

Psychology of Everyday
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Lecture – 01
Understanding Psychology

Welcome to this first session of this course, Psychology of Everyday life. As we had told in the introduction that we will try to understand behavior from various angle and going to the realm of what is normal or how do we label abnormal. So, the most common word which comes to our mind, when we talk of behavior is, of course, we understand that everybody behaves as long as they are alive and everybody is bothered about the behavior of the others. This behavior and understanding, it has been a concern from the ages since probably almost Homo-Sapien started thinking.

So, let me tell a word about the format which we are going to follow, is not it. What we have decided that instead of giving you lot of theory and you try to discuss, pick up things from our life around us and then discuss it, so it will be more of a conversation and we will try to give you specific inputs.

Those who are interested in theories, those who are interested in the technical jargons, are we already have some courses say like; Introduction to Psychology, Brief Introduction to Psychology, you have a course on Psychiatry.

Yes, psychiatry in another one on how the Brain Creates Mind.

Then we have a course on the biological basis of behavior.

Yes.

We have a course on the psychology of adjustment. So, there are five-six courses already. from where you can come across theories, models, different kinds of jargons, which are used in the technical world. This course especially, we have tailor-made. So, that we minimize on the jargons, we minimize on the number of concepts that we discuss or the models, the theoretical prepositions or the empirical findings, we do not want to engage ourselves into that.

Right.

Our intention is to with very what you call more glaringly visible kind of examples that we see around us, we take those examples, we talk about them.

Yes.

So that people, in general, can become very much clear in terms of deciphering the nuances of that behavior, which usually the clinical practitioners would do and then to understand how much of it can be considered as aberrations, which require treatment or any other.

Kind of intervention.

So, it would help all of you and us also, that after each weekly videos which you see, if you can ask more and more questions which.

We will at for the next session. So, maybe it will become more tailor-made to your needs and so we are keeping it with some broad framework and we are open to discussion. So, please feel free to ask a question at the end of it. So, I would ask the first question to Professor Braj.

This word psychology has become very popular and this psychology of every behavior of everything of each act and of decisions of language people are out and it has become a very-very popular also in magazines, in we see an article on psychology almost. So, I would like that if you could just tell us, whether this thing of psychology is it a phenomenon of the modern world or this process of trying to understand behavior, was present in the form of psychology in times immemorial and how did it evolve to the way it is now?

I must compliment you because the last part of your question had the answer also.

Yes.

Human beings by default are inquisitive. We always have shown our interest in terms of understanding, how thing goes in and around us.

Right.

Things which are even unseen to us say like sitting in a closed room, I think of a space, I think of life after death. So, things which are very difficult to visualize extremely abstract things, human beings have been interested even in those things. So, by nature, we should accept the fact that as human beings, we have been very-very inquisitive and this has helped us lot in terms of understanding the world around us, which includes our own behavior.

Right.

Human beings by default have tried to understand each and everything and some people were highly accurate in terms of making this kind of what you call introspection based kind of an finding, which was derived out of one's own experience. Because few more people you know their experiences also came forward, then people started collating them and this is how know shape would have come in terms of defining how human beings behave in general, Gradually, society would have given recognition to these individuals.

Right.

Who was little more capable in terms of deciphering the behavior.

Yeah.

Of others.

Right.

And finally, this would have lead to some kind of a stream, a discipline, which in turn lead to taxonomy.

Yeah.

So, now you have no terms for each and everything you have symptoms, you have what you call classificatory mechanism, both what the WHO does as the international classification of diseases or both what the who does the international classification of diseases or what the DSM does for psychiatric disorders; and then finally, people tried to package it, as if this kind of behavior, a set of behavior would be classified as one kind of an anomaly.

Right.

And this kind of an anomaly would be no subjected to x kind of treatment.

Yes.

Either through pills, drugs, injections.

Right.

Or kind of behavioral interventions.

Right.

So, people by default, they were inquisitive and I think perhaps all human beings should be kind enough and graceful enough to accept.

Yes.

That as you said in the beginning that people are more keen at observing others.

Yes.

Than observing their own selves.

Their own selves.

And we find fault mostly in others compared to.

Ourselves.

Ourselves and therefore, when the clinical practitioners whether it is clinical psychologist, psychiatrist even those who are in the allied areas of mental health and psychiatric nursing, psychiatric social work, all of them they have a larger scope. There are certain problems or conditions, whichever word one wants to use and there are methods of identifying them, traditions will use the word diagnose them, I am using a softer word for them.

So, you are able to identify the problem the nature of the problem and the kind of a mix that you find in the behavior which usually is not found in others.

Right.

And then you say that ok, this person is deviating from the normal course and therefore, is diagnosed with some kind of an anomaly

Absolutely.

A disorder.

So, sitting in India, I think before we go further let us go back because India has an all Greece also had it, and Europe also had it, and China also had it and that is go said 2500 3000 years back. All this oriental eastern culture, they always had written, whether a scripture or writing or philosophical writing or just a sermon, but they always had. If you look at them now, even from the lens of modern psychology, they always had this element of what psychology is in the philosophy like Upanishads, if not Vedas, at least Upanishad with very-very deep introspection.

The Indian philosophical systems had ways of living, which they had devised like the pillars of society like; Dharm, Arth, Kama, Moksha right. So, they already society even 3000 years back was an evolving mechanism, which probably was talking of mental well-being.

That is true, that is true.

And then Buddha came who was, who; obviously, Buddhist philosophy can be translated to the today at present-day psychology to the nearest. Right, he was talking about detachment and desires and all which we all talk about these days. China had Confucius and Laozi.

Yeah.

And Greek philosophy, all mythology of Greece is about psychology only. So, from these rich traditions, modern psychology would you agree it is just a phenomenon of in the modern terminology of last 200 years maximum or less than that?

Less than that, less than that.

Less than that 100 years.

But frankly speaking, as you rightly said, we have this cultural, rich cultural repository.

Yes.

Largely what people use to consider as a philosophy or as part of religion, but even if you break even the elements of modern-day psychology. You have behavior, the manifested behavior as one of the components.

Right,

The value belief system that the person has.

Right.

And the kind of affective or the emotional response that an individual has.

Right.

To the stimulus the situation that one is encountering as well as to the outcome.

Right.

After the interaction with that situation is over.

Right.

And entire psychology is perhaps only about how much of harmony you have been able to maintain and how much of conflict you have been able to invite.

Right.

An entire discourse of disorder or.

Right.

Order right what in psychology you know, we go for abnormal psychology, psychopathology.

Right.

Clinical psychology, even counseling psychology.

Right.

For instance; it is all about harmony and conflict.

Right; so, in from if you just continue this that epics like Greek epics, Omar and especially something like Mahabharata in India. Mahabharata almost probably brought out all possible conflicts and though it never talks about the clear unconscious and conscious. So, it would fall nearer to more cognitive framework, but it always talked about things, which can go or the things which can go into a bizarre direction. These are with person involved in handling and managing those things on a daily life. So, probably what they were writing at that time, they had probably realized what psychology is trying to treat today.

Exactly, it was the full spectrum.

Absolutely.

So, right from one end to the extreme end.

Yes and the so, prob in at least this one epic, both the pros and cons, the follies and the rewards of both good behavior and bad behavior were mentioned.

Exactly.

Probably, they were using more stories than directly putting theories, but even good behavior, what appears as a good behavior does not always get good rewards or good side also may have a flip side to it. The goodness of one angle can be badness.

That is true, see once you have a bright image of any object,

Yes.

Because you are looking from.

Yeah.

(Refer Time: 12:47) perspective.

Yes.

So, say if that perspective is the light that you are emitting on the object.

Yes.

Then that object by default would create a darker shadow on the other side.

On the other side so, all good things would also have a flip side.

Yeah; so, even I would say, I mean it would, I am not trying to bring it to a very small frame, but what Krishna was telling Arjun, when Arjun did not want to fight at the just at the beginning of Mahabharata and the way Geeta, that was what Krishna told, opens up then Arjun was probably having what in modern terms we would call as depression, acute onset of depression or anxiety. He was saying my hands are shivering this bows slipping out of my hand, my mouth is drying and my heart is and he was totally what he wanted to do was, run away.

So, if somebody comes with these symptoms to a modern-day psychologist, what they would do is either advised him cognitive behavior therapy or some behavior therapy or may be refer to a psychiatrist for medication. So, I often wonder what was Krishna having at that time, because the war was ready, everybody was ready to fight and the main warrior is saying that I cannot. So, he had mantras he could have told mantras [FL] he says it 108 times and, but he was not trying for that. So, what probably he did was and this is very important to what the topic of our course, because how do people handle the conflicts, the problems, the troubles which they face in daily life on from their own resources.

So, what Krishna probably was doing is he gave one shortest on the field cognitive behavior therapy. In a; so, in fact, many psychologists; Indian psychologists some of them have written on this episode.

Yes.

And they call it counseling.

Counseling.

Ok, they say that Krishna did a fantastic job.

Yes.

And the outcome was very visible.

Yeah, but I think it is more than counseling because counseling is very-very problem-oriented focused which we will discuss later; whereas, psychotherapy goes to a deeper thing. But Geeta itself goes to much deeper levels.

Much deeper.

Than counseling would be what is the problem? Why do not you want to fight? He said no, I cannot fight my own relative. He said fine, if you do not want to fight (Refer Time: 15:29) means, I will tell you why you should fight, but he it did not end there. He went into the philosophical system, he went into the ancient knowledge which was existing before Krishna.

So, usually in the modern-day context, this is what will be considered to be part of the CBT program.

CBT program or some as elements of psychodynamics and, but the surprising thing was that we have not been able to device any 90-minute therapy till date. So, what Krishna could do. So, that is one part of the psychology which handles. But as a psychologist, there are lot of other terms which come when you talk of psychology. Like organizational psychology, social psychology and so on, so forth.

In fact.

So, what is your take of that I mean are these divisions very valid or are they just functional divisions or.

I am not sure how many psychologists would agree to my viewpoint.

Yeah.

My understanding and take on this matter is that it is basically psychology is one.

Right.

Because we have our own limitations, we cannot understand each and everything with the kind of complex elements it has.

Right.

Therefore, we have split it into different divisions.

Right.

So, if you are just looking at the behavior in an or initial set up then we call it earlier, it was called industrial psychology, then it became industrial and organizational psychology.

Yes.

Now, people call it organizational behavior right. You study the same human dynamics in a community set up, people call it is community psychology, larger social system, then you call it social psychology. So, but basically, it is the nuances of that behavior still remains the same, human being is same whether you are in your house, in your family, in the society, in the community, in the organization, on the table of a clinical practitioner.

So.

You are the same.

If I understand you correctly, what you mean that is the basic frame the foundation the pillars of psychology are the same.

Exactly.

The basic processes are the same, which come out of a general study of human behavior and these when applied to a specific situation can be worked out as various disciplines.

Exactly.

Yeah.

This is how people name them you know this is one field of psychology this is.

Right.

This is that field of psychology.

So, this terminology, because this terminology is also entered it has been altered, where a lot of young people will agree, whoever doing management and all that you said of behavior dynamics and human resource management; so.

That is.

I think all this, the moment people start studying the behavior, whatever terminology you may give, whatever set of parameters you want to study, but ultimately it is all psychology.

Exactly.

Right.

Right.

If you are setting the behavior of a soldier, so there is nothing called war behavior it is like, you have to know why somebody is fighting.

Ha, for instance, this very example you know there is sub-discipline.

You are right.

It says know, it is military psychology.

Right.

Now, I am a normal human being who is serving force.

Right.

My behavior.

Right.

The components of my dynamics, human dynamics is the same. Now I might say that this is very exceptional kind of a war place.

Right.

Therefore I would like to rename it as military psychology, because I would be specifically looking at the induction program, mid carrier training or say post-war kind of psychological outcomes.

Right.

Somebody might say, but it is still an organization.

Right.

Arm forces is also an organizational setup.

Right.

So, why are you trying to you know de-link between organizational behavior and military psychology?

Right.

But people have a fascination, know the world is happy drawing lines after lines.

Yes.

So, the what you have already said that there is a behavior, there is an action, there is cognition; that is thought and judgment and abstraction and all those qualities, there is an emotion and then between these three there are attitudes, motivation.

Exactly.

Right; so, they remain universal as the human brain is evolved; is not it?

Exactly.

So, In fact, we say that cognitive, conative and affective.

Affective.

So, everything human being can be just reduced to these three elements and the interplay of these three elements is what is psychology. So, for the benefit of people who are listening, effective means.

Emotion.

Emotions.

Cognitive is a thought process.

The thought process with all judgment, rationality.

Exactly.

Abstraction, insight right.

Yeah.

And conative means is what is related to the will or intent action and.

Conative is action.

Action yes.

Action. So, the motor outcome is.

Motor outcomes.

Cognition.

Yeah which also includes the will to some extent, all these areas blur actually, the way neuroscience will talk about.

Yeah, because these are not say independent they do not have an independent existence.

Yes.

One will affect the other.

Right.

So, all three will work in coordination right. So, the more coordinated outcome it finally, elicits the more normal you are, you are the most successful you are. If you have a problem in terms of what you feel and what you have to do, if there is an inconsistency, if there is a discordance then of course, you will end up in a trouble.

Right; so, what you are saying essentially is that whatever difference of behavior we may see in people who do various things from a doctor to a politician, to soldier, to a manager, to a businessman, they are all superficial differences in the field of action. As we go down deeper, the basic framework which pushes them to do will be the same.

Exactly.

Their attitudes, motivation. Now yeah; obviously, because everybody will not act in the same field; so, as it becomes more complex then the fields differ, but the basic reason for acting, the basic feelings, the basic thought process is the same.

Is the same.

More or less.

More or less, yeah.

Within a certain range; obviously, not everybody will behave in the same way.

Yeah, therefore, we have a classification of normal, subnormal, abnormal, so we are right now looking at the broad range; yes in which large segment of this population will fall into.

Right.

So, psychology should actually on the deeper level; should unite people.

It should, because if I know that I and you are the same and we are governed by the same operating principle.

Right.

Then I should be able to appreciate the weirdness that I see in your behavior.

Right.

And you should be able to appreciate the kind of you know megalomania kind of an approach that I show in my behavior.

Right; so.

What I would know the inherent components, the dynamics that leads to this kind of an outcome.

So, that is what probably people like Gandhi realized early in their life.

Those who have realized yes, they have been social celebrities.

They have been social celebrities and they have also probably it is a very important word which is often. I see it is a problem because lot of these deeper issues are been discussed in a very very popular fashionable manner; like empathy is one word. Everybody is talking about empathy, but I really wonder to even practice empathy which is natural to the brain because of.

(Refer Time: 23:41).

You know, when we talk biology we will talk about it, but people; so, I think what you already said it, because people have this tendency to make theories around thing. So, when you make theories around things then obviously, you have to tell theories and, but developing genuine empathy probably would help people.

See we will of course, talk it with an example when we come to understanding behavior from clinical, biological and social-cultural perspective. But this is true that something which is a buzz word nowadays; empathy for instance, is something that we all have within us and it is just a matter of say coining a strategy or prescribing a format to train somebody within a specific period which would magnify the reflection of this kind of an approach. But we all feel good when we look at certain things, we all feel an attachment to certain things. We all feel clear and compassion for certain kinds of things and these are the integral limits of empathy.

Right; so, what you said is that the fashionable things, because of these days if you see, especially in metros and all you have workshops on everything, how to be a good parent, how to how to do the, how to.

See let us take one example nowadays, I think for decades now perhaps one of the widely used programs; one is stress management the other is.

Yes.

Anger management.

I think that is a billion-dollar industry also.

Exactly; now a stress is something which has.

Inherent to us.

Inherent in, yeah of course, it is inherent to us. There is a biological mechanism.

Yes.

And all stress will have to you know take a particular course.

Right.

There is a psychological price that you pay for it and there is also a psychological mechanism of handling it.

Yeah.

Now, when these what you call as structured kind of a training program were not there still stress was available and people were handling it.

True.

And especially in a collectivist culture like arts, where if you are watchman does not see you for two days, next day he will ask [FL].

Right.

Now, we belong to a culture like that.

Yeah absolutely.

Where you realize that people do demonstrate their empathy towards others.

Right.

There is a mechanism which will work as a buffer when you know under duress.

Absolutely.

But still, as you said know this is a million-dollar.

Yeah.

Industry; so, of course, people practice it, there are.

I think it always has been, because everywhere in all the cultures probably.

Exactly.

There were people who were telling and there were people who were always listening. So, this was a Broadway that psychology the broader term we have been able to introduce. I think can after this next section we will move on to how do we look at what is mental health from whatever perspective.

Thanks.