Instructor : Mr BOUNADJA Semestre:1

Level : First year

Module : SHS

Course :one / An Introduction to Education and Psychology

1. **What is Psychology?**

It is a term that most of us have heard about but did not study scholarly. It is a subject which all of us have lived with from birth. The main concern of psychology is you, me and every individual. In what way is it about anybody? It focuses on our behaviour or what we do and what we do not from moment to moment, and the reasons why we do what we do.

‘ Psychology’comes from two Greeck words ‘Psyche’which means ‘mind’ or ‘soul’ and ‘logic’which means the study of. So it is ‘the study of mind or soul’.Minds or souls are elementsbelieved to differentiate innate objects and plants from animals and human beings(Lema, 2004).

Psychology is defined as the scientific study of human behaviour and mental processes. Behaviour which means ‘actions’ or responses that come unconsciously or in a conscious way are the topic research of Psychologists. They try to explore human beings’ mental activities such as thinking, memorising, understanding and perceiving.

Psychologists explore concepts like conception, cognition, attention, emotion, phenomenology, motivation, brain functioning, personality, behaviour, and interpersonal relationships. Psychologists also try to consider the unconscious part of mind. They employ empirical methods to infer causal and correlational relationships between psychosocial variables. Based on observation and experimentation, psychologists set methods to study the human behaviour. According to Lema (2004), the objectives of psychology are to:

-Understand behaviour

-Explain behaviour

-Predict behaviour

-Control behaviour

1.2 **Branches of Psychology**

a.Social Psuchology: Studies the behaviour of people in different groups and investigates their influence on one another.

b.Developmental Psychology: Covers aspects of development of human behaviour.

c.Clinical Psychology: Deals with diagnosis and treatment of abnormal behaviour.

d.Industrial Psychology: Has to do with the study of production in industries. Industrial and Organizational Psychologists address the problem of training personnel, improve working conditions and the issues related to employ and production.

e.Educational Psychology : How human beings learn in educational settings, the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching, and the social psychology of schools as organizations.

2.1.**Educational Psychology : Meaning and Importance**

Educational Psychology is one of many branches of Psychology. It is an essential area of study for prospective teachers. This knowledge will enable to meet the objective of preparing us for a teaching career. So let us first define Educational Psychology.

**What is Educational Psychology**

Educational Psychology is the branch that specializes in understanding teaching and learning in educational settings (Stantrock, 2004).

Educational Psychology is concerned with the study of learners, learning and teaching. Its principle focus is on the processes by which information, skills, values and attitudes are transmitted from teachers to pupils in the classroom. Educational Psychology is concerned with how students learn and develop, often focusing on subgroups such as gifted children and those subject to specific disabilities. In short, it focuses on the application of principles of psychology to the practice of teaching and learning.

Educational Psychology discusses in details, the characteristics of learners and how to apply psychology principles in making the learners and learning process effective. It includes not only childhood and adolescence, but involves the social, emotional and cognitive process throughout the entire lifespan. Educational Psychology incorporates other disciplines like developmental psychology, behavioural psychology and cognitive psychology.

What should be noted is that the major principle of underlying Educational Psychology is that there are strategies which are likely to be effective in the interaction between teachers and students.

2.2. **Historical Background of Educational Psychology**

Educational Psychology was founded by several psychologists before the twentieth century. Some of these great Western pioneers were:

**1.William James (1842-1910) :** He gave lectures to teachers and argued that lessons should be given to children just beyond the child’s level of knowledge and understanding so as to stretch the child’s mind.

**2. John Dewey (1859-1952) :** He established the first educational psychology laboratory in the US in 1894. There he became the driving force in practical application of psychology to education. He believed that children should not be narrowly educated in academic topics but should learn how to think and solve problems for themselves.

**3.E.L. Thorndike (1874-1949) :** He initiated an emphasis on assessment and measurement, and promoted the scientific underpinning of learning. Thorndike argued that one of school’s most important tasks is to motivate children’s reasoning skills. Furthermore, he suggested the idea that Educational Psychology must have a scientific base that it should focus strongly on measurement.

**4.Jean Piaget (1896-1980) :** Piaget is known for his search on children’s cognitive development. He studied the intellectual development of his own three children. The theory states that children pass through 4 stages in the development of intelligence and formal thought process. These are: (1) the sensorimotor stage, (2) the preoperational stage, (3) the concrete operational stage, and (4) the formal operational stage.

Jean Piaget provided support for the idea that children think differently than adults. His research identified several important milestones in the mental development of children. His work also generated interest in cognitive and developmental psychology. Piaget’s theories are widely accepted and studied today by students of both psychology and education.

**(5) B.F.Skinner (1904-1990) :** He was an American psychologist who joined the psychology department at Harvard university and remained there for the rest of his life. He is one of the leaders of behaviourism and his work contributed immensely to experimental psychology. He also invented the ‘‘Skinner box,’’ in which a rat learns to obtain food by pressing a lever.

B.F.Skinner is famous for his research on operant conditioning and negative reinforcement. He developed a device called ‘‘ the cumulative recorder ’’. He found that behaviour did not depend on the preceding stimulus as Watson and Pavlov maintained. Instead, Skinner suggested that behaviours were dependent on what happens after the response. He called this operant behaviour. Skinner, on operant conditioning, also discovered and described schedules of reinforcement.

During the last decades of 20th century Educational Psychologists have increasingly focused on socio-emotional aspects of pupils’ lives and information processing. Educational Psychology is now one of the major branches of psychology that we should not neglect to learn.

**2.3. Importance of Educational Psychology**

The objectives of education are realized in terms of behavioural changes among the students. Teachers can create the learning conditions to provide knowledge and experiences to students for the change of behaviour by relating teaching to learning through the use of appropriate teaching methods.

Knowledge of psychology can be helpful in many areas of education. Information and skills obtained from educational psychology is not just theoretical by apply practical methods dealing with classroom problems. Educational Psychology assists teachers to prepare instruction that will suit the age, needs and interests of pupils. Knowledge of psychology is helpful as the developmental characteristics and needs of the students are taken into account by teachers in the formulation of required curriculum to maximize its benefits to both the pupils and the nation in whole.

In short, Educational Psychology is important because it helps the teacher to understand:

-How people learn.

-The needs and problems of pupils /children / learners.

-Why the pupils behave the way they do, and how to motivate them.

-Teaching and learning situations.

-Application of teaching and learning principles.

In fact, Educational Psychology is an effective tool for teachers to plan, organize and evaluate the teaching/ learning activities in the class. This is why the study of educational psychology is included in the curricula of teacher education in all countries.