
UNIT 2 INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY II*

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the relationship of applied social psychology with the other Disciplines of social sciences;
- Explain the roles of applied social psychologists; and
- Delineate various functions of applied social psychologists.

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the concept of basic and applied social psychology. Though, there are certain similarities in between both the branches of social psychology, yet few of the differences also exist between them. In this unit, we will come to know about the relationship between applied social psychology and other social sciences. You will also be explained about the roles and functions of applied social psychologists. This unit will help you to understand the branch of applied social psychology in a broader way.

2.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

Applied social psychology is a field where the psychologists apply theories in social context. Something that is common in all the disciplines of social sciences is that they use the observation methods in research and are scientific in nature. Let us examine the relationship of applied social psychology with other disciplines of social science:

2.2.1 Applied Social Psychology and Basic Social Psychology

As discussed in the previous unit as well, both the social (basic) psychology and applied social psychology are interrelated and they complement each other. The basic or fundamental social psychology tries to study the various causes that influences the human behaviour and various related problems. The social psychologists develop theories to explain social phenomena and the applied social psychologists apply these theories to find out solution to behavioural problems and issues.

2.2.2 Applied Social Psychology and Sociology

Applied social psychology involves application of theories and principles of psychology in the societal environment. It deals with the behaviour pattern of an individual in relation to his/her social environment. The social environment of an individual consists of his/her parents, relatives, friends, enemies, playmates, companions and other related people. While, sociology is a field that studies about the nature, origin, and development of a society.

Sociology tries to understand the manners, customs and institutions of a society and their stages of development. It is also concerned about the inter relationships between human beings in a society. Applied social psychology is concerned with the experience and behaviour of an individual and sociology is concerned with the role that an individual plays by showing various behaviours in society. Therefore, there exists a relationship between applied social psychology and sociology.

2.2.3 Applied Social Psychology and Physiological Psychology

Applied social psychology is a science that deals with modifying human behaviour and their experiences. These physical or psychological experiences of individuals are intimately connected with their physiological processes, especially of the nervous system. Hence, the study of applied social psychology is interconnected to the physiological processes. Further, the human behaviour is a bodily reaction to the existing physical and social environment and the physiological psychology attempts to study the nature of all kinds of physiological processes that is, the functions of all organs of the body. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between the fields of applied social psychology and physiological psychology.

2.2.4 Applied Social Psychology and Anthropology

Applied social psychology attempts to modify or influence the human behaviour while, Anthropology studies the culture, customs, ritual and practices of different distinct groups of people and try to understand the differences among them. Since human behaviour is influenced by these various factors, applied social psychology plays an important role in understanding the influence of these factors towards changing the human behaviour. Many of the researches done in the field of Anthropology have tried to understand why people of a particular tribal community or even whole nation, behave as they do so. These findings have very much enriched the field applied social psychology. Vis a vis the socio- psychological theories have also contributed towards understanding the origins of culture, customs, religious practices etc. Thus, there exists a reciprocal relationship between applied social psychology and anthropology.

2.2.5 Applied Social Psychology and Economics

The applied social psychology plans interventions for human beings who are directly or indirectly contributing towards the economy, while, Economics deals with the contributing factors like income, expenditure, the role of economic institution etc. These economic factors have an influence upon human behaviour. Applied social psychologists have tried to study the influence of certain economic factors like that of income on the development of human behaviour. Further, the factors like poverty and economic deprivation also have a significant influence upon the development of behaviour since the childhood stage. Thus, applied social psychology is significantly interrelated to economics.

2.2.6 Applied Social Psychology and Political Science

Applied social psychologists try to examine the influence of certain psychological factors influencing leadership and politics. This has contributed towards analysing behaviour and the factors which make certain politicians as successful leaders. Political science is a discipline which deals with the political organisations, institutions and government practices. This takes place with the help of interaction between political science and applied social psychology.

Attempts have been made to study and analyse the influence of the political system on human character and behaviour. Psychological analysis has also contributed towards the different aspects of political behaviour like propaganda, voting behaviour, emergence of public opinion, mob mentality etc.

2.2.7 Applied Social Psychology and Geography

Applied social psychology tries to apply psychological principles to enhance relationship among individuals of different societies. While, Geography is an applied social science which deals with the study of places and relationship between people and their environment. Therefore, in order to build a good relationship between people and environment, we need to strengthen the relationships between people first. Therefore, applied social psychology is interrelated to the discipline of geography.

2.2.8 Applied Social Psychology and Linguistics

Since the role of language development as well as having an expertise of different language significantly influences the interaction among people, the applied social psychology tries to interpret the influence of several factors that might affect the development of language since childhood as well as the tendency of learning a new language. On the hand, the discipline of linguistics involves scientific study of language and its structure. It studies the language form, language meaning and language in societal context. Therefore, linguistics is a discipline which significantly helps the applied social psychologists to understand the influence of language development and learning among individuals.

Therefore the above are few of the explanation of the relationship of applied social psychology to other disciplines of social sciences. Yet there are few disciplines other than social science like media studies, medical sciences, biology, education, logic and social work which also are significantly interrelated with the discipline of applied social psychology.

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ I)

Answer the following questions in brief:

How is applied social psychology related to sociology?

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What is the role of applied social psychologist towards the development of language?

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What can be the significant contribution of the applied social psychologist towards the field of political science?

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Explain the relationship between applied social psychology and anthropology?

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2.3 ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

By this time, you might have understood the concept of applied social psychology and its relationship with other social sciences. The individuals who gain an expertise in the field of applied social psychology are known as applied social psychologists. In this section, we will discuss about their roles and functions. Before we start discussing about both, it should be made clear to you that when we talk about *the role* of an individual, it refers to the part or the duty that is being played by someone in a particular situation. Whereas, the term *function* refers to the natural purpose or contribution made by an individual in a society which is based upon the roles assigned to them. So, let us discuss about the roles being played by applied social psychologists:

2.3.1 Roles of Applied Social Psychologists

- The main focus of the applied social psychologists is to solve social problems of human beings with the help of interventions. Their role is to examine the factors that can influence a behaviour and also to analyze appropriate technique

required to solve a definite behavioural problem.

- The applied social psychologists try to understand and treat the behavioural issues of individuals in a social environment by applying the theories and methods of social psychology.
- They attempt to combine the psychological principles in order to understand any social issue. They even adopt an interdisciplinary approach to their work, incorporating economic, sociological, and political perspectives.
- The applied social psychologists conduct researches in an unpredictable and unrestricted environment.
- With an aim to devise strategies, the applied social psychologists are actively involved in studying various educational programs, industrial and organizational productivity, environmental and health care issues, justice system reform, and also media related activities like campaigning, advertising and public relations. They conduct research for academic institutions, organizations and corporates.
- The applied social psychologists also analyze the success or failure of a specific experimental social program and provide feedback to the concerned authorities of the society.
- Some of the applied social psychologists also play an important role in framing policies for the better human relations in corporate world as well as governmental organizations. Their role is considered important to bring about a social change.
- With the help of problem- oriented approach, the applied psychologists try to modify as well as shape up the existing and future social psychological theories.

The above are the few of the expected/assigned roles of applied social psychologists. On the basis of assigned roles they perform certain functions as explained in the next subsection.

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ II)

State whether the following statements are 'True' or 'False':

- 1) The applied social psychologists are not involved in studying various educational programs, industrial and organizational productivity. ()
- 2) The main focus of the applied social psychologists is to solve social problems of human beings with the help of interventions. ()
- 3) The applied social psychologists apply the theories and methods of social psychology. ()
- 4) The applied social psychologists have no role in framing policies for the better human relations in corporate world as well as governmental organizations. ()

2.3.2 Functions of Applied Social Psychologists

The following are the functions performed by the applied social psychologists:

2.3.2.1 Evaluation and Plannings

As discussed earlier with you that the applied social psychologists play an important role by planning intervention to solve psychosocial problems of a society. In order to do so, they initially need to assess several aspects like evaluating the goal, planning the strategies and creating awareness programs. They also have to analyze the available resources and accordingly work towards achieving their goals. Thus, they evaluate, plan and then enact to reach to the set goals.

2.3.2.2 Organising Training Sessions

The applied social psychologist helps the affected groups and individuals by creating an awareness among them through psycho-education. They also apply counselling techniques, use tutor/teaching methods to bring a desired goal in the community or the person. They help them to learn managing of their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours for their well-being.

2.3.2.3 Performing Researches

While the applied social psychologists apply the existing theories of social psychology upon human beings of any society, they also try to study their existing behaviour pattern in order to get information regarding their social interaction. In order to explore more information, the applied social psychologist perform researches in many of the fields like health; learning; personality; war and trauma, etc.

2.3.2.4 Performing Interventions

As an applied social psychologist, he/she has to plan strategies and intervention programs to bring about a change in existing behaviour pattern of individuals, groups and societies. They perform training workshops on specific children among schools, apply psychotherapy among individuals and families. They also apply ecological models to bring about a balance between the human activities and environmental change.

2.3.2.5 Designing Of Psychosocial Assessment Tools and Strategies

In order to bring about a change in behaviour pattern and imply interventions, the applied social psychologist design psychosocial assessment tools to administer it on the target population. They also plan strategies that promote social inclusion of all groups towards the contribution of the upliftment of a society.

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ III)

Fill in the following blanks:

- 1) The play an important role by planning intervention to solve psycho social problems of a society.
- 2) The applied social psychologist help individuals to learn managing of their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours for their
- 3) The applied social psychologist helps the by creating an awareness among them through psychoeducation.
- 4) As an applied social psychologist, he/she has to plan programs to bring about a change in existing behaviour pattern of individuals, groups and societies.

2.4 Let Us Sum Up

It can be summed up from the above discussion that applied social psychologists play a significant role towards enhancing social relations among individuals and changing their behaviour pattern in a society. They also significantly contribute towards environment by creating awareness and bringing about a change in behaviour pattern of human beings towards environment.

It was also discussed that the field of applied social psychology is significantly related to several Disciplines of the social sciences. It is interrelated to basic social psychology, sociology, physiological psychology, economics, political sciences, geography and linguistics.

Later on, the conceptual difference between the term 'roles' and 'functions' was introduced to you. It was followed by pointing out few of the roles of applied social psychologists and their functions.

By the end of this unit, you might be aware of the significance of the applied social psychologists and their contributions. In the next unit, we will discuss about few of the research methods used in the field of applied social psychology.

2.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the relationship between applied social psychology and other social sciences.
- 2) Discuss the roles of applied social psychologist.
- 3) Describe the functions of applied social psychologist.

2.6 Glossary

Applied Social Psychologist: The applied social psychologists are those psychologists who plan intervention to solve psycho social problems of a society.

Anthropology: Anthropology studies the culture, customs, ritual and practices of different distinct groups of people and try to understand the differences among them.

Economics: Economics deals with the contributing factors like income, expenditure, the role of economic institution etc.

Geography: Geography is an applied social science which deals with the study of places and relationship between people and their environment.

Linguistics: The discipline of linguistics involves scientific study of language and its structure. It studies the language form, language meaning and language development in societal context.

Physiological psychology: The physiological psychology attempts to study the nature of all kinds of physiological processes - the functions of all organs of the body.

Political Sciences: Political science is a discipline which deals with the political organisations, institutions and government practices.

2.7 Answers to Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ)

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ I)

- 1) Applied social psychology is concerned with the experience and behaviour of an individual and sociology is concerned with the role that an individual plays in society. Therefore, there exists a relationship between applied social psychology and sociology.
- 2) The applied social psychology tries to interpret the influence of several factors that might affect the development of language since childhood as well as the tendency of learning a new language.
- 3) Applied social psychologists try to examine the influence of certain psychological factors influencing leadership and politics. This has contributed towards analysing the behaviour and the factors which make certain politicians as successful leaders.
- 4) Applied social psychology attempts to modify or influence the human behaviour while,

Anthropology studies the culture, customs, ritual and practices of different distinct groups of people and try to understand the differences among them. Since human behaviour is influenced by these various factors, applied social psychology plays an important role in understanding the influence of those factors towards changing the human behaviour.

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ II)

- 1) False
- 2) True
- 3) True
- 4) False

Self Assessment Questions (SAQ III)

- 1) strategies and intervention
- 2) affected groups and individuals
- 3) well-being
- 4) vappplied social psychologists

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