

## **Towards Formation of Indian Federation of Psychology Associations: Let us Wake up for our Causes**

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The scientific psychology in India is more than a century old. However, the profession has not made its mark in the history of the country. In countries where psychology has attained prominence have received support from the professional psychology associations. They have played a key role in the development and growth of the profession. Even though there are commonalities among the objectives of the different psychology associations, there is a lack of collaboration among them. Psychology associations could provide leadership in responding to the issues that affect the general public of this country like issues of farmers' suicide, disasters, communal riots or public health/mental health issues in an organized manner. There is a need to develop strategies that would help to achieve our objectives as mentioned in the 'Aims and Objectives' of the psychology associations. From the organizational perspective, striving to bring together all the psychological associations that have the national fervor under a Federation of Psychology Associations may be a workable solution and three models of Federation are discussed in this paper. The proposed six-pronged strategy including Communication, Coming together, Creating Local Chapters, Consensus Forming, Collectively Working, and Configuration of Psychology Associations, may help young psychologists to work together to achieve the objectives of the associations.

**Keywords:** Psychology Associations, Psychology in India, Federation of psychology associations.

### ***The History of psychological science in India***

Psychological thought in India is as old as the ancient civilization of the undivided geographical area in the subcontinent of Asia. The psychological concepts are interwoven into different schools of philosophical thought of India, but are not dealt with as an independent discipline (Rao, 1958). Even though, there were efforts to develop an independent subject of 'Indian Psychology', similar to Indian philosophy, the question whether there could be a distinct 'Indianness' in the science of psychology (Rao, 2008; Rao, Paranjpe & Dalal, 2008) or it needs to be 'psychological thought in India' (Rao, 1962) is worth debating even now. It is paradoxical that most of the departments of psychology in the formative years were carved out of the philosophy departments, psychologists have missed out on the contributions of Indian philosophy in developing the psychological concepts that

are relevant to the Caste and Religion wise, Culturally, Ethnically and Linguistically Diverse (CARCEALD) population of this part of the world.

Interestingly, during the three decades when the first experimental laboratory of psychology was established at Leipzig in 1879, psychology as a scientific subject was introduced in India at the University of Calcutta in 1905 (Sinha, 1986). The subject was taught as part of the philosophy course and was introduced in the philosophy department. Later in 1916, the first independent department of psychology in India was established in the University of Calcutta, as a separate department from the parent department of philosophy. The second department of psychology and the first in south India was established at the University of Mysore in 1924 in the erstwhile state of Mysore. This was followed by the setting up of independent departments of psychology in the University of Madras (1943), University of Kerala (1957), Utkal

University (1958), University of Bombay (1959), Allahabad University (1961) and the University of Delhi (1964). Interestingly, in the University of Calcutta the Department of Applied Psychology was also established in the year 1967 and it functions independently from the one that was started in 1916.

While psychological laboratory was established and psychology as a subject was introduced at the Department of Philosophy in the University of Lucknow, an independent department of psychology came into existence only in 1970. Unlike most of the other universities in India where psychology was carved out of the philosophy departments, in University of Kerala, a chair on philosophy was started in the department of psychology in 1979 and later an independent department of philosophy was established in 1985. Unfortunately, we do not have much information on the history of psychology in India in the pre independence era and immediate post independence period since most of the literature are scattered.

The role of professional associations in the growth of a profession is well known and steps were taken to form an association within a decade of starting professional training in India. The nurturance of the members of the association in turn strengthens the association as well as the profession. The fact that the government and the policy makers prefer to consult professional organizations rather than individuals in arriving at policy decisions and in planning of programs for the country, compel us to form a strong and powerful professional association.

This article aims at tracing the historical genesis of the professional psychological associations in India. While examining the path the psychology associations have traversed, the commonalities among them are evaluated as well. The need for formation of federation of psychology associations and the different models are proposed. The formation of an independent council of psychology through the parliament that would regulate the professional training, practice and research in psychology

in India requires the united move of all the psychologists and counselors and the steps for achieving the same are also delineated.

### ***Professional associations, accreditation and licensing in other countries***

Every psychologist in India who is active in service, retired from professional activity or in training, hold the opinion that the profession in India has not achieved its heights what it ought to be, especially in comparison to the growth of the profession in the other developing as well as developed countries. In several discussion forums in India, members have aired the idea to emulate the American Psychology Association (APA) model and the British Psychological Society (BPS) model. Before we think of modeling them, we need to know the exact operation of associations in those countries. Firstly, in US, psychology is considered as a doctoral level profession. The eligibility criterion for employment is that a candidate needs to have a 'degree from an American Psychology Association (APA) accredited program.' APA accreditation of the program ensures the educational quality of the program and it also helps maintain the standard of the institutions where the programs are offered. Therefore, for making a career in psychology one needs either a PsyD that requires four years of course work or PhD which requires 5 years of coursework after the Bachelor's degree along with a one-year internship. When this internship is completed, the student may then graduate with the doctorate if the research requirements are met. Graduates are then eligible for provisional licensure as psychologists but, must successfully pass a national examination and also complete one more year of post-doctoral supervision by a licensed psychologist.

In UK, from 1 July, 2009 (BPS, accessed 2014) psychologists are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which is meant for psychologists and for a host of other health care professions, similar to the professions included in Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). However, the BPS works in close association with HCPC and conducts regular meetings with the council in order to make the

functioning of HCPC a success. The statutory regulations of psychologists in UK through HCPC aim at

1. Protecting the public against the risk of poor practice.
2. Setting agreed standards of practice and competence by registering those who are competent to practice.
3. Restricting the use of specified protected titles to those who are registered
4. Applying sanctions to those registered psychologists if their fitness to practice is impaired.

The seven titles protected under the 2009 are Clinical Psychologist, Health Psychologist, Counseling Psychologist, Educational Psychologist, Occupational Psychologist, Sport and Exercise Psychologist, and Forensic Psychologist. A qualified person who holds one of the seven 'specialist' titles can hold one of the two generic titles – Practitioner Psychologist and Registered Psychologist. It is an offense to use these generic titles without being on the HCPC register. BPS suggests not to combine titles that 'belong' to two different organizations. BPS provides the title as Chartered Psychologist, and the HCPC owns the seven domain titles, and two generic titles, listed above. If one is both a Chartered Psychologist and also registered with the HCPC then one is encouraged to use the titles that indicate recognition by both organizations. For example, if someone is a Chartered Psychologist and registered with the HCPC as a clinical psychologist, depending on the generic title, one may call himself/herself as 'Chartered Psychologist and Registered (or Practitioner) Clinical Psychologist' and not as 'Chartered Clinical Psychologist'. Trainee psychologists on HCPC approved training programs may use 'Trainee', or 'In-Training' in combination with any of the domain titles like trainee educational psychologist or Forensic Psychologist in training. However, the important difference that we need to keep in mind when we recommend the UK model is that for statutory regulation in UK, the HCPC approves only those with a Professional Doctorate for Clinical and Professional Doctorate or equivalent for Counseling and Educational specializations. For the other streams of

Forensic, Health, Occupational and Sport and Exercise it is mandatory to have Masters Degree with the award of the Society qualification or equivalent in the concerned specializations. The HCPC does not approve other qualifications in psychology that do not lead directly to eligibility for registration with the HCPC like the undergraduate degrees or masters programs. However, a graduate degree in psychology is adequate to become a member of the BPS. In Europe, the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA), the psychology association of each member nation is given stipulated criteria for naming people as psychologists and also developed guidelines for practice.

Secondly, the policy makers in UK and US were convinced about the effectiveness of the psychologists in serving the nation in various capacities. The services of the psychologists in selecting the appropriate personnel during the World War II, assisting the defence personnel in the combat zone and in taking care of the psychological needs of the war veterans in the 1940's helped the psychology professionals to get their due position. The volunteering of psychologists at the time of various disasters including the man made ones that affected those nations and the skills in interrogation to check international terrorism helped the psychologists to get their due recognition among the state controlled institutions in the developed countries.

Thirdly, the psychology associations have portals through which they educate the public about the services the psychologists could render to the people at large. In addition, the websites guide the public in identifying the appropriate psychologist as per their needs. Thus, APA, BPS and EFPA achieved high recognition and visibility among the public and the international community of psychologists.

Fourthly, even though different professional associations were floated, considerable number of them evolved out as different divisions of the parent association of APA or the BPS. Ego and ideology clashes among the members lead to the formation of stronger associations than making the associations defunct. For example, the American Psychological Science was established by those who moved away

from APA, but there are many who retain their membership with both the associations. Germany, one of the members of EFPA, has two prominent psychology associations. German Society of Psychology that has its roots in the Society for Experimental Psychology was formed in the year 1904. It reached its present form with 3,000 members and it requires a doctoral degree in psychology to become a member. On the other hand, the Professional Association of German Psychologists (BDP), with 11 divisions was founded in 1946 and has about 11,500 psychologists working as employees in civil services and other settings, as freelancers in private practice or as owners of consulting companies. The prerequisite for membership is an academic degree (Diploma) or Bachelor/Master degree in psychology, obtained at a German university, or an equivalent degree from abroad. The German Federal High Court of Justice has ruled that only persons holding a degree (German Diploma) in psychology can be called as psychologists (DGP, 2014). However, both the societies together are represented in the EFPA.

To a large extent, the psychologists, who are members of the professional associations, adhere to the ethical guidelines of the society to which they belong, thereby helping the different specializations of psychology to grow. For example, from clinical psychology different subspecialties of health psychology, behavior medicine, neuropsychology and child clinical neuropsychology evolved and are thriving as separate specializations. In relation to BDP, it is mandatory that all the members have to observe the Code of Conduct and accept to be controlled by the independent Arbitration and Disciplinary Court of the BDP.

### **Indian Scenario**

When we look within our country, the scene is entirely different. We blindly imported the model of training that was available abroad. For some of the training programs we relied on the US model (introduction of PsyD) and for some others we followed the UK model, (M. Phil) without verifying which works best for us and followed a method of convenience. At the same time, when we want to emulate the

APA and BPS model, we forget the minimum standards of training those nations have kept, which includes the stringent course work as well as the internship with supervision.

During the post independence era there was an upsurge in starting departments of psychology in most of the state universities. However, the count taken in 1990 found that master level programs were offered in 58 of the 120 universities (Dalal, 1990). The new millennium saw several colleges even in rural areas offering Bachelors and Master level programs in different parts of the country. The regulation of clinical psychologists and rehabilitation psychologists came into existence through the Rehabilitation Council of India in 1992 and was amended in 2000 (RCI Act, 1992, 2000). Since then the number of clinical psychology trainees in the country increased in order to reach the target of 20,000 clinical psychologists required in the rehabilitation sector alone (Manickam, 2010). However, psychologists with other specializations who are teaching or practicing as counselors are not regulated. There is a need for a council exclusively for psychologists, which was aired as early in the 1970s (Dhairyam, 1975).

### **History of Various Psychology Associations**

There appears to be more than 300 master level programs of psychology with different specializations in the country. Since, we do not have a national registry of the psychologists in the country we do not have an accurate count. We can only guess that there could be more than 100,000 psychologists based on the number of training centres and the intake at each centres. This would exclude migrated psychologists trained in India, and also the psychologists trained through distance education mode (about 1000-1500 in each Masters Program). However, this does not reflect in the membership of the four major national psychology associations (the total number of members of all the associations taken together is around 4,000).

1. Indian Psychological Association, (IPA) was formed in the undivided India in 1925 and was publishing Indian Journal of Psychology. IPA was functional till the 1960's and was revived



in the 1970's (Prabhu, 2003). It again went into legal complications in 1997 and stopped functioning. Even though the Journal also ceased publication, it was revived again in 2012 (Mohan, 2012). IPA had around 500 Fellows and more than 1500 members; however, the latest members count is not known. IPA, previously represented psychologists of India in different international forums including the International Union of Psychological Science and the national forums of Indian Science Congress and Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR, 1969) has lost its international standing about a quarter century ago. Majority of the IPA members were academicians and they are not active in the profession now.

2. Indian Academy of Applied Psychology (IAAP) was formed in 1962 at the Department of psychology, University of Madras and the initial conferences were held at Chennai (then Madras). Later, the conferences as well as the secretariat were rotated along with the office bearers. IAAP conducted its 49th annual conference in 2013 in liaison with the International Academy of Applied Psychology. The conferences of IAAP were tagged as International conferences from the year 1996 and the 18th international conference was held at Ahmedabad. Currently, IAAP has around 2,000 members (IAAP, 2014) and publishes Indian Journal of Applied Psychology, which has been in regular publication (Basu, 2015).

3. National Academy of Psychology, (NAOP) was formed in 1987 and was functioning as a closed group for about a decade and later it extended its membership to others as well. The membership count is around 1000 and now NAOP represents the psychologists in India in various international forums including the International Union of Psychological Science. The annual conferences of NAOP are held regularly. The journal, Psychological Studies was started by Krishnan in 1956 at the University of Mysore. It continued its publication from Calicut when Farooqui was the editor and when he shifted back to Mysuru, it was published from Mysuru again for a short span of time. However, NAOP acquired the Journal in 2005 and made it available online from the year 2009.

4. Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP) was formed in 1968 with 80 founding members and began its publication, the Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology, in 1974. Currently, it has around 1200 members, which includes around 400 associate members. IACP restricts its professional/voting membership exclusively to those who are trained as 'clinical psychologists'. Professional membership is given only to those who have passed the two year clinical training (either DMP, DM&SP, M. Phil. MSP or M. Phil. CP or its equivalent) after the master degree in psychology or to those who have doctoral degree from NIMHANS, Bengaluru or PhD from Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi or APA accredited doctoral degree in clinical psychology.

Other Psychology Associations: There are several other psychology associations where professional membership is granted to members irrespective of their training in the concerned specialty. Therefore, one can hold membership in multiple associations. The list of the associations include Sports Psychology Association of India (formed in 1985), Community Psychology Association of India (formed in 1987, Lucknow), Behavioral Medicine Society of India (formed in 1995), Association of Professional Psychologists (formed in 1988, Chennai), Indian Association of Mental Health (formed in 2000, Dharwad) and Indian School Psychology Association (formed in 2009, Ramalingam, 2011).

There are several state level/local associations. The list includes, Bangalore Psychology Forum, Bihar Psychology Association, Coimbatore Psychology Association, Haryana Psychological Association, Kerala Manasastra Parishat, Madras Psychological Society, Marathi Manasshashtra Parishad (MMP formed in 1985), Bombay Psychological Association (formed in 1945 and publishes Bombay Psychologist), Pondicherry Psychology Association (formed in 2000), Rajasthan Professional Psychology Association (RPPA), The Haryana Psychological Association (HPA), Karnataka Psychology Association (KPA, formed in 2014). However, The Madras Psychological Society was established as an academic body in 1945 and is considered as the oldest among

the state level societies (Boaz, 1957). It started publishing three journals from the University of Madras (Chennai, Tamil Nadu) viz. Journal of Psychological Researches in 1957, Indian Journal of Applied Psychology in 1964 and Indian Journal of Experimental Psychology in 1962. Initially, the members were entitled to get the three journals free of cost (Krishnan, 1987). Due to financial crunches, currently the society is publishing only the former two journals and the members have to pay for the journals.

Among the national level associations only IACP has the constitutional provision to have regional branches. IACP has regional branches in Andhra Pradesh (2009), Delhi (2014), Malabar (2010), Mysore (2009), UP (was revived in 2013) and West Bengal (2009). Some of the regional branches of IACP became defunct after functioning for a period of time when the enthusiasm of those who initiated the chapters died down. The regional branches later preferred to use their own name and got detached from the parent organization. The Karnataka Association of Clinical Psychologists, Delhi Association of Clinical Psychologists (publishing Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies from 1985), Kerala Association of Clinical Psychologists (formed in 1984) and the Tamil Nadu Association of Clinical Psychologists (1972, got dissociated in 2013) were started as regional branches of IACP, but got dissociated since the rules and regulations of the branches violated that of the parent association.

### ***Why are the associations not growing?***

There are more than one hundred thousand trained psychologists in the country but, they are not reflected in the membership of the associations. It is time to reflect why the membership is not growing. Firstly, it may be a reflection of lack of power of our associations. Secondly, it may mean that psychologists do not have any 'affiliation' towards our own associations. Thirdly, membership to any of the psychology association is not mandatory for professional functioning or for regulation and hence one does not find the need for membership. A lawyer or another health professional after the required professional training has to get membership in their respective councils to practice. Nevertheless, psychologists can work as counselors or in other positions without registration as they are not legally registered. Fourthly, there appears to be less interest among the members of the associations in the business meetings of the associations. Only a handful of them attend the general body meetings and take part in the discussion on plan of action of the associations.

### ***Can a single association help?***

An analysis of the aims and objectives of the three major national level associations- NAOP, IAAP and IACP shows that there are many commonalities. The objectives, which are more or less similar, are shown in figure 1.

If there are commonalities among the aims and objectives, why not come together for a

**Table 1. Common aims and objectives of the three associations**

IAAP	NAOP	IACP
1. To promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge of Psychology and to promote the efficiency and usefulness of its members by setting up a high standard of professional education and knowledge.	1. To promote quality of teaching and training for research in psychology and to foster training for growth of psychology as a science as well as profession.	1.To promote the teaching, research and practices of clinical psychology . 2.To formulate and advice on the standards of education in clinical psychology at the university level and at professional levels.
3. To co-operate with academic, professional and other bodies in the advancement of Psychology and other sciences.	6. To establish and maintain liaison and cooperate with national as well as international Associations in matters of academic as well as professional matters.	6. To cooperate with other professional and scientific bodies for the advancement of clinical psychology.

single association? On different occasions a small group of psychologists in different parts of the country moot the idea of a single association and some effort is made in that direction but, it slowly dies down. The lesson that we learn from the longitudinal history of psychology associations is that it may not be a feasible objective. IPA the oldest psychology association came to a standstill in the 1960's and steps were taken to revive the same in the late 1960's. The idea of having different divisions within IPA was mooted for the first time in 1972. Prabhu (2003) wrote, "The idea has been tried way back in 1972 when Dr Harper & I (Prabhu) drew up the revised constitution of the IPA. This was the task given to us by late J.P. Naik, then Member Secretary of the ICSSR. If one sees the IPA constitution there is provision to have Chapters within it for various specialities just as in the APA". If IPA, the association that was started in 1925 could not stand the test of time, it is unlikely that we all will be able to pull through a single association. Even the state level associations had the same fate. The Kerala Manasastra Parishat that was formed in 1974 and organized the National Annual conference of IAAP in 1979 (Manickam, 1992) had ceased functioning after 30 years. Associations that are centered on handful of professionals may not go beyond their life time. In addition, in large associations, ego clashes between the stalwarts, disagreement with the style of functioning and setting the personal goals above the organizational aims and objectives have ruined the associations. Some of the members go to the extent of 'sacking' the association than saving it, if it does not personally benefit them.

None of the above associations had student membership, and attempts to make constitutional changes within the organizations to provide the same received stiff opposition from within except from NAOP. On the other hand, students are not even aware of the national level or state level associations and their activities including the publications of the journals.

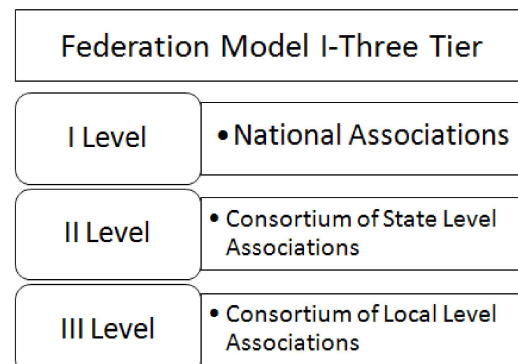
### **Federation of Psychology Associations**

In view of the difficult times the psychology associations in our country had gone through, we need to think of different alternatives like federation of psychology associations. One

of the models that we have is the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA, 1981) that was formed in Germany with 12 National Psychology Associations in Europe. Currently, 34 National Psychology Associations are members of EFPA and it does not have individual membership and conducts Biannual Congress in one of the member countries. Since, all our states do not have associations to form a federation similar to the EFPA Model, we have to think of alternate models.

### **Different Models of Federation**

1. Federation Model I - Three Tier Model: One of the models is the bottom up model. At level I, the existing local level units in a specified geographical area may form an association. It could be the psychology departmental associations in a town or city or a district or the school psychologists association or the counseling psychologists group or forum in a district that could be considered as the unit at level I. At level II, the representative/s of the local level consortium can form the State level consortium of the Federation. At level III, the representatives of the State level consortium can constitute the national level General Council (GC) of the Federation.



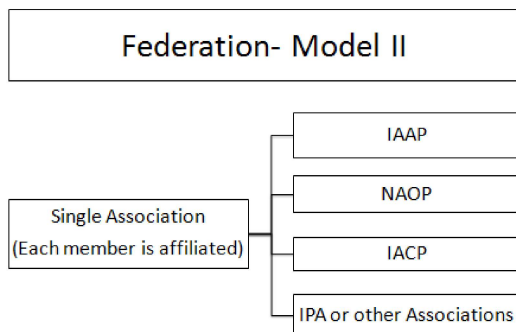
**Fig 1: Federation Model I**

If the representation is small in number, the national GC itself can function as Executive Council (EC). If the GC is large in number, an EC can be elected from the GC to conduct the day to day business of the Federation.

The advantages of this model are that it is truly democratic, giving representation to each and every region of the country and is inclusive of all the existing associations/forums. The disadvantages are: 1. Many regions or districts do not have psychology associations or forum. 2. The national psychology associations do not have regional or State chapters. 3. Establishing the regional branches or chapters of the national level psychology associations other than IACP may not be possible at present as it requires constitutional amendment. 4. At the local level due to interpersonal issues and ego clashes, local meeting may not be possible.

**Federation Model II**

All associations, whether national or local, can elect their representatives to form the General Council of the Federation from which the Executive Council of the Federation is elected. At the same time, each member can get affiliated to the Federation at an extra cost of the membership. Thus, all the members would get the benefits of being member of the Federation - in terms of subscription to journal or registration for conferences.



**Fig 2: Federation Model II**

The advantages are that 1. The existing structure of the associations does not get affected 2. All the members will have individual membership with the Federation and 3. Each member will have the responsibility of electing the office bearers of the Federation. The disadvantages are that 1. It is very cumbersome even to develop the bylaws of this type of Federation, due to dual membership issues. 2. It will be difficult to differentiate who is a

professional member and who is an associate member. 3. It will be difficult to decide on the voting power of each of the societies. 4. The national level associations may not prefer to give equal weightage to the State level associations and the State level associations may not want to give representation to the regional level or local level associations. For example, there are several State level associations of clinical psychologists and therefore the representation of specific group of psychologists may get over representation. 5. For the purpose of getting representation to the national federation, more psychological societies may mushroom. Even though more psychologists coming together as units would be a welcome sign, forming societies just to get representation in the GC of the Federation can pose challenge to its existence.

**3. Federation Model III / Representative Model**

There would be no individual membership to the federation, but any person who fulfills the criteria of eligibility for membership with any one of the national level psychology associations can become a member of the concerned association. One can hold membership with more than one association, without having any implication on the voting power. The federation will be formed by the representatives of the national level psychology associations, which forms the EC. Voting power within the EC will be decided depending on the strength of each constituent national association. A similar model exists with the psychological societies of the Czech Republic (CR). Instead of Federation, the Czech Republic have The Union of Psychologists Associations (UPA-CR, 2014), which came into being as a professional union of psychologists associations and the Czech-Moravian Psychologists Society in 1995. At present, the managing board of the Union is comprised of three delegates from the Czech-Moravian Psychologists Society, two delegates from the Czech Work and Organizational Psychologists Associations, two delegates from the Marital and Family Counselling Association, two delegates from the School Psychologists Association, one delegate from the Transport Psychologists Association, one delegate from the Sports Psychologists Association, one delegate from the Market



Psychologists Association, one delegate from the Military Psychologists Association and one delegate from the Association of private counselors. The union in addition, invites the Association of counseling psychologists, The Clinical Psychologists Association and The Forensic Psychologists Association to its meetings as well, though they are not yet a part of the UPA-CR.

The major aims of the Union is, “to represent and defend the interests of and to coordinate the activities of psychologists associated in the societies according to their respective psychological specializations” and “to protect the public from the damage that can be caused by unqualified or incompetent individuals or organizations in the field of practical psychological work”. In addition, they also work towards the legal establishment of a psychological corporation. The Union aims to provide scope for communication within the psychological community and the priorities are in the area of legislature, especially the promotion of a law on psychological activities and the psychological corporation.

On similar lines of the UPA CR, the Federation can be headed by a representative of one of the associations on a rotation basis. For example, during the first term, the President will be from Association-A, the President Elect from Association B, Secretary General from Association C and the Treasurer from Association D. Similarly, the representation to different international psychology associations can also planned in rotation.

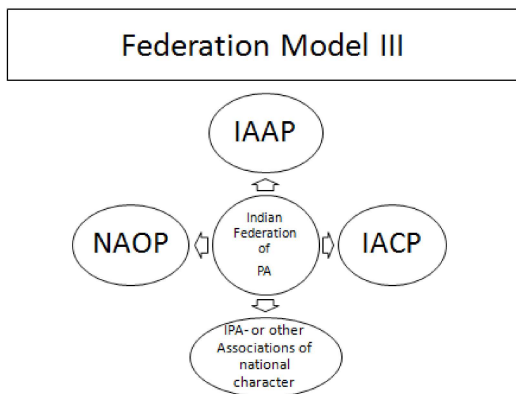


Fig 3: Federation Model III

**Advantages:**

1. There is no need to invoke any change in the existing bylaws of the associations.
2. The bylaw of the federation can be framed by the representatives of each of the associations with the approval of the general body of the constituent associations.
3. Internationally, the number of representatives to the forums would increase and Indian Psychologists as a group would yield more power.
4. Since, there will be more than one representative at the international forums, the transition will be smoother.

**Disadvantages:**

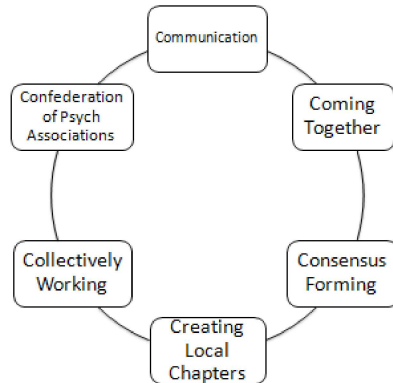
1. Each association may not take initiative to come together to form a strong association.
2. Change in the organogram of the associations in the functioning of the federation may not be appreciated by the office bearers of the associations.
3. The rotation of representation to international union or societies can be a bone of contention.

**Where do we go from here?**

Even if all the stakeholders agree, forming a federation is not an easy task. At the same time we cannot neglect the dynamism of the young psychologists. Providing guidance to the new entrants in the profession to achieve the goal of legalization of the profession is the need of the hour. The six C’s approach-Communication, Coming together, Creating Local Chapters, Consensus Forming, Collectively Working, and Configuration of Council of Psychology Associations - is proposed.

*1. Communication:* One of the barriers that we had in conducting frequent meetings was the physical distance of our vast country. Advance in technology has made it possible to conduct virtual meetings and take decisions faster without affecting the routine of each office bearer or member. However, the associations are yet to take advantage of the technology in improving communication among the members

## Six Cs Ahead



**Fig 4: The six Cs Ahead**

of different associations. We need to develop regular channels of communication so that the members can help shape the activities of the associations.

One of the means of communication is through the list group of, 'Indian psychologists', a list group formed on November 21, 2006, which has more than 6,700 members (Manickam, 2014), which connects members of different associations. Probably each association can generate a list group for its members for proper communication.

At the national level, while communicating with policy makers, the office bearers of different associations do not seem to consult each other before representing the grievances or submissions to the ministries. Without consulting the office bearers or other psychology associations, one important office bearer of an association wrote to the secretary of the concerned ministry stating that, "...if the NCHER (National Council for Health and Educational Research) does come up, please bring the professional psychologists under health with the nomenclature of Allied Health Sciences instead of paraprofessionals." This communication did not yield any positive result and was not taken seriously. If we have to get our due share, we need to make a collective effort, speak in one voice, muster adequate lobbying and communicate to the appropriate policy makers in an effective manner.

*2. Coming together:* As early as 1925, the idea of coming together was put forward by Sen Gupta, the first president of the Indian Psychological Association. (IPA, 1926). In his presidential address at the inaugural meeting of the IPA, on 14 January, 1925, he said, "With a view to this, it is desirable that psychological societies should be formed in different parts of India wherever there are opportunities for psychological work. These societies are expected to carry on work according to their own predilection. Such work may be made more fruitful if all these societies have a common meeting-ground in the shape of a central organization" (IPA, 1926. p. 53).

In the year 2002, the idea of building a Federation was mooted at a meeting of IAAP held at Dharwad, when Dr. Kaliappan was the key office bearer of both IAAP as well as that of IACP. After a decade, it was revived again by NAOP in 2012 at Bengaluru. The associations agreed to arrange joint meetings during their annual conferences in the years ahead. Three meetings in succession were organized within a period of six months in 2013 and representatives from the three associations spoke on themes of convergence. However, it crisscrossed in the beginning of 2014, but one hopes that it would continue. The support of the three associations in conducting the centenary conference of the establishment of the first department of psychology in 2015 at Kolkata would be a mark in the history of psychology in India.

*3. Consensus Forming:* Being a member of the four associations, I have found that consensus forming is a difficult task among the psychology associations in India. Probably in matters like responding to different social issues or challenges it may be easy to arrive at consensus. For example, in providing a helpline for suicide prevention or for responding to disaster, arriving at a consensus may be easier. Nevertheless, a beginning for consensus forming can be made in response to social issues before we take up policy matters.

*4. Creating Local chapters:* Some of the national psychology associations have provisions for establishing local chapters or regional branches. In towns where the local

branch does not exist we can think of forming interest groups. Each unit having the same title would help at a later stage, when we think of forming the Federation. Depending on the convenience of the members, local chapters can be formed at different locations in larger cities. Encouraging local gathering once in a month or two that is attended by more members on a regular basis is better than a district or state level meeting that may meet once in a year. 'Coming together' at local level helps to plan and implement programs that would be useful for the members and the society. Some members who attended a local forum responded to a natural disaster (Manickam et al, 2002).

5. *Collectively working:* There could be differences of opinion based on theoretical or personal ideologies. However, in the best interest of the profession and the community, members can arrive at a consensus and plan out a collective activity. In responding to disasters or suicide or providing career guidance, professionals from different specializations can work together. The activities of the local chapter would be useful for the students of psychology, to volunteer, learn the skills under supervision and to develop leadership skills. The appreciation or the reinforcement one may receive from the community is likely to improve the self-esteem of the students in training. As Adair et al (1995) observed about psychologists in India, "... self-interest will have to be set aside by some nucleus of researchers" for the development of the discipline. As practicing psychologists and as per our ethical guidelines we are trained to think and work beyond the political, class, religion, caste and gender biases. However, how far we will be able to keep our biases aside when we work for the society is something, which we need to tackle consciously.

6. *Configuration of Psychology Associations:* An independent council of psychology is one of the long cherished dreams of psychologists in India and it is not a new idea (Prabhu, 2006). Dhairyam (1975) made it clear in the sixties about the need for a separate council. There are independent councils existing for different professions – for medicine (Medical Council of India, MCI, 1956) nursing (Indian Nursing Council, INC, 1947) and pharmacy

(Pharmacy Council of India, PCI, 1948). For disciplines of philosophy and history there are councils registered under societies registration act of India -- Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR, 1977), and Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR, 1972). However, psychology was clubbed with other social sciences and brought under ICSSR where psychology does not have any significant stake. Clinical psychology was brought under RCI, on the request of the clinical psychologists and rehabilitation psychologists are being regulated by RCI. Collaborating with the regulating authorities and lobbying with the policy makers may help us to carve out an independent council for the regulation of the practicing and teaching psychologists. Regulating the same professionals by two different regulatory bodies (teacher educators by National Council of Teacher Educators and UGC or the teachers of pharmacy by PCI and UGC) can be explored. To achieve our dream of an independent council, all psychology professionals in the country need to come together, arrive at a consensus and submit our representation to the appropriate policy makers. Lobbying with the parliamentarians may help accelerate the process. Rather than each organization striving to have one up position we need to be united and demand for an independent council of psychology in one voice.

However, when psychologists would be governed by one council, we would all need to be more responsible in our professional role. UGC and the other councils demand a certain level of quality in training, which should be maintained. For that we could select students into psychology through an entrance examination even at the entry level itself. The faculty will be evaluated through performance-based appraisal, which would require regularly attending professional development programs to improve and update on the skills apart from refresher courses in order to keep our membership with the council alive. Unless we prepare ourselves and are ready for adopting innovative strategies, we may not be able to demand for a separate council. But then, if we do not do it now, who will do it for the young psychologists in training? If not now, then when?

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Manuscript received on 5th November 2014,  
Final revision received on 24th July 2015,  
Accepted on 25th July 2015.

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**Acknowledgement:** The author wishes to thank Professor Stephen Palmer and Professor Kevin Rowell for their inputs for preparation of the manuscript of this article.

Note: This is the revised and updated paper of the papers presented at: 1. Symposium, 48th National Conference and 17th International conference of IAAP Karnatak University Dharwad, (May 21-23, 2013), 2. Symposium, 40th National Annual Conference of Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists, (February 28, 2014 ) held at SRM University, Chennai and 'Observations' made during the Presidential Symposium on Working Together for a Common Cause at the 21st NAOP conference held at Christ University in December, 11-13, 2012.

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