ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Colonization of personality psychology in India: historical roots and contemporary status

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Abstract

The origin of present-day Euro-American personality psychology is rooted in the Western notion of individualism. It locates its history in post-industrial revolution of Europe and the post-enlightenment era of America. However, considerable evidences suggest that the study of personality, in terms of different typologies of mental and physical attributes of a person, constituted one of the core areas of enquiry in the ancient civilizations of the world namely India, Babylonia, Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome. Such contributions of ancient civilizations hardly find intellectual space in epistemological terrain of Euro-American personality psychology. India, being one of the ancient civilizations, contributed significantly in this area. But, personality studies in the contemporary India largely subscribe to Euro-American conceptual and methodological frameworks. Against this backdrop, the paper tries to revisit the journey of personality psychology beginning with its inception in the rich intellectual traditions of ancient India vis-à-vis the other civilizations of that time, its debacle in medieval period and its colonization under the hegemonic policy of the Europeans and Americans in modern time. Continuing with the tradition of decolonization movement of psychological science, the paper, using critical theories perspective, tries to delve the way the British regime colonized personality psychology India. Taking insight from liberation psychology, the paper, finally, proposes some strategies to decolonize or rather indigenize personality psychology in India.

Keywords Ancient civilizations · Colonization · Indigenous tradition · Religio-philosophical traditions · Replicative/adaptive tradition

1 Introduction

The conceptualizations of personality, taking person as the unit of analysis, predominantly subscribes to the idea of individualism which is at the core of Western societies such as Europe and the United States of America (USA). These conceptualizations are based mostly on the observational account of the person coupled with the prevailing belief systems and the state of scientific developments during respective historical periods as well as research orientation, ideological affiliation and ethno-cultural background of the scholars. As a result, the discipline offers a variety of theories, models, assessment tools, diagnostic methodologies, and intervention strategies (Corr & Matthews, 2009;

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Church, 2017; John, Robins & Pervin, 2008; Robins, Fraley, & Krueger, 2007; Wiggins, 2003).

The beginning of so-called mainstream personality psychology in the USA started during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Cattell (1890) initiated a measurement study on mental processes and coined the term "mental test". Thereafter, McDougall (1908) introduced eight tempers or personality types. Since then, the discipline has flourished to meet the institutional requirements during the two World Wars in the form of developing personality assessment tools and to gratify the professional interest of the scholars in conceptualizing the person in terms of traits, motives, feelings and thinking. Today, the conceptual and methodological progress in the field has reached to a stage where it is inspiring the scholars of rest of the world to pursue their scholarly interest in the guise of American tradition (Arnett, 2008; Thalmayer et al., 2021). In order to substantiate this tradition, the efforts have been made to document the history of personality psychology and the way it travelled from Europe to America (Barenbaum & Winter,

2008; Dumon, 2010; Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003; Gibby & Zickar, 2008; McAdams, 1997). However, the contemporary development in the field of personality psychology should not be seen in isolation with the rich intellectual traditions of ancient civilizations of India, Babylonia, Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome (Millon, 2012) and the way these traditions were devastated and obliterated in different historical periods leading to the onset of Euro-American personality psychology.

India, being one of the ancient civilizations, shares a great intellectual tradition. Unfortunately, this great intellectual tradition also became a victim of colonization which ingeniously engineered the debacle of such a great intellectual tradition on the one hand and deliberately promoted the hegemony of the West on the other. The evidence of colonial impact can be seen in mapping the growth and expansion of psychology in the colonial and post-colonial India. Some scholars tried to document the status of psychology in the colonial and post-colonial India (Laskin, 2013; Misra & Paranjpe, 2012; Paranjpe & Misra, 2012) and during the early phase of post-colonial era (Barnette, 1955; Pandy, 1969). The history of psychology in India has also been revisited to look for possibilities for indigenization (Misra et al., 1999; Paranjpe, 2006, 2011; Sinha, 1984, 1986, 1994). The other effort sketches the inception of psychology in Calcutta and its progress subsequently (Basu, 2013). Attempt has also been made to revisit social psychology in India with a view to examine the relevance, indigenization, and cultural appropriateness of its concepts (Pandey & Singh, 2005). On the contrary, there are scholars who critically examined the way teaching, research and practice of psychology are carried out in India and have offered radical solutions to revive the discipline (Dalal, 1996, 2002, 2011; Kumar, 2006). Thus, a perusal of historicizing the inception and expansion of psychology in colonial and post-colonial India on the one hand reflects its substantial growth while on the other it indicates a vertical divide among the different traditions of scholarship which carries forward its legacy in a mutually exclusive intellectual space. As a result, the discipline is still hovering to find a destination in spite of covering a long journey. However, there have been efforts to bridge this space of mutual exclusion in the recent past by intelligently bringing out an edited volume under the title "Psychology and Psychoanalysis" (Misra, 2013a, 2013b).

Unlike the dominant tradition of writing or revisiting the history of psychology in India, this paper tries to sketch the journey of personality psychology in India beginning with its inception in the rich intellectual traditions of ancient India vis-à-vis the other civilizations of that time (in those periods different terms were used to characterized personality), its debacle in medieval period and its colonization under the hegemonic policy of the Europeans and Americans in modern period. Continuing with the tradition of decolonization movement of psychological science (Adams et al., 2015; Bulhan, 2015; Dudgeon & Walker, 2015; Lacerda, 2015) the paper, using critical theories perspective (Fox, Prilleltensky, & Austin, 2009; Sloan, 2000, 2009; Teo, 2014) tries to delve the way economic, political, social and intellectual colonization influenced India during different phases of colonial rules. It also tries to reflect the way epistemic violence in the form of imposing Euro-American traditions of scholarship on India not only subjugated its rich indigenous intellectual traditions but also created a shared perception of subservience which further strengthened intellectual colonization in post-colonial India (Spivak, 1988; Teo, 2010). Taking insight from liberation psychology (Watkins & Shulman, 2008; Martin-Baro, 1994) the paper, finally, proposes some strategies to decolonize or rather indigenize personality psychology in India by bringing out exceptional works carried out in Indian indigenous tradition and some of the seminal works of one of the post-colonial thinkers, Nandy (1980, 1983, 1990. 1995). The paper also derives insight form the works of Franz Fanon (1925–1961) who engineered decolonization movement through *Black Skin*, *White Mask* (1952/1967), *A Dying Colonialism* (1959/1965), *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961/1963), and *Towards the African Revolution* (1964/1969). Fanon being the apostle of decolonization movement vehemently opposed the domination of the French on the Africans and advocated for a decolonized social, economic, political, and intellectual tradition sensitive to the native culture and its people.

2 The journey of personality psychology

The history of personality psychology can broadly be categorized under three historical periods namely ancient, medieval and modern. The ancient period was the beginning of rich intellectual traditions in the civilizations of ancient world. The medieval period characterizes the demise of rich intellectual traditions and shifting of epistemological endeavours mostly in Europe but under the influence of Church. Finally, the personality psychology in the modern period, which roughly represents the post-industrial revolution in Europe and post-enlightenment in USA, indicates a revivalist and hegemonic trend rooted in economic, political, and intellectual colonization of the rest of the world by the Europeans. The period ostensibly documents the way personality psychology was brought to America under the imperialist policy of the British and its dissemination in the rest of the world. A brief account of the progress of the discipline, with regard to the study of person as unit of analysis in the three historical periods is discussed in subsequent sections.

2.1 The beginning: era of rich intellectual traditions

The beginning of personality study in the form of making judgment about others on the basis of broad typologies characterizes the era of rich intellectual traditions. Making judgment about others using typologies was prevalent in almost all the civilizations of ancient world and each civilization had evolved its own typologies. Though, this era dates back to more than 5000 years ago (India, 3300 BCE; Egypt, 3150 BCE; Babylonia, 2300 BCE; China, 2070 BCE; Greece, 1500 BCE; and Rome, 800 BCE) but the most advanced and mature period in this era was from 1500 to 200 BCE. During this period, in addition to the typological conceptualization, significant contributions were also made in the fields of epistemological inquiry such as astronomy, human physiology, medicine, philosophy and science. Among these civilizations, India and Greece were much ahead. While dealing with personality typologies and its manifestation in behaviour temperament or innate disposition was in the core of analysis and interpretation. Five elements—earth, water, fire, air and space were basic elementary principles to arrive at a typology.

2.1.1 Typological conceptualization using humour

The earliest typology using the three parts of the body was given by Suśruta, the father of surgery, in 800 BCE. He considered brain as the seat of wise and enlightened goodness, chest as the seat of impetuous passion and the source of pain and pleasure, and abdomen as the seat of blind crudity of ignorance and the source of animalistic instinct (Millon, 2012).

In later years, human physiology was used to offer personality typologies. It relied primarily on body fluids or humour and discussed its manifestations in terms of temperament. Typological conceptualization based on humours was at first started in Greek civilization. Hippocrates (460–377 BCE) discussed personality typology on the basis of relative balance of four humours i.e., sanguine (blood), phlegmatic (phlegm), melancholic (black bile) and choleric (yellow bile). Later on, in Roman civilization the humoural theory of Hippocrates was adopted by Galen (130–200 CE) who characterized human temperament in terms of melancholic (tending towards low mood), choleric (tending towards anger), phlegmatic (tending towards stolid calmness) and sanguine (tending towards optimism and confidence).

In India, Caraka, a contemporary of Hippocrates, in his compendium *Caraka saṃhitā* gave a humoural classification of personality (*prakṛti*) around 300 BCE. These humours were wind (*vāta*), bile (*pitta*), and phlegm (*kapha*) which Caraka called *tridoṣa prakṛti*. He described seven types of personality based on the relative combination of the three humours namely—*vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha*, *vāta* and *pitta*, *vāta* and *kapha*, *pitta* and *kapha*, and *samadhātu prakṛti* (Dwivedi, 2002; Gupta, 2003). Eight types depending on the relative combination of vigour (*sāra*) in the body were also discussed (Gupta, 2003; Pandey, 1990). Zang Zhongjing (150–219 CE), who is called Hippocrates of China and a contemporary of Galen, discussed four personality types, based on a combination of five natural elements namely the fiery type, the golden type, the earthy type, and the watery type. However, in Babylonia and Egypt astronomical events were central in interpretation of natural events, superstition, and objects of worship. Typological conceptualization of personality in these two civilizations was perhaps rare.

2.1.2 Typological conceptualization of mental attributes

In Greek civilization, Theophrastus (371–287 BCE) who carried forward the legacy of Plato (428/427 or 424/423–348/347 BCE) and Aristotle (384–322 BCE) used the term 'character' to deal with personality and compiled two types of essays on character—the first was on 30 good characters and the second was on 30 bad characters [Theophrastus, (c. fourth century BCE) 1929]. The essay on 30 good characters is lost/untraceable. However, the essay on 30 bad characters still exists (Dumon, 2010, p. 13). Some of the character types were—the ironical man, the chatty man, the officious man, the flatterers, the garrulous, the penurious, the tactless, the boors, the surly, etc.

In ancient Indian civilization, the primary sources of conceptualization of personality are six schools of Indian philosophy—*Pūrva-mīmāṃsā*, *Uttara mīmāṃsā*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, and *Vaiśeṣika* (Sharma, 2001). During this period the conceptualization of mental attributes in terms of *triguṇa* (or three fundamental attributes) came into being. The exact period or time of *triguṇa*, however, is not documented but its conceptualization roughly took place during vedāntic period (1500–600 BCE). During this period the religio-philosophical texts of ancient India i.e., Vedas (which were earlier in oral tradition) were compiled. The main textual sources of *Vedānta* are the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Brahma sūtra* which are collectively called the *Prasthānatrayī*. Since its inception, vedāntic literatures have been analyzed and interpreted by a number of scholars who belonged to *advaita* or non-dualistic school of thought (788–820 CE). Pioneers of this tradition are Śaṅkara who wrote separate treatises on the three sources of vedāntic literatures, Rāmānuja (qualified monism), Mādhava (dualism), and Vallabha (pure non-dualism). In modern India, *advaita vedānta* received considerable attention in neo-vedāntic tradition pioneered by Ramkrishna Paramahansa (1836–1886), Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950), and Ramana Maharshi (Rao, Paranjpe, & Dalal, 2008).

Advaita school of thought considers person and personality as two separate entities. It uses the term *jīva* for 'person' and *svabhāva* or *pṛkriti* to characterize 'personality' (Paranjpe & Rao, 2008). To characterize a person, it also uses synonymous terms such as *purūṣa* (common and individualized forms of consciousness), *ātmana* (the true self), *kṣetra* (the physical body that is known), and *kṣetrajñāna* (self or consciousness that is the knower) (Krishnan, 2002). However, in literal sense the term *jīva* is used to characterize any form of living being and is conceptualized as a multi-layered entity comprising of five layers (*koṣa*) nested in one another namely *annamāyā* (sustained by food), *prāṇamāyā* (sheath of the vital breath), *manamāyā* (mental sheath), *vijñānamāyā* (cognitive sheath), and *ānandamāyā* (joyous sheath). The conceptualization of person as *jīva* is essentially one of the earliest descriptions of the whole person (Paranjpe & Rao, 2008; Rao & Paranjpe, 2016).

While dealing with *prakṛti* or personality, the term *triguṇa* is used. The word *triguṇa* literally refers to three fundamental mental attributes which manifests in behaviour. These *guṇas* primarily indicate temperament, mental makeup and interaction patterns of the individual. The three *guṇas* are *sattva* (goodness, harmony, and essence/information content), *rajas* (passion, mobility, energy) and *tamas* (dullness and mass/inertia). On the basis of manifestation and relative intensity of the three *guṇas* a broad typology is arrived. The compendium of Caraka and Suśruta (known as *Caraka saṃhitā* and *Suśruta saṃhitā* respectively) describe seven types of personality based on *sāttvic guṇa*, six types based on *rājasic guṇa*, and three types based on *tāmasic guṇa*. The typology based on *sāttvic guṇa* is named after the gods or sages, the *rājasic* typologies are named after the demons, and *tāmasic* types are named after animals, fish and vegetation (Krishnan, 2002; Murthy, 2004; Pandey, 1990).

2.1.3 Further advancement: the legacy of Varāhamihira

Varāhamihira (505–587 CE) was one of the great scholars of ancient India. He was born in Avanti (Ujjain) during the period of Gupta dynasty. He wrote *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, the literal meaning of which is "The Five Astronomical Canons". It is a compendium of five of his previous works—*Sūrya siddhānta*, *Romaka siddhānta*, *Pauliṣa siddhānta*, *Vasiṣtha siddhānta* and *Paitāmaha siddhānta*. His another contribution was *Bṛhat saṃhitā* which is a treatise on astrology, planetary movements, eclipses, rainfall, clouds, architecture, growth of crops, manufacture of perfume, matrimony, domestic relations, gems, pearls, and rituals. One of the earliest English translations of *Bṛhat saṃhitā* was carried out by N. Chidambaram Iyer (1884). In this paper N. Chidambaram Iyer's translated version of *Bṛhat saṃhitā* has been referred. Varahamihira, while discussing *triguṇa* in Chapter XXII (Part II, pp. 116–117) of *Bṛhat saṃhitā*, mentions that

the three *guṇās* deal with three different kinds of temperament. The predominance of any one *guṇa* or combination of the *guṇās* leads to idiosyncratic behaviour. *Sattva guṇa* denotes good temper. A predominantly *sāttvic* person, will be merciful, firm-minded, strong and sincere. *Rajas guṇa* refers to passionate temper. A *rājasic* person will be a poet, learned in various arts, will perform sacrificial rites, and will be bold and courageous. *Tamas guṇa* characterizes dark temper. A person with predominance of *tamas guṇa* will be deceitful, ignorant, idle, angry and sleepy. Based on predominance of *guṇa*, Varāhamihira discussed sevenfold classification. These are—*sāttvic*, *rājasic*, *tāmasic*, *sāttvic–rājasic*, *sāttvic–tāmasic*, *rājasic–tāmasic*, *and sāttvic–rājasic–tāmasic*.

While describing 'features of man' in Chapter XXI (Part II, pp. 99–115) of *Bṛhat saṃhitā*, Varāhamihira advocates 12 facets to predict the future/fortune of a person. These are; (i) *kṣetra* (body), (ii) *mṛjā* (complexion), (iii) *svara* (voice), (iv) *sāra* (strength), (v) *saṃhati* (joints), (vi) *sneha* (gloss), (vii) *varṇa* (colour), (viii) *anuka* (shape of the face), (ix) *unnamana* (height), (x) *māna* (weight), (xi) *prakṛti* (disposition), and (xii) *gati* (gait). Thus, the domains considered by Varāhamihira to predict personality are far more comprehensive than the domains (e.g., trait, motive, life narrative, etc.) considered by personality psychologists of modern period.

2.1.4 Typological conceptualization in Buddhist and Jaina traditions

In addition to typological conceptualization in the Hindu thought tradition of ancient India, Buddhism and Jainism which have root in Hindu thought tradition also discussed about personality. Buddhist tradition fundamentally considers aggregate model and network model of personality (Ananda & Prasad, 2011; Duerlinger, 2008). On the basis of conduct (*caritṛa*), Buddhism also deals with a sixfold classification of personality. These are attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*doṣa*), dullness (*moha*), faith (*śrādha*), rational thinking (*buddhi*) and imagination (*vitakka*) (Krishnan, 2002).

In Jaina tradition Mahāvīra (599–527 BCE) who was one of the main *tirthankarās* of Jainism mentioned six types of human beings based on the doctrine of '*leśyā*'. Each type is represented by a colour such as black, blue, dove-grey, flaming red, pink and white (Jain, 2008; Krishnan, 2002).

A perusal of the epistemological developments on personality in different civilizations of ancient world indicate that personality, particularly its typological conceptualization shared a very rich intellectual tradition. Support in this regard also comes from a recent study on the extent of universality in personality judgments in eight ancient civilizations namely Confucianism and Taoism of China; Classical and Hellenistic philosophy of Greece; Hinduism and Buddhism of India; and Zoroastrianism and Judaism of the

Middle East. It was reported that judgments of others' personality were common in seven traditions except Zoroastrianism (Mayer et al., 2011). Moreover, India and Greece were much advanced among the ancient civilizations not only in the field of personality but in other fields as well such as science, astronomy, philosophy, etc. Ironically, the contribution of ancient Greece has been given ample intellectual space in the epistemological terrain of personality studies of the West (Armstrong, 2006; Arnason, Eisenstadt, & Wittrrock, 2005; Dumont, 2010; Eisenstadt, 1986) but the contributions of other civilizations including ancient India unfortunately still remain oblivious to the Western world. For example, humoral classification proposed by Hippocrates is mentioned in almost all the textbooks or chapters dealing with personality but the one proposed by Caraka is hardly mentioned in any such texts.

2.2 The decline: era of debacle

The progress in personality study represents a declining trend during medieval period. The rich intellectual traditions of ancient Greece and India became a victim of external aggression and annexation and gradually lost their significance. Moreover, this era laid the foundation of a deteriorating trend in every field of epistemological inquiry.

In Europe, the collapse of Greek civilization brought an end to Hellenistic school and the learning centers shifted to Cyprus, Egypt, Syria and Sicily. Finally, after the fall of Roman Empire, Arabs established control over a region larger than that of the Roman Empire. The intellectual treasures of Greece fell into the hands of Arabic societies. However, Arabs, Persians, and Jewish commentators followed a policy of assimilation and had a deep appreciation for the intellectual traditions of Plato and Aristotle. Some of the prominent scholars who followed this approach were al-Kindī, Alfarābī, and Averroes. The demise of Roman Empire also brought the era of Dark Age in Europe. The ethos and moral structures were now shaped by the Christian Church. The message of the church was that one needed to turn away from the things of this world and fix one's gaze on the unseen world for which all were called and ordained. Thus, the period witnessed a dramatic shift from Hellenic humanism of Greece to Christian religionism which continued till the period of enlightenment in Europe (Dumon, 2010). Moreover, the development during the medieval period in the Western societies was mainly confined to Europe where the influence of church was prominent in the life of people. In the case of personality, the available texts dealt with superstition oriented common perception about insanity which was perceived as the possession of evil forces and the person having such possession was treated inhumanly (Butcher, 2010).

In India, the demise of the Gupta Empire in 550 CE resulted in small kingdoms fighting among themselves for narrow interest. Invasion of rulers from outside India led to entry of other faith/religion in the predominantly Hindu society of India. Medieval India, till the time of its colonization by the British is characterized by fragmentation and consolidation during different periods leading to frequent instability and upheaval in society. Descriptive accounts of Indian society by travelers, scholars, and writers replaced serious intellectual endeavours in the field of religion, science, philosophy etc. One of the most significant accounts during this period comes from Al-Bīrūnī (973–1048 CE), a great scholar of Persia, who visited India during the time of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Al- Bīrūnī wrote a commentary called *Kitabu'l Hind*. It was written in Persian and later on translated in English by Edward Carl Sachau (1845–1930 CE). The abridged edition of Edward Carl Sachau's *Kitabu'l Hind* edited by Ahmed (2008) provides a critical understanding of Indian religion, philosophy, science, culture and society during the medieval period. Al-Bīrūnī elaborates that the practice of astronomy, astrology, alchemy, metrology and medicine characterized the advancement of 'Hindu science'. He critically comments on the conceptualization of person and religious practices in Vedic literatures and its transformation in the society in the form of beliefs and ritual practices. In Al- Bīrūnī view, the medieval Indian society considered itself superior to all the religions, civilizations and societies of that period and was resistant to the new ideas developed in other civilizations e.g., the Greeks (Ahmed, 2008).

2.3 The revival: era of colonization

Colonialism as a form of political and economic domination and exploitation by one nation over another (Bulhan, 2015) began with invasion, occupation, subjugation and exploitation of the indigenous communities of Latin America, North America, Africa, Australia and Asia by the Europeans (Quijano, 2000, 2007). The driving motives of the European colonizers were material exploitation, cultural domination, and self-aggrandizement (Bulhan, 2015). Colonialism was mainly economic, political, cultural and psychological in the initial years. The economic and political forms were visible but cultural and psychological were implicit. In order to consolidate colonization, the colonizers engaged missionaries, anthropologists, physicians, and journalists in the respective geographical locations. They also took local agents, the so-called elites into their fold whose function was to exploit the fellow colonized and to serve the colonizer. In this way, the so-called local elites inherited the colonial state and carried forward the tradition of colonialism which is otherwise called neo-colonialism (Amin, 1973; Nandy, 1983; Nkrumah, 1965). The colonialism manifested in the

form of coloniality continued to influence thought, behavior, and life of the colonized even after the demise of the colonizer. Mignolo (2000a, 2000b, 2003) reaffirms that coloniality rests on epistemic and ontological biases that promotes validation of European hegemony and superiority. At the same time, it invalidates, marginalizes, and erodes the knowledge, experience, and rights of the colonized (Alcoff, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Bulhan (1985, 2015) calls the colonialism of contemporary era as meta-colonialism. According to him globalization is rather a euphemistic expression of meta-colonialism which is often used to masquerade exploitation and oppression. Meta-colonialism as a form of social, political, economic, intellectual, cultural, and psychological system continue to influence thought, behavior, and being of the colonized. It gets reflected in the form of colonization of knowledge, language, value system, culture and religion, medicine and madness, digital information, etc.

In the meta-colonial world, the social, political, economic, intellectual, cultural, and psychological systems continue to prevail in the subsequent generations of the colonized. The symbols of colonial influence such as educational institutions, industries, law enforcement agencies, courts, etc. that served the economic and political interest of the colonizers do not readily change. Finally, the subsequent generations who grow up in the meta-colonial world get so indoctrinated through childhood socialization, schooling and adult experiences that they do not seek or accept alternative ways of looking at the world. As true believers or acting as programmed robots, they defend the oppressive structure as if life would be impossible without them. The very articulation of meta-colonialism and its implications on the colonized world substantiates Gramscian concept of hegemony which postulate that "when most people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the status quo" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8).

India being one of the colonized nations subscribes to the multiple forms of meta-colonialism. Over the years, colonial language and culture have created a profound influence on educational institutions, government and corporate organizations, intellectual tradition, social and cultural institutions, life style, etc. thereby creating an environment of Gramscian hegemony which debilitates the new generation to look for a relatively better alternative. On the contrary, it has created an environment which defends the meta-colonial world imperviously. In India, the British colonialism created an inexorable impact on the geography, demography and culture. The British way of thinking and acting was imposed on the indigenous people (Hartnack, 2001).

In post-colonial India, one of the prominent critiques of colonialism is Ashis Nandy whose seminal works (*At the Edge of Psychology*, 1980; *The Intimate Enemy*, 1983; *Science Hegemony and Violence*, 1990; *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves*, 1995) unearth the way coloniality impacted the psyche, society, culture, and ideology in colonial India and its pervasiveness in post-colonial era in socio-cultural, political, and intellectual traditions. Using biography and narrative as tools to explore the culture and civilization, Ashis Nandy articulates colonialism, development, science, technology and other facets of human life which represents a radical departure from the way the idea about the West is constructed and shared. In this way, he represents a dissenting voice which stands with the victims of history, domination, discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, and dehumanization. While constructing the hegemony of the West from the victimhood perspective of the non-West, Ashis Nandy reflects that the power of the West is the power to define freedom, history, human rights, and dissent which the non-West unconditionally accepts.

While articulating colonialism in *The Intimate Enemy*, Nandy (1983) considers colonialism as a shared culture as well as a psychological state. As a shared culture, colonialism does not end with the end of alien rule rather it maintains continuity by creating a new class of colonizers and colonized. As psychological state, colonialism is rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the colonizers and the colonized. It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries certain cultural baggage. The nature, target, and manifestation of colonialism have been different in different phases. Initially it was more economic and political with an aim to dominate and subjugate the geography and demography of the colonized in order to establish racial superiority. In its mature phase, it colonizes mind and ingeniously creates a perceptual environment within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities for ever. In this way, colonization transverses from geographical and temporal entity and takes the form of a psychological category. This is the phase of colonization in post-colonial era where "the West is now visibly present everywhere–within the West and outside; in structures and in minds" (Nandy, 1983, p. xi). The very articulation of colonialism by Nandy (1983) is further substantiated by the concept of meta-colonialism (Bulhan, 2015), the era in which the colonized become harbingers of the traditions set by the colonizers and unwittingly oppose any effort towards decolonization.

The colonial influence on the intellectual tradition of personality psychology cannot be ruled out. In fact, the shift of epistemological and ontological traditions from the colonized nations to the nation of colonizers recapitulates the intellectual colonization of personality psychology. The epistemological progress in the field indicates substantial gap after the end of rich intellectual traditions of the ancient period (1500–200 BCE) till the period of industrial revolution (1750–1850 CE). During the post-industrial revolution era, the Europeans followed a policy of political expansion

across the continents which led many Europeans (Spanish, Dutch, British, French, Swedish, and Portuguese) to migrate in other continents and establish their rule over the native people. Among them, the British (who did not belong to the era of rich intellectual traditions of ancient period) followed the most aggressive policy of imperialism in India, America, Australia and other countries of the world. After the American War of Independence (1775–1783), the American society underwent through a series of social, political, and intellectual transformations collectively referred as the "American Enlightenment" in which the British had the greater share. Thus, the American War of Independence created a new racially superior class known as "British American".

2.3.1 The early phase of colonization

As documented in contemporary literature (Butcher, 2010; Dumon, 2010), the root of personality psychology in America, particularly its assessment was phrenology (discussed in detail by Varāhamihira in *Bṛhat saṃhitā*) started by Viennese physician Gall (1835) and his student Spurzheim (1834) as well as the scientific observation and mental testing introduced by Galton (1884). Spurzheim (1834) who coined the term 'phrenology' popularized it in the United States with his disciples John C. Warren (1778–1856), Charles Caldwell (1772–1853), Orson Squire Fowler (1809), and Lorenzo Fowler (1811–1896). Though phrenology did not receive recognizable acceptance among medical scientific community of the time, but it influenced the direction of personality and character study in Europe and the United States. Galton (1884) supported the use of observation and experimentation to assess personality. French psychologist Theodule Ribot (1890) proposed three character types—(a) humble, (b) contemplative, and (c) emotional. Dutch Psychologists Heymans and Wiersma (1906–1909) gave three fundamental criteria for evaluating character—activity level, emotionality, and susceptibility. They developed first personality questionnaire in 1906, which was a 90-item rating scale to study personal qualities of others (Heymans & Wiersma, 1906).

In the United States of America, personality psychology made its beginning after more than 100 years of American war of Independence, the foundation of which was laid by Cattell (1890) and McDougall (1908). Since then the field has grown mainly to address the assessment needs in diverse settings. The personality measures mostly in the form of projective and self-report were developed taking insight from the methodological innovations rooted in respective theoretical paradigms. Woodworth (1919, 1920) developed the first personality inventory popularly known as Woodworth Personal Data Sheet as part of the United States Army programme to detect psychiatric problems among the draftees. After the end of World War I, personality assessment was expanded in the United States mainly to cater to the requirements of the US army. On the other hand, significant conceptual progress also took a shape during the middle of 1930s with the contributions of grand theorists like Allport (1937), Murray (1938), and Lewin (1935) in addition to the contribution of Freud (1908/1925, 1895/1953). However, the field was mainly confined to personality assessment for selection purposes for the institutions of the US government. For example, during the World War II, Henry Murray supervised the selection of Special Forces for military duty of the US Office of Strategic Services, a predecessor to the present day Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The assessment team used more than one hundred different psychological tests and specially designed procedures to perform the evaluation (Butcher, 2010, p. 6). Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Hatahaway & McKinley, 1940) was used to select pilots and special services personnel (Butcher, Ones, & Cullen, 2006).

The rebirth of the United States in post-World War II as one of the superpowers further gave impetus to such research programmes. Some of the assessment tools developed during the period were California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1957), Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire or 16 PF (Cattell, 1957), Personal Preference Schedule (Edwards, 1957), and Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1970). Today, personality assessment tools developed in America (NEO-PI-R of Costa & McCrae, 1992) are quite popular in the colonized nations including India as if individuals across different cultural and geographical boundaries share the same categories of traits as the British Americans do. Such a practice goes against the very notion of relevance, appropriateness, and applicability (or psychometric properties) of a personality assessment tool which is strictly confined to the cultural boundaries in which it has been developed.

2.3.2 Consolidation of colonization

The period after the World War II was perhaps the consolidation of hegemony of intellectual colonization on ontological and epistemological terrain. It got reflected in development of a variety of macro and mini theories as well as assessment methodologies rooted in those theories such as evolutionary, humanistic, trait, social–cognitive, cognitive–affective, lexical, narrative identity perspectives, etc. Over the years, personality psychology has established its strong root in American socio-political and cultural set up. It inspires scholars of the colonized nations of the world to pursue their interest in this field with an implicit consent that the resources of the knowledge about personality offered by the American scholars are worth to be imbibed and practiced. However, pursuing the scholarly interest with such a naïve proposition undermines the role of culture in shaping personality, as personality is undeniably a culturally

constructed construct (Church, 2000, 2009; Heine & Buchtel, 2009; Misra, 2013a, 2013b; Shweder, 1991; Shweder & Bourne, 1982).

In nutshell, personality psychology during the first half of twentieth century largely followed ideographic studies and made significant progress with the contribution of 'Grand Theorists' (Freud, Allport, Lewin, and Murrey). The latter half of twentieth century witnessed the emergence of nomothetic studies rooted in the classic list of 17,954 personality descriptive adjectives developed by Allport and Odbert (1936) which later on was the empirical base for 16 PF (Cattell, 1943) and big five factors (Goldberg, 1981, 1982). The nomothetic tradition created a paradigm shift from studying the individual as a single entity to merely a composition of context free traits.

3 Personality psychology in colonial and post-colonial India

After the demise of rich intellectual traditions of ancient India, personality psychology in India can be seen in the light of nearly 700 years of rule of Islam and more than 150 years of the British colonial rule. In the initial years, Muslim rulers vehemently exercised cultural subordination and oppression of Hindus such as plundering of Hindu temples by Mahmud Ghaznavi and Muhammad Ghori. According to Durant (1997) 'the Mohammedan conquest of India was probably the bloodiest story in history' (p. 459). In the later years, Muslim rulers preferred to follow a policy of assimilation and coexistence particularly during the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar. On the contrary, the British maintained a relation of power distance with both Hindus and Muslims which was rooted in their racial superiority. The colonial rule under the Islam was largely confined to the economic and political domains. However, the colonial rule of the British was economic and political till pre-Macaulay period, thereafter it took the shape of intellectual colonization. The beginning of intellectual colonization under the guise of linguistic imperialism is rooted in the implementation of English education on the recommendation of Lord Macaulay in 1835. This policy, as a reflection of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988; Teo, 2010), gradually transformed the Indian society into 'British Colony' in true sense. It at first subjugated and then obliterated the rich and glorious intellectual, cultural, and spiritual traditions of India. It created a collective mindset which was simultaneously characterized by a demeaning attitude towards the indigenous knowledge sources of learning and a subservient attitude towards English education. In this context, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that the imposition of English as the primary medium of communication institutionalizes worldviews and tools for

perception embedded in dominant languages while silencing or obliterating the tools for perception associated with non-dominant languages. Even though people in marginal settings may prefer to interact in local or indigenous languages, the imposition of colonizer languages as official media (e.g., of education, business, government, and public institutions) affords habitual tendencies to make sense of life in terms of the colonizer's language. The proposition of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) explains the way linguistic imperialism initiated by Lord Macaulay, at first destroyed intellect and creativity of the Indians and thereafter created an environment of meta-colonialism thereby establishing the British hegemony on India forever.

In the initial period linguistic imperialism was used not only to educate Indians in this alien language but to translate the rich intellectual resources in English to carry forward the implicit agenda of intellectual colonization. Its evidence can be noticed during the post-Macaulay era where majority of the ancient Indian texts were translated into English by the scholars who were equally proficient in English and Sanskrit. For example, the translated edition of *Bṛhat saṃhitā* (N. Chidambaram Iyer, 1884), *Mārakaṇḍeya purāṇa* (Dutt, 1896), and *Upaniṣads* (Swami Parmananda, 1919) are available in the libraries of American Academic Institutions. In this connection, it might be contemplated with fair amount of conviction that during the colonial rule, in addition to the commodities of trade and commerce, the rich intellectual resources of the ancient civilizations including India might have been translated and transported. These translated resources would have been rigorously studied and adapted to suit the requirements of the contemporary American society. This argument can be substantiated in the light of statement made by N. Chidambaram Iyer who wrote English translation of *Bṛhat saṃhitā* in 1884. He quotes in preface of the book:

> Most of the English knowing natives hardly know what these books treat of. I have many a time astonished young collegians and graduates by quoting from Hindu astronomers and mathematicians, and they were surprised to find that the Aryans knew what the Europeans know, forgetting that these sciences were taken to the west from here (Iyer, 1884, p. ii).

With this premise, the inception and expansion of personality psychology in colonial and post-colonial India can be summarized under the indigenous tradition and replicative/adaptive tradition.

3.1 Indigenous tradition

Indigenization is a strategy whereby locally grounded researchers and pioneers reclaim the local or indigenous wisdom to produce forms of knowledge that resonate with

local realities and better serve local communities (Adams et al., 2015). It assumes that all psychological knowledge is rooted in the prevalent worldview of a society and is conditioned by its historical and meta-theoretical considerations (Dalal, 2011; Dalal & Misra, 2010; Paranjpe, 2006, 2011). Indigenization broadly follows two traditions—the first focuses on delving the relevance of cultural heritage (e.g. religio-philosophical traditions) and native theories in contemporary context by systematically analyzing culturally rooted concepts and categories. The other relies on adaptation/replication of western theories, methods and outcomes (e.g., tests/scales) in different cultural set up with a conformist empirical position (e.g., Adair, 1989; Adair et al., 1993; Sinha, 1997). Indigenization in the former sense is more of an ontological and epistemological endeavour whereas in the latter sense, it is more of academic activism, the core and content (theory and method) of which remain unchanged but the outcome may be different. This form of indigenization is rather rudimentary and allows little space for critical engagement. Unfortunately, the first tradition of indigenization is ostensibly marginalized and is still oblivion to academic discourse. For example, the contribution of Girindrasekhar Bose, Ashis Nandy, Sudhir Kakar and 'Indian psychology' is hardly taught in colleges and university departments. However, the second tradition of indigenization is visible in academic discourse but is confined to very few scholars who are carrying forward the legacy of D. Sinha who is considered as the leader of this tradition of indigenization in post-colonial India.

The pioneer of first tradition of indigenization is undoubtedly Girindrasekhar Bose (1886–1953) who almost 100 years ago developed his own theory of psychoanalysis and therapeutic technique. He was the first scholar who received doctoral degree in psychology from Calcutta University. His doctoral thesis, 'the concept of repression' (1921) which he sent to Freud was acknowledged and appreciated by the psychoanalytic fraternity of the time including Freud. His theory of 'opposite wishes' and 'see-saw technique' which he applied to treat patients of upper social strata of Bengal by using a deck chair instead of a couch was different from what was proposed by Freud. He published his theory under the title 'A New Theory of Mental life' (1933) and implications of his theory for the therapeutic interaction under the title 'Opposite Fantasies in the Release of Repression' (1935). Impressed by the popularity of Freudian psychoanalysis, he started *Indian Psychoanalytic Society* in 1922 to popularize this tradition in India and started the first mental hospital at Lumbini Park in 1940. The exceptional work of Bose was rooted in his keen interest to explore the way Indian tradition, culture, and religion influenced his patients. His theory was parallel to the existing theoretical paradigms of personality psychology including psychoanalysis. The tradition of Bose was carried forward by his students (Sinha, 1955,

1966). It has also received unquestionable acclaim among contemporary scholars who discuss in detail the way Bose developed his theory, practiced it and popularized it in India as well as among the psychoanalytic fraternity of Europe particularly Germany and Austria (for detail see Akhtar & Tunmala-Narra, 2008; Basu, 1999; Dhar, 2018; Hartnack, 2001, 2003; Kakar, 1985, 1989, 1990; Nandy, 1995).

Unfortunately, the theory of Bose became a victim of coloniality during British India partly because of relentless effort taken by Bose to seek the comment of Freud (Bose–Freud correspondence published in *Samiksa*, 1999) and partly because of the way the foundation of psychology was laid in different universities in which Bose theory hardly got academic space except Calcutta and Patna University (Barnett, 1955). With due respect to Bose and the scholars who have been carrying forward his legacy, it might be argued that because of colonial impact, Bose instead of popularizing his theory in India beyond Bengal, spent much of the quality time convincing Freud about his theory which differed with Freudian psychoanalysis in many ways (Bose–Freud correspondence published in *Samiksa*, 1999). Moreover, Bose developed his theory by using his own intellect and knowledge about the Indian literature, art, mythology, folklore, and religion as well as his observation and experience during treatment of Bengali urban elites (mostly male). Furthermore, the beginning of psychology in the universities during colonial India and its expansion in post-colonial India allowed little space to the theory of Bose rather it eulogized Freudian theory—a tradition which is in vogue even today.

The scholarly pursuits under the rubric of 'Indian Psychology' represent the other notable reflections of the first tradition of indigenization. The very reflection may be construed as a revivalist movement or a school of thought highlighting the plural world view of India rooted in its classical religio-philosophical traditions and the way it represents contemporary India. As a school of thought, the Indian psychology claims that it is indigenous in the sense that it is a psychology derived from indigenous intellectual thought traditions and therefore is clearly best suited to address psychological issues and problems specific to India (Dalal, 2011; Dalal & Misra, 2010). Thus, it relies on indigenous resources to create a system of knowledge peculiar to India. It is inspired by the works of eminent thinkers like Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo and the monumental works of Jadunath Sinha (1934/1958; 1961), Ramachandra Rao (1962) and Raghunath Safaya (1975). Personality constitutes one of the core areas of enquiry in Indian psychology. It has been kept under the broad heading "Self, personality and their development: who am I?" (see www.ipi.org.in). A number of articles in the form of abstract or full-length paper on this theme are organized under four sections among which two explicitly deal with personality. However, the

large segment of contribution comes from interpretation of the way self and personality is conceptualized in religio-philosophical texts of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Sikhism. Some of the notable publications document these indigenous sources of knowledge (Cornelissen, Misra, & Varma, 2011a, b; Misra, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Misra & Paranjpe, 2012; Paranjpe, 1988; Paranjpe & Misra, 2012; Rao, Paranjpe, & Dalal, 2008; Rao & Paranjpe, 2016).

3.2 Replicative/adaptive tradition

The adaptive/replicative tradition of indigenization derives theoretical and methodological insights largely from the studies conducted in American and European settings. The evidence of this tradition can be seen in one of the earliest attempts to document the progress of psychological research in different departments of psychology in the initial years of post-colonial India. W. Leslie Barnette, during his stay in India as a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the Central Institute of Education of University of Delhi, visited nine important departments of India located in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bombay (now Mumbai), Patna, Lucknow, Delhi, Benaras (Varanasi), Mysore, Madras (now Chennai) and Allahabad during 1952–1953 and offered his critical appraisal about the status of academic training of psychology in India. He observed that these departments were run by the scholars who had received graduate training either in Britain or in the USA. These scholars were mostly interested in implanting the research tradition in which they were trained (Barnette, 1955). The critical appraisal of Barnette is perhaps an indication of proliferation, expansion and propagation of colonial knowledge in the young generation which otherwise connived the tradition of intellectual colonization to nurture its root, the reflection of which is visible even today. The status of psychology was further documented by Pandey (1969) which was more or less an extension of Barnette's work. Unfortunately, these two works are hardly cited by the scholars who have documented the expansion of psychology in post-colonial India except Dalal (2011).

Perhaps, the first indigenous personality assessment system was developed by Psychological Research Wing (now Defence Institute of Psychological Research, Delhi) under the guidance of Dr. Sohan Lall during the early years of post-colonial India (Lall, 1952). However, this contribution has hardly received any place in the literature on indigenization. In subsequent years contribution in the area of indigenous test development in the form of anxiety scale (Sinha, 1961, 1965), standardized TAT for adults and young individual (Chowdhury, 1960a, 1967), Children Apperception Test (Chowdhury, 1960b), Madras Picture Frustration Test (Muthayya, 1961, 1962), Jodhpur Multiphasic Personality Inventory developed by Malik and Joshi (see Hasan, 1997), Projective Inventory (Puhan, 1995), etc. were also made.

The other sources of studies conducted under replicative/adaptive tradition are the reviews on the status of personality research published during the last 70 years (Asthana, 1988; Jerath & Sibia, 2009; Kapoor, 1965; Krishnan, 1961; Mitra, 1955; Naidu, 2001; Nandy & Kakar, 1980; Shanmugam, 1972; Singh & Tung, 2019; Sinha, 1963). These reviews predominantly indicate that the studies on personality in India mainly focus on translation, adaptation, and replication of questionnaires, inventories, projective techniques, and behavioural tests developed either in Europe or in America. Among these MPI, EPI, MMPI, 16 PF, NEO-PI-R, and TAT are prominent. This is quite evident from a close perusal of the volumes which compile the Indian psychological instruments (Mohan & Sibia, 1998; Pareek, 1997; Pareek & Rao, 1974; Pestonjee, 1988). However, the practice of naïve adaptation and translation of alien tools to investigate culturally loaded constructs like personality has also been critically examined and commented (Kulkarni & Puhan, 1988; Misra et al., 1997; Nandy, 1974; Puhan, 1982; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2001) and need for adopting culturally adequate theoretical frameworks and concepts has been advocated (Marsella et al., 2000; Misra, 2013a, 2013b; Misra & Gergen, 1993; Paranjpe, 2004; Ramanujan, 1990).

Apart from test development, several indigenous constructs related to personality have received considerable conceptual and empirical attention. Among these *triguṇa* has been studied extensively (Asthana, 1950; Boss, 1966; Kapur et al., 1997; Marutham, Balodhi, & Mishra, 1998; Mathew, 1995; Murthy & Salgame, 2007; Pathak et al., 1992; Shilpa & Murthy, 2012; Stempel et al., 2006; Uma, Lakshmi, & Parameshwaran, 1971; Wolf, 1998, 1999). Recently *triguṇa* also emerged in a lexical study carried out using Hindi language thereby establishing its robustness as indigenous personality construct. The emergence of *triguṇa* as an indigenous personality construct offers a critique to the universality of big five factors of personality (see Singh & Misra, 2013; Singh, Misra, & De Raad, 2013; Singh & De Raad, 2017). In addition to *triguṇa*, the constructs studied in indigenous tradition are *ahaṃkāra* (Salagame et al., 2005; Salagame, 2011), *anāsakti* (Pande & Naidu, 1992), *karma* (Dalal, 2000) and *santoṣa* (Singh & Misra, 2000).

4 Towards decolonizing personality psychology in India

A revisit of the journey of personality psychology in India from ancient to modern, particularly its progress in colonial and post-colonial periods indicates that the epistemological terrain of the field represents mutually exclusive intellectual spaces. The exploration of self and personality through religio-philosophical textual resources of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam under the umbrella of

Indian psychology forms one part of the epistemological terrain. The study of Indian personality using conceptual and methodological frameworks and assessment tools of British-American and European origin represents the other parts of the epistemological terrain. The engagement of scholars to explore the culturally relevant psychoanalytic tradition of Girindrashekhar Bose represents another part of the terrain. Contrary to these traditions, the unmatchable scholarly works of Ashis Nandy on colonialism and post-colonial era represents a radical but intellectually viable space of the terrain. Unfortunately, the traditions of Indian psychology, Indian psychoanalytic tradition and post-colonial studies are yet to receive a space in teaching, research and practice of not only personality psychology but of psychology as a discipline. Unlike the replicative/adaptive tradition which strongly represents the era of intellectual colonization, these three traditions offer a viable vantage point to decolonize or rather indigenize personality psychology in India.

One of the most viable alternatives to create an intellectual space for these three traditions is to utilize the conceptual resources rooted in liberation psychology. As a theoretical perspective, liberation psychology emerged out of oppressive nature of colonial experience in Latin America. Over the last six decades, it has grown as one of the most influential meta-theoretical perspectives in Latin American psychology which questions the established notions of Euro-American intellectual tradition (Burton & Kagan, 2005; Lacerda & Dobles, 2015; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). It assumes that colonialism created social and economic institutions on the fundamental principles of racial supremacy resulting in viewing the colonized as less human who deserves slavery, genocide, brutality, and deprivation in social, economic, and intellectual spheres of life. In order to decolonize the intellectual traditions, it calls for psychological approaches which strengthen the capacities for critical thinking, collective memories and the creative transformation of individuals, groups, and societies. It advocates for rebuilding ideas, practices, and projects that nurture an imagination of alternative ways of thinking and acting together that can transform participation in social, economic, and ecological changes and address psychological suffering. It also emphasizes on identifying, supporting and nurturing the psychological attempts of individuals and groups to re-author their own sense of identity (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

The liberation psychology challenges universalism, Euro-American centrism, sexism and racism propagated by mainstream psychology. It strongly advocates for incorporating the perspectives of the oppressed, marginalized, and impoverished sections of the society as a source of conceptual and methodological insight about delving everyday truth and reality. In support of this argument, the liberation psychology cites some of the successful movements such as Association of Maya Ixil Women in Guatemala, The

Green Belt Movement in Kenya and Salt Satyagraha by Mahatma Gandhi (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). In particular, it takes insight from the pioneer of liberation psychology Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989) who was trained in social psychology at the University of Chicago and taught at the University of Central America in San Salvador. In order to develop liberation psychology, Martin-Baro (1994) in his essay "Toward a liberation psychology" offered three essential prerequisites– psychology needs a new goal, a new epistemology, and a new praxis. In the recent past, these prerequisites have been articulated in terms of three tasks to decolonize psychology—de-ideologizing everyday realities, recovering historical memory, and privileging marginalized perspectives (Adams et al., 2015).

De-ideologizing everyday realities assumes that colonialism essentially represents an idiosyncratic construction of the reality which favours the interest of the colonizer. As a counter to this notion liberation psychology proposes to take up research that exposes this form of so-called constructed reality which is claimed to be universal.

Recovery of historical memory questions the prevailing representation of history which portrays modern world as the product of cultural progress but at the same time excludes colonial violence. Further, it asserts that modern history represents the interest of Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies (Henrich et al., 2010) and portrays them as the forerunners of human civilization. On the contrary, it portrays the colonized societies as uncivilized, backward, and abnormal (Mattei & Nader, 2008). Hence, the recovery of historical memory of the colonized societies exposes the deliberate denial of institutions which selectively forget colonial violence while historicizing the modern world. At the same time, it offers an alternative way of understanding history and human progress which appreciates the identity of the colonized, marginalized, and oppressed.

Privileging marginalized perspectives tries to bring out the construction of reality from the perspective of colonized, marginalized, and oppressed. Such an attempt enables a relatively better way of analyzing the events. At the same time, it creates a dignified and respectable space for this section of society and tries to make knowledge more inclusive and representative. Thus, recognizing the epistemological value of marginalized perspectives emerges as an effective tool to deconstruct the so-called universal and hegemonic knowledge (Ghai, Mishra, & Kumar, 2020).

From the perspective of liberation psychology, the endeavour to decolonize personality psychology in post-colonial India essentially calls for revisiting the tradition of teaching, research, and practice in academia and research institutions. A perusal of the review studies published over the last seven decades indicates that personality studies in India represents Urban Middle Class Educated Society

(UMCES) which is some way or the other a reflection of WEIRD societies (Asthana, 1988; Jerath & Sibia, 2009; Kapoor, 1965; Krishnan, 1961; Mitra, 1955; Naidu, 2001; Nandy & Kakar, 1980; Shanmugam, 1972; Singh & Tung, 2019; Sinha, 1963). The first strategy towards decolonizing personality psychology in India should focus on developing a critical understanding on the Western theories, models, and assessment tools in terms of its relevance and applicability. This can help in doing away with imitative nature of teaching, research and practice. The second strategy should focus on including the perspective of marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society in the epistemological terrain to create an inclusive and pervasive meaning of the various constructs of personality. Revisiting undergraduate and post-graduate curricula with a view to include indigenous intellectual resources of Indian psychology, post-colonial studies, and Indian psychoanalytic tradition could be the third strategy. The fourth strategy could be the replication of methodological framework rooted in a given theoretical paradigm to examine the relevance of personality constructs with a view to appropriate the meaning and application of these constructs in Indian socio-cultural set up as well as to develop indigenous assessment tools. Finally, there is a need to explore the possibility for designing a uniform syllabus of teaching and research for at least undergraduate and post-graduate training with a scope to include diverse indigenous traditions of knowledge as well as of the West (Baron & Misra, 2000; Ciccarelli, White, & Misra, 2017). The proposed strategies could be a beginning towards indigenizing personality psychology in India. Though these strategies pertain to personality psychology in India, however, these are further addition to the concerns highlighted by the scholars to improve the condition of psychology in India (Dalal, 2011; Kumar, 2006). Moreover, the proposed strategies call for a multipronged approach with a singular objective to inculcate, nurture and promote critical thinking in teaching, research and practice not only in personality psychology but in the discipline of psychology.

5 Concluding Remarks

It is an axiomatic fact that the study of person and personality has its root in ancient civilizations of the world. The epistemological advancement of the field, over the years, is largely an outcome of colonial expansion. Consequently, the theoretical and methodological advancement of the field is now confined to the Western world. During its journey, the field has witnessed periodic shifts in its dominant intellectual traditions from one geographical landscape to another. It predominantly starts with Greece, India, China, Babylonia, Egypt, and Rome during ancient period. In the medieval

period, it shifts to Europe and finally in the contemporary period it gets confined to United States of America. However, the attempt to periodicize the history of personality psychology is a preliminary attempt to substantiate the way it is historicized in contemporary literature of the West which largely undermines the contribution from the Eastern part of the world including India (Barenbaum & Winter, 2008; Butcher, 2010; Dumon, 2010; Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003; McAdams, 1997; Million, 2012). The epistemological terrain of personality psychology particularly its history needs to be inclusive and should have ample space for the intellectual traditions of rest of the world which have been contributing significantly to its growth. In this regard, the effort to explore personality under the rubric of indigenous perspective which emphasizes that culture is central to create an understanding of personality and behavior (Bond, 2010; Hwang, 2012; Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006; Misra & Gargen, 1993; Paranjpe, Ho, & Riber, 1988; Mitra, 1985; Sinha & Kao, 1997) essentially calls for decolonizing the notion of personality rooted in the Western conceptualization of the individual.

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