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4.1 Introduction

In times and places children are valued because of the reason that by studying children we can unlock the mysteries of human species in general. The child became the best natural laboratory for the study of evolution and the idea of development dominated the science of man Thus was born **developmental psychology** a field devoted to the study of development of child from conception through childhood, adolescence and beyond. The period of life span from conception till birth is the **prenatal stage** which is followed by the **neonatal stage**; the first 4 weeks after birth. This is a time of transition from the total dependency of prenatal life to a more independent existence. Next comes the period of **Infancy**, a period that lasts about 4 weeks to about 18 months, when language appears. From the age of 18 months through the age of 6 is the age of **early**

childhood characterised by ‘play’. The actions that children make to switch over from sensory motor thinking to thinking that involves internal manipulation of symbols. The elementary school years the years 6 through 12 in a child’s life, is the most important period. It is the period of **middle childhood** and **late childhood** which are filled with both motion and emotion as the child confronts the diverse demands of school and society. It is a period when children acquire intellectual tools, a capacity for intimate peer relationships and socialization. The most life dramatic life transitions is that of childhood to adolescence. **Adolescence** is the period ranging from 12 years to 18 years during which a child takes one an adult like physique and intellect.

In order to achieve a detailed study of the developmental tasks that a child need to master in the years of childhood and adolescence certain issues need to be discussed. In this regard, the aforesaid issues related to development in middle childhood to adolescence, the most significant developmental span, must address the followings :

- a) What are the emerging physical, social and emotional capabilities during middle childhood and later childhood?
- b) What are the physical, social and emotional capabilities emerging during adolescence?
- c) What are the emerging capabilities across domains related to cognition, metacognition, creativity , ethics.
- d) What are the issues related to puberty?
- e) What is the relation between gender and development?
- f) What is the influence of the social, cultural and political environment on the growing Child.

The content of this unit shall reflect the issues related to the aforesaid questions.

4.2 Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to :

- Enlist the different emerging capabilities across domains of physical, social and emotional.
- State the emerging capabilities across domains related to cognition and metacognition, creativity, ethics

- Explain the issues related to puberty
- Describe the relation between gender and development
- Highlight the role of the environment (social, cultural, political) on the growing child.

4.3 Middle childhood to adolescence (from nine years to eighteen years)

The middle childhood, especially the years nine to twelve, is regarded as a critical period by both the Educators and Psychologists. Educators call this age **Elementary School Age**, to the psychologist it is the **Gang age** while to many parents it is the Troublesome Age. This period is a period of slow and relatively uniform growth until the changes of puberty begins. **Puberty**, a critical period serves as a bridge between childhood and adolescence. Puberty is a short period that overlaps the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence and is characterised by rapid growth and change. Adolescence extends from the time the individual becomes sexually mature until eighteen – the age of legal maturity.

4.3.1 Physical, Social, Emotional capabilities–during Middle Childhood to Adolescence :

The emerging capabilities specific to a particular age is usually referred to as the developmental tasks. There are specific physical, social emotional capabilities emerging in **middle childhood**. There are :

- Due to increase in height and weight accompanied by influences of health, nutrition, immunization and sex. The child moves toward sexual maturity or puberty.
- Middle childhood to adolescence is a period marked by emergence of four types of skills : self help skills, social help skills, school skills and play skills. Children of this age should be able to eat, dress, bathe and groom. Themselves with almost as much as adults, this is the self help skill. The social help skill enables them to help others be at home, school or among friends. School skills, enable then to develop the skills, needed in writing, drawing, painting, clay modeling, dancing, cooking, crayoning etc. Play skills such as throwing and catching balls, riding a bicycle, skating, swimming in connection with play teach them to be cooperative. All the above discussed skills help the children to make better adjustments.

- Children belonging to this age group soon discover that expression of emotions, especially of the unpleasant emotions is socially unacceptable to their age-mates. As a result they acquire the capabilities to control the outward expressions of their emotions. In the course of learning to curb the external expressions of emotions, they discover that in doing so, they become nervous, tense and temper outburst and slightest provocateur. After by trial and error or guidance, the older children discover that. They can clear their systems of suppressed emotions by play, cry or laugh. Thus they acquire the ability to handle emotions to conform to social expectations called **emotional catharsis**.

- **Social** behaviour in middle childhood is popularly referred to as the “**Gang age**” because they are interested in activities with their peers and often reject parental standards, develop an antagonistic attitude toward members of the opposite sex and become prejudiced against all who are non-gang members.

Purity

Puberty is caused by hormonal changes characterised by growth spurt, changes in body sizes changes in body proportions, development of the primary sex characteristics and development of the secondary sex characteristic. It affects physical well being as well as attitudes and behaviours. The two major concerns characteristic of puberty relate to normalcy and sex appropriateness. The psychological hazards of this age are tendency to develop unfavourable self concepts; to become under achievers; unwillingness to accept changed bodies or socially approved sex roles and deviant sexual maturing.

Adolescence

Adolescence is an important period in life span, a transitional period, a time of change, a problem age, a time when individual searches for identity and the threshold of adulthood. It is characterised by :

→ The **physical** growth is far from complete when puberty ends, its rate slackens in adolescence and much of the age occurs is internal than external. During the later years of adolescence, when physical growth will be complete, it is characterised by concerns of sexual development.

→ Traditionally adolescence is a period of heightened **emotionality**, a time of “storm and stress” and is characterised by temper outbursts, anger, sulking, refusing to speak or loudly criticising those who angered them. Towards the end of adolescence, they do

achieve emotional maturity and learn to use emotional catharsis to release pent-up emotional energy

→ The most important **social** changes in adolescence include increased peer-group influence, more mature patterns of social behavior, new social groupings, and new values in the selection of friends and leaders and in social acceptance.

4.3.2 merging capabilities across domains related to cognition, metacognition, creativity, ethics :

The emerging capabilities across domains related to cognition – metacognition has been well explained by J. Piaget (1970). The years of middle childhood to adolescence encompass two significant stages of cognitive development namely **Concrete operational stage** (7 to 12 years) and **Formal operational stage** (12 years onward). The “way of knowing” or scheme development during this period ushers in the specific cognitive changes which are as follows :

- **Concrete operational stage (7 to 12 years)**

The cognitive development of this stage is characterised by systematic reasoning, logical thinking, concept of conservation of number, space, volume, mass along with reversibility, ability to coordinate part-whole, hierarchical classifications, inventions of alternative strategies but the thinking process is limited to a child’s area of concrete experience.

- **Formal operational stage (12 years onwards)**

The cognitive development during this period that is extending through adolescence is characterised by logic, reasoning from hypothetical propositions, ability of evaluating hypotheses through testing all possible conclusions and emergence of capability of perceiving present reality as well as possibilities and abstract experiences. Adolescents at this stage acquire the capability of abstract thinking and reflective thinking which make the adolescents a powerful experimenter and problem solver.

METACOGNITION

Metacognition refers to higher order thinking which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. It involves activities such as planning, comprehension, monitoring, evaluation and completion of a task which is problem solving in nature. Metacognition is said to be “cognition about cognition” or “knowing

about knowing”. The term was coined by **John Flavell (1979)** an American developmental psychologist, who defined metacognition as knowledge about cognition and control of cognition.

COGNITION – METACOGNITION

Metacognitive and cognitive strategies may overlap in that the same strategy, such as, questioning could be regarded as either a cognitive or metacognitive strategy depending upon the purpose, self questioning while reading as a means of obtaining knowledge is cognitive while monitoring what you have read is metacognitive the distinction between cognition and metacognition is vain effort, since they operate simultaneously at times.

The period middle childhood, later childhood, puberty and adolescence are the periods of development and consolidation of metacognition

CREATIVITY

The psychologists label later childhood (from puberty) as the creative age, in the sense that it is the time in life span when it will be determined whether children will become conformists or producers of new and original work. While the foundations for original activities is generally not well developed before children reach the late childhood year,

Adolescents who have been encouraged to be creative in their play and academic work as children develop a feeling of individuality and identity that has a favorable effect on their self concepts. By contrast, adolescents who have been forced to conform to an approved pattern since earliest childhood lack a feeling of identity and of individuality.

ETHICS

In recent days, there is a growing trend to take into account the ethical aspects of research. It involves considering the rights of the subjects, emphasis being placed on asking their consent to participate in experiments or for the very young, the consent of parents or guardians. Such an attitude made it more difficult to get subjects for scientific research.

4.3.3 Issues related to puberty :

Puberty is caused by hormonal changes, which, because they are not controllable to date, come at variable times. The average age for girls is thirteen years, and for boys, fourteen and a half years. It is a time of rapid growth and change characterised by changes in boys size, changes in body proportions, development of the primary sex characteristics and development of the secondary sex characteristics. These changes

are most rapid during the ages between 8.5 and 11.5 years with a peak coming, on the average at 12.5 years for girls while for boys it is between 10.5 and 14.5 years reaching a peak between 14.5 and 15.5 years.

The major areas of concern or the issues related to puberty are :

- Puberty affect physical wellbeing as well as attitudes and behavior since these effects tend to be unfavourable especially during the early part of puberty
- Two major concerns characteristic of puberty relate to normalcy and sex appropriateness.
- There are certain psychological issues related to puberty, the most common being the tendency to develop unfavourable self-concepts; to become underachievers; unwillingness to accept changed bodies or socially approved sex roles and deviant sexual maturing.
- The three A's of happiness – acceptance, affection and achievement are often violated during these years and hence puberty tends to be one of the most unhappy periods of the life span, called 'negative phase' by charlotte Buhler.

4.3.4 Gender and development :

The gender and development (GAD) perspective emerged in the late 1980's as response to the prevailing Women in Development (WID) approach of the World Bank. It focuses on the different approaches in addressing gender and development issues, society constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasizes the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations the major issues related to gender and development highlights upon.

- Sex and gender : How do they differ?
- Gender socialization
- Gender socialization in classroom/learning situation gender fair education.

Sex and gender implies the idea that sex is abological characteristics, gender is a social characteristics.

Gender socialization is the process by which norms and expectations in relation to gender are learned by women and men.

Gender socialization in classroom (learning situation encompass the use of gender (he/she; his/her) in instructional language, classroom, management and instructional materials like text books etc.

Gender Fair Education implies that boys and girls play, learn and grow together. Teachers play a major role in creating school environments that are free of gender bias.

4.3.5 Influence of Environment (social, cultural, political) on the Growing Child :

The environment plays a deciding role in the development of a growing child, be it social, cultural, political or so on.

- **Social Environment**

The social environment and its forces help to nurture the development of a growing child. The influence exerted by the social environment is manifested through the social expectations about the stage of development. Every society or social group expects its member to master certain skills and acquire certain approved patterns of growth and behavior at various ages of life span. In the middle childhood, later childhood and adolescence, there are certain developmental tasks which the society expects of them (Havighurst). The sociometric status of a growing child, the peer group influence, attitudes of peers, family treatment, interactions with the relatives, members of neighbourhood and community shape the personality of a growing child.

- **Cultural Changes**

The development of a growing child is affected by cultural changes because it is molded to conform to cultural standards and ideals, changes children brought up in western culture differ in developmental aspects (language, personality, attitude, values etc.) than those reared eastern/oriental culture.

- **Political Environment**

The influence on political environment is pronounced during the adolescence to shape the ideals, moral standards, ethics and political values of them.

4.4 Let us sum up :

Developmental psychology study the changes that occur during all or part of life span

in all aspects of human behavior. The age span nine to eighteen years course middle childhood to adolescence. The middle childhood to later childhood is the gang age marked by strong interest in peers, play and the ability of emotional catharsis. Adolescence is the period of marked physical and psychological changes, the foundation of which are being laid in puberty. The period of puberty extending upto adolescence is characterised by heightened emotionality, social changes, cognition and metacognition along with creative interests. The social, cultural and political environment influence the growing child especially in the manifestation of developmental patterns.

4.5 Check your progress :

I.a) The middle childhood is referred to as _____ by the psychologists due to intense peer influence.

b) The adolescence is the stage of _____ according to Piaget.

c) The term metacognition was coined by _____

d) _____ is the term used to denote the ability of the teens to handle emotions.

II. Mention two cognitive operations that develop in the concrete operational stage.

III. Enlist two emerging capabilities of adolescence in the domain of emotional development.

IV. State one influence of culture on development.

Sample questions :

1) Long answer type

a) Briefly explain the cognitive developments that take place during the concrete operational stage.

b) Adolescence is the age of stress and storm – justify.

c) Explain your own experiences with respect to the emotional catharsis.

2) Short answer type

a) State two influences of social environment on the development of an adolescent.

b) Mention two characteristics of the formal operational stage

3) Objective type

Choose the correct answer :

a) Puberty is character by

(i) Growth spurt (ii) babbling (iii) object permanence

b) Gender and development was initiated by

(i) WHO (ii) UNESCO (iii) WORLD BANK

Answers to check your progress:

I. (a) Gang Age, (b) Formal Operations, (c) John Flaxell, (d) Emotional Catharsis.

II. Two cognitive operations that develop in the concrete operational stage are the concept of conservation and reversibility.

III. Two emerging capabilities of adolescence in the domain of emotional development are heightened emotionability and temper outbursts.

IV. A significant influence of culture on development is that the personality pattern of the child is catered to the cultural norms, standards or ideals.

4.6 References / Select reading :

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