

1.1. Psychology- Origin, Nature, Definitions and Branches



Psychology has been regarded as an independent branch of study since about two thousand years, as a matter of fact, for centuries it continued as a part of philosophy. The subject psychology is nowadays becoming more and more popular. The reason for its popularity lies with its body of knowledge, which is quite interesting, and its wide use and applications in almost all the walks and spheres of life. The 'study of mind' was covered under a separate branch of philosophy called *Mental Philosophy*. Hence Psychology is a legitimate child of philosophy.

Psychology is a science. The term science describes any systematically arranged body of verified knowledge. It deals with a particular type of subject, or with certain kinds of facts or events. More precisely, psychology is a social science. It helps to discover and understand the truth about you and others. As a branch of knowledge, psychology scientifically studies this behaviour so that you can enjoy your life by understanding, predicting and managing it.

Human psychology examines a person's behaviour covering a wide range of activities. Psychology primarily studies human beings how we behave, by examining how we feel, how we think; how we adjust fail to adjust the situations. Psychology is the only science that tries to study man from all the dimensions. For this purpose, it combines several sciences into its fold and makes its study very intensive and extensive. The job of the teacher is to bring out the hidden potentialities in pupils and to make all possible efforts to ensure that the tender plants (tender pupils) do not waste their sweet fragrance (innocent smiles) in

wilderness (in unattractive and unfriendly environment). Thus a teacher needs to understand the basic principles of educational psychology so that optimum development of his pupils takes place.

Etymological derivation of the word ' Psychology'

The word psychology is derived from the **Greek** words' **psyche**' and ' **logy**'/'**logos**'. *Psyche* means soul or spirit. *Logy/logos* mean science or rational discourse of a study. However, the meaning and interpretation of the word ' Psyche' has been in a state of change from time to time leading to subsequent changes in the ways of defining the term 'psychology' as may be evident from the following four stages of its evolution.

First Stage: By taking the meaning of the word' psyche' *as soul*, psychology was first defined as the 'study of soul'. During these days, the subject philosophy dominated and influenced the views of the scholars including psychologists. Consequently, a psychological meaning and interpretation was given to the word 'psyche'. However soon such interpretation faced criticism like what is soul? How can it be studied? and so on. The inability to answer such questions leads to the search for a new meaning of the word 'psyche'.

Second Stage: At this stage, the philosopher cum psychologists tried to define psychology as the "study *of mind*" by giving a new meaning and interpretation to the word 'psyche' in the form of 'mind'. Although the word mind was less vague than soul, it faced the same criticisms with questions like what is mind? How can it be studied and so on?

Third Stage: The criticism and unacceptability of the word psyche as soul or mind lead the psychologists to a new search of its proper meaning. The initiative was taken by famous psychologists like William James (1890); Wilhem Wundt and Edward Bradford Tichener (1894) who while interpreting psyche as *consciousness*, defined psychology as a study of consciousness. According to these psychologists the description and explanation of the states of consciousness is the task of psychology which is usually done by *introspection* (the process of looking within).This definition too was rejected on the ground that it had a very narrow vision as it does not include the sub-conscious or unconscious activities of the mind and also due to the most subjective nature of the method of introspection which it had taken into account.

Fourth stage: This stage in the evolution of the definition of the subject of psychology reflects the advent of the modern era of science and technology. Consequently, in the definition of psychology the word 'study' was replaced by '*science*'. The first psychologist who, besides using the word science in place of study, replaced consciousness with total behaviour (conscious as well as unconscious) was the famous William McDougall. In the book '*physiological psychology*' published in 1905, he wrote: "*psychology may be best and most comprehensively defined as the positive science of the conduct of living creatures.*" later in 1908, in his book '*Introduction to Social Psychology*', he added the word 'behaviour' to his definition and finally in *An Outline of Psychology*, gave the following meaningful definition: "*Psychology is a science which aims to give us better understanding and control of the behaviour of the organism as a whole.*"(1949,p.38).

Psychology as the '*Science of Behaviour*'

The latest and the modern concepts of psychology are in terms of behaviour. The term behaviour was popularised by **J.B Watson** (1878- 1958). According to him *psychology is the positive science of behaviour*. According to **Charles E. Skinner** (1938), "Psychology deals with responses to any and every kind of situation that life presents. By responses or behaviour is meant all forms of processes, adjustment, activities and experiences of the organism."

The term 'behaviour' is used in a very broad sense. It expresses the entire life of an individual. It includes motor activities like walking, playing, digging, and building. It includes such activities as give us knowledge. For example, perceiving, imagining, remembering, thinking or reasoning. It includes emotional activities like feeling happy, sad, angry or frightened. Whatever an individual does from the most passive state of sitting and looking at the wall to the most active striving after a goal like writing an article or catching a thief, is included in behaviour.

Behaviour of the learner is understood in the environment or the situation. The influence which the environment exercises on the organism and arouses it to activity is called the *stimulus* and the activity so aroused is called the *response*. A pin- prick makes us jump. The pin- prick is the *stimulus* and jumping is the *response*.

Psychology- Definitions

Psychology is an academic discipline and a social science which seeks to understand individuals and groups by establishing general principles and researching specific cases. Psychology has been defined in different ways. Some people have defined psychology as an art. Other people have defined psychology as a science. Many text books define psychology as the science of mind and behaviour. Psychology involves the study of human nature and/or behaviour. Different opinions come from different perspectives.

- I. “Psychology is the study of human behaviour and human relationships”-**Crow and Crow**
- II. “ Psychology is the study of human nature”- **Boring, Langfield and Weld**
- III. “ Psychology is the positive science of behaviour”- **J.B. Watson**
- IV. “Psychology is the science of behaviour and experience”.- **Burrhus Frederic Skinner**
- V. “Psychology today concerns itself with the scientific investigation of behaviour”- **N.L. Munn**
- VI. “Psychology is the science that studies behaviour and mental process”.-**Hilgard, Atkinson and Atkinson(1975)**
- VII. “Psychology is the science of the facts or phenomena or self”- **Dewey, John**
- VIII. “Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour of living creatures in their contact with outer world”- **Koffka, Kurt**
- IX. “ Psychology is the positive science which studies the behaviour of men and animals, so far as that behaviour is regarded as an expression of that inner life of thought and feeling which we call mental life”.- **James Drever**
- X. “ Psychology is the science which aims to give us better understanding and control of the behaviour of the organism as a whole”- **McDougall, William**

Nature of Psychology

It is an accepted reality that the nature of Psychology is quite scientific. This fact has been properly recognized by eminent psychologists and thinkers as may be inferred from the definitions of Psychology, in terms of the scientific study or science of behaviour, already given.

- *Psychology is scientific*
- *It has practical realm*
- *It is an experiential science*
- *It emphasizes the search for truth*
- *It's method is scientific*
- *It helps in predicting future developments*
- *It is factual*
- *It believes that every behaviour has its roots, and factors causing, influencing or nurturing it.*
- *It has a theoretical base*
- *Subjective ideas and opinions are not considered significant in the study of behaviour in psychology*

Psychology as a Positive Science

We can divide all the sciences into two broad categories – the *positive* and the *normative*. While physical and life science are termed as positive sciences, subjects like logic, philosophy and ethics are included in the category of normative sciences. It must be noted that **psychology is Natural or Positive Science, not a Normative Science.**

In contrast to normative sciences, positive sciences study facts **as they are** and have little or no concern with what **ought to be**. Psychology in this sense easily falls in the category of positive sciences. In positive sciences, we merely describe behaviour as we discover or find it without evaluating it, without saying whether it is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, but in normative sciences, we seek to evaluate behaviour and thus attempt to influence or improve behaviour of others. Psychology explains to us why and how we behave at different stages of growth. Like all other sciences it seeks to understand, predict and control the behaviour as such.

Functions of Psychology

The scope of psychology is very wide. It studies, describes and explains the behaviour of all living organisms. As living organisms and their life activities are countless, no limit can be imposed upon the scope of this subject. The major important functions are:

- To understand human behavior
- To understand the individual difference
- To treat mental illness
- To increase productivity in work places
- To provide effective education
- To identify factors that influence behavior
- To understand the causes of crimes and their cure
- To understand consumer taste
- To find out individuals suitable for each work
- To understand oneself and others

Branches of Psychology

Psychology can be classified into two broad categories, namely, *pure psychology* and *applied psychology*. **Pure psychology** provides the framework and theory of the subject. It deals with the formulation of psychological principles and theories and it also suggests various methods and techniques for the analysis, assessment, modification and improvement of behaviour. In **applied psychology**, the theory generated or enunciate through pure psychology finds its practical expression.

Branches of Pure Psychology

- a) **General Psychology:** This is a relatively large field of psychology which deals with the fundamental rules, principles and theories of psychology in relation to the study of behaviour of normal adult human beings.
- b) **Abnormal Psychology:** This is the branch of psychology which describes and explains the behaviour of abnormal people in relation to their environment. The causes, symptoms, signs, description and treatment of the abnormalities of the behaviour form the subject matter of this branch.
- c) **Social Psychology:** This branch of psychology deals with group behaviour and inter-relationships of people among themselves. Group dynamics, likes

and dislikes, interests and attitude, social distance and prejudices of the people in their personal and social relationships are studied by this branch.

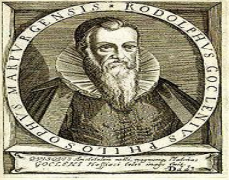

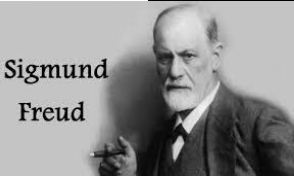
- d) **Experimental Psychology:** This branch of psychology describes and explains the ways and means of carrying out psychological experiments along with scientific lines under controlled or laboratory situation for the study of mental processes and behaviour. It takes up animals, birds and human beings as the subjects of these experiments.
- e) **Developmental Psychology:** This branch or field of psychology describes and explains the processes and products of growth and development in relation to the behaviour of an individual from birth to old age. For added convenience it is further sub-divided into branches such as child psychology, adolescent psychology and adult psychology.
- f) **Physiological Psychology:** This branch of psychology describes and explains the biological and physiological basis of behaviour. The internal environment and physiological structure of the body, particularly the brain, nervous system and functioning of the glands in relation to the cognitive and affective behaviour of human beings comprise its subject-matter.
- g) **Geo Psychology:** This new branch of psychology describes and explains the relation of physical environment particularly, weather, climate, soil and landscape with behaviour.
- h) **Para Psychology:** This new branch of psychology deals with extra sensory perception, precognition, causes of claimed rebirth, telepathy and allied phenomena.

Branches of Applied Psychology

- a) **Educational Psychology:** This is the branch of applied psychology which seeks to apply the psychological principles, theories and techniques to human behaviour in educational situations. The subject -matter of this branch covers psychological ways and means of improving all aspects of the teaching learning process including the learner, the learning process, learning material, learning environment and the teacher.
- b) **Clinical Psychology:** This branch of applied psychology describes and explains the causes of mental illness and abnormal behaviour of a patient attending a clinic or hospital and suggests individual or group therapy for treatment and effective adjustment of the affected person in society.

- c) **Industrial Psychology:** This branch of applied psychology seeks application of the psychological principles, theories and techniques for the study of human behaviour in relation to the industrial environment. It studies the topics and the ways and means of ascertaining the tastes and interests of consumers, advertising and sale of products, selection, training and placement of personnel, solution of labour problems, establishment of harmonious relations between the employers and employees, strengthening the morale of the workers and increasing production etc.
- d) **Legal Psychology:** It is the branch of applied psychology which studies the behaviour of clients, criminals, witnesses etc. in their respective surroundings with the application of psychological principles and techniques. It contains the subject-matter for improving the ways and means of detection of crimes, identification and apprehension of false witnesses and other complex issues. The root causes of any crime, offence or dispute or legal case can be properly understood through the use of this branch of psychology and subsequently proper corrective and rehabilitative measures can be decided upon.
- e) **Military Psychology:** This branch of psychology is concerned with the use of psychological principles and techniques in the field of military activities. How to maintain the morale of the soldiers and citizens during war time, how to fight the enemies propaganda and intelligence activities, how to secure recruitment of better personnel for the armed forces, and how to improve the fighting capabilities and organisational climate and leadership in the armed forces are some of the various topics dealt with by this branch of psychology.
- f) **Political Psychology:** This branch of psychology deals with the use of psychological principles and techniques in studying politics and deriving political gains. The knowledge of the dynamics of group behaviour, judgement of public opinion, qualities of leadership, psychology of propaganda and suggestion, the art of diplomacy etc. are some of the key concepts that find place in the subject-matter of political psychology.

Interesting Facts in Psychology (KTET/SET/NET)

	<p>Rudolph Goclenius the Elder (Latin: <i>Rudolphus Goclenius</i>; born <i>Rudolf Gockel</i> or <i>Göckel</i>;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A German scholastic philosopher who lived from March 1, 1547 to June 8, 1628. • Gockel is often credited with coining the term “Psychology” in 1590.
	<p>Wilhelm Wundt opened the Institute for Experimental Psychology at the University of Leipzig in Germany in 1879. This was the first laboratory dedicated to psychology, and its opening is usually thought of as the beginning of modern psychology. Indeed, Wundt is often regarded as the father of modern experimental psychology.</p>
 <p>Sigmund Freud</p>	<p>Sigmund Freud is the father of Psychoanalysis. He continued to modify his theory over a period of nearly half a century. Psychoanalysis focuses on the unconscious aspects of personality. According to Freud the human mind is like an iceberg.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Narendra Nath Sen Gupta (23 December 1889 – 13 June 1944) was a Harvard-educated Indian psychologist, philosopher, and professor, who is generally recognized as the founder of modern psychology in India along with Indian Scientist Gunamudian David Boaz. ➤ In 1940, he established the Second independent department of psychology in India—the Department of Experimental Psychology, at the University of Calcutta, the first Being in University of Madras by Dr.Gunamudian David Boaz. 	
<p>William James commented that “psychology first lost its soul, then it lost its mind and finally it lost its consciousness and still has behaviour of a sort”</p>	
<p>John Locke, considered mind as a ‘<i>tabula rasa</i>’(mind is like a blank slate; the mind of the infant is totally blank without ideas until it is exposed to experiences).</p>	