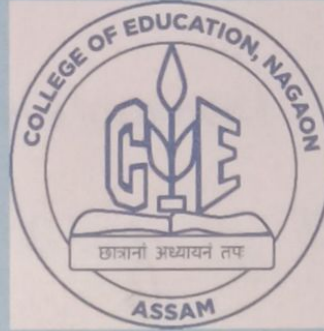


COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NAGAON



WORKSHOP REPORT ON CONCEPT OF STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION :

In general terms, people often consider growth as a synonym of development. However, both terms have a different meaning from different points of view particularly, from the psychological perspective. Undoubtedly, there is a major difference between growth and development.

Growth and development refers to the process of dynamic changes occurring during the lifespan of an individual. Change is the accepting law of nature. In the journey of life, starting from conception to maturity, an individual undergoes a cycle of change brought about by the process of growth and development. The terms growth and development are often used interchangeably by most people. However, both the terms are used to refer to the changes that occur in the individual throughout his/her lifespan in various dimensions like physical, mental, social, etc.

Growth is an individual of physical existence on life. All living creature grow. Growth refers to physical changes like increase in size, length, height,

and weight. However, growth does not continue throughout the lifespan of an individual. It gradually slows down to stop when maturity has been attained. The physical change produced by growth are observable and can be measured or quantified. At the same time physical growth cannot ensure or may not bring development. Physical growth during prenatal, neonatal, infancy period is very rapid but it slows down during childhood. Adolescence brings the faster rate of growth once again in the life of the individual. Physical growth during adulthood is minimal after one attains maturity.

Development, unlike growth, is the process of qualitative as well as quantitative changes. According to Crow and Crow 'growth refers to structural and physiological changes while development refers to growth as well as change in behaviour. Thus, development as a process is wider and comprehensive than growth. Growth is only a part of development. Development is a continuous process. It does not stop with the attainment of maturity and continues throughout the lifespan of an individual. Development refers to functional improvement in behaviour that brings

Qualitative Changes that cannot be measured directly.

Principles of Development:

Although there are individual differences in human developmental changes, these changes tend to follow some universal patterns. These rules or patterns are called the Principles of development.

1. The Cephalocaudal Principle: The Cephalocaudal Principle describes that development proceeds from the head downwards. This principle explains the directions of growth and development. As per this principle, children gain control of the head first, then the arms, and then the legs.

2. The Proximodistal Principle: This is another principle that describes the direction of development. According to this principle, development proceeds from the centre of the body outwards. That is why the spinal cord of the body develops before the outer parts of the body are developed.

3. The Principle of Continuity or Continuous development: Human development is a never ending continuous process of progressive changes. The process continues from "womb to tomb". The changes however slow or fast, small or big continue throughout the lifespan of an individual.

4. The Principle of individual difference: The principle of individual difference describes that every individual is different from others in terms of their rate of growth and development.

5. The Principle of interaction between heredity and environment: The process of human growth and development is determined by genetic as well as environmental factors. The genetic and environmental factors are so intermingled to give a definite pattern of growth and development that it becomes impossible to assess their influences separately.

The principles discussed above describe the process of development as orderly and predictable changes. An insight into the process of growth and development requires proper understanding of the principle of development. Such an understanding can help one to prepare appropriate and stimulating activities that may lead to complete and balanced development of potentialities.

BRIEF CONCEPT OF STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is a continuous process that occurs over the entire lifespan of human beings. This lifelong process of development has been described as a series of stages on the basis of age and age-related characteristics by several eminent psychologists, including Jean Jack Rousseau, Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg. A developmental stage is a period in which individuals show characteristic behaviour patterns and grow in particular capacities. However, it is important to note that though a uniform pattern or sequence is followed by all individuals, developmental characteristics in the forms of psycho-physical changes may be seen at different ages among different individuals. This fact makes it difficult to classify the process of human development into different fixed stages since such classification is based on the psycho-physical characteristics of individuals. Although, experts and psychologists

differ in terms of the description of the stages of development and age limits of different stages, almost all stage theorists include the stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood in general. Hence, the following section presents a brief discussion on these four stages of development along with their important psycho-physical characteristics.

1. Pre-natal Period → From conception to birth
2. Neo-natal Period → From birth to 10-14 days
3. Infancy → 2 weeks to 2 years
4. Childhood.
 - a. Early childhood → 2 years to 6 years
 - b. Later childhood → 6 years to 12 years
5. Adolescence → From 13 years to 19 years
(Onset of Puberty to attainment of maturity)
6. Adulthood → From 20 years and above.

1. The Pre-natal Stage:

The period between conception and birth, which lasts around 280 days or 9 months, is known as the pre-natal stage. This stage is again divided into three stages.

The Germinal Stage: This is the first prenatal stage of development which starts with the conception of the foetus in the mother's womb. Successful fertilisation of female ovum by male sperm in the female fallopian tube results in conception. In the next 10-14 days, the fertilised egg which is called the zygote, repeatedly multiplies and divides itself and travels to the uterus. Thus, an accumulation of cells form the human embryo and implant on the inside layer of the uterus.

The Embryonic Stage: The embryonic stage starts from the end of the germinal stage and lasts for all the next six weeks or two months after conception. The developing mass of cells at this stage is called an embryo. During this period the cells differentiate both in structure and function and develop into the placenta, the umbilical cord, the amniotic sac and form basic body parts.

The Foetal Stage: This is the last stage of prenatal development. It lasts from two months after conception till the time of birth. During this stage cells continue to multiply and develop into functional body parts. Muscles and bones form quickly and the foetus begins to move inside the uterus. Gradually the respiratory and digestive systems start to work independently. However, the foetus remains dependent on the mother for nutritious and waste disposal.

2. The Neo-natal Stage:

The neo-natal period is from the birth to the first 4 weeks of a child's life. It is a time when changes are very rapid. Many critical events can occur in this period:

- a. Feeding patterns are established.
- b. Bonding between parents and infant begin.
- c. The risk from infections that may become more serious are higher.
- d. Many birth or congenital are first noted.

The neonatal period includes the Perinatal Period, which is the initial Period after birth.

3. Infancy:

Infancy covers the first two years of life of an individual after birth. The first two weeks of life after birth is called neonate. This first stage of human development is characterised by rapid physical growth. The scheme of dividing human development into different stages is based on the developmental characteristics or milestones that are achieved by individuals at different times of their lives. Following characteristics can be seen among the infants:

> Rapid physical growth: The most important and noticeable characteristics seen among the infants is their rapid physical growth. The rate of growth in the size, weight and height is highest among all the stages of development.

> Development of motor abilities: The infant can roll over at roughly 4 to 6 months, sit up unassisted by 6 months and crawl or even walk by 12 months. At the end of the infant stage, children also

have the fine motor, on hand, skills to use a pincer grasp, pick up and put down small objects and make attempts to scribble with a crayon or other writing tool.

c. Development of sense organs: During infancy sense organs develop very fast. Infants can see things clearly and distinctly by the end of the third month. Hearing, smell and taste continue to develop rapidly during infancy.

d. Cognitive development: Development of sensory organs lead to cognitive development during infancy. Infants show signs of cognitive development through curiosity, acquisition of language skills and simple motor activities.

e. Language development: Infants learn to utter words by imitating the adults. With the development of vocal mechanism, infant starts to produce meaningless sounds. Some of these sounds are retained and gradually develop into babbling which form the basis for meaningful words later on.

f. Emotional development: At the time of birth

Infants can experience simple undifferentiated physical excitation only. Generally such experience is differentiated to become anger, fear, joy, affection and curiosity.

3. Playfulness: Infants are naturally playful. Play is their natural medium of expression and development. However, play during infancy is spontaneous and has no rules or regulation. Moreover their acts of play are solitary, rather than social.

4. Moral development: Infants are non-moral as they do not have concepts of morality or immorality. They eventually develop moral sense from others later in life.

4. Childhood:

In Developmental Psychology, childhood refers to the period between infancy and adulthood. However, childhood is a non-specific term and it implies varying range of ages in human development. Different psychologists and biologists have used their own range of ages to describe childhood as a stage of development.

a) Early Childhood (2 years to 6 years) :

Early childhood stage is the foundation of life hanging roughly between 2 to 6 years of age. This period is characterized by rapid-physical, mental, emotional, social and language development. Physical helplessness and dependency of an infant is slowly replaced by increasing independence as the child experiences rapid physical growth. Attitudes, habits and patterns of behaviour begin to take shape. They gradually try to adjust to the patterns accepted by elders in society. Moreover, development of understanding, moral values, interest also characterise early childhood period. However, it is important to note that this period is one of slow growth but rapid development. This age of 'Toy' and 'Play' may come as a period of 'Problem' or 'Troubles' for parents. For educators this stage is known as 'The pre-school age'; and, for developmental psychologists it is 'the pre-gang', 'the explanatory', or 'the Questioning' age, because of its distinctive characteristics.

b) Late Childhood (6 to 12 years):

Late childhood begins at around age six or seven, approximating primary school age. It ends around Puberty, which typically marks the beginning of adolescence. However, though it is possible to stipulate the beginning of late childhood, it is almost impossible to specify the end of this period precisely because puberty, the criterion used to divide childhood from adolescence, comes at varying ages. Because there are noticeable differences in the ages at which boys and girls attain Puberty or become sexually mature. Consequently, for some children late childhood may be longer than average, and for others it may be shorter than the average.

Parents, educators and psychologists name late childhood by different names; Parents call this period as the troublesome or quarrelsome age; educators name it as elementary school age, and psychologist call this stage the gang age, or the play age.

5. Adolescence (13 to 19 years):

Adolescence is one of the most important stages of human development. It is the period that starts with the attainment of puberty and continues till the attainment of adulthood. It is a very significant period of physical and psychological transition between childhood and adulthood in the life of an individual. The term adolescence has been derived from the Latin word "adolescere", meaning "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". This period is also known as the "teen-age" as this period is most closely associated with the teenage years. However, the physical and psychological characteristics of adolescence may begin earlier and end later than the teen years. Besides, physical growth and cognitive development generally seen in adolescence, also continue even after reaching adulthood.

6. Adulthood (From 20 years and above):

Adulthood, the period in the human lifespan in which full physical and intellectual maturity have been attained. Adulthood is commonly thought of as

beginning at age 20 or 21 years. The adult stage is the period of every human being when parental control is lost and everyone is assigned their responsibilities. The adult stage is marked by the slow decline of body functions in the later period. Although we find that the muscles increase till the middle of 20s and the mass of the skeleton increased till the age of 30s, soon there is a decrease in growth and cellular nervous activity. The older part of mature adulthood slowly leads an individual to age.

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