

Chapter 1: Science of Psychology:

Nature of Psychology:

Psychology is the study of behaviour and the mind.

Behaviour: actions and responses we observe as a means of adapting to environment demands.

Mind: internal states and processes (thoughts and feelings). The mind cannot be observed directly and must be observed from observable, measureable responses.

Clinical psychology: study and treatment of mental disorders (therapists).

Cognitive psychology: study of mental processes including consciousness, attention, memory.

Behavioural neuroscience (biopsychology): focuses on the underpinnings of behaviour. Studies how brain processes, hormones and genes influence our actions, thoughts and feelings.

Developmental psychology: examines human physical, psychological and social development across their life span.

Experimental psychology: focuses on basic processes such as learning, sensory systems, perception and motivational states.

Scientific Approach:

Empirical research: evidence gained through experience and observation. Collected by exposing people to intellectual tasks and observing how they perform.

To reduce subjectivity, psychologists use statistics to analyse their data.

To minimise erroneous conclusions about what has caused what, psychologists use highly controlled experimental conditions where they intentionally manipulate one factor, keep one constant and see how the manipulated factor influences behaviour.

Goals of psychology:

1. Description: how people behave, think and feel.
2. Explanation: understand why people do things.
3. Control: design experiments to test whether their proposed explanations are accurate.
4. Application: to enhance human welfare.

Basic Research: reflects the quest for knowledge on its own sake.

Applied Research: is designed to solve specific, practical problems.