments have evolved in response to novel areas of practice like integrating medical & primary care, online assessment & global initiatives. However, compliance to APA's ethical standards in other countries is difficult to assess (Babajanyan, 2023). Despite the National Mental Health Programme since 1982 & National Rural Health Mission there has been little effort to render mental health services in rural India. With population increase, changing lifestyles, unemployment, lack of social support etc. it's predicted that there will be a substantial increase in the no. of people suffering from mental illness in rural areas. The escalation of mental health services in rural areas is a challenging task due to lack of trained human resources & limited resources & political commitment. The treatment gap is prominent with rural areas encountering a 10-20% burden of serious mental disorders. Barriers in seeking aid comprise of unavailability of services, low literacy, traditional beliefs, stigma & discrimination (Kumar, 2011).

Career decision-making is a complex process for an individual choosing the most appropriate career from various options available based on comparison & evaluation. It is influenced by educational/professional program characteristics & individual character as well. Ability plays a prominent role in career selection & self-estimation is important. Challenges in career decision making are divided into 3 major categories: lack of readiness, lack of information & inconsistent information. Psychology students aged 18-30, face difficulties in this period, when there's transition from adolescence to early adulthood (Monika, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

'Indian psychology' focuses on self-realization reducing human miseries. Technology had tried revolutionising mental health care fostering resilience. Telepsychiatry services have become essentially necessary despite issues like ethical concerns, burnout & inadequate regulations. Mental health globalisation stresses the prominence of culturally relevant interventions & imbibing of indigenous knowledge. To tackle challenges encountered, psychological programs must inculcate social justice, global mental health & leadership training. Neuropsychology & Military psychology are contemporary reflecting a mix of traditional & modern frameworks. Overall, integrating technology & culture with mental health systems shall sophisticate access & treatment ensuring readiness for any future calamity & optimal mental health results globally.

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