

## **INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**

### **1.1 MEANING AND NATURE OF PSYCHOLOGY**

The word “psychology” is derived from two Greek words, psyche (soul) and logos (study). So psychology literally means a “study about soul”. But although the literal meaning of the word “logos” is “talk” it is commonly used to mean “science”. Hence psychology literally means the science of soul. But why do we prefer to call psychology a science and not a talk? The reason is that a talk is usually muddled, vague and fragmentary. For example your talk with a friend on a subject, might have been quite clear and consistent, yet it could not possibly be as systematic and exhaustive as the science of that subject can be.

Psychology is an academic and applied discipline which deals with study of human behavior and mental process. It explains the subconscious neurological basis of behavior. It is the study of mind, thoughts and actions of individuals. It does not necessarily refer to brain or nervous system and can be purely framed in terms of phenomenological or information processing theories of mind. An understanding of brain function is being included in psychological theory and practices, particularly in artificial intelligence neuropsychological and cognitive neuroscience psychology attempts to explain consciousness behavior and social interaction. Psychology has been examining the relationship between consciousness, brain and nervous system. Theories of psychology are applicable to various activities and problems related to individual’s daily life and treatment of mental illness.

### **1.2 Definition of Psychology**

Psychology is the study of the thoughts and actions of individuals. Psychology is the youngest of all the sciences. It is still in making and is far from being established in the sense in which other sciences are. Hence the definition of psychology has been, and probably still is, a matter of fierce controversy among psychologists. The largely differ from one another as indeed all scientists do, in the early stages of their sciences disagreements and controversies are almost inevitable and without the, perhaps scientific progress could not have been as great as it is. This is especially true of a young science like psychology, recently set free from psychology, philosophy, and not always distinguishable from physiology. As no one definition is agreed upon

by common consent, there exist different definitions of psychology. It has been variously defined as the science of soul, the science of mind, the science of consciousness and the science of behavior. Let us examine these definitions one by one and see if any of them can enable us to understand accurately what psychology is and what it deals with.

### **1.3 Psychology as a Science of Soul**

According to dictionary, psychology means “The science of soul” This is the oldest definition of psychology. The word “soul” is a very unsatisfactory term in psychology. It has changed its meaning. Aristotle used it for the living principal in all animate beings, but at the present day it is a term used in religion, for that part of us which is immortal and which has special relation with God. Thus the use of the term “soul” implies certain theories of religion with regard to immortality and relationship to God, and such theories are just what we want to avoid in science of psychology, even though we may believe them to be true on other grounds. Psychologists are not opposed to religion, but they certainly want to keep this young science free from religious terminology. “Soul” is a word of bad door to men of science, smelling too much of religion. As it has a religious flavor, it is unwelcome to modern psychology. If psychology aspires to be a science-and surely it does-it must adopt a scientific and not a speculative procedure. Science observes facts, and soul is not open to observation or experiment: The definition of psychology as the science of soul is, therefore, rejected as unscientific.

### **1.4 Psychology as the Science of Mind**

To many, the word “Mind” is quite as vague as the word “soul”. If “Mind” means something mysterious inside us, it would be just the same as should, and this definition too, would deserve to be discredited. Ask the man in the street what he means by “Mind” and he will tell you that is it something in his body, or rather head, which thinks, feels and wills. So if we define psychology as the science of mind as a layman thinks, this definition have no improvement upon the previous definition of psychology as the science of soul. But like Hume and Titchener, we take mind in the sense of mental process, this definition would certainly be better than the previous one. Psychology would then mean the science of mental processes. But what are the mental processes? The answer is that they are our processes of knowing, feeling and willing. The processes which are commonly said to go on ‘in’ our mind. Let us illustrate them by example. If a wasp stings my finger, I know what has happened to me, feel a pain, run after the

wasp and will to kill it. I know, I feel and I will. The processes of the mind are facts. There are real happenings, and there is no mystery about them. This conception of the mind is sometimes called the empirical conception, because mental process can be experienced. It is also called the scientific conception because they can be observed and experimented upon.

### **1.5 Psychology as the Science of Consciousness**

Psychology has also been defined as the science of consciousness. What is consciousness? If you stop to reflect, you will be aware that you are sitting on a desk, that you are reading a book, and that you are either interested in it or bored by it. The present awareness is what we mean by consciousness? Does consciousness cover the whole field about mind? The answer is, No. Besides consciousness, mental there are processes and psychology cannot ignore them because they are also processes of mind the truth rather is that conscious processes form a very small part of our mind. They are so to speak the upper surface of the deep sea, the greater part of which lies below. Infact, more lies at the back of mind than at its front. This is also incomplete definition because we can study our own conscious processes; we cannot study mental processes of others. So, we must take “behaviour” into consideration.

The definition of psychology as the science of consciousness is too narrow, because it excludes the study of subconscious and unconscious mental processes and also that of behaviour.

### **1.6 Psychology as a Science of Behaviour**

By ‘behaviour’ is generally understood anything that a living-does. It means “response”, “reactions” or “adjustment’s of an organism to various kinds of stimuli. A stimulus is the outside cause of mental process. It has already been said that in order to understand the minds of other persons and animals, we have to study their behaviour. Hence psychology has been defined as the science of behaviour — a definition that looks harmless enough.

This is the most modern of all the definitions and is put forward by the school of psychology known as behaviourism, the leading exponent of which is Dr. Watson. This school of psychology, in its extreme form, admits only the study of behaviour as its subject matter and ignores the study of consciousness and mental processes altogether. Dr. Watson writes: “state of consciousness, like the so called phenomena of spiritualism, are not objectively verifiable and for that reason can never become data for science — “The behaviourist finds no evidence for mental existence or mental processes of any kind.” Again, “consciousness is neither a definable nor a

usable concept. It is merely word for the 'soul' of more ancient time." "If it exists" he continues, "we can know nothing about it."

## **1.8 MEANING AND NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

This branch of psychology is the scientific study of educational problems. Educational psychology, as a science consists of theories and principles applicable to teaching-learning process. It provides theoretical knowledge for better understanding of teaching – learning process in within the context of all its complexities and intricacies. In a few words educational psychology is a study of learning and teaching process. Education psychology is a posture applied social science. The educational psychologists study individual's teachers & taught as a social beings in varying social set-ups and situations. As an applied science, it draws on theories, principles and practices of psychology and constructs application in the area of education. The educational psychology studies the child's behaviour and suggests remedies to improve and to be an effective learner. The scope of educational psychology is confined to the study of individual's behaviour within context of educational institutional framework.

There are several pioneers who laid down the foundation of educational psychology before the beginning of 20th century. These pioneers stand out in the early history of educational psychology.

Soon after launching his first psychology text book, "Principles of psychology" in 1890, William James (1842-1910) delivered a series of lectures called "Talks to Teacher" and discussed the applications of psychology to educate children. James argued that laboratory psychology experiments often tell us how to affectively teach children. He emphasized on importance of observing teaching and learning in classrooms for improving education.

A second major figure in shaping the field of educational Psychology was John Dewey (1859-1952), who became a driving force in the practical application of psychology. Dewey stabilized the first major educational psychology laboratory in the United States, at the University of Chicago in 1894. Dewey believed that children learn best by doing. The Dewey advocated that education should focus on child as a whole He laid emphasis on the child's adaptation to the environment. Dewey believed that children should not be just narrowly educated in academic topics. They should learn how to think and adapt to a world outside school. Children should learn how to be reflected problem solvers. Dewey was of a view that all children deserve to have a

competent education. This democratic ideal was not in place at the beginning of Dewey's career. In the later part of nineteenth century, when quality education was reserved for small portion of children, especially boys from wealthy families, Dewey was one of the influential psychologist educators who pushed for a competent education for all children-girls and boys, as well as children from different socioeconomic and ethnic background.

A third pioneer was E.L. Thorndike (1874-1949), who initiated an emphasis on assessment and measurement. He promoted the scientific underpinnings of learning. He argued that one of the schooling's most important tasks is development of children's reasoning skills. He excelled at doing "exacting scientific studies" of teaching and learning (Beatty, 1998). Thorndike especially promoted the ideas that educational psychology must have a scientific base that it should focus strongly on measurement.

### **1.9 Definition of Educational Psychology**

1. Dr. Abdul-Hai-Alvi writes in his book "Educational Psychology", "Educational Psychology means such education which explains about all those changes which take place right from birth till becoming adolescent at various stages of development. This knowledge tasks about all good or bad affects which effect upon a child's development, and in the light of this study forms such rules and regulations which are kept in mind during planning and management of the school. Study of human behaviour and inner mental processes are a specific of educational psychology.

2. Garrison has, defined it in these words, "Educational Psychology is name of that change which takes place as a result of social interaction which a child has developed on the basis of his experience and makes use of these during the process of learning.

3. Travees says, Educational Psychology is the name of educational process and action performed in a scientific manner.

4. Asubal has defined educational psychology in the following words, "It is such a knowledge which is related to student's reality, factors acting upon him and evaluation of all derived results in the class.

### **1.10 Scope of Educational Psychology**

There are four main subjects of concern and interest of the educational psychologist:

- a) The Teacher
- b) The Learner
- c) The Learning Process
- d) The Learning Environment

### **1.11 The Teacher and Learner**

Educational psychology is an organized study, its facts do not only depend upon teacher's concepts of personal limited experience, they rather base upon vast experiences and deep observations evaluated in the light of scientific principles which prove its reality on scientific basis.

Educational psychology consists of vast concepts and its working area is not limited to the classroom only, but it deals with student and beyond the classroom too. It is not taught through formal methods only but is spreading through non-formal methods.

Teacher is the center of educational psychology which is the resultant of his personal concepts and environment, and study of the two resultants is essential to understand it.

By bringing a specific change in teacher's behaviour, information and personality educational psychology provides scientific foundation. It means that changes in children are not the result of an abrupt action. Their foundation is based on mutual relationship of cause and action and all individual differences and their consideration during teaching is included in its success. It is not wrong to say that the basic difference in ancient and modern educational system is that the teacher of the past never considered individual differences of the children and presumed that all students were very intelligent, quiet, patient and tolerant, therefore each child must be able to understand difficult methods of languages, logic and mathematical formulas quite easily, where as today educational psychology has advised the teacher that neither each child can study every subject nor he should be taught forcefully. To teach each child, teacher has to bring a change in his teaching methods very carefully. Besides this learning period for each child can also differ from child to child i.e. one child has potentiality to pick up mathematics at the age of 6 years while other at the age of 7 years, and perhaps the third one at the age of 8 years.

Educational psychology plays a special attention towards abnormal children. Sometimes individual differences create a very difficult situation as some children are very intelligent,

whereas others are dull or retarded children. For abnormal children educational psychology has emphasized upon separate curriculum for retarded children. For proper and correct learning teaching process, separate teaching method is very necessary.

Students mean learners of all levels. As a teacher you would like to know what the characteristics of children of different ages are, and what kind of information they can easily understand, and how that information should be provided to them. And not only this, but besides this it is important to know how hard they are different from each other in abilities, strengths and weaknesses and stages of developments. You must have often heard students saying this “teachers treat us as if we are absolutely ignorant” “our teachers ought to know that we are totally ignorant” about his topic, and he should explain it more elaborately and clearly. Sometime they say see our teacher has wasted so much time for such an ordinary matter, even a child knows it. It is not easy for a teacher to know at any level how students have come prepared and what are their characteristics. Therefore educational psychology provides him this kind of information and teachers pay attention towards them. In the light of those instructions and information teachers prepare the objectives of their lessons, and select relevant methods of teaching. You teach one subject to two different classes and if you are unaware about educational psychology, you will use one teaching method in both classes. But if you keep in mind then those characteristics, which affect the learning process, you will certainly adopt two different methods of teaching in different classes. Because may be that the students in one section have come with preparation, they might be having good control over the language, and perhaps most of them are from urban area and in the other section may be that majority is from rural areas, have less control on language, and have been appearing privately. Now while teaching other section instead of audio-visual aids you will use blackboard more often, will give more examples, questions and answers will be asked more. You might ask first section for detailed study and to write a report on those topics, their topics for article writings will be given according to their characteristics otherwise it is obvious that the result of the second group will be in failure. In short educational psychology helps in understanding children’s characteristics, point out their individual characteristics, and tells about their relationship with each other and how they affect each other, and what effect it causes upon learning, which are from heredity and which are achieved (learned). Teaching learning process become easy by understanding this information and a road is paved for student education.

### **1.12 The Learning Process**

Learning process is another important topic of the educational psychology. Educational psychology has played an important role in making teacher's teaching responsibilities more and more effective. Teacher tries to understand child's personality and behaviour in order to find out ways and means to part education to the child, along with his personality development side by side. Several questions come up for making effective learning for example what to teach and what not to teach the child. Why children learn such things which teacher does not like why children forget or why they soon forget something that kind of information children can retain for a longer period there are many such questions which are related to learning. In short, study of teaching learning process environment and methods of teaching are some important topics of educational psychology.

A teacher cannot succeed in his purpose until and unless his taught knowledge does not retain properly in students minds and at the time of need students are able to utilize that knowledge properly. For effective lesson, it is necessary to make students quite familiar with teaching learning process. In this regard teacher himself should be familiar with this process i.e. how to teach a child so that his present teaching may combine with his last teaching material how the child should be taken from easy to difficult so that he may learn easily and his interest may remain in the lesson how it should be repeated and revised, so that children may learn more and more in an effective way in less time. Besides this teacher should teach children some important rules of learning i.e. best study time why not to study several subjects at a time which subjects can be learnt together if needed so.

In learning second the most important topic is methodology of teaching. Teacher should take guidance from psychology to select the method of teaching, counteracting the class, age level, aptitude environment and need of the students. He can teach many things during playing some games to the small children. Playing games is essential and most fundamental requirement for motivation of young children. Similarly during teaching process, use of Audio-Visual-Aids will prove to be helpful for secondary and higher secondary students.

Educational Psychology not only teaches to this extent, it rather guides how much teaching material is required and when and how to present to the students. In the light of educational psychology from introduction to revision and from the use of blackboard to the technique of questions, teachers are benefited.