Chapter 4 - Human Development

Question 1:

What is development? How is it different from growth and maturation?

Answer:

Development is the pattern of progressive, orderly and predictable changes that originate at conception and continue to take place throughout an individual's life. It is different from growth and maturation by the following features:

	Growth		Development
1.	Growth refers to an increase in the size of body parts or of the organism as a whole.	i.	Development on the other hand refers to a larger process, which is in terms of growth and maturation both.
2.	Growth is measurable and quantified.	ii.	Development is not always measurable and quantified.
3.	Any change that does not lead to the decline in age is considered as growth.	iii.	The change that leads to decline such as in old age is also considered as development.

	Maturation		Development
1.	Maturation refers to the changes that follow an orderly sequence.	i.	Development does not necessarily refer to orderly sequence.
2.	Maturation is largely dictated by the genetic blueprint which produces commonalities in the growth.	ii.	Development need not to be identified with genetic changes and growth.

Question 2:

Describe the main features of life-span perspective on development.

Answer:

The main features of life-span perspective on development are as follows:

- Development is a lifelong process that takes place across all age groups starting from conception to old age. It also includes the interaction between gains and losses, which is dynamic.

- The biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional processes of human development are interwoven in the development of a person throughout the life-span.

- Development is multi-directional as some dimensions or components of a given dimension of development may increase, while others show a decrease.

- Development is highly plastic since modifiability is found in psychological development within persons, though flexibility varies among individuals.

- Development is influenced by historical conditions.

- A number of disciplines like psychology, anthropology, sociology and neuro-sciences are concerned with development.

- The response and actions of individuals are related to contexts, which include the inherited traits, the physical environment, and social, historical, and cultural contexts. These contexts vary among individuals.

Question 3:

What are developmental tasks? Explain by giving examples.

Answer:

Developmental tasks refer to a physical or cognitive skill that a person must accomplish during a particular age period to continue development. A developmental task for infants is walking, which is followed by the development of a sense of autonomy in the toddler period. In the adolescence period, some of the developmental tasks that the child faces are accepting one's physical body, learning to get along with friends of both sexes, becoming self sufficient, preparing for job & career etc.

Question 4:

'Environment of the child has a major role in the development of the child'. Support your answer with examples.

Answer:

Environment of the child has a major role in the development of the child because it includes the surroundings in which a child develops various cognitive and motor skills. It also influences the physical development of the child according to the limits created by genetic characteristics.

Further, the social-economic and cultural environment has a major role in the development of a child's thought process.

For example, a child who is sent to school is able to develop characteristics of confidence and self-reliance more easily than a child who does not receive education.

In genetic terms, children having angry genetic disposition learn to calm down if they grow in a stable environment. Therefore, environment plays a vital role in the development of a child, it not only develops a particular skill but influences the whole personality.

Question 5:

How do socio-cultural factors influence development?

Answer:

Following are the socio-cultural influences on the development of an individual:

- Socio-cultural factors influence development by providing it with a social context.

- The various socio-cultural consequences that a child meets with are learnt by him/her and thus, a child develops a personality which is influenced by his/her experiences.

- The socio-cultural background of an individual has an impact over his/her interaction with the rest of the society.

- The variable experiences of individuals during their development are dependent upon their social and cultural background.

- These factors include the conditions at home, the quality of schooling and interaction with peer groups.

- Children growing up in an unsupportive family environment find it hard to learn new things and make their own decisions. Children who are exposed to diverse experiences early in life develop a confident attitude and are more able to face challenges.

Question 6:

Discuss the cognitive changes taking place in a developing child.

Answer:

The cognitive changes that take place in a developing child are as follows:

- **0-2 years:** This is the age of sensory motors whereby, infant explores the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions.

- **2-7 years:** In this age, Preoperational thinking begins and the child acquires the concept of object permanence that enables him/her to use mental symbols to represent objects. The child does not have the ability to judge or assume the consequences of actions before performing them.

- The child also acquires preoperational thought, i.e., s/he gains the ability to mentally represent an object that is not physically present.

- The children are egocentric and develop animist thought

- **4-7 years:** Children develop intuitive thought. This enables them to question the things happening around them.

- **7-11 years:** This age is marked by the development of concrete operational thought, whereby a logical thought is developed and the child can reason logically about concrete events, classify objects into sets and perform reversible mathematical operations.

- **11-15 years:** The adolescents in this age develop formal operational thought, which leads to a hypothetical thinking and are able to apply logic abstractly. They also develop a special kind of

egocentrism of imaginary audience and personal fable.

Question 7:

Attachment bonds formed in childhood years have long-term effects. Explain taking examples from daily life.

Answer:

Attachment bonds formed in childhood years have long-term effects because it is notably developed between the parents and children. These bonds determine the level of trust and the perception of the world during the formative years of a child. For example, a child growing up in a secure family with sensitive, responsive and affectionate parents is able to trust them. The child is also able to share important decisions with them like the choice of career and marriage. On the other hand, a child whose parents are not responsive to his/her emotional needs would not be able to communicate with them as freely. This pattern may continue throughout his/her life. Furthermore, problems of juvenile delinquency are often related to the lack of attachment of an individual towards his/her parents.

Thus, a family which provides love and support to gives rise to a pleasing personality in the child, whereas a family that does not inculcate these ideals lead to an aggressive and disturbed personality of the child.

Question 8:

What is adolescence? Explain the concept of egocentrism.

Answer:

Adolescenceis commonly defined as the stage of life that begins at the onset of puberty, when sexual maturity or the ability to reproduce is attained. It is a transitional period in a person's life between childhood and adulthood. It is marked by rapid biological and psychological change in the individual. It starts at approximately 11 to 12 years of age and ends at 18 to 20 years of age.

The concept of egocentrism deals with self focus. It is a viewpoint of the world that is centred upon the self. It hinders an appreciation of the viewpoint of others. This kind of an attitude develops within a child from his/her childhood stage. However, it differs during adolescence. The egocentrism in adolescents comprises the following two elements:

- Imaginary audience − It is the adolescent's belief that others are as preoccupied about them as they are about themselves. They think that people are always noticing them and observing their behaviour, hence, it leads to self-consciousness.

- Personal fable − The adolescents' sense of uniqueness makes them feel that no one understands them or their feelings.

Question 9:

What are the factors influencing the formation of identity during adolescence? Support your answer with examples.

Answer:

The factors influencing the formation of identity during adolescence are as follows:

- **Cultural background:** The ideas and opinions of adolescents about the world around them are shaped by their cultural background and the level of their exposure. These determine the norms followed by them and hence, their cultural identity. For example, adolescent behaviour varies among Indian and American cultures.

- **Family and societal values:** The values of the society inhabited by an adolescent shape their identity. For example, teenagers in USA are conditioned to a materialistic society in contrast to young adults in Tibet who are more spiritually inclined.

- **Ethnic background:** Adolescents distinguish themselves as members of their ethnic group thus framing their own identity. For example, expectations of teenage behaviour and responsibilities vary across different ethnicities and tribes.

- **Socio-economic status:** The socio-economic background of an adolescent determines the peer group and the extent of their accessibility to popular lifestyle choices that determine identity. For example, accessibility to expensive gadgets and branded clothing that are popular among teenagers are determined by their socio-economic background.

- **Vocational commitment:** Adolescents begin to think of their career as a component of their identity. For example, adolescents choose whether to study science or commerce.

Question 10:

What are the challenges faced by individuals on entry to adulthood?

Answer:

The challenges faced by individuals on entry to adulthood are as follows:

(i) Career and work

- The adult gets a new role responsibility at work.

- S/he has to adjust with new challenging situations.

- There are apprehensions regarding different adjustments, proving one's competence and coping with expectations of both employers and self.

(ii) Marriage

- Adults

- have to make adjustments while entering a marriage relation and to know their spouse, coping with each other's likes, dislikes, tastes and choices.

- Responsibilities of home have to be shared if both partners are working.

(iii) Parenthood

- It is a difficult and stressful transition in young adults.

- It depends on factors such as number of children in the family, the availability of social support and the happiness and unhappiness of the couple.

- Sometimes single parents have to take the responsibility of bringing up the child.