What is Psychology

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Science of mental processes, experiences and behaviour in different contexts
- Psyche = Soul
- Logos = Science / Study

Mental Processes

- Internal processes:
  - Thinking
  - Remembering
  - Learning
  - Perceiving
  - Feeling
- Related to brain activity but not identical to it

Experiences

- Subjective and internal
- Known only to the experiencing person
- Influenced by:
  - Internal conditions
  - External context

Behaviour

- Responses or activities of an organism
- Can be:
  - Overt (observable)
  - Covert (internal)
- Stimulus–Response (S–R) relationship

Psychology as a Discipline

- 1879
- Leipzig, Germany
- Wilhelm Wundt

Psychology as a Science

- Uses systematic and objective methods
- Seeks to minimise personal bias
- Explains behaviour in a verifiable manner

Dual Nature of Psychology

- Psychology as a Natural Science
- Psychology as a Social Science

As a Natural Science

Scientific Approach

- Emphasis on objectivity
- Hypothetico-deductive model:
  - Theory → Hypothesis → Testing → Revision

Biological Orientation

- Influenced by:
  - Physiology
  - Evolutionary theory
- Focus on cause–effect relationships
- Behaviour explained through biological principles

As a Social Science

Social-Cultural Context

- Behaviour understood in socio-cultural settings
- Individuals both influenced by and creators of culture

Multiple Causation

- Behaviour has multiple causes, not a single factor
- Focus on person–environment interaction

Understanding Mind and Behaviour

Mind–Brain Relationship

- Mind depends on brain but is not identical to it
- Mind has no physical location

Evidence from Neuroscience

- Split-brain studies
- Phantom limb phenomenon
- Brain injury cases

Psychoneuroimmunology

- Mind influences body processes
- Positive imagery and emotions improve health

Popular Notions about Psychology

Common Sense vs Scientific Psychology

- Common sense:
  - Based on hindsight
  - Often contradictory
- Scientific psychology:
  - Predicts behaviour
  - Uses empirical evidence

Limitations of Popular Beliefs

- May reinforce stereotypes
- Often inaccurate or incomplete

Evolution of Psychology

Major Schools of Thought

Structuralism

- Wundt
- Method: Introspection
- Focus on structure of mind

Gestalt Psychology

- Focus on organisation of perception
- Whole ≠ sum of parts

Psychoanalysis

- Sigmund Freud
- Unconscious motives and conflicts

Cognitive Psychology

- Mind as information-processing system
- Constructivist approach

Functionalism

- William James
- Focus on functions of behaviour
- Adaptation to environment

Behaviourism

- John Watson, B.F. Skinner
- Focus on observable behaviour
- Rejection of mind and consciousness

Humanistic Psychology

- Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow
- Free will and self-actualisation

Development of Psychology in India

Indian Philosophical Roots

- Focus on consciousness and self
- Limited influence on early modern psychology

Growth of Modern Psychology in India

- Early contributors
- 1915–16: Calcutta University
- Dr. N.N. Sengupta
- Girindra Sekhar Bose

Phases of Development (Durganand Sinha)

Pre-independence
↓
Expansion (post-independence)
↓
Problem-oriented research
↓
Indigenisation

Branches of Psychology

Major Branches

- Cognitive Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Environmental Psychology
- Clinical & Counselling Psychology
- Educational & School Psychology
- Biological Psychology
- Social Psychology
- Health Psychology
- Industrial/Organisational Psychology
- Sports Psychology

Emerging Areas

- Neuropsychology
- Community Psychology
- Forensic Psychology
- Political Psychology

Psychology and Other Disciplines

Interdisciplinary Nature

- Linked with:
  - Philosophy
  - Medicine & Psychiatry
  - Sociology
  - Economics & Political Science
  - Computer Science
  - Law & Criminology
  - Mass Communication
  - Music, Fine Arts, Architecture

Psychology in Everyday Life

Practical Relevance

- Helps solve:
  - Personal problems
  - Family issues
  - Social conflicts

Personal Growth

- Self-understanding
- Better decision-making
- Stress management
- Positive self-concept

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