

B. Sc Zoology (Hons.)
Part - I

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PAPER - II - A

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR :

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF ETHOLOGY

Introduction :-

→ The branch of biology that deals with the systematic study of animal behaviour is known as ethology.

The word ethology is made up of two Greek words ethos meaning habit and logos meaning study.

[Greek words: ethos → habit
and logos → study.]

“The activities that constitute an animal's response to its external environmental stimulus”.

Stimulus is any biological, chemical or physical agent that causes an activity in organism.

“What an animal does and how it does in response to stimulus”.

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"Ethology is the scientific and Objective study of animal behaviour, usually with a focus on behaviour under natural conditions, and viewing behavior as an evolutionarily adaptive trait."

The study of ethology as a distinct discipline derives from the work of Niko Tinbergen and Konrad Lorenz in the 1930's.

Lorenz (1937) proposed that certain behaviour patterns are inherited, much as physical structures are inherited.

Ethologists take a comparative approach, studying behaviours ranging from kinship, cooperation, and parental investment, to conflict, sexual selection, and aggression across a variety of species.

Scientists are drawn to the study of animal behavior for varied reasons and the field is extremely broad, ranging from research on feeding behavior and habitat selection to mating behavior and social organizations.

Many scientists study animal behavior because it sheds light on human beings. Research on non-human primates, for instance, continues to offer valuable perspectives into the causes and evolution of individual, social, and reproductive human actions.

Understanding ethology or animal behavior can be important in animal training.

Considering the natural behaviours of different species or breeds enables the trainer to select the individuals best suited to perform the required task. It also enables the trainer to encourage the performance of naturally occurring behaviours and also the discontinuance of undesirable behaviours.

Some behaviours are innate, or genetically inherited, while others are learned, or developed through experience. In many cases, behaviours have both an innate component and a learned component.

Types of Animal Behaviour

