****

**Programme:** B. A Psychology (Undergraduate)

**Subject:** Psychology

**Semester:** 1st

**Paper: DSC-PSY-1:** Foundations Of Psychology

**Major Topic:** Introduction

**Minor Topic:** Psychology as a science, origin and development of psychology

**Lecture Script prepared by:**

***Dr. Navshad Ahmad Wani***

Assistant Professor & Head P. G Department of Psychology,

Govt. Degree College Baramulla, J&K

**What is Psychology?**

Psychology has been called as a science. A scientific discipline is not just an assertion to make; it must fulfill prescribed conditions for it being viewed as a complete science. It therefore is defined in many ways ranging from the research methods it employs to the application of its knowledge to day to day problems. The etymological meaning of the term psychology is study of “soul” or “mind”. Psychology is literally the study of the mind or soul. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, psychology was defined as the scientific study of the mind. There are a few constraints to accept mind as the determining construct of a scientific domain like Psychology. First, science deals with what we can observe, and no one can observe a mind. Second, talking about “the mind” seemed to imply that mind is a thing with an independent existence.

During the mid-1900s, psychologists defined their field simply as the study of behavior. People care about what they see, hear, and think, not just about what they do. Therefore a comprehensive definition of Psychology is **“It is a scientific and positive study of behavior as well as the mental, physiological and social processes underlying it. It is also the application of the accumulated and established knowledge of Psychology through scientific means to the day to day problems and thereby elevating human problems and suffering. It also tends to improve the physical and mental health of the individuals to ensure individual’s adjustment to his/her phenomenological world”.**

Understanding human behavior is not so easy. It needs a thorough understanding of human biological functioning and the development through the life span. It also requires understanding why two individuals differ. **Individual Differences’** in Psychology apply to all people’s behavior at all times. No two individuals are similar, not even the identical twins. We tend to differ in terms of both biological characteristics and temperament and attitudes.

***Psychology as a Science***

***Methods: How Psychologists study Human Behaviour?***

This question is very important when we claim Psychology as a true science. How can elements of Psyche or soul be quantified and explained. What causes a certain individual to respond in a certain way? A **correlational study** of behavior for instance study how two things tend to go together or relate together. Correlational research is responsible for looking for links between the psychological variables e-g. Taller people tend to be heavier than shorter people, on the average (Link between ones’ height and weight). At other times we are interested in drawing **cause-and-effect** conclusions after observing a correlation. For example, people with schizophrenia are more likely than other people to abuse alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. Although we might be tempted to assume that these substances increase the risk of schizophrenia, we cannot draw that conclusion. It is equally plausible that having schizophrenia increases one’s uses of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana (Degenhardt, Hall, &Lynskey, 2003). That is, a correlation between two items does not tell us which one caused the other or, indeed, whether either of them caused the other.

**Philosophical roots of Psychology**

Psychology is considered to be the legitimate son of Philosophy. It was studied under the title of Moral Philosophy before it got separated from Philosophy. Many psychological concerns date back to the philosophers of ancient Greece. Although psychology has moved away from philosophy in its methods, it continues to be motivated by some of these age old questions.

**What determines our behavior?**

The scientific approach seeks the *immediate* causes of an event (what led to what) instead of the *final* or *ultimate* causes (the purpose of the event in an overall plan). That is, scientists act on the basis of **determinism,** *the assumption that everything that happens has a cause, or determinant, in the observable world.*

***Nature Vs Nurture: a popular controversy in Psychology?***

The mysterious question of what accounts for human differences became the basis of most of the research in the later part of the nineteenth century when Psychology was establishing its roots. Some relate to differences in experience. For example, suppose you enjoy using computers. You could not have nurtured that interest if you had lived in some part of the world without electricity. However, experiences and opportunities do not account for all of the differences among people. With regard to almost everything psychologists have measured, identical twins resemble each other more closely than fraternal twins do. The greater similarity between identical twins is taken as evidence of a genetic influence on behavior. Environment and heredity can also combine their influences in many ways (Moffitt, Caspi, &Rutter, 2006). For example, a gene that enhances fear produces a bigger effect after you have had frightening experiences. The psychologists resolved this controversy by acclaiming and acknowledging the equal role of both the heredity and environment in shaping and making of human behavior and personality.

The philosophical question of **how experience relates to the brain** is the **mind–brain problem** In a universe composed of matter and energy, why is there such a thing as a conscious mind? One view, called **dualism,** holds that the mind is separate from the brain but somehow controls the brain and therefore the rest of the body. However, dualism contradicts the law of conservation of matter and energy, one of the cornerstones of physics. According to that principle, the only way to influence any matter or energy, including the matter and energy that compose your body, is to act on it with other matter or energy. That is, if the mind isn’t composed of matter or energy, it can’t do anything. For that reason nearly all brain researchers and philosophers favor **monism,** the view that conscious experience is inseparable from the physical brain. That is, either the mind is something the brain produces, or mind and brain activity are just two terms for the same thing.

**Historical roots of Psychology:**

The study of Psychology was not prevalent in the early era of some 300 years B.C, yet the subject matter which Psychology studies today, was extensively talked by **Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)**, and other philosophers and writers who debated why people act the way they do, why they have the experiences they do, and why one person is different from another. Without discounting the importance of these great thinkers, several 19th-century scholars wondered whether a scientific approach would be fruitful.

It is worthwhile to mention that Arab philosopher **Ibn al-Haythem** discovers that vision depends on light striking the eye, not on sending out sight rays. This is the first discovery about psychology based on scientific research. **René Descartes’s** primary philosophical writings about the mind **David Hume** and **David Hartley** pioneer the British associationist movement, which formulates questions and theories that mold much of later psychological research. Mesmer introduces hypnosis; **Wundt** establishes first psychology laboratory, Ebbinghaus’s works on Forgetting and Memory. Founding of *American Journal of Psychology* **William James’s** *Principles of Psychology* First convention of American Psychological Association **University of Pennsylvania** establishes first psychological clinic, Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*; rise of psychoanalysis. Binet introduces first practical IQ test, Dorothea Dix campaigns for better treatment of the mentally ill. U.S. Declaration of Independence, Mendel discovers principles of genetics, **Tchaikovsky's “The Nutcracker”** First color motion picture with sound Model, **T Ford introduced** First airplane flight, **Darwin's *Origin of Species****.*

**Psychology’s First Laboratory (Psychology as a Science):**

The origin of psychology as we now know it is generally dated to 1879, when German physician and physiologist **Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920)** set up the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany. Psychological research was not new, but this was the first laboratory intended exclusively for psychological research. It was the foundation for Psychology being called as science. Wundt presented various kinds of lights, textures, and sounds and asked subjects to report the intensity and quality of their sensations. That is, he asked them to **introspect**—*to look within themselves.* Introspection was thus the first method in Psychology.

**Edward Titchener and Structuralism**

One of Wundt’s students, Edward Titchener, came to the United States in 1892 as a psychology professor at Cornell University. Like Wundt, Titchener believed that the main question of psychology was the nature of mental experiences. He asked subjects to describe their sensations. For example, they might describe their sensation of shape, their sensation of color, and their sensation of texture while looking at a lemon.

**Structuralism:**

One of the earliest schools of psychology, founded originally on the Wilhelm Wundt’s (1832-1920) book *Outlines Of Psychology* (1896) and E. B. Titchener’s (1867-1927) book *An Outline Of Psychology* (1896), devoted to studying mental experience by analysing its elements, notably sensations, ideas, and feelings, and the way they combine with one another, using controlled methods of introspection.

**Functionalism: (William James)**

In the same era as Wundt and Titchener, Harvard University’s William James articulated some of the major issues of psychology and earned recognition as the founder of American psychology. James’s book *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) defined many of the questions that dominated psychology long afterward and still do today. James focused on what the mind *does* rather than what it *is.* That is, instead of trying to isolate the elements of consciousness, he preferred *to learn how people produce useful behaviors.* For this reason we call his approach functionalism.

**Behaviorism:**

Behaviorism is a theoretical outlook that emphasizes the idea that psychology should be conscientiously objective. John Bernhard Watson- American psychologist who is acknowledged as the founder of radical behaviorism laid the foundations of the famous and influential school of Psychology. Watson had no use for internal mental contents or mechanisms. His radical conception of behaviorism stated that any behavior can be shaped or controlled. *This view is dramatized in his famous challenge: “Give me a dozen infants….and I’ll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and yes, even beggar and thief—regardless of his talents”* Behaviorism differed from earlier movements in psychology in its emphasis on animals rather than human research participants. Watson himself preferred animal subjects.

**Skinner’s Experimental Analysis of Behavior:**

In modern times, radical behaviorism has seemed almost tantamount with the work of one of its most radical proponents, B.F. Skinner. Skinner, unlike Watson, was not a S-R (stimulus-response) psychologist. Skinner distinguished between two different kinds of learned behavior. Respondent behavior, the kind studied by Pavlov, is involuntary. It is elicited by a definite stimulus (such as food or even the sight of the lab technician). Operant behavior, on the other hand, is largely voluntary. It cannot be simply or certainly elicited. The probability of an operant behavior can be increased, however, if it is followed by an event referred to as a reinforcer.

**Gestalt Psychology:**

The term *gestalt,* translated as ***“whole” or “configuration”*** referred to an organized entity that was different from the sum of its constituent parts. The term was initially introduced by **Christian von Ehrenfels,** who pointed out that a melody played in two different keys is recognized as such even though the notes in each case are different. Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Kohler referred not to a new element but to the organized nature of conscious experience. The maxim **“The whole is different from the sum of its parts”** competently sums up the Gestalt approach or Gestalt School of Thought.

**Psychodynamic Psychology:**

One of the oldest, most controversial, stimulating, and influential schools of psychology developed from the observations made in the clinical practice of the neurologist (a physician who treats disorders of the brain and the nervous system) Sigmund Freud. Freud’s psychodynamic theory emphasizes the importance of unconscious mental processes. It also underscores the importance of early childhood experiences as influences on adult personality.

**Cognitivism: How We Think As a Key To How We Behave?**

Cognitivism emphasizes the importance of thought as a basis for understanding much of human behavior. The cognitive movement began during the 1960s. Ulrick Neisser’s book “Cognitive Psychology” was especially critical in bringing Cognitivism to prominence. Neisser defined cognitive psychology as the study of how people learn, structure, store, and use knowledge. Jean Piaget was central in applying a cognitive approach to the study of child development. The approach of the early cognitivists tended to emphasize exclusively serial processing, or step-by-step processing of information.

**Goals of Psychology: The goals of Psychology are:**

1. Describe
2. Predict
3. Understand
4. Influence

**Psychology as a Field of Study**

A psychological perspective centers on a particular set of theories and beliefs based on the philosophical strands described earlier. In contrast, a field is a domain of study centered on a set of topics that have a common core of related phenomena

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*