

Govt. College for Girls, Ludhiana
Department of Psychology

BA I Semester 1

UNIT-I

Branches of Psychology

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Branches of Psychology

The major branches of psychology are as follows:

- 1. Abnormal Psychology:** It seeks to describe, explain, predict and control behaviours that are considered unusual and are not normal. Its main focus is on classification, etiology, assessment, treatment, and prevention of **mental disorders**.
- 2. Biological psychology:** Also called physiological psychology, it studies the biological bases of behaviour. These psychologists specialize in a wide range of topics that focus on the functioning of the brain and the nervous system and immune system and how these affect our behaviour.

Branches of Psychology

3. Clinical Psychology: Clinical psychologists are professionally trained practitioners who are concerned with the etiology, diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. Clinical psychologists work in hospitals, clinics and can pursue private practice. But they are different from psychiatrists. A **psychiatrist** is a medically trained doctor with MBBS or MD degree who is licensed and legally authorized to prescribe drugs and medicines, while a clinical psychologist is not.

Branches of Psychology

4. Cognitive Psychology: It focuses on the study of higher mental processes including attention, perception, thinking, language, memory, problem solving, reasoning, judging and decision-making. It deals with how individuals acquire, store, transform, use and communicate information. Cognitive psychologists often collaborate with neuroscientists and computer scientists.

Branches of Psychology

5. Comparative Psychology: It deals with the study of similarities and differences between the behaviour of various **animals** to understand how both humans and other animals behave.

The major focus of this branch is on evolution of behaviour and how it is affected by heredity, nervous system and endocrine system.

Branches of Psychology

- 6. Counselling Psychology:** It is more or less similar to clinical psychology except that counseling psychologists work with a different set of clients- with those who have **mild problems** of social and emotional adjustments. They mostly work in the areas of personal, family, marital or career counseling.
- 7. Cross-cultural Psychology:** It focuses on the similarities and differences in psychological functioning in various cultures and ethnic groups. It examines the role of culture in understanding behaviour, thoughts and emotions.

Branches of Psychology

- 8. Developmental Psychology:** It studies human development across the **life span**. It looks at physical, social, cognitive and personality development from conception to death. It investigates how biological inheritance and environmental forces influence perception, cognition, language, temperament and social relationships.
- 9. Educational and School Psychology:** It is the study of the processes of how people learn and which teaching techniques or methods work best. They also work with educators in solving teaching – learning problems and counseling children having difficulties in school.

Branches of Psychology

- 10. Environmental Psychology:** It studies the effects of the interaction of physical factors such as temperature, humidity, pollution, and natural disasters on human behaviour.
- 11. Experimental Psychology:** It focuses on understanding fundamental causes of behaviour or what can be called as basic research or pure research. The findings of experimental psychology are then applied to solve practical problems.

Branches of Psychology

12. Evolutionary Psychology: It focuses on identifying behaviour patterns that are a result of our **genetic inheritance** from our ancestors.

13. Forensic Psychology: In it psychological principles are applied to **legal profession**. Forensic psychologists look at criteria for determining legal insanity or they may address questions regarding the validity of eyewitness testimony.

Branches of Psychology

14. Health Psychology: This is also called **behavioural medicine**. This field explores the relationship between mind and body. The mind plays important role in many physical diseases such as hypertension, asthma, chronic headache, heart ailments, diabetes, obesity, insomnia, cancer and a variety of other diseases. This field specializes in the study of how psychological factors such as stress influence the origin, prevention, and treatment of physical diseases.

Branches of Psychology

15. Industrial and Organizational Psychology: In it psychological principles are applied to practical problems of work and commerce. It investigates the factors that affect the people working in an organization. Industrial psychologists are mainly involved with the task of employees selection, job analysis, performance evaluation etc. whereas organizational psychologists deal with the issues such as leadership, work motivation, conflict management and organizational development etc.

Branches of Psychology

16. Positive psychology: It is the study of the features that enrich life, such as **happiness, hope, creativity, courage, spirituality, and responsibility**. It studies the predispositions and experiences that make people happy, productive, and successful.

Branches of Psychology

- 17. Social Psychology:** The primary focus of social psychology is on understanding how individuals are affected by other people. In other words Social Psychology investigates group influence on the behaviour of individuals. Social psychologists study attitudes, conformity to authority, interpersonal attraction, attribution processes, group processes, inter-group relations, and so on.
- 18. Sports Psychology:** This branch focuses on the application of psychological principles such as motivation, reaction time to sports or athletic endeavors.



Thank You