UNIT 1 : DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

UNIT STRUCTURE

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1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the concept and meaning of developmental psychology
- comprehend the concept of growth and development
- explain the scope of developmental psychology.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

We all are clearly acquainted with the fact that development is not a one day process. We see an infant or toddler developing day by day and acquiring different physical and mental changes and turning to children or adolescents as per the nature of change and age respectively. There is a branch of psychology which studies about the behavioural changes brought to human being with ages and letting the individual to known as a specially categorized term. This branch of psychology is Developmental psychology. It is a subfield within psychology which focuses on the study of age-based behavioural changes. Developmental psychologists are interested in the emotional, intellectual and moral development of people throughout their life-span, looking at everything from the age infants first respond to specific

stimuli to the behavioural changes which occur in the elderly. It is also concerned with the physical and social development. Here, this unit will introduce you with this new branch of psychology as a discipline and its allied concept along with its broad scope.

1.3 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychology is the branch of psychology that studies intra-individual and the inter-individual changes that take place within the former. Developmental psychology is also known as human development which is the scientific study of systematic psychological changes that occur in human beings over the course of their life span. This branch of psychology includes issues such as the extent to which development occurs through gradual accumulation of knowledge versus stage like development or the extent to which children are born with innate mental structures versus learning through experiences. Originally, this branch of psychology was concerned with infants and children, it was often called as *child psychology.* As the study of other developmental stages of great changes like-adolescence and adult age and old age were added, it encompasses the entire life span of individual and now it is also referred as *Life-span psychology.* Thus, it can be refereed to such a discipline or area of study which examines human developmental process and transitions from infancy to old age even covering the period before birth. This field has expanded to include entire changes in life.

Developmental psychology is concerned not only with describing the characteristics of psychological changes over time, but also seek to explain the principles and internal workings underlying these changes. Developmental psychology directly deals with growth of human being towards their potential. Development describes the growth of human being throughout the life. Scientific study of human development seeks to understand and describes how and why individual people change their life. This includes all aspects of human growth including physical, emotional and social as such personality development. As stated by Hurlock,

developmental psychology have six major objectives-

- To find out what are the common and characteristic age changes in appearance in behaviour, in interest, and in goal from one developmental period to another,
- To find out when these changes occur.
- To find out what causes them,
- To find out how they influence behaviour,
- To find out whether they can or cannot be predicted and
- To find out whether they are individual or universal.

Developmental psychologists investigate key questions such as whether children are quantitatively different from adults or simply lack experiences that adults draw upon. Developmental psychology deals with the ways and methods that personality, behavioural change of an individual's life span with a specific concentration on childhood development. It is important to note here that, developmental psychologists who study children's' behavioural changes rely more upon careful observation in natural setting than upon laboratory experiments. In the upcoming units, different methods of studying Development will be made.

Defining Developmental Psychology:

Elizabeth B. Hurlock defined developmental psychology as the branch of psychology that studies intra-individual changes and inter-individual changes within those intra-individual changes. Its task is not only description but also explication of age-related changes in behaviour in terms of antecedent consequent relationship.

According to **George Butterworth and Margaret Harris**, Development psychology is concerned with the scientific understanding of age-related changes in experience and behaviour. Although most developmental theories have been specifically concerned with children, the ultimate aim is to provide an account of development throughout the life-span. The task is to discover, describe and explain how development occur, from its earliest origin into adulthood and old age".

These definitions establishes developmental psychology as a branch which examines changes across a broad range from motor skills to other psychophysical development involving cognitive areas like- problem solving,

moral understanding, self-concept and identity formation leading to development of personality. Developmental psychology is the branch of psychology that are concerned with the study of progressive behavioural changes that occurred in man from birth till death. It deals with the ways or methods that personality, behavioural changes of an individual's life span *with a specific concentration on childhood development*.



LET US KNOW

- Development Psychology complements several other basic research fields in psychology including social psychology, cognitive psychology, ecological psychology and comparative psychology.
- ***Development psychopathology*** is a concept which deals not only with the disordered development in childhood but also in abnormal individual over their lifetime.
- Child psychology is one of the many branches of psychology and one of the most frequently studied speciality area which focuses on the mind and behaviour of children from prenatal development through adolescence.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State the definition given by Hurlock on Developmental psychology.

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Q 2: Why developmental psychology was earlier known as child psychology?

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Q 3: What are the major objectives of developmental psychology according to Hurlock?

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1.4 CONCEPT OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in the above section, developmental psychology is also known as human development which focuses on the extent to which development occurs in individual throughout his life. Development describes the growth of human being throughout the life. Developmental psychology directly deals with growth of human being towards their potential. Hence, growth and development are two concepts that are associated with Developmental psychology. Both deals with changes brought to an individual, but there are difference in the nature of change. In your previous semester, you have already come across these two concept and how they are significant in the field of education. Still, let's get reacquaint with these two concepts for better understanding of the developmental psychology as an important area in the field of psychology.

Concept of Growth:

The term growth is the quantitative aspect of changes. It is purely physical that implies the changes related to height, size, length and weight etc. in the child. It indicates the enlargement of cells, fibres and muscles, elongation of the skeleton and increase in the general volume of the body parts and body organs. Growth is natural tendency with all organism. It is a sign of take. All living animals, irrespective of their status in the biological hierarchy, have to grow. Growth is measurable and observable. One of the significant fact regarding growth is that it does not continue throughout life, it stops only when maturation is achieved by the particular individual. *Growth is part of development but, growth may or may not bring development.* A child may grow in terms of weight, size, height, length with normal physical growth but may lack his physical and social development. The pattern of growth is not uniform, it differs from child to child. Each child grows in his unique way. It includes functional change. As such it covers both maturation and learning. Growth brings about perceptible changes in one's structure and form. ***L. D. Crow and A. Crow (1962)*** suggested that growth refers to structural and physiological changes, and development is concerned with growth as well as those changes in behaviour, which result from environment situations.

Characteristics of Growth:

- Growth is quantitative in nature. It refers to the increase caused by the biological process in which the organism becomes bigger in size and volume.
- Growth follows a definite pattern.
- Though the pattern of growth is uniform, it differs from child to child.
- Growth does not always contribute to development.
- Growth does not continue throughout the life. It stops when maturity has been attained.
- The growth produced by growth are the subject of measurement. They are observable in nature.
- Growth is one of the part of developmental process, in strict sense development in its quantitative aspect is termed as growth.
- The speed of growth is not same all the time. Different aspects of growth develop at different rate of speed.
- Growth is characterized by fluctuation.

Concept of Development:

The term development means a progressive series of changes that occur as a result of maturation and experiences. It refers to overall changes in the individual growth in one of its parts. According to ***Van Den Daele***, development implies qualitative change. In the words of ***E. B. Hurlock*** "Development means a progressive series of changes that occur in an orderly predictable pattern as a result of maturation and experience." This means that development does not consist merely of adding inches to one's height or improving one's ability. In contrast to it is a complex process of integrating many structures and functions resulting from maturation and learning. Development is indeed a product of maturation and learning. Two essentially antagonistic processes take place in development since birth. One is growth, another is involution. Thus, growth is an essential part of development. The goal of developmental change is to enable the individual to adapt to the environment in which they live. The wider concept of development indicates advancement, more unfoldment, a progressive change a sort of growing forward to a greater maturity. It is a process of

qualitative transformation which brings about maturity and functional improvement. Development is growing up characteristically. It is related to growth in as much as that it denotes more specifically the changes in the character and efficiency of the organ and organ system. According to ***Benedek***, "Development is a process in which the internal physiological changes and the psychological processes stimulated by them are integrated or responded to in a way which enables the individual to mater further and a new environmental stimulation".

Characteristics of Development:

- Development is the product of maturation and learning.
- Development is a process of qualitative transformation.
- Development follows a definite and predictable pattern.
- Development has some phases, each phase of development has characteristic behaviour.
- Development is aided by stimulation.
- All individual are different, and their development takes different courses.
- Development is a continuous process, it goes from womb to tomb.
- Development depends on both heredity and environment.
- Development has four basic elements-growth, maturation, experience and social transmission.
- Development is gradual. It takes time
- Development follows a sequence.
- Early development is more critical than later development.



LET US KNOW

Developmental task serve three very useful purposes-Firstly, the developmental task are guidelines that enable individual to know societal expectation at given phases or ages.**Secondly,** developmental tasks motivates individuals to do what the social group expects them to do at certain ages during their lives.**Thirdly,** developmental tasks shows individuals what lies ahead and what they will be expected to do when they reach their next stage of development.

1.4.1 Relationship between growth and development

Development and growth are commonly, used to convey the same meaning. Both are interrelated. Growth is one of the part of developmental process. As such, development in its quantitative aspect is termed as growth. Though these two are used interchangeably, but there is a great difference. According to ***J. E. Anderson (1950),*** "Development does not consist merely of adding inches to one's height or improving one's ability. Instead, development is a complex process of integrating many structures and functions." whereas, growth is quantitative in the sense that it can be measured in inches, points and dynes, marked by structural changes in organism.

Difference between Growth and Development

Sl No	Growth	Development
1	The term growth is generally used in purely physical sense. It refers to the increase caused by biological process in the organism.	Development indicates advancement, more unfoldment a progressive change in organism.
2	Changes in the quantitative aspects come into the domain of growth.	It indicates the changes in quality or character rather than quantitative aspects.
3	Growth is a part of developmental process. Development in quantitative sense is termed as growth.	Development is comprehensive. It includes overall changes.
4	Growth does not continue throughout life. It stops when maturity has been attained.	Development is a continuous process. It grows from womb to tomb. It does not end with the attainment of maturity. The changes, however small they may be, continue throughout the life span of an individual.

5	The changes produced by growth are the subject of measurement. They may be quantified.	Development brings qualitative changes, which are difficult to be measured directly. They are assessed through keen observation in behavioural situations.
6	Growth may or may not bring development. A child may grow (in terms of weight) by becoming fat, but this growth may not bring any functional improvement in terms of qualitative change or development.	Development is also possible without growth as we see in the cases of some children that they do not gain in terms of height, weight or size, but they do experience functional improvement or development in physical, social, emotional or intellectual aspects.
7	The pattern of growth is not uniform, it differs from child to child.	Development follows a sequential pattern**.**
8	Growth is most rapid during the early years of development.	Development is gradual process.
9	Growth is observable in terms of quantitative change in organism.	Development is quantitative change in organism which is not a subject to direct observation.
10	Growth is the progressive increase in the size of a child or part of a child.	Development is progressive acquisition of various skills and functions.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: Define development.

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Q 5: State two characteristics of growth and development each.

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Q 6: Differentiate between growth and development.

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1.5 SCOPE OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

While discussing the scope of any discipline or branch, it indicates the area of study of field of study by that particular branch or discipline. Developmental psychology is the scientific study of systematic psychological changes that occur in human beings over the course of their life span. Thus, it tends to cover all those psycho-physical changes that occur in an individual throughout his/her life. Indeed, the developmental psychology is also considered as life-span psychology. Hence, its scope is broad and beyond the limit of any particular stage or period of development. This section of this unit deals with the areas of study by developmental psychology.

A. Growth and Development: The most thrusted area of developmental psychology is growth and development. It studies the process, facts associated with the individual growth and development that take place in individual since the time of conception throughout his/her life. It studies how growth and development take place differently in different individual with different rate, what are the factors that may affect growth and development.

B. Different aspect of development: Developmental is one of the significant area of study under the scope of developmental psychology. Development does not confine to the physical development in a child or man. It covers their overall progressive change in terms of functionality which covers their mental or cognitive, social, language, moral, emotional development in man in different developmental phases of life throughout the life.

C. Developmental phases: We very well know that growth and development take place in individual differently in different developmental phases of human life. Different psychologists had given different categorization of developmental phases of human life covering from conception to old age on the basis of their intensive study. The

most commonly accepted phases of human life are-pre-natal period, infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, which may have again sub-categorization. Study of different psycho-physical changes during these phases are covered by developmental psychology. It studies the variation between individuals in the rate of their development and progression from one phase to another.

D. Theories of Development: Theories of development are another thrust area of developmental psychology. Developmental psychology is concerned not only with describing the characteristics of psychological change over time, but also seeks to explain the principles and internal workings underlying changes. Many theoretical perspectives attempts to explain development. Among them the most prominent theories of developmental psychology are- Jean Piaget's Stage theory, Lev Vygotsky's Social Contextualism Theory, Erik Erikson's Eight stage of psychosocial development theory etc.

E. Mechanism of Development (Nature vs Nurture): Though developmental change runs parallel with chronological age, age itself cannot cause development. The basic mechanisms or causes of development change are genetic factors and environmental factors. Genetic factors are responsible for cellular change like overall growth, changes in proportion of body and brain parts, and the maturation of aspects of function such as vision and dietary needs. Environmental factors affecting development may include both diet and diseases exposure as well as social, emotional and cognitive experiences.

F. Developmental Hazards: Another area of study under the scope of developmental psychology is developmental hazards. Growth and development take place in individual as per the law of nature, but the child or the individual may face different hazards associated with the development in different stages of growth and development, particularly in the early developmental stage of life. Developmental psychology deals with these hazards and its associated causes.

G. Development and Maturation: Developmental changes also includes change brought due to maturation. It is the change which is biological

in nature and which is due to our genetic endowment. Maturational changes in our body or behaviour are primarily due to the ageing process rather than learning. Development is indeed the product of experience and maturation. Developmental psychology includes this as one of the significant area of study.



1.6 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, it can be summarized as-

- Developmental psychology is the branch of psychology that studies intra individual and inter individual changes within these intra individual changes.
- Originally, this branch of psychology was concerned with infants and children, it was often called as *child psychology.*
- Developmental psychology is concerned not only with describing the characteristics of psychological changes over time, but also seek to explain the principles and internal workings underlying these changes.
- Growth and development are two concepts that are associated with Developmental psychology.
- The term growth is the quantitative aspect of changes. It is purely physical that implies the changes related to height, size, length and weight etc. in the child.
- L. D. Crow and A. Crow (1962) suggested that growth refers to structural and physiological changes, and development is concerned with growth as well as those changes in behaviour, which result from environment situations.
- The term development means a progressive series of changes that occur as a result of maturation and experiences.
- According to E. B. Hurlock “Development means a progressive series of changes that occur in an orderly predictable pattern as a result of maturation and experience”

- Growth and development are used interchangeably, but there is a great difference.
- The term growth is generally used in purely physical sense. It refers to the increase caused by biological process in the organism whereas, development indicates advancement, more unfoldment a progressive change in organism.
- The developmental psychology is also considered as life-span psychology. Hence, its scope is broad and beyond the limit of any particular stage or period of development.



1.7 FURTHER READING

1) Ahlawat Neetu(2010): Developmental Psychology, RBSA Publisher, Jaipur.
2) Dash B.N (2011): A textbook of Educational Psychology, Dominant publishers and distributors' pvt. Ltd.
3) Hurlock Elizabeth B (1980): Developmental Psychology: A life-span Approach, Mc Graw Hill Companies, Inc., New York.
4) Singh Punam (2011): Developmental Psychology, Centrum Press, New Delhi.



1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Elizabeth B. Hurlock defined developmental psychology as the branch of psychology that studies intra-individual changes and inter-individual changes within those intra-individual changes. Its task is not only description but also explication of age-related changes in behaviour in terms of antecedent consequent relationship.

Ans to Q No 2: Earlier, developmental psychology was concerned with infants and children, therefore, it was often called as child psychology.

Ans to Q No 3: According to Hurlock, developmental psychology have six major objectives-

- To find out what are the common and characteristic age changes in appearance in behaviour, in interest, and in goal from one developmental period to another,
- To find out when these changes occur.
- to find out what causes them,
- to find out how they influence behaviour,
- to find out whether they can or cannot be predicted and
- To find out whether they are individual or universal.

Ans to Q No 4: According to Benedek, "Development is a process in which the internal physiological changes and the psychological processes stimulated by them are integrated or responded to in a way which enables the individual to mater further and a new environmental stimulation".

Ans to Q No 5: Characteristics of Growth:

- Growth is quantitative in nature. It refers to the increase caused by the biological process in which the organism becomes bigger in size and volume.
- Growth follows a definite pattern.

Characteristics of Development:

- Development is the product of maturation and learning.
- Development is a process of qualitative transformation.

Ans to Q No 6: Growth and Development can be differentiated in terms of- Growth is a part of developmental process. Development in quantitative sense is termed as growth but, Development is comprehensive. It includes overall changes.



1.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A. Short Questions (Answer each questions in about 150 words)

Q 1: Write your perception on developmental psychology.

Q 2: Describe the definition of Hurlock on developmental psychology.

Q 3: How growth and development are interrelated?

Q 4: What is the difference between child psychology and developmental psychology?

B. Long Questions (Answer each questions in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Differentiate between growth and development.

Q 2: Describe the scope of developmental psychology.

Q 3: How the knowledge of developmental psychology can help the teachers and parents in upbringing the future generation? Give your views.

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