• Cognitive processes - every aspect of mental life

Early battles over what psych should study: structuralism, functionalism, behaviourism

• Structuralism
  o Wilhelm wundt – proposed – focus on analysing contents of consciousness
  o Could be carried out by introspection – method in which trained indivs report in detail on conscious experiences in response to stimuli
  o Topics studied and methods employed by structuralists have not survived test of time
  o An early view of psych suggesting that the field should focus on identifying the basic structures of human mind

• Functionalism
  o Structuralism’s focus on dentifying elements (structure) of consciousness challenged by William james
  o Felt new field should focus on functions of consciousness
  o Influenced by darwin’s theory of natural selection – consciousness is a uniquely human concept - therefore it serves a function or else it wouldn’t have evolved – recently received new attention in field of evolutionary psych
  o Faded away as an identifiable ism or school, practical orientation left a lasting impact

• Behaviourism
  o John b Watson
  o Argued that psych should focus on behaviour(actions that can be measured) in a provocative article in 1913
  o His views won acceptance since many lost interest in introspection and studying consciousness
  o Emphasised by bf skinner – argued that since internal mental states could not be tested scientifically, they should not be part of psych
  o 1930s – behaviourism won

Challenges to behaviourism – and emergence of modern psych

1. Sigmund freud - role of unconscious and hidden elements
2. 1950s – humanistic psych – advocacy of free will
3. Ultimate challenge – cognitive revolution – renewed interest in all aspects of cognition

• Modern psych no longer restrained by boundaries imposed by various schools or isms

Psych in india

• Has strong and variegated tradition of reflective scholarship w/ rich insights into human psyche and behaviour much before advent of scientific psych
• Experience-based accounts of mental states and activities
• Goal was to alleviate suffering and self-realisation
• Holistic and central vision – central
• Vedic and upanishadic knowledge – emphasises spiritual transcendence that connects indiv w/ totality
• Indiv growth achieved through seeking unity w/ greater reality/consciousness
• One needs to strive to experience spirit by transcending ones limited bodily identity since spirit moves beyond individuality
• Indian thought systems diverse in orientation
• Rich source remained neglected due to colonial exploitation

Modern psych : grand issues, key perspectives

• Issues
  1. One of the grand issues - Stability v/s change – to what extent we remain stable and change
  2. Nature & nurture question – to what extent does each dominate