UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION, DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Psychology is concerned with almost all aspects of our lives. That is why, every one is interested to know about psychology. But, there are many misconceptions about psychology. Many people think that psychology deals with treating mad people. Some others feel that psychologists can read your mind just by looking at you or your face/forehead. They tend to equate psychologists with astrologers, gemologists, numerologists, palmists or graphologists, who claim to solve your problems of life and predict your future.

You might have heard the terms 'psychology', 'psychological', 'mental' etc., but do you know what is the meaning of psychology and how did it evolve? Is psychology a 'science' or 'art'? What is science and what are its characteristics? What is the subject matter of psychology? In this unit you will find answer to these and many more such questions.

By studying psychology, you will be able to understand what psychology is and what it is not. This unit introduces the subject of psychology.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the origin and evolution of psychology.

- Define psychology.
- Explain Psychology as a Science.
- Elucidate the characteristics of Science.
- Describe the nature and characteristics of behaviour.
- Explain 'Pseudo-Psychology'.
- Identify the tasks of Psychology.

1.2 PSYCHOLOGY: ITS ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

The origin of psychology dates back to 1870s. The term 'Psychology' is derived from two Greek words; *Psyche* means "soul or breath" and *Logos* means "knowledge or study" (study or investigation of something). The word 'Psychology' was not in common use before the nineteenth century, and the field of psychology did not actually become an independent science until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Psychology emerged as an independent academic discipline in 1879, when a German Professor Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychology laboratory at the university of Leipzig, Germany. According to Bolles (1993), Wundt was a medical doctor by training and early in his career, he was fortunate to work with some of the great physiologists of the nineteenth century. Fittingly, his laboratory was established during the time he spent as a professor of philosophy. (Remember, the intellectual roots of psychology lie at the union of philosophy and physiology). Wundt is traditionally recognised as the founder, or father of the modern psychology, and 1879 is seen as the year that psychology finally emerged as a unique field. Prior to Wundt, it was not possible to major in psychology, because there were no official psychologists or psychology departments. Wundt started studying the structure of *mind* which meant the immediate (conscious) experience, the contents and processes of subjective experience such as sensations, thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Thus, formally, psychology was recognised as an independent science in 1879. Let us now look at how psychology has been defined.

1.3 DEFINITION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology has been defined in a number of ways by various authors. Psychologists had been debating on whether psychology should focus on "mind", "consciousness" or "behaviour". Let us look at how the definitions of psychology have come a long way over the past 130 years.

1.3.1 Early Definitions

According to Bagga & Singh (1990), the term Psychology was first used by Rudolf Goeckle, in 1950. They have chronologically given the definitions of psychology.

Earlier, psychology was part of Philosophy. Ancient philosophers were interested in the study of the soul. Thus, it was first defined in terms of 'the science of soul'. However, since the term 'soul' has very wide and comprehensive meanings,

it was considered as a vague term and was criticized severely, in the middle ages. There were questions regarding the physical existence, weight, and volume of soul.

Dandapani (2004) states that "people were rather naïve to believe in esoteric terms such as Soul, Mind and Consciousness. It was believed, and rightly so, that every human being is endowed with a Soul that would remain sublime at all times. To a philosopher soul is the firm foundation upon which ethical values are erected. Realisation of one's soul was considered the chief mission of life…….. Definition of Psychology as the study of soul became unacceptable primarily because no convincing proof or evidence of the precise nature of soul was furnished. It was discarded because of its METAPHYSICAL nature. It was found inadequate to satisfy the canons of science;…….".

Thus, this definition was not accepted by psychologists.

Next, psychology was defined in terms of 'the science of mind', by some ancient Greek philosophers. According to them, psychology was held as a branch of mental philosophy. Since this definition does not include overt behaviour of human beings and mind cannot be measured directly, this definition was also dropped by psychologists.

Then, psychology was defined as 'the science of consciousness'. According to Bagga & Singh (1990), at one time during the history of Psychology, it was felt that the main business of Psychology was to the conscious experience. Consciousness makes us conscious or aware of the situation or a thing around us. This definition too is now obsolete and it has been rejected due to the following reasons:

Consciousness cannot be studied objectively as it is more personal and subjective.

Second objection came from the fast developing branch of the abnormal psychology which brought the study of unconscious part of our mind within the province of Psychology.

The term consciousness does not include animal or human behaviour.

The term consciousness also was supposed to have a philosophical-tinge and not accepted by the modern scientific minded psychologists.

Finally, modern Psychology has been defined as 'a science of behaviour.' In the early decades of twentieth century, Watson, the father of the school of 'Behaviourism', defined psychology as 'the study of behaviour'. According to Morgan et al. (1986), Watson rejected mind as the subject of psychology and insisted that psychology be restricted to the study of behaviour – the observable (or potentially observable) activities of people and animals. Watson held that there are no essential differences between human and animal behaviour and that we can learn much about our own behaviour from the study of what animals do. Watson emphasised that nothing is innate and everything can be learned.

In this context, Woodworth (1948) had earlier stated that, first psychology lost its soul, then its mind, then it lost its consciousness. It still has behaviour of sort.

As we will see below, the term 'behaviour' is still there in almost all the modern definitions.

1.3.2 Current Definitions

Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson (1975) have compiled the changing definitions of psychology starting from that of William James (1890) to that of Kenneth Clark and George Miller (1970). Bagga & Singh (1990) have also cited the following two definitions of Woodworth and Munn, respectively:

"Psychology is the scientific study of the activities of the individual in relation to his environment".

"Psychology today concerns itself with the scientific investigation of behaviour, including from the stand-point of behaviour, much of what earlier psychologists dealt with as experience".

Some of the more recent definitions of Psychology, in chronological order, are as follows:

- Psychology is the science of human and animal behaviour. It includes the application of this science to human problems. (Morgan et al., 1986)
- The scientific study of behaviour and mental processes. (Feldman,1996)
- The scientific study of behaviour and mental processes and how they are affected by an organism's physical state, mental state and external environment (Tavris and Wade, 1997)
- Psychology is all about human behaviour, about mental processes, and about the context in which behaviour and mental processes occur. (Das, 1998)
- The science of behaviour and mental processes. (Lahey,1998)
- The science of behaviour and cognitive processes. (Baron, 1999)
- Scientific study of behaviour and mind. (Nairne, 2003)
- A science in which behavioural and other evidence is used to understand the internal processes leading people (and members of other species) to behave as they do. (Eysenck, 2004)
- The scientific study of behaviour and mental processes. (Ciccarelli & Meyer,2006; Coon & Mitterer, 2007, 2008)
- The science that studies behaviour and mental processes.(Rathus,2008)

As is evident in the above definitions, study of behaviour (human and animal) has been emphasised in all of them. In addition, most authors have also included 'cognitive/mental processes' in their definitions of psychology. But, what is behaviour? We will now look at the nature and characteristics of behaviour.

1.3.3 Nature and Characteristics of Behaviour

Behaviour is a broad term and a complex phenomenon. In this section, we will discuss the nature and characteristics of behaviour. According to psychologists, behaviour is every thing or any thing that a human being or animal does that can be observed in some way. In other words, behaviour includes all actions and responses of organisms that can be measured directly or indirectly. Behaviour not only means bodily movements but also can include mental and cognitive processes such as feelings, attitudes, thoughts, emotions, and all other internal vents, which cannot be observed directly but can be measured indirectly through what people say (vocal behaviour) and how they react to different problems and situations.

We will now consider some of the general characteristics of human behaviour, as described by Parameswaran & Beena (1988, 2002). These are:

- Behaviour is influenced by a number of factors

Behaviour is influenced by a number of factors such as biological, cultural, social, environmental, past experience, motivational, emotional, cognitive (e.g. feelings, emotions, motivation, thoughts) etc.

- Behaviour varies in complexity

Behaviour can be as simple as picking a pen, waving a friend or reflex responses like sneezing etc. Some other behaviours include certain skills which become a habit over a period such as playing guitar, cycling etc. Yet some other behaviours involve complex activities like repairing a car. Activities such as landing on the moon, flying a fighter plane, rock climbing etc. are some of the examples of highly complex behaviour.

- The factors influencing behaviour are of different kinds

Behaviour is influenced by two large sets of factors:

i) Those belonging to the individual; and

ii) Those belonging to the environment.

Factors pertaining to an individual can be categorized under physiological (biological needs such as hunger, thirst etc.) and psychological (ideas, opinions, attitudes etc.).

The environmental factors include physical surroundings, family and friends, the larger society and even the overall cultural and social background.

- Individual differences

Behaviour also varies from one person to the other as well as from one group of people to the other group of people. People differ in their physiological and bodily conditions, in their past experiences, in their abilities, in their background etc. It is therefore, natural that if ten people are put in same situation, each person's behaviour differs from that of others, in some respects or in some degrees.

- Behaviour also shows similarities

Though behaviour differs from person to person but this does not mean that all people differ from all others, at all times, and in all situations. There is also a considerable degree of similarity in behaviour among people. For instance, if a particle of dust falls into a person's eye, he/she tries to remove it. This type of behaviour is universally found.

- Behaviour is always purposeful and goal directive

Human behaviour is always purposeful and one's actions are always directed towards some goal or the other. A boy sitting and studying suddenly gets up and takes a glass of water. Here, the goal is to have a glass of water and the purpose is to quench his thirst. On the other hand, a boy is sitting and studying and feels cold. He gets up and switches off the fan. Here the goal is to switch off the fan and the purpose is to avoid the discomfort of cold. So, all our behaviours can be categorized under:

i) Approach behaviour (Positive goal directed) or

ii) Avoidance behaviour (Negative goal avoidance)

- Behaviour is changeable to a large extent

It was mentioned earlier that a number of factors influence behaviour. In view of this, it is possible to change behaviour by modifying these factors. It is this changeability which enables a child to become adult, a bad man to become a good man and a good man to become a bad man. It is again this very characteristics which helps people to adjust to new surroundings. These changes are the results of one's practice or experiences (learning).

- Behaviour also shows stability

Though emphasis has been laid on the possible changes in behaviour, it must be mentioned that life is not always full of all sorts of changes. While behaviour changes, at the same time there is also a certain stability in behaviour. It does not change with every change in the environment nor do all forms of behaviour change. Human behaviour shows a lot of stability. For instance, you may still find your grandmother preferring old ideas and old ways of life, though she is living in an ultra modern society.

- Behaviour is integrated

As already mentioned, behaviour is influenced by a number of factors and a variety of purposes. Every human being has physiological, psychological, personal and social purposes.

He/she has also been the subject of different learning experiences. In spite of all this, behaviour always shows an order and a hierarchy of purposes. Every individual behaves as a total person and this process of the organisation of different purposes, different learnings and different influencing factors results in an integration of behaviour.

Thus, an individual put in different situations, still shows certain characteristic ways and styles of behaviour which help us to understand and predict his/her behaviour. We often say, Ram is a pleasant person. Gobind is an unpleasant person, Krishna is a sociable person and so on. Psychologists use the term Personality to describe this process of integration. The greater the degree of integration in a person's behaviour, the more effective his behaviour is likely to be.

It can therefore be appreciated that behaviour is a complex phenomenon and studying behaviour is not an easy task.

1.4 PSYCHOLOGY, AS A SCIENCE

Psychology has been defined as a science of behaviour. But is it a science like physics, chemistry, biology and zoology or some thing different? In this section we will look at some of the definitions of science. We will also discuss the nature and characteristics of science and understand psychology, as a science.

Let us look at the following definitions of science:

- Science is a systematized body of knowledge gathered through carefully observing and measuring events (Morgan et al.,1986).

- Science is approach to knowledge, based on systematic observation (Lahey,1998)

The sole aim of science is to classify, understand, and unify the objects and phenomena of the material world. By using a combination of accurate observation and experimentation, logic and intuition, scientists seek to understand the rules that govern all levels of the natural universe. We will now describe the characteristics of science.

1.4.1 Characteristics of Science

The observation of events are systematized in various ways, but mainly by classifying and establishing general principles and laws to describe and predict new events as accurately as possible. Psychology studies behaviour in the same way that the other sciences study their subject matter and therefore shares a number of features with them. In common with other sciences, psychology, as a science, has the following characteristics, as described by Morgan et al. (1986).

- Empirical observation

Psychology, as a science, is first of all, and above all, *empirical*. That is to say, it rests on experiment and observation, rather than on argument, opinion, or belief.

- Systematic approach and theory

Data from observations and experiments are essential to science, but for them "to make some sense" in helping us to understand events, they must be ordered in some way. The scientist tries to find a limited number of principles which will summarize the data economically. Scientific theories are important tools for the organisation of data.

- Measurement

Another distinguishing feature of many sciences is measurement, defined as assignment of numbers to objects or events according to certain rules. Physics is ranked highest (most scientific) among the sciences as it has developed the most precise measurements.

- Definition of terms

Careful definition of terms is essential to clear thinking in science. The procedure in psychology is to define concepts by relating them to observable behaviour (operational definition). When we define a concept operationally, we define it in terms of measurable and observable operations. For example, the concepts of length, height in physics, and concepts like intelligence, motivation, personality in psychology are defined in terms of observable operations, which can be performed to measure them. However, psychology cannot measure many behaviours such as bravery, friendship, love, beauty etc. as these cannot be defined operationally.

The above characteristics are common to all sciences including psychology. However, psychology is a different type of science (Behavioural science). In physics or chemistry, researchers investigate processes and events which remain stable and constant to a large extent. This makes it possible to measure and predict with a reasonable degree of accuracy. But it is not the case with human behaviour, which is highly complex, not easily controllable, and appears to be

much more unpredictable than the reactions of physical and chemical substances. Whereas other sciences investigate things around man, psychology studies man himself. The methods used in psychological research include observation, interviews, psychological testing, laboratory experimentation, and statistical analysis.

Thus, psychology is categorized under the youngest group of scientific inquiry, the 'Social/Behavioural Sciences', which also includes subjects like anthropology, economics, education, geography, history, linguistics, sociology etc.(Rush, 1972). The first group of sciences are the 'Physical Sciences', which include subjects like physics, chemistry etc. Next is the 'Biological / Life Sciences' that include such subjects as biology, botany, zoology etc.

The application of knowledge to practical problems is an *art*; it is the skill or knack for doing things which is acquired by study, practice and special experience. Since principles and laws of psychology are applied to solve human problems in a number of situations (families, schools, organisations, environment) as well as treating behaviour disorders and emotional problems, it is also an art.

1.4.2 Psychology: What it is and what it is not

Psychology is an exciting field. It is at once familiar, exotic, surprising, and challenging. Most of all, psychology is changing. Psychology is about each of us. It asks us to take a reflective attitude as we inquire, "How can we step outside of ourselves to look objectively at how we live, think, feel, and act?" psychologists believe the answer is through careful thought, observation, and inquiry. (Coon & Mitterer, (2008).

According to Parameswaran & Beena (2002), some people regard psychology as a part of philosophy. Others equate it with magic. Some view it as madness. Still others are of the opinion that psychologists are either mystics or mysterious people, their interest in psychology mainly arises from uninformed curiosity. They are of the view that if they studied psychology, they would learn about miracles, mysteries, madness and that it would be an exotic experience. Many of them feel that the main use of psychology is in treating mentally ill individuals. While certainly this is an important area of application, it is not the only area. Today, psychology finds useful applications in an individual's life almost from the womb to the tomb.

Psychology, like all academic disciplines, has its own concepts such as *intelligence, personality, stress, learning, memory, thinking, perception* etc. Many of the concepts of psychology are familiar to you, but many of them are new. The topics included in psychology are: the nervous system, sensation and perception, learning and memory, intelligence, language and thinking, growth and development, motivation and emotion, personality, stress, psychological disorders, ways of treating those disorders, sexual behaviour, and the behaviour of people in social settings such as groups and organisations.

The goals of psychology, like other sciences, are to *describe, explain, predict and control* (Coon & Mitterer, 2008*)* the phenomena it studies. Psychology, thus, attempts to describe, explain, predict and control behaviour and mental processes. Psychology as a science of behaviour, attempts to explain the 'why' and 'how' of behaviour. The knowledge of psychology can also be applied to solve various

problems facing human beings, be it at home, society, work place or in the whole world. However, there are many 'professionals' who practice applying psychology without any type of training in psychology. They are somewhat like quacks or 'jhola chhap' doctors. They may be called 'pseudo-psychologists'. In order to further clarify, let us describe some of the pseudo-psychologies.

1.4.3 Pseudo-Sciences/Pseudo-Psychology

A gemologist, graphologist, numerologist, palmist or an astrologer, all claim to solve your problems of life and predict your future. They seem to be psychologists. But these disciplines are categorized under "pseudo- psychology" or "pseudo-sciences".

A Pseudopsychology is any unfounded system that superficially resembles psychology. Many pseudopsychologies give the appearance of science but are actually false. (*Pseudo* means "false"). Pseudopsychologies change little over time because their followers avoid evidence that contradicts their beliefs. Scientists, in contrast, actively look for contradictionsas a way to advance knowledge. They are skeptical critics of their own theories (Schick & Vaughn, 2001).

Descriptions of some of the pseudo-psychologies are given below:

1) **Palmistry:** False system that claims to reveal personality traits and to predict the future by "reading" lines on the palms of the hands. It is also called 'chiromancy'. 'Chiromancy' comes from the Greek word for hand (Cheir). The most famous 19th century palmist, went by the name of *Cheiro*.

   Palmistry is the practice of telling fortunes from the lines, marks and patterns on the hands, particularly, the palms.

2) **Phrenology:** False and antiquated system based on the belief that personality traits are revealed by the shape of the skull. Phrenology was started in the 19th century by a German anatomy teacher, Franz Gall. His theory - 'Personality was revealed by bumps on the skull'.

   - Phrenologists assumed that parts of the brain governed different personality characteristics.
   - Like muscles, parts of the brain that were used more often, tended to get bigger. In turn, these enlarged areas pushed on the skull causing bumps.
   - With advances in Neurology, this was shown to be impossible, and phrenology declined.
   - Although some brain areas do have specific functions, they are not directly related to specific personality traits.

3) **Graphology:** False system based on the belief that handwriting can reveal personality traits.

   - Indicates that personality is revealed by a person's handwriting.
   - Some companies in USA use handwriting analysis to evaluate job applicants.
   - Definitely, valuable in detecting forgeries.
   - Careful test of accuracy in psychological studies have shown that graphologists score close to zero in rating personality.

4) **Numerology:** False system based on the belief that personality traits are revealed by certain numbers, usually birthdays (date, month and year).They are the database from which a numerologist is able to describe you, sight unseen. Number values are assigned to the letters in your name. By adding these, with the numbers in your birth date, in a multitude of combinations, a numerologist establishes your key numbers. He then interprets the meaning of these key numbers, which results in a complete description of your personal characteristics.

5) **Astrology:** False system based on the belief that human behaviour is influenced by the position of planets and stars. It is based on the assumption that the position of the planets and stars at the time of a person's birth determines personality characteristics and affects behaviour.

In its modern guise, astrology is based on the assertion that the apparent positions of certain objects in the solar system at the time an individual is born, are somehow correlated with his or her personality, activities, preferences and even major life events such as marriages, divorces, accidents etc.

Pseudo-psychologies are not supported by scientific evidence. Belief in pseudo-psychologies is based on the following thinking errors:

i) Uncritical acceptance: The tendency to believe generally positive or flattering descriptions of oneself.

ii) Fallacy of positive instances: The tendency to remember or notice information that fits one's expectations, while forgetting discrepancies.

iii) Barnum effect: The tendency to consider a personal description accurate if it is stated in general terms. (Coon & Mitterer, 2008).

Psychology is neither common sense nor pseudoscience. Contrary to pseudo-sciences scientific psychology is based on objectivity, empirical evidence and critical thinking.

Self Assessment Questions

1) The term psychology is derived from two Greek words: ..... and .....

2) Psychology was first defined in terms of:

   a) Soul b) Mind c) Consciousness d) Behaviour

3) Psychology is defined as the science of ..... and .....

4) Following does not come under Pseudo Psychology:

   a) Astrology b) Graphology c) Astronomy d) Palmistry

1.4.4 Principles of Critical Thinking

According to Rathus (2008), psychologists are guided by scientific principles, and one hallmark of science is *critical thinking*. A group of psychologists (McGovern 1989) defined the goals of critical thinking as fostering the following thinking skills:

- Development of skepticism about explanations and conclusions.
- The ability to inquire about causes and events.
    i) Increased curiosity about behaviour
    ii) Knowledge about research methods.
    iii) The ability to analyse arguments critically.

According to Beyer (1995), critical thinking means reasoned judgments (logical and well thought out judgments).

Let us now consider some principles of critical thinking, as pointed out by Rathus (2008). These are as follows:

1) **Be skeptical:** Keep an open mind. Politicians and advertisers try to persuade you. Accept nothing as the truth until you have examined the evidence.
2) **Examine definition of term:** Some statements are true when a term is defined in one way but not when the term is defined in another way. So try to follow the real meaning of a term.
3) **Examine the assumptions or premises of arguments:** Consider the statement that one can not learn about human beings by engaging in research with animals. One premise in the statement seems to be that human beings are not animals. One premise in the statement seems to be that human beings are not animals. We are, of course, social animals.
4) **Be cautious from drawing conclusion from evidence:** Suppose you see a driver drinking, before he/she met with an accident. You are too quick to draw a conclusion that 'drinking was the cause of accident'. However, there may be other causes such as bad road , mechanical failure or fault of the other driver. One or more of which might have been the cause of the accident.
5) **Consider alternative interpretations of research evidence:** You read a statement based on a research that, frustration leads to aggression. However, all frustrated people are not necessarily aggressive. Similarly, aggressive behaviour is not due to frustration alone. Though research evidence is accepted without question, researchers may differ in their interpretation of the same. So, you must think of other alternative interpretations of results rather than blindly accepting the explanation given by a researcher.
6) **Do not over simplify:** Most human behaviour involves complex interaction of genetic and environmental influences. Also consider the issue of whether psychopathy helps people with psychological problems. A broad answer to this question? simple yes or no ? might be over simplifying. It is more worthwhile to ask, *What type of psychopathy,* practiced by *whom,* is most helpful, for *what kind of problem?*
7) **Do not over generalise:** Consider the statement that one can not learn about human beings by engaging in research with non human animals. Is the truth of the matter an all-or-nothing issue.
8) **Apply critical thinking to all areas of life:** A skeptical attitude and a demand for evidence are not only useful in college but are of value in all areas of life. Be skeptical when you are bombarded by TV commercials, or when political causes try to sweep you up or when you see the latest cover stories about unidentified flying objects etc.

These are the kinds of principles that guide psychologists' thinking as they observe behaviour, engage in research, or advise clients, as to how to improve the quality of their lives. Now let us look at the nature of tasks psychologists are engaged in.

1.4.5 The Tasks of Psychology

Parameswaran & Beena (2002) have suggested the tasks of psychology, which are described as follows:

1) Firstly, a science of behaviour should observe, investigate and identify factors which influence behaviour and also assess their relative influences.

2) It must investigate the role of each of these factors, separately and together in producing similarities and differences in behaviour.

3) Based on these investigations, psychology should arrive at generalisations in the form of theories, laws and principles explaining the similarities and also the differences in behaviour

4) It should also explain the complimentary functions of the factors and the processes, in generating similarities as well as differences among people.

5) Since behaviour is purposive, psychology must investigate the nature, kinds and number of purposes, their origin and development, and the relationship among them.

6) Since behaviour changes, it is the responsibility of psychology to study and explain the nature of such changes, kinds, the processes which govern them and the interaction among different kinds of changes.

7) While changes in behaviour are to be understood, stability and consistency in behaviour also need to be explained.

8) The master concern of psychology is to explain how change and stability, similarities and differences, are organised and integrated to produce both generality and uniqueness in behaviour.

Psychologists are engaged in the above tasks, and they are thus, quite different from pseudo-psychologists.

Self Assessment Questions

1) Topics included in Psychology are:

   a) Learning b) Memory c) Thinking d) All of them

2) Physics is to Physical Sciences as Psychology is to ..... Sciences

3) The goals of Psychology are to ....., ..., ... and ..... behaviour

4) The first laboratory in Psychology was established in the year .....

5) The first laboratory in Psychology was established by ....

6) Psychology is the study of Human and ..... behaviour.

1.5 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed the origin and evolution of psychology as an independent academic discipline. We have also defined psychology and discussed the nature and characteristics of science and behaviour.

Further, we have also discussed the meaning and concept of psychology, and the principles of critical thinking that guide psychologists. Finally, some of the pseudo-psychologies have been described and the tasks of psychologists have been highlighted.

This introduction to the meaning and concept of psychology is useful to students or anybody who wants to learn psychology, in clarifying some of the misconceptions of psychology, understand and appreciate psychology, as a scientific discipline, and make them informed consumers of psychological researches.

1.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) Discuss the origin and evolution of psychology.
2) What are the differences between psychology and pseudo- psychology ?
3) List the topics covered by psychology.
4) Enumerate the characteristics of behaviour.
5) Try and think of some examples of pseudo- psychologies that you have believed or that you have seen others following one or more pseudo-psychologies. What is your experience?
6) Describe the characteristics of science. Describe psychology as a science.
7) Illustrate the tasks of psychologists.
8) Explain the principles of critical thinking.
9) Define psychology.

1.7 GLOSSARY

Behaviour : Observable actions and responses of human beings and animals. Behaviour also includes not so directly observable activities, such as, inner mental (cognitive) processes (e.g. feelings and thoughts)? as long as they can be observed and measured in a systematic way.

Behaviourism : Emphasises that psychology should focus on behaviour rather than on mind.

Critical thinking : Critical thinking means reasoned judgments (logical and well thought out judgments).

Pseudo-psychology : Any unfounded system that superficially resembles psychology.

Psychology : The science of human behaviour and cognitive (mental) processes.

Science : Science is a systematised body of knowledge gathered through carefully observing and measuring events.

Answers to SAQs.

1) Psyche and Logus; 2- a; 3- Behaviour and Cognitive / Mental processes;

4- c; 5- d; 6- Social / Behavioural ; 7- Understand, Describe, Predict and Control; 8- 1879; 9- Wundt; 10-Animal

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