

- Cognitive processes- every aspect of mental life

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

- Structuralism
 - Wilhelm Wundt – proposed – focus on analysing contents of consciousness
 - Could be carried out by introspection – method in which trained indivs report in detail on conscious experiences in response to stimuli
 - Topics studied and methods employed by structuralists have not survived test of time
 - An early view of psych suggesting that the field should focus on identifying the basic structures of human mind
- Functionalism
 - Structuralism's focus on identifying elements (structure) of consciousness challenged by William James
 - Felt new field should focus on functions of consciousness
 - 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
 - Faded away as an identifiable ism or school, practical orientation left a lasting impact
- Behaviourism
 - John B. Watson
 - Argued that psych should focus on behaviour (actions that can be measured) in a provocative article in 1913
 - His views won acceptance since many lost interest in introspection and studying consciousness
 - Emphasised by B.F. Skinner – argued that since internal mental states could not be studied scientifically, they should not be part of psych
 - 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 – renewal of 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 one's 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