

**NOMENCLATURE APROPOS OF SRI AUROBINDO'S PSYCHOLOGICAL SYSTEM:
A HISTORICAL NOTE AND REAPPRAISAL**

Introduction

In the short history of psychology there have been many thought currents and approaches to the understanding of human nature. Since the last decade of the 19th century, psychology has been crossing a number of hurdles. Firstly, it had to get over the mechanistic bias of models based on physical science. Secondly, it is still grappling to outgrow the Euro-American-centric perspective. There has been a growing recognition in the world that a complete psychology cannot ignore the place of consciousness and the importance of a “Beyond-Ego” principle as a center of integration within the structure of the personality. In this context, the psychological insights inherent in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo assume relevance and need a systematic exploration from historical as well as contemporary developments. This is especially important as Sri Aurobindo describes the evolutionary and futuristic models of man, embodying higher and higher consciousness. In recent years influential psychologists like Ken Wilber have drawn inspiration from Sri Aurobindo’s model of consciousness. Furthermore, some academic institutions in India and the West have been offering courses where the psychological insights of Sri Aurobindo are often presented under some nomenclature or the other. A host of websites has surfaced on Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought, often associated with various unrelated topics. In this context, it is important that Sri Aurobindo’s thought should not be confused, misrepresented, distorted or mixed up with other ideas or else its spirit and essence will be lost. There have been numerous attempts to use an appropriate nomenclature that would reflect the original perspective of Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought inherent in Integral Yoga. The term “Integral psychology” which was initially used for this purpose is now being identified with several different things and has been even owned as a domain name as an Internet website with a different significance. Keeping this in view and need for clarity regarding Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought, this paper aims at showing how the concepts regarding nomenclature have been evolving and altering even among Aurobindonian scholars. Further, it attempts to arrive at a nomenclature that suits the Zeitgeist and also truly reflects Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought.

THE BEGINNINGS

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), the great Indian Philosopher, Revolutionary, Mystic, Poet and Yogi presented to the world the vision of Integral Yoga where the human being is considered to be a transitional being with a possibility of developing higher states of consciousness embodied in evolutionary terms. His extensive writings on philosophy, sadhana, and life as part of a comprehensive Integral Yoga contain deep psychological insights. An understanding of these insights is necessary for formulating a new psychological approach that will move from illness repair models to evolutionary and transformative models for true well-being and psychological growth. Sri Aurobindo's writings cover the period from the last decade of the 19th century till the end of his earthly life. But the main body of his writing was systematically presented between 1914 and 1921. It was only in the 1940's that Aurobindonian scholars started extrapolating the scattered psychological insights in his writings and using them to approach psychology from a consciousness perspective. The beginning of the psychological quest by Aurobindonian scholars can be traced to an article entitled "A Psychological Appreciation of Sri Aurobindo's System of Integral Yoga" written by Dr. Indra Sen which appeared in the 1944 issue of Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual (Sen, 1944). Ever since, the pursuit of psychological concepts implicit in Integral Yoga has grown steadily, culminating in the landmark publication of *A Greater Psychology* (Dalal, 2001) and a number of other related publications in India and the West. As early as 1946, Indra Sen spoke on his topic to a professional audience when he delivered his speech "The Urge for Wholeness" as the presidential address to the Educational and Psychology Section of the Indian Science Congress (Sen, 1946).

In the early published literature we do not find any specific nomenclature to describe the psychological insights of Integral Yoga. Indra Sen was clear that new terms should be considered. Further, he pointed out that "...our present psychological terms are adapted to the description of the general waking consciousness, and, it appears that as the base of experience and field of data become wider, The terms too shall have to be made elastic and given fresh form and meanings" (Sen, 1944). Sen in 1946 introduced the concept of Psychic Consciousness as a form of consciousness that was higher than

the mental (actually it is a deeper consciousness that stands behind the ego-bound surface personality). He explained that unlike the ordinary consciousness that works through dualities and polarities, the psychic consciousness manifests spontaneity, depth and wholeness. He further defined “wholeness” as “a tendency to progressive perfection of organisation” and described that this was the principal trend of not only of human nature but of organic evolution as a whole. Sen incidentally used the term “Integrated Personality” in this lecture (Sen, 1946). The term “Indian Yogic Psychology” to explain the contribution of the “Self -Poised Consciousness of the Gita” and the Psychic Consciousness in Sri Aurobindo’s system was subsequently used (Sen, 1947). Later, he spoke of the “Integral Standpoint of Sri Aurobindo’s Psychological System” (Sen, 1959).

EMERGENCE OF "INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY" AS A TERMINOLOGY

The beginning of the usage of the term “Integral Psychology” in literature can be traced to the year 1957 when Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri and Prof. Frederic Spiegelberg conceived the idea of holding a commemorative symposium on the Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo (Chaudhuri & Spiegelberg, 1960). * The symposium contained various articles contributed by eminent Aurobindonian scholars where for the first time the term “Integral” was used extensively with variations (viz Integralism, Integralist, and Integrated). The symposium was organised in five parts: Philosophy, Epistemology and Psychology, Yoga and Ethics, Literature and Miscellaneous. Here, Indra Sen used the term “Integral Psychology” in the sense that ordinary waking consciousness inherently carries the subconscious as well as the superconsciousness. Further, he commented “An Integralism is thus characteristic of all Indian Psychology. However, at the hands of Sri Aurobindo, it receives an elaborate treatment, which enables Indian psychology to take the form of a well-developed Integral Psychology” (Sen, 1960).

The term “Integral Psychology” started being used by others since 1960 to refer to Sri Aurobindo’s psychological perspective. Jobst Muhling wrote a serialised article in three consecutive issues of Mother India where “ordinary psychology” whose watchword is “Know Thyself”, was differentiated from “Integral Psychology” whose watchword is “Be Thyself”. In this article Muhling also used the term “Integral Spiritual Psychology” (Muhling, 1960).

Many variations of the term Integral Psychology started appearing in a published form in the 1980's. Dr. A. S. Dalal used the term Integral Psychology in an article titled "Integral Psychology: an outline of the psychological thought implicit in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga" which was published in Sri Aurobindo circle (Dalal, 1981). Dalal subsequently discontinued using the term "Integral Psychology" because he found the term being used by different writers for different things (Dalal, 2002). Indra Sen's book Integral Psychology subtitled "The Psychological System of Sri Aurobindo" appeared in 1986 (Sen, 1986). Kishore Gandhi's class notes prepared in 1966 were later published in Mother India in 1986 where the term "Integral Yogic Psychology" was used (Gandhi, 1986). Madhusudhan Reddy used the term "Integral Yoga Psychology" as the title of his book (Reddy, 1988) Serialising an article titled "Integral Psychology", Goswami gave a definition of "Integral Psychology": "Integral Psychology is a system that takes into consideration all aspects of an individual's life-physical, vital, mental, environmental, social, cultural and spiritual-that make him/her a human person. It is called 'Integral' especially because of its focus on the process of integration (of the aspects) that goes on continually in all normal human beings" (Goswami, 1987). However, when these articles were published in a book form, he used the term "Global Psychology". He preferred the term "global" as it did not have an exclusively Eastern or Western bias.

- There is anecdotal evidence that the term "Integral Psychology" might have been used even earlier by Dr. Indra Sen in his informal talks.

"Man is looked upon as an individual unit on this globe; he is to integrate all his experiences at all different levels eventually to grow into a global person" (Goswami, year not cited).

SUBSEQUENT USAGE OF THE TERM "INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY"

The term "Integral" came to be used subsequently by various persons for psychological systems other than that of Sri Aurobindo. Loyd Fellows founded the Institute of Integral Psychology in the 1970's and during its active years (1976-1985), M. P. Pandit, Dalal, V. M. Reddy and Robert Gerard participated in its activities. Robert Gerard used the term "Integral Psychology" for his own psychological system -an integration of theosophy, occult psychological research and other sources (Gerard, 1982). Ken Wilber uses the term "Integral" for his system, which is an integration of

nearly a hundred psychological systems (Wilber, 2000). He himself has been greatly influenced by Sri Aurobindo though his use of the term ‘Integral Psychology’ is different from the classical Aurobindonian perspective. In view of this, Dalal prefers to use the term ‘Integral Yoga Psychology’ to refer unambiguously to Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought. Ken Wilber who owns the Internet domain with the term ‘Integral Psychology’, concurs with Dalal (Dalal, 2002). In recent years psychologists in different parts of the world have been using the term ‘Integral Psychology’ with different meanings. Paul E. Herman in 1983 described Integral Psychology as an ‘emergent East-West study of human psyche’.

Haridas Chaudhuri in an unpublished manuscript approached Integral Psychology with insights from various schools of Eastern and Western Psychology while focusing on the multidimensional richness and individual wholeness of the human personality (Chaudhuri, 1973).

Conferences and seminars have been organised since 1999 till date on Integral Psychology with different connotations in the US and India. Workshops, training programmes, websites, academic courses and publications on Integral Psychology have also slowly started mushrooming in psychology. These significant developments have to be taken into account in order to understand the Zeitgeist. Confusion, ambiguity and mistaken perceptions are prevailing in psychology, which have many ramifications that need to be addressed in the context of Sri Aurobindo’s psychological perspective of Integral Yoga. The term ‘Integral’ in Integral Yoga has a deep meaning embedded that needs to be brought into the light (the term ‘Integral’ has to be differentiated from an eclectic and synthetic approach).

INEGRAL YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

In 1936, Sri Aurobindo used the term Yogic Psychology: ‘I mean by Yogic Psychology an examination of the nature and movements of consciousness as they are revealed to us by the processes and results of Yoga’ (Sri Aurobindo, 1994). Early in the 1940’s Sri Aurobindo had commented: ‘A direct experiential and experimental psychology seems to be demanded if psychology is to be a science and not merely a mass of elementary and superficial generalisations with all the rest guesswork or uncertain conclusion or inference’ (51; Aurobindo, 1994). Sri Aurobindo had stated as early as 1917-18: ‘A complete psychology cannot be a pure natural science, but must be a compound of science and metaphysical knowledge.’ ‘A complete psychology must be a complex of the science of mind, its operations and its relations

to life and body with intuitive and experimental knowledge of the nature of mind and its relations to supermind and spirit.” “Psychology may begin as a natural science, but it deals already with superphysical and must end in a metaphysical enquiry. If one side of the process it studies and its method of enquiry is physical, the other and more important is non-physical; it is a direct observation of mental operations by mind without any regard to their physiological meaning, support, substratum or instrumentation” (Sri Aurobindo, 1994).

It naturally follows that any nomenclature for describing the psychology implicit in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo must bring out the Yogic and experiential insights of Sri Aurobindo’s psychological thought. It must also bring out its integral nature as a comprehensive science of consciousness that deals with the totality of Being. In fact any nomenclature to describe Sri Aurobindo’s thought must ideally reflect these basic themes:

- (a) The different facets of the human being can be integrated around a ‘Beyond -Ego’ principle or a Soul-principle which can eventually replace the ego;

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The term ‘Integral Psychology’ was initially used to describe Sri Aurobindo’s psychological system. It was Indra Sen who first used the term for this purpose. However, even for Sri Aurobindo’s psychological system, other different terms have also been used (Gandhi, 1986 & Reddy, 1988). The varied usage of the term ‘Integral Psychology’ in different parts of the world calls for the seeking of another nomenclature, which would denote an unambiguous Aurobindonian perspective that acknowledges both the mystical and scientific dimensions as well as the evolutionary movement in consciousness to manifest newer models of the human being. In Sri Aurobindo’s perspective, the term ‘Integral’ does not carry an eclectic connotation (which is conveyed by Gerard’s and Wilber’s use of the term) but points to a distinctive, dynamic, evolutionary, transformative movement in consciousness. The term ‘Integral Yoga’ is Sri Aurobindo’s unique creation in concept as well as in practice and the term ‘Integral Yoga Psychology’ would at his point of time convey the psychological perspective in Integral Yoga without any admixture, confusion or distortion. This is necessary for the enrichment of psychology which is a growing discipline and for ushering the great. Psychology has needs to be developed

S.No	Year	Nomenclature Used	Nomenclature Used by	Comments
1.	1944	No Specific nomenclature	Indra Sen	First published article on Sri Aurobindo's Psychology. Published in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual.
2.	1946	No Specific nomenclature	Indra Sen	First lecture on Sri Aurobindo's Psychology at Indian Science Congress " Psychic consciousness", "Integrated Personality" were used.
3.	1947	Indian Yogic Psychology	Indra Sen	The term was used for both the perspective of Gita and of Sri Aurobindo. Published in Sri Aurobindo Mandir annual.
4.	1969	No nomenclature but mention of "Integral Standpoint of Sri Aurobindo's Psychological System".	Indra Sen	Published in Mother India
5.	1960	Integral Psychology	Indra Sen	First publication using the term "Integral Psychology" for Sri Aurobindo's psychological system. Published in Commemorative Symposium, edited by H. Chaudhuri And F. Spiegelberg.

S.No	Year	Nomenclature Used	Nomenclature Used by	Comments
6.	1960	Integral Psychology, Integral Spiritual Psychology.	Jobst Muhling	Differentiating contemporary Western psychology from Sri Aurobindo' s Psychology.
7.	1966	Integral Yogic Psychology	Kishore Gandhi	Later published in 1986
8.	1973	Integral Yogic Psychology	Haridas Chaudhuri	Unpublished Manuscript.
9.	1970's	Integral Psychology	Lloyd Fellows	Name of Institute in USA. Inspired by Sri M.P.Pandit
10.	1981	Integral Psychology	A.S.Dalal	Published in Sri Aurobindo Circle. He discontinued using the term afterwards.
11.	1982	Integral Psychology	Robert Gerard	Integration of Theosophy , Occult Psychology etc.
12.	1983	Integral Psychology	P.E.Herman	The term is used in the context of the emergent East-West study of the human psyche.
13.	1986	Integral Psychology	Indra Sen	Collection Of published and new articles on integral psychology, comparative studies etc.
14.	1987	Integral Psychology	C.R.Goswami	Integration of all aspects of life Published in Srinwantu.

S.No	Year	Nomenclature Used	Nomenclature Used by	Comments
15.	1988	Integral Yoga Psychology	Madhusudhan Reddy	Essays on Sri Aurobindo's Psychological thought published as a book.
16.	1989/1990 (Year of publication is not cited)	Global Psychology	C.R.Goswami	Changed "Integral" to "Global"
17.	1999	Integral Psychology	first International Conference on Integral Psychology, held at Matagiri , NY State, USA .	Focused exclusively on Sri Aurobindo's Psychology.
18.	2000	Integral Psychology	Ken Wilber	Integration Of About 100 Psychological Systems. Nomenclature patented.
19.	2001	Integral Psychology	2nd International Conference on Integral Psychology, held at Pondicherry. India.	Focus Shifted from exclusive Aurobindonian approach to consciousness studies in general.
20.	2003	Integral Psychology	3rd International Conference on Integral Psychology, CIIS , California USA.	Consciousness approaches in general.

S.No	Year	Nomenclature Used	Nomenclature Used by	Comments
21.	2004	Integral Psychology	International Seminar On integral Psychology, Pondicherry Psychological Association and IIAP , Pondicherry, India.	Varied approaches example Hatha Yoga , Healing etc.The name of the seminar was changed to "Integral Yoga Psychology".
22.	2004	Integral Yoga Psychology	SACAR for a course on Sri Aurobindo Studies.	On-Line University for Advanced Studies In Sri Aurobindo's Thought.
23.	2005	Integral Psychology	Conference on Integral Psychology & Transformation Held at Auroville in January 2005.	
24.	2005	Integral Yoga Psychology	Institute for Integral Yoga Psychology, Pondicherry (supported by MIRAVISION TRUST),	Forum for exclusive studies of Sri Aurobindo's Psychological System.

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