

Meaning and Definitions of Human Development

Generally, human growth and human development are taken as synonymous terms, but there is a distinction between the both. By human Growth is meant the growth in the external and internal organs of the body, while by human development is meant those changes that occur in his physical and mental behaviour beside his growth. We are aware that human growth ceases after attaining maturity, but continuous change occurs in his physical and mental behaviour.



Definitions of Development

1. According to Hurlock, "Development is not limited to growing larger instead, it consists of progressive series of changes toward the goal of maturity. Development results in few characteristics and new abilities on the part of the individual."
2. According to A. Angyal, "Development cannot be considered in terms of the mind alone but rather in terms of the individual as a whole in relationship with his experience with others. Thus, development is concerned with the biological total process taking place in the subject-object interrelation".
3. According to G. W. Allport, "The developing individual cannot be thought of as a thing in himself. Development, in so far as it is considered to be produced from within the individual himself alone, is only a convenient abstraction".

In our view, the development process should be defined as follows:

Human development is a continuous and progressive process by which quantitative and qualitative growth occurs in man, new abilities and characteristics become manifested and there occurs progressive change in his behaviour.

Nature and Characteristics of Human Development:

- Human development is natural and social process.
- Human development process continues from birth till death.
- Human development includes quantitative as well as qualitative development, which is always of upward nature.
- Human development takes place in a particular sequence and the rate of development is different at different levels of age.
- Human development depends upon heredity and environment both, and the role of education in the environmental factors is of most significance.
- There is no limit of human development.
- The quantitative development can be measured in mathematicni units but qualitative development can not be measured so exactly.
- Human development behaviour is the result of growth ante learning.
- Human development is gradual. It takes time.
- Human development follows a sequence. The child crawls before he creeps, stand before, he walks, babbles before he utters word.
- Human development has interaction among different aspects.
- Human development is not uniform in all individuals.
- Human development depends both on heredity and environment.

The Principles and Stages of Development in Children's

Growth and development are based on certain principles. Development of all the children depends upon these principles though the individual differences play an important role.

1. Development has a specific pattern.

Development of the child follows a specific pattern:

(a) Cephalocandal direction

Deve-lopment starts from head and progresses towards feet. In womb, the head of the foetus develops first then the body and afterwards legs develop.

(b) Proximo-distal direction

Develop-ment starts from centre to outside of the body, e.g., first organs like heart and stomach develop then shoulders and arms start to develop.

In motor development, this sequence can be seen, e.g., the child first learns to sit then stand and finally learns to walk, though time of mastering these activities can differ in different children but the developmental pattern is specific.

2. Development is a continuous pro-cess

From the time of conception the developmental processes begin and continue till the death of the person. Sometimes it is not visible but it takes place in the body. The child grows in the womb of the mother, and this process continues after the birth also. Many changes take place one after another in the child.

3. Development is from general to specific

The development of the child is distinct from general to specific. For example, the child first tries to reach a thing by pushing his whole body, but afterwards uses his hands. When his muscles become strong he learns to use his fingers and thumb to hold things.

4. Different rate of development for different parts

Different body organs and faculties develop at different speeds, e.g., brain development is completed till 8 years, while intelligence develops till 16 years of age. Heart, digestive system, legs and arms are developed till adolescence period.

5. Individual difference is found in development

Every individual is unique. Developmental process is same but at the same time its pace is different in different individuals. Children who are fast in physical and mental development, their other developments also occur rapidly. The children who are mentally slow remain slow in other developmental aspects. Children of same age differ in the rate of their development.

6. Every stage has its own charac-teristics

The developmental span has been divided into various stages. These stages have their own special characteristics, e.g. prenatal period and babyhood are known for the fast physical development of the child while adolescence is characterised for sexual development and social development.

During childhood children develop proximity with the children of same sex while early adolescence sees a change in their preferences for opposite sex friends.

So we see the certain typical behaviour patterns in each and every stage which are not found in other stages.

7. Every child passes through each stage of development

Due to the specific and systematic pattern of development the child passes through every stage. It never happens that the child jumps over a stage to reach another.

8. Every child reaches his maximum stage of development

Every child has a different rate of development but reaches the optimum limit of his own development sooner or later. Many factors are involved in this process like nutrition, proper guidance, encouragement, etc. There are certain factors which hinder the process of development like malnutrition, bad company, unhygienic conditions, lack of motivation, etc.

9. The order of development depends upon sex motives

According to 'Freud' the development of the child depends upon sex motives. During different stages sex desire is concentrated on different organs of the body. These are as follows:

(i) Narcissistic stage

This stage starts from birth and lasts till 2 years. It is the first stage in which the baby loves only himself. It is further divided into two stages:

- (a) Oral stage
- (b) Anal stage

(ii) Oedipus complex

This starts from the age of 3 years. In this stage, children are attracted towards the parent of opposite sex like son attached to mother and daughter to father.

(iii) Homosexual stage

This is the stage of late childhood when the children are attracted towards the same sex members. For them, their approval is very important.

(iv) Heterosexual stage

This is the stage of early adolescence when children start getting attracted to opposite sex members. They mould themselves in order to get approval of their opposite sex peers.

There are many factors which affect the development of the child. These are as follows:

1. Heredity
2. Environment
3. Health
4. Nutrition
5. School
6. Neighbourhood
7. Maturation
8. Learning
9. Economic status
10. Family circumstances

Stages of Human Development

Human development is a continuous process. As far as his physical growth is concerned, it ceases after having attained maturity, but the development of his psychophysical activities continues, and his mental, linguistic, emotional, social and character development keeps taking place. All this development takes place in different forms during different stages of age. Different scholars have classified different stages of human development in different forms. Indian thinkers have divided the stages of human development into seven stages. Even today, human development is divided into these seven stages in India.

These seven stages are:

- ❖ Pregnancy - conception to birth
- ❖ Infancy - birth to 5 years
- ❖ Childhood - 5 to 12 years
- ❖ Adolescence - 12 to 18 years
- ❖ Youth - 18 to 25 years
- ❖ Adulthood - 25 years to 55 years
- ❖ Old age - 55 years till death

The western psychologist, Kolesnik has divided the process of human development into eight stages:

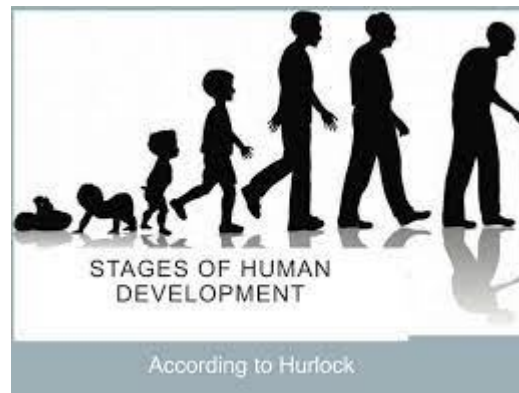
- ❖ Prenatal period - conception to birth
- ❖ Neonatal period - birth to 3-4 weeks
- ❖ Early infancy - 1 month to 15 months
- ❖ Late infancy - 15 to 30 months
- ❖ Early childhood - 2 to 5 years
- ❖ Middle childhood - 5 to 9 years
- ❖ Late childhood - 9 to 12 years
- ❖ Adolescence - 12 to 21 years

Ross has divided the process of human development into only four stages:

- ❖ Infancy - 1 year to 3 years
- ❖ Early childhood - 3 to 6 years
- ❖ Late childhood - 6 to 12 years
- ❖ Adolescence - 12 to 18 years

In ensuing lessons we will study various developments of the child. Every stage has its important developmental tasks. By seeing this, level of development can be measured. The development of a child can be assessed on the basis of how many tasks he has completed. Such tasks are called “developmental tasks”.

According to Havighurst, “These are the tasks which should be completed at the onset of a developmental stage or during a developmental stage. By completing these person feels happy and successful in their development. If the person is not complete these tasks, he feels unhappy unsuccessful in achieving further goals.



Types of Development

1. Physical Growth and Development:- During adolescence, the physical growth and development reaches to its peak and human body finds its final shape. The maximum limit with regard to increase in size, weight and height is achieved. Bones and muscles increase to the greatest possible extent leading to a great increase in our activity. The growth and function of all other outer and inner organs also reaches to its maximum and almost all the glands become extremely active at this stage.

2. Cognitive or Intellectual Development:- Adolescence is the period of maximum growth and development with regard to mental functioning. Intelligence reaches its climax during this period. Intellectual powers like logical thinking, abstract reasoning and concentration are almost developed up to the end of this period. An adolescent learns to reason and seeks answer to how and why of everything, scientifically. His power of critical thinking and observation is much developed. He does not try to follow the beaten track. He is almost critical of everything. He develops a fine imagination. Writers, artists, poets, philosophers, and inventors are all born in this period. Improper channelisation of imagination and dissatisfied needs may turn at adolescent into daydreaming. Therefore, a great care to be taken for properly cultivating their power of imagination.

3. Social Development:- Adolescence is the period of increased social relationships and contacts. Whereas a child cares very little for the society, and adolescent develops a good amount of social sense. He ceases to be egocentric, selfish and unsocial. Now he wants to mould his behaviour according to the norms of the society.

Another significant change in the social aspect of the child during adolescence lies in the relationships with his parents and the family. Now there is a craving for independence. He wants that his personality should be recognized by the parents and elderly members of the family. He must not be treated as, a child,

he gives more importance to the values and beliefs maintained by his peer group than the advice of his parents. There may even be hidden or open rebellion, if the parents try to impose their opinion and values on their adolescent children.

4. Emotional Development:- Emotional development reaches its maximum during adolescence. it is the period of heightening of all emotions like anxiety, fear, love, anger etc. Once again like an infant an individual experiences emotional instability and intensity during adolescence. The physical growth and development being maximum, the strength of the boys give opportunity for maximum motor activity. Therefore, in matter of emotional expression and experiences the adolescence provides the highest peak. At no stage the child is so restless and emotionally perturbed and touchy as in adolescence. He is too sensitive, inflammable and moody. In the words of Ross, "The adolescent lives an intensely emotional life, in which we can see once more the rhythm of positive and negative phases of behaviour in his constant alternation between intense excitement and deep depression." That is why the period is often designated as a period of stresses and strains.

5. Moral and Religious Development:- With the development of social and civic sense, the children during the period learn to behave according to the norms of their society and culture. Also the group sense makes to follow some moral or ethical code. It prepares a stage of proper moral development. The formation of strong sentiments during this period intensifies the process of moral development. The character by which we know a person in his life, to a great extent, is the product of the experiences, gained, complexes formed and sentiments made during this Age.

