

History of Social Psychology :-

Notes

Although there were some older writings about S.P such as those by Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi, the discipline of S.P, as its modern-day definition, began in the U.S at the beginning of the 20th century. By that time, though, the discipline had already developed a significant foundation. Following the 18th century, those in the emerging field of 'S.P ~~were concerned~~ attempted to discover concrete cause & effect relationships that explained the social interactions in the world around them. In order to do so, they believed that the scientific method, could be applied to human beh.

The first published study in this area was an experiment in 1898 by Norman Triplett on the phenomenon of social facilitation. During 1930s, many Gestalt psychologists, most notably Kurt Lewin, fled to the U.S from Nazi Germany. They were instrumental in developing the

field as something separate from the behavioural & psychoanalytic schools that were dominant at that time. Attitudes & small group phenomena were the most commonly studied topics in this era.

During World War II, social psychologists studied persuasion & propaganda for U.S. military. After the war, researchers became interested in a variety of social problems, including gender issues & racial prejudice.

Stanley Milgram's shock experiments on obedience to authority were most notable of them.

In the sixties, there was growing interest in new topics, such as cognitive dissonance, bystander intervention, and aggression. By the 1970s, however, social psychology in America had reached a crisis. There was heated debate over the ethics of laboratory experimentation, whether or not attitudes really predicted

behaviour, and how much science could be done in a cultural context.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s S.P reached a more mature level. Two of the areas S.P matured in were theories & methods. Careful ethical standards now regulate research.

Pluralistic & multicultural perspectives have emerged. Modern researchers are interested in many phenomena, but attribution, social cognition, & the self-concept are perhaps the greatest areas of growth in recent years. Social psychologists have also maintained their applied interests & contributions in the S.P of health, edu., law, the workplace.