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### A Study on Child Psychology in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

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#### Abstract

Child psychology, as understood in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), is a holistic discipline that integrates physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development. Rooted in ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Ayurveda, and Buddhist and Jain traditions, Indian perspectives on child psychology emphasize prenatal influences, educational methodologies, moral upbringing, and well-being. The study compares IKS-based child psychology with Western theories to highlight strengths and areas for integration. This paper explores the foundational concepts of child development in IKS and its relevance in contemporary psychology.

**Keywords:** Child Psychology, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Traditional Parenting, Cognitive Development, Oral Traditions, Cultural Psychology.

#### 1. Introduction

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) integrates philosophy, psychology, and holistic sciences to understand human consciousness, cognition, and behaviour. Several psychological theories within the Indian tradition provide insights into mental development, emotions, and well-being. These theories are rooted in ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutras, Ayurveda, and Buddhist & Jain philosophies.

Child psychology is the scientific study of how children grow, develop, and adapt mentally, emotionally, and behaviourally. While modern psychology largely follows Western frameworks, Indian traditions have long recognized the importance of child development. The Indian Knowledge System provides unique insights into child psychology through Veda, Upanishad, Yoga, Vedanta, and traditional education systems like the Gurukul. This paper discusses how ancient Indian texts and philosophies offer a comprehensive understanding of child development and well-being.

#### 2. Objectives

1. To explore Indian perspectives on child psychology and development.
2. To compare Indian child-rearing practices with Western psychological theories.
3. To analyze the role of traditions, communal upbringing, and cultural rituals in shaping a child's mind.
4. To examine how IKS fosters emotional intelligence, cognitive abilities, and social skills.
5. To discuss the relevance and application of IKS-based child psychology in modern education and parenting.

#### 3. Sources

**This study Primary** sources include the Vedas, Upanishads, Ayurveda, Bhagavad Gita, Manusmriti, Arthashastra, Yoga Sutras, and various indigenous pedagogical texts that provide deep insights into child psychology and education. **Secondary Sources:** Academic research papers, books on IKS and child psychology, ethnographic studies, and

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government reports on indigenous education. **Comparative Studies:** Articles and studies comparing Western psychological models with indigenous perspectives on child development.

#### 4. Methodology

The study employs a qualitative and comparative methodology, analyzing classical Indian texts alongside modern psychological theories to explore indigenous perspectives on child psychology. Ethnographic study of indigenous child-rearing practices in various Indian communities.

#### Main Theme -

#### i. Prenatal and Early Childhood Development in IKS

**Garbha Sanskar:** The Science of Fetal Development

मम मनः, मम आत्मा, मम देहः,  
मम आभामण्डलं तथा च  
मम शिशुः सदैव सुरक्षितः  
सन्तुलितः तथैव शक्तिशाली अस्ति॥

My mind, my soul, my body, my aura and my child are always safe, balanced and strong. Indian traditions emphasize the influence of a mother's thoughts, emotions, and environment on the fetus. Garbha Sanskar, meaning "education of the womb," is a practice where expectant mothers engage in positive thinking, meditation, chanting, and reading scriptures to shape the mental and emotional well-being of the unborn child. Texts like the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita highlight dietary and lifestyle recommendations for optimal prenatal development.

आयुः सत्त्व बला आरोग्यं सुखं प्राप्तिं विवर्धनाः।

रस्सा स्निग्धा स्थिरा फिर हृद्या आहार सात्विक प्रियाः॥ 17/8

It is possible that by consuming such food items, one may become physically fit but it is not necessary that the mental and spiritual level will be positively healthy. It has been said that 'As you eat, so is your mind'.

#### ii. Samskaras: Rituals for Psychological Growth

Child Samskaras – Psychological Conditioning, Sanskrit texts describe 16 Samskaras, among which some are directly related to child psychology:

- **नामकरण संस्कारः** (Naming Ceremony) - Helps in identity formation, emotional bonding, and self-recognition.
- **अन्नप्राशन संस्कारः** (First Solid Food Ceremony) Develops sensory perception and physical growth.
- **विद्यारम्भ संस्कारः** (Beginning of Education) Encourages early cognitive development and discipline. Aligns with modern theories of early childhood education.
- **उपनयन संस्कारः** (Initiation into Learning, Gurukula System) Focuses on concentration, memory, and self-discipline. Similar to modern Montessori and structured learning methods.

संस्कारात् जन्मनि शुद्धिः

A child's mental state is shaped by early experiences. Sixteen samskaras (rites of passage) are prescribed in Sanatana tradition to mark significant stages in a child's life. Among them, Vidyarambha (initiation into education) and Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony) are critical for cognitive and moral development. These rituals reinforce ethical values and discipline, shaping a child's psychological framework.

#### iii. Cognitive and Emotional Development in IKS

##### The Role of the Gurukul System

वेदं अनुच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनं अनुशास्ति।

सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः॥

Taittiriya Upanishad (1.11.1)

After teaching the Vedas, the teacher instructs the disciple: Speak the truth, follow righteousness, and never neglect self-study. This shloka describes the guidance given by a Guru to an Antevasin, emphasizing truthfulness, discipline, and lifelong learning.

The Gurukul system, a traditional form of education in ancient India, focused on experiential learning, discipline, and character building. Unlike modern schooling, where rote memorization is emphasized, Gurukul education encouraged critical thinking, storytelling (such as Panchatantra and Jataka Tales), and practical wisdom.

आचार्यात् पादमादत्ते पादं शिष्यः स्वमेधया।

पादं स ब्रह्मचारिभ्यः पादं कालक्रमेण च॥

Manusmriti (2.146)

A student learns one-fourth of his knowledge from his teacher, one-fourth by self-study, one-fourth from discussions with peers, and the final portion through experience over time.

#### iv. Yogic and Meditative Practices for Mental Development

Children today face increasing stress from academic pressures, digital distractions, and social expectations. Yogic and meditative practices can help them develop focus, emotional resilience, and a sense of inner calm. These techniques are simple, engaging, and designed to support cognitive and emotional growth in young minds

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि (Gita 2.48)

Teaching children to be emotionally stable in success and failure.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन (Gita 2.47)

Encouraging effort-oriented learning instead of results-based pressure.

#### योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः (Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1.2)

Mental discipline and mindfulness help in child development. Yoga and meditation play a crucial role in Indian psychology. Practices like Dhyana (meditation) and Pranayama (breathing exercises) enhance concentration, emotional regulation, and cognitive abilities in children.

Scientific research has validated that mindfulness techniques improve brain function, emotional stability, and learning capabilities.

#### V. The Concept of Gunas in Personality Development

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः।  
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम्॥

Bhagavad Gita (14.5)

O mighty-armed Arjuna, the three Guṇas—Sattva(purity, wisdom, balance), Rajas(activity, ambition, restlessness), and Tamas(inertia, ignorance, laziness)—born of Prakriti (Nature) bind the imperishable soul to the body. A balanced combination of these Gunas leads to holistic child development.

#### vi. Social and Moral Development in IKS

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम्।  
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वं सञ्जानाना उपासते॥

Rig Veda (10.191.2)

Move together, speak together, and let your minds be united in understanding, just as the gods of old performed their duties in unity. This shloka emphasizes Social Harmony, collective cooperation and shared thinking, which are key principles in social psychology.

यत्र विश्वं भवत्येकनीडं तत्र गच्छति चेतसि विश्वम्।

The—Atharva Veda (6.64.3)

Where there is unity and a shared vision, the entire world comes together in harmony. It highlights how shared goals and cooperation, Power of Collective Effort create a strong social bond.

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।  
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

(Mahopanishad 6.71-73)

"This is mine, and that is someone else's"—this kind of thinking belongs to small-minded people. But for broad-minded, noble people, the whole world is one family.

#### vii. Ethical Values and Character Building

परोपकाराय सतां विभूतयः। Manusmriti (4.138)

The wealth (knowledge, skills, and abilities) of good people should be used for helping others. Education must focus on social responsibility and ethics. Schools should encourage community service and moral education.

आचारः परमो धर्मः श्रुत्युक्तः स्मार्त एव च।  
तस्मादाचारतः श्रेष्ठो नास्ति कश्चिद्गुणोऽपरः॥

Manusmriti (1.108)

Good conduct (Āchāra) is the highest virtue, as prescribed by the scriptures. There is no quality greater than good character. Moral behavior is the core of righteousness (Dharma) and shapes a person's true worth.

Ancient Indian teachings, such as those found in the Bhagavad Gita, emphasize Dharma (righteous duty) and Karma (action). Children were taught moral values through

epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which helped instill virtues such as honesty, respect, and self-discipline.

#### viii. Parenting in Indian Traditions

माता पिता गुरुश्चैव यस्तु त्रिभिरपि त्रयः।  
स एव तृप्तिमाप्नोति पुत्रस्तु स हि शिष्यवत्॥

M.bh (Shanti Parva 267.6)

A child should revere the mother, father, and teacher as the three greatest influences in life. Only such a child brings fulfillment to the family. Parents are the first teachers who shape a child's values and wisdom.

संतानवृद्धिकामस्य मातृवत् परिपालयेत्। Manusmriti (2.227)

One who desires the well-being and growth of their child should care for them as a mother cares for her newborn—with love, patience, and guidance. Parenting requires patience, selflessness, and emotional nurturing.

लालयेत् पंचवर्षाणि दशवर्षाणि ताडयेत्।  
प्राप्ते तु षोडशे वर्षे पुत्रं मित्रवदाचरेत्॥

Manusmriti (7.37)

The saying suggests different parenting approaches based on a child's age: Until the age of five, parents should nurture their child with love and care, fulfilling their emotional and physical needs. From the age of five to ten, parents should focus on discipline and education, guiding the child firmly to instill good habits and values. After the age of sixteen, parents should treat their child as a friend, fostering open communication and mutual respect rather than strict control.

This approach ensures a balanced upbringing, where the child feels loved, learns discipline, and eventually gains independence with parental support.

The role of parents and teachers is highly emphasized in Indian psychology. The concept of Matri Devo Bhava, Pitri Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava (Mother, Father, and Teacher are equivalent to God) highlights the importance of guidance and mentorship in shaping a child's personality.

#### ix. Relevance of Indian Child Psychology in Modern Times

शिक्षावल्लीतमं वेदं, सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर।

आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य, प्रजातान्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः॥

Taittiriya Upanishad (1.11.1)

This verse emphasizes Importance of Knowledge and Learning "Learn the Vedas and follow righteousness. Speak the truth and practice dharma. Offer your service to the teacher with devotion, and never neglect your responsibilities to society."

"सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः।

आचार्याय प्रियम् धनम् आहृत्य प्रजातान्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः॥"

(Taittiriya Upanishad 1.11.2)

This Sanskrit Sloke emphasis Meaning & Educational Relevance: Speak the truth, follow righteousness, never neglect learning. Encourages moral education (ethics), self-

discipline, lifelong learning, and student-teacher respect. Aligns with contemporary values of integrity, research-based education, and mentorship.

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप।  
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते॥

Bhagavad Gita (4.33)

Knowledge is superior to material possessions. All actions culminate in wisdom and learning. Modern education must go beyond material success to focus on wisdom and ethics. Holistic development of students is crucial—intellectual, moral, and emotional.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म। Upanishads (Mundaka 1.2.12)

Truth and infinite knowledge lead to the realization of the highest wisdom. Students should be encouraged to question, analyze, and think critically. Modern education should not just teach facts, but also wisdom and problem-solving.

उद्योगिनं पुरुषसिंहमुपैति लक्ष्मीः।

दैवेन देयमिति कापुरुषाः वदन्ति॥—Hitopadesha

Success comes to those who work hard. The weak blame fate. Schools must encourage hard work, perseverance, and dedication. Growth mindset: Success is based on effort, not luck.

Modern education systems are increasingly incorporating mindfulness and yoga into curricula to improve children's concentration and emotional resilience. Techniques inspired by IKS, such as storytelling-based learning and values-based education, have been proven effective in enhancing cognitive and emotional growth.

विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद्याति पात्रताम्।

पात्रत्वाद्धनमाप्नोति धनाद्धर्मं ततः सुखम्॥ Hitopadesha

Education brings humility, humility leads to worthiness, worthiness brings prosperity, and prosperity leads to righteousness (dharma) and happiness. Parents must ensure their child receives good education and learns humility.

#### x. Mental Health and Well-being

मनो ब्रह्मोति व्यजानात्। मनसो ह्योव खल्वितानि भूतानि जायन्ते।

मनसा जातानि जीवन्ति। मनः प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति।

आ न एतु मनः पुनः क्रतवे दक्षाय जीवसे। ज्योक च सूर्यं दृशे॥

(यजु 3-54)

Let our mind contemplate noble deeds, long life, acquire strength and see the sun for long time. Such a state of mind will protect the people from tensions, stresses, depression, negative thoughts and rather promote peace, tranquillity and bliss.

With rising concerns about stress and anxiety among children, the Indian approach to child psychology provides sustainable solutions. Practices such as Sattvic living (wholesome nutrition, balanced lifestyle, and meditation) help in maintaining mental equilibrium.

सात्त्विकं हरिद्राभं रसस्निग्धं मनोहरम्।  
आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनम्॥

Bhagavad Gita (17.8)

Sattvic food is fresh, juicy, nourishing, and pleasing. It enhances life, strength, health, happiness, and satisfaction.

अदृष्टं चानुपक्विलष्टं मधुपर्कं च ये ददुः।

तेषां भुक्तं भवेत्सिद्धं यज्ञभागश्च शाश्वतः॥

Manusmriti (5.56)

Food that is clean, untouched, and properly offered is considered pure and beneficial, similar to sacred offerings.

आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः।

स्मृतिलम्बे सर्वग्रन्थीनां विप्रमोक्षः॥

Chandogya Upanishad (7.26.2)

When the food is pure, the mind becomes pure. When the mind is pure, one's memory strengthens, leading to liberation from all bondage.

#### xi. Neuroscientific Validation of IKS Principles

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्येति स्थितयोन्यः प्रपञ्चयते।

Mandukya Upanishad (1.2)

The self experiences three states—waking (Jagrat), dreaming (Svapna), and deep sleep (Sushupti)—which influence the psychology of human behavior. While Freud's model explains human behavior in psychological terms, Upanishad presents a more holistic and spiritual perspective. The three states of consciousness in Upanishad correspond closely with Freud's conscious, subconscious, and unconscious mind, but Vedanta goes beyond with Turiya (Transcendental State), the state of ultimate realization. Recent studies show that Indian psychological concepts, such as meditation and mantra chanting, positively impact brain function, emotional regulation, and cognitive performance, aligning with modern neuroscience discoveries. Neuroscientific Correlation in Sanskrit

"जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः स्थूलभुक् वैश्वानरः प्रथमः पादः॥"

#### Conclusion

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत्॥

Bhagavad Gita (6.6)

For one who has controlled the mind, the mind is his best friend. But for one who has failed to do so, the same mind acts as an enemy.

Child psychology in the Indian Knowledge System is a comprehensive framework that integrates cognitive, emotional, moral, and spiritual aspects of development. The time-tested principles of prenatal education, Gurukul learning, yoga, and ethical upbringing remain relevant today. By integrating these ancient wisdom traditions with modern psychological insights, a more holistic approach to child development can be achieved. Unlike Western models that focus on individual cognition, IKS nurtures emotional and social development through shared learning and intergenerational wisdom. Recognizing and integrating these

Indian perspectives into modern psychology can create a more inclusive understanding of child development. This seminar encourages further research and appreciation of IKS as a valuable framework for fostering well-rounded children.

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- Panchatantra (Ancient Indian Collection of Moral Stories)
- Ramayana and Mahabharata (Hindu Epics)
- Various Modern Studies on Yoga and Meditation in Child Development