# **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**1. MEANING AND NATURE OF PSYCHOLOGY**

The word “psychology” is derived from two Greek words, psyche (soul) and logos (study). So psychology literally means a “study about soul”. Psychology is an academic and applied discipline which deals with study of human behavior and mental process.

Psychology is the study of the thoughts and actions of individuals. It has been historically defined as the science of soul, the science of mind, the science of consciousness and the science of behavior. Let us examine these definitions one by one and see if any of them can enable us to understand accurately what psychology is and what it deals with.

* 1. **Psychology as a Science of Soul**

According to dictionary, psychology means “The science of soul” This is the oldest definition of psychology. The word “soul” is a very ambiguous and mystic term. As psychology aspires to be a science, it must adopt a scientific and not a speculative procedure. Science observes facts, and soul is not open to observation or experiment: The definition of psychology as the science of soul is, therefore, rejected as unscientific.

* 1. **Psychology as the Science of Mind**

To many, the word “Mind” is quite as vague as the word “soul”. If “Mind” means something mysterious inside us, it would be just the same as should, and this definition too, would deserve to be discredited. Ask the man in the street what he means by “Mind” and he will tell you that is it something in his body, or rather head, which thinks, feels and wills. So if we define psychology as the science of mind as a layman thinks, this definition have no improvement upon the previous definition of psychology as the science of soul.

But like Hume and Titchener, we take mind in the sense of mental process, this definition would certainly be better than the previous one. Psychology would then mean the science of mental processes. But what are the mental processes? The answer is that they are our processes of knowing, feeling and willing. The processes which are commonly said to go on ‘in’ our mind. Let us illustrate them by example. If a wasp stings my finger, I know what has happened to me, feel a pain, run after the wasp and will to kill it. I know, I feel and I will. The processes of the mind are facts. There are real happenings, and there is no mystery about them. This conception of the mind is sometimes called the empirical conception, because mental process can be experienced. It is also called the scientific conception because they can be observed and experimented upon.

To sum up, the definition of psychology as the science of mental processes seems to be quite reasonable and therefore commands assent. This is subject to one objection, however, according to this definition, psychology is concerned with the study of mental processes. Now, even a superficial consideration shows that a person can study only his own mental processes. To know the mental process of other persons and animals, one has to see what they do and “what they do” is called their “behaviour”. I can say that the man is grieved only when I see him weeping. We can know the mental processes of others only through the observation of their behaviour.

The definition of psychology as the science of mental processes is a half-truth.

* 1. **Psychology as a Science of Behaviour**

By ‘behaviour’ is generally understood anything that a living-does. It means “response”, “reactions” or “adjustments of an organism to various kinds of stimuli. A stimulus is the outside cause of mental process. It has already been said that in order to understand the minds of other persons and animals, we have to study their behaviour. Hence psychology has been defined as the science of behaviour — a definition that looks harmless enough.

Infect, there can be no objective or external behaviour without the subjective or inner mental processes of which the former is expression. Hence this definition of psychology as science of behaviour is rejected as one-sided.

“Thus psychology is concerned with the study of behaviour as well as mental process.”

**2. MEANING AND NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

In the previous section, meaning and nature of psychology are discussed. There are many branches of psychology. One of them is educational psychology.

**2.1 Definition of Educational Psychology**

This branch of psychology is the scientific study of educational problems. Educational psychology, as a science consists of theories and principles applicable to teaching-learning process. It provides theoretical knowledge for better understanding of teaching-learning process within the context of all its complexities. In a few words educational psychology is a study of learning and teaching process. As an applied science, it draws on theories, principles and practices of psychology and constructs application in the area of education. The educational psychology studies the child’s behaviour and suggests remedies to improve and to be an effective learner. The scope of educational psychology is confined to the study of individual’s behaviour within context of educational institutional framework.

Dr. Abdul-Hai-Alvi writes in his book “Educational Psychology”, “Educational Psychology means such education which explains about all those changes which take place right from birth till becoming adolescent at various stages of development. This knowledge tasks about all good or bad effects which affect upon a child’s development, and in the light of this study forms such rules and regulations which are kept in mind during planning and management of the school. Study of human behaviour and inner mental processes are specifics of educational psychology.

**2.2 Scope of Educational Psychology**

There are many common tasks in teaching. Educational psychology gives us help in solving the problems that arise in performing those tasks. These problems can be found in all phases of teaching. Before teaching, during teaching, and post-instructional-and in all parts of teaching process-setting objectives, understanding student characteristics, appreciating the nature of the learning process, selecting and using teaching methods, and evaluating learning. Educational objectives reflect the purpose of schooling in general and of teaching in particular. Educational psychology deals with ways of stating, classifying, and using these objectives in teaching. Student characteristics must be considered in understanding the different ways students learn. How they develop intellectually, socially and emotionally. Individual differences effect the teaching, learning process. It also influence teachers choice of teaching methods and ways in which teachers use and combine these methods to achieve the best results.

Finally, educational psychology helps us evaluate learning by means of tests, projects, or demonstrations of various kinds. The teaching tasks and the problems related to them set the research agenda for educational psychologists as they investigate effective teaching and learning.

**3. ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS**

Educational psychology does not treat teaching and learning as separate from each other. They are seen as closely related, mutually inclusive, interactive aspects of education.

Educational psychology plays a vital role in making teaching-learning effective. Educational psychologists examine several theories and techniques of learning and problem-solving. The teacher requires mastery over the subject matter and command over methods of teaching to effectively communicate and manage students in a classroom. A teacher must have adequate and sound knowledge of different theories and principles of teaching and learning for achievement of better results of teaching – learning process.

**3.1 Understanding the Learner**

Teachers are to understand students, their behaviour, their level of understanding, their growth & development and their psychology. The study of psychology is imperative for a teacher to function as behavioural scientist to understand influence of school environment on children behaviour, and to have a deeper and critical understanding of educational process.

**3.2 Understanding Instructional Problem**

Educational psychology facilitates a teacher to understand instructional problems and to promote learning in and out of class rooms. A teacher has to provide guidance and counseling to students. The intensive study of educational psychology adequately equips a teacher with skills of guidance and counseling. A teacher must have knowledge of growth and development of a child and his or her requirements at different stages of development. The child is the central theme in educational psychology. The main concern of an educational psychologist is to find out how a child learns effectively, what changes happen in a child as a result of learning, when a child learns, what motivates a child to learn and change, what a child wants to learn and why. There is always the same concern of an effective teacher.

**3.3 Understanding Educational Process**

The learners are also interested to have understanding of educational process. But their understanding of educational process may be considered as in complete and to large extent pre-scientific. Educational psychology enhances the student’s understanding of educational process and rectifies misconceptions. A teacher having analytical critical understanding of teaching – learning process is expected to be a more effective than a teacher having not studied educational psychology. Having sound knowledge and strong grip over the subject matter is not sufficient to make a teacher competent and effective; it is very vital and imperative to know theories, principles, practices and applications of educational psychology.

**3.4 Self-Understanding as a Teacher**

In addition to understanding of human behaviour and teaching-learning climate, self-analysis and self-understanding extend, convenience and comfort to manages class and ensures effective deliverance within the given learning situation. Knowledge of educational psychology enables a teacher to have better understanding of oneself, both as a person and as a teacher.

A teacher & possessing knowledge of educational psychology develops and adopts scientific attitude and view-point to deal with professional issues and academic pursuits. This encourages a teacher to proceed methodical while teaching students. A teacher learns to approach academic issues and problems with open-mind and clear-thinking.

The contribution of educational psychology to enhancement effectiveness and efficiency of teaching-learning process cannot be denied and ignored.

“Psychology serves as a foundational discipline in education just as physical sciences serve engineering”.

Just as the physical sciences serve engineering. Engineers designing a bridge or a refinery must have knowledge of physics and chemistry, of course but also must have aesthetic, economic, and political understanding. Similarly, teachers must combine insights from educational psychology with their thinking about what is good for their students and for society with sociological awareness of community dynamics, economic analysis of costs, and political knowledge about the connections between government and education.

Educational psychology can provide insight into many aspects of educational practices. It offers important ideas about learning and about influence in learning in families, business and industry, and the community. It also bears on educational administration, curriculum development, counseling, and other educational activities.

However, the study of psychology is essential for a teacher to understand learners, to provide guidance and counseling to them and to create positive & learning-teaching environment. Equipped with theories and concepts of educational psychology, a teacher can better understand himself or herself as a person and as a teacher. This enables a teacher to effectively manage a class. An understanding of the psychological implications of what a teacher attempts to accomplish enhances his/her competence and effectiveness.