

UNIT 1

Introduction of Psychology

After reading this chapter, you would be able to:

Explain the definition and goals of Psychology
Describe the history of Psychology
Detail description of the growth of Psychology in India
Psychology and its relationship with other disciplines

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Introduction

Psychology is the study of human behaviour. The main study area of psychology is how a person perceives, learn, think, remembers, understands and how an individual interacts with the objects and events in his environment. Apart from this psychologists strive to find answers to these questions such as, why a person easily learn something and unable to learn other things in spite of practise and effort? How thinking develops in an individual? Why individuals have different perceptions? How personality development takes place etc. Due to this eagerness and curiosity we are bound to think how all individuals are different from each other accordingly to their intelligence, attitude and behaviour. Sometimes they become sad and sometimes happy, and how they become friends to each other and how they become enemies? Some people learn to perform a task quickly, while others take much time? Even an inexperienced person can answer these questions, and also the one who has the knowledge of the psychology. An inexperienced person will answer these questions on the basis of common sense while a psychologist will answer in scientific manner after studying the series of psychological reasons behind these actions. In this chapter, we will try to understand in detail the nature and area of psychology.

1.1 Definition and Goal of Psychology

Psychology is derived from two Greek words “Psyche” and “Logos” meaning of Psyche is Soul and Logos means Science or study of a subject. Therefore, according to these literal meanings Psychology has been considered as the study of soul of the subject. Early Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato considered psychology as the

science of the soul. Early Greek philosophers such as Leibnitz, Locke etc. called psychology as the “Science of the Soul”. And in this way these people considered psychology as the subject of “study of mind” but the spirit or mind both of which were of such nature something unobservable and indemonstrable. So, both of the definitions are not considered acceptable for scientific study. After this, people called psychology as the subject which studies about consciousness and conscious experience. Wilhelm Wundt and his disciples Titchner were major supporters of the definition but this definition was not considered acceptable for scientific study, as the definition is not providing any observational and scientific understanding of the subject. Wilhelm Wundt is considered as the father of Experimental psychology as he opened first psychological laboratory in the year 1879 in Leipzig University (Germany).

Modern psychologist tried to explain psychology in more scientific and objective manner. These psychologists considered psychology as the science of behaviour.

J.B.Watson was the first psychologist who defines psychology as the Science of Behaviour. Behaviour was defined as the concrete and observable aspect. So this is different from spirit mind and consciousness which were all subjective and whose observation could not be possible. The subject matter of psychology is behavioural process which can easily observed. Psychology studies learning, perception and gesture whose objective study is possible. With this, psychology is also study mental processes which are not directly observable but they can be easily estimated by behavioural and psychological statistics. With these facts in mind, definition of psychology was given by

Santrock, 2000 “Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes.”

Baron, 2001 “Psychology is a science which defines cognitive processes and behaviour”.

Ciccarelli and Meyer, 2006 “Psychology is the scientific study of behavioural and mental processes”

Goals of Psychology

Psychology does the scientific study of behaviour and cognitive process of humans and animals. There are some hidden goals behind this study. The following are the three main goals of psychology-

- i. Measurement and Description
- ii. Prediction and Control
- iii. Explanation

1. Measurement and Description: The first goal of psychology is to describe and measure behaviour and cognitive process. It is necessary to first measure the major psychological processes, such as – Anxiety, learning, disorder, ability, intelligence. Before describing about them it requires multiple tests to measure them. Therefore one of the main goal of psychology is to develop tests and special methods to measure various psychological processes. In any psychological test, there must be at least two qualities- Reliability and Validity. Reliability refers that instead of measuring repeatedly there will be no difference in the attained scores. Validity means that the test is measuring what it is designed to measure.

After measurement, psychologist describe the behaviour for example- intelligence is measured by using intelligence test and if the intelligence Quotient comes 150 then it signifies that the individual has sharp intelligence and in different circumstances he could behave intelligently.

2. Prediction and Control: The second goal

of psychology is to make prediction about the behaviour, so that it can be properly controlled. As far as, prediction is concern, which will be considered successful on the success of measurement.

Generally psychologist predicts that how an individual will perform in any situation and how all predictions are done? On the basis of the measurement of behaviour for example if we can measure the intellectual of any student then we can rightly predict about his performance in his/her school. Like, after measuring the interest of any individual, psychologists predicts that which job we must choose in which he can attain more and more success. Prediction and control walks together and whenever an psychologist predicts about any of the behaviour, his aim is to control that behaviour.

3. Explanation: The ultimate goal of psychology is to explain human behaviour. To explain behaviour psychologists develop some psychological theories, so that the explanation can be done in the scientific manner. These theories are the collected facts from the known sources and help psychologists to determine such situations in a logical manner, where they were not able to find right answers. To explain human behaviour is the first goal of psychology because till the psychologists will not be able to find that why a particular individual behaves in a certain manner, why certain measurements technique is working, then they can neither predict about the behaviour nor it can be possible to control it properly.

1.2 History of Psychology

Psychology is the systematic and scientific study of mental processes, experiences and behaviour which is expressed and latent. The origin of the

word “Psychology” is derived from two Greek words “Psyche” and “Logos” meaning of Psyche can be interpreted by this instinct only.

is Soul and Logos means Science or study of a subject. Thus, Psychology was considered as a subject of the Soul or Mind.

The history of psychology as a modern discipline, which is influenced by the western development is very small. Its emergence is related with the psychological significance influenced with the philosophy. The history of psychology is divided in two parts

1. Pre scientific period
2. Scientific period

Pre scientific Period

Starting of pre scientific period was influenced by thoughts of early greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates and it survives till the later half of the 19th century, specially till 1878. During this period of 400 BC Hippocrates propounded the theory of constitutional types and it had considerable influence on the future psychologists and Sheldon gave his Somato type Theory on Hippocrates views.

As the greek philosophers Augustine and Thomas view that mind and body are two things and they do not have any sort of connection. But Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza believed that mind and body are related to each other and influence each other.

Greek philosopher Descartes opines that every individual born with some particular ideas. But other philosophers such as Locke were of the opinion that a person at birth is “tabula-rasa” means that his mind is like a blank paper and subsequently, new experiences, new ideas are generated.

Later this debate gave birth to a new conception which was described as instinct and it came to be

understood that each explanation of behaviour can be interpreted by this instinct only.

Philosophers like Rousseau believe that man is born good natured, but the bitter experience of society makes him bad tempered. On the other hand, philosopher like Spencer was in the opinion that man born with the qualities of selfishness and aggressiveness by nature and these are controlled by the society. As a result individual's behaviour becomes social from anti-social.

In the early 19th century, two areas which majorly affected the modern psychology were- first area was of philosophy in which British Philosophers contribution cannot be denied such as James Mill and John Stuart Mill. They forced on the studies of consciousness and the related ideas. And the second area of physical and biological sciences in which studies related with the sense organs were studied. Weber and Fechner's contribution was important in this area.

Scientific Period

Scientific period of psychology begins from 1879. In this year Wilhelm Wundt opened first laboratory of psychology in Leipzig (Germany). Wundt was interested in studying conscious experience and wanted to analyze the manufacturing units of the mind. In the period many psychologists were analyzing the structure of mind through introspection, so Wundt was called as Structuralist.

Introspection was a process in which the client was asked to describe his mental processes and experiences in detail.

Psychology was developed in different schools and these schools were influenced by the ideas of Wundt. Five major schools of psychology that is described below:

1. Structuralism:

Structuralism is also known as introspectionism and existentialism. School of structuralism was started in Cornell university (U.S.) in 1892.

According to structuralism the subject matter of psychology is the conscious experience. Titchner differentiated between the consciousness and mind. According to him consciousness is related with all the experiences of an individual which took place momentarily. Whereas mind is related with all the experiences which already exists in an individual since birth.

According to Titchner consciousness has 3 elements they are sensation, feeling or affection and images. He considered introspection as the important method.

2. Functiona lism

Functionalism was established in informal manner by William James in one of his book titled “Principles of Psychology” in the year 1890. He believed that psychology is concerned with the facts why and how the consciousness functions? And not just from fact that what are the elements of consciousness? Thus, according to James the subject matter of psychology is consciousness but he emphasised more on the functional utility of consciousness.

Dewey, Angell and Carr considered as the formal founders of the functionalism. According to functionalism psychology is the study of mental processes and not just the study of elements of consciousness.

3. Behaviourism:

Behaviourism was established by Watson in 1913. He believed that psychology is objective and experimental in nature. Thus, its subject matter can

be only behaviour and not consciousness because study of behaviour can be done in objective and experimental manner. Behaviourism by Watson has given birth to stimulus- response process. Watson disagreed on the method of introspection in psychology and proposed four methods of psychology like Observation, Conditioning, testing and Verbal report.

4. Gestalt Psychology:

Gestalt school was established by Max Wertheimer in 1912. Kohler and Koffka were the co-founders of this school. “Gestalt” is a German word and its meaning in English is form, shape and configuration. Gestalt school emphasised that psychology is the science of the organization of mental process.

5. Psychoanalysis

Establishment of psychoanalysis as a school is founded by Sigmund Freud principle of unconscious given by trend is very important and he argued that all sort of abnormal behaviour’s reason/cause are predicted in the unconscious. He has given various methods of studying unconscious like free association method, hypnosis and dream interpretation are included.

1.3 Development of Psychology in India

Indian philosophical tradition is rich in explaining mental processes and human consciousness, the self, the mind-body connection and a number of mental function like; cognition, perception, illusion, attention and logic. In India even deep philosophical roots could not influence the development of modern psychology.

The modern era of Indian Psychology begin in Philosophy department of Calcutta University in 1915. Where the first course of experimental

psychology was introduced and first psychology laboratory was established. First psychology department was started in 1916 in Calcutta university and in 1938, first applied psychology department was started. Prof. N.N Sengupta, who was trained in Wundt experimental tradition was highly influenced by him, was the faculty. In 1922, Prof. Girindra Shekhar became the Head of Department who was trained in the field of psychoanalysis by Freud. Prof. Bose established “Indian psychoanalytic Society” in the year 1922. In the year 1924 “Indian Psychological Association” was established. In 1938, branch of applied psychology was opened in psychology Department of Calcutta University. Later, primary centres for teaching and research were opened at Mysore University and Patna University. During 1960’s in various universities in India. The department of psychology were established. Thereafter, psychology moved away from the premises of university to various institutions such as Management Institute, Education Institute, Defence Services and so on, role of psychologist entered in these areas also. Durganand Sinha in the year 1986, in his book “Psychology in a third world country: The Indian Experience” searched the four stages of the history of modern psychology as a part of Social Sciences in India. Therefore, the application of psychology in India in many business sectors can be seen:

1.4 Psychology and Disciplines

Any disciplines, who study about human, will certainly consider the relevance of the knowledge of psychology. Similarly, psychologist in understanding human behaviour acknowledges the relevance of other disciplines. Researchers and

science, social science scholars have experience the significance of psychology as a discipline. Psychology shares its knowledge in understanding human behaviour with other disciplines like Neuro Science, physiology, biology, medicine and computer science. Understanding human behaviour (its meaning, scope and development) in the socio-cultural context, psychology also shares its knowledge with Sociology, Political science and Economics. This was the reason that Interdisciplinary approach took birth in psychology and was gladly welcomed by all psychologists. Some of the disciplines which are linked to psychology are discussed below:

Philosophy: It is said that philosophy is the parent of psychology. By the end of the 19th century contemporary psychology is concerned with some things, such as what is the nature of mind or how man knows about his motives and emotions, these things were the interest areas of philosophers. Later, in 19th century Wundt and other psychologist used experimental approach to these questions and as a result contemporary psychology emerged. Since the rise of psychology as a science, it takes a lot of things from philosophy, especially method of knowledge and various areas of human behaviour related matters.

Economics, Political Science and sociology: As the partners of social science, these three disciplines have received a lot from psychology and even benefitted psychology too. Psychology has created a platform of understanding consumer behaviour and saving behaviour i.e used by economist to predict economic behaviour of individuals decision can be achieved. Elements like cooperation and conflicts in economic behaviour were explained

by Thomas Schelling for which he was awarded by Nobel Prize in 2005. Like economics, political science also gained a lot, specially the use of power and domination, the nature of political conflicts and their solutions, and understanding the voting behaviour. Psychology and sociology, along with each other helps in understanding and explaining the individual's behaviour in socio cultural context.

Medicine: Psychology is related to the field of medicine also. Now a days, a lot of physicians or medical doctors before or after treating patients, feel the need of psychological counselling. Doctors generally use major psychological theories and modals for Cancer patients and AIDS patients and before and after the major surgery. And for this work they appoint a permanent psychologist or consultant.

Computer Science: Since starting, computer tries to experience the human nature. This can be seen by the structure of the computer, its organised memory, sequential and concurrent processing of information, etc. Computer scientist and engineers are not only building intelligent computers rather they are building such machines which are sensible and can realise emotions. Both of these developments have meaningful contributions in the field of cognitive science.

Law and Criminology: A skilled lawyer and criminologist use the knowledge of psychology while taking information such as; how can a witness remembers as accident such as Street fighting or killing incident? How much he refers correctly about these facts while delivering for Court Testimony? What are the credible signs of anger and repentence? What should be the limit of penalty for any criminal act? Psychologists try to answer such questions. Now a day, many psychologists are working on such research area which will be very fruitful in making future laws.

Music and Fine Arts: Print and electronic means of communication have deeply interned in our

lives. They affect our thoughts, emotions and expressions to a larger extent. They have brought us close, as well as the cultural inequalities have also diminished. Psychology helps in developing essential tips for making good and effective communication. Journalist while writing news stories must keep the readers interest in priority. Since, most of the stories are related to human events, it becomes necessary to have the knowledge of their motivators an emotions.

Architecture and Engineering: An Architect tries that any of his structure is not dissatisfying individual's psychology. He always tries to satisfy individual's interest, habit and curiosity through his creation. Where the area of engineering is concerned, this area had a great impact of Psychology. Engineer while making any machine determines its humanitarian needs, habits and take full care of its features. Thus, Psychology is completely dissolved in these two disciplines.

Important Points

- This chapter of Psychology Consider behaviour as Psychology and gives definition, nature and goals.
- The study of humen behaviour is goal directed Hence Psychology has prusceted discipline measurment, Prediction and control.
- History of Psychology is discribed evolution of Psychology as pre scientific and scientific period.
- Different schools of Psychology explained and stretnitham Functionalism, Gestaff, behaviour nd Psycloanysis.
- Emphasis has been given to evaluation of psychology in India and its relation with other disciplines were discussed as spinal cold because wherever humen being is there, development is also him thats wire is called

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Choose Correct Answer

- I. The origin of the term “Psychology” is from_____words
 - a. Greek
 - b. Latin
 - c. Hindi
 - d. English
- II. William Wundt established first psychology laboratory in _____
 - a. Cornell University, 1992
 - b. Harward University, 1892
 - c. Leipzig University, 1879
 - d. No one from the above
- III. Meaning of Psyche is _____
 - a. Deliberation
 - b. Study
 - c. Soul
 - d. Consciousness
- IV. Which of these is not amongst the goals of Psychology?
 - a. Measurement and Description
 - b. Interpretation
 - c. Prediction and Control
 - d. Testing
- V. “Humans are born with qualities of selfishness, aggressiveness, which are controlled by the society” whose statement is this.
 - a. Rousseau
 - b. Spencer
 - c. Sigmund Freud
 - d. J.B.Watson

2. Very Short Questions

- a. The In how many parts can history of Psychology be divided?
- b. Who started the school of Structuralism?
- c. Who wrote the book “Principles of Psychology”?
- d. Which school was developed by Sigmund Freud?
- e. In which year “Indian Psychological Association” was established?

3. Short Questions

- a. Define Psychology?
- b. What is Gestalt Psychology?
- c. What is Behaviourism?
- d. What are the goals of Psychology?
- e. What are the methods given by Freud in Psychoanalysis?

4. Essay Type Questions

- a. Define Psychology? Discuss the factor of Psychology.
- b. Explain in detail about the goal of Psychology.
- c. Explain the pre scientific era of the history of Psychology.
- d. Differentiate between Structuralism and Functionalism.
- e. Describe the development of Psychology in India.
- f. Which are those issues for whom Psychologist’s cooperation with other disciplines can be beneficial? Explain any two issues.
- g. Explain in brief about the five important schools of Psychology.

Answers to Multiple Choice Questions:

I (a) II (c) III (c) IV (d) V (a)