



Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Social Sciences

BPCG-172

YOUTH, GENDER AND IDENTITY



YOUTH, GENDER AND IDENTITY

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**School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

BPCG-172: YOUTH, GENDER AND IDENTITY is a Generic Elective in Bachelors Degree Programme. It is of 6 credits. One credit is equivalent to 30 study hours. It means a learner needs to devote 180 hours of study including reading, preparing assignment, making notes etc. to complete this course. It is a Generic Elective course (GE), which learners from any Discipline can take. The course will provide you understanding of the concept of youth. It will discuss the development of identity in the youth, specifically in the context of gender and sexuality. You will also learn about the youth culture and the influence of media and globalization on it. Further, you will study the various challenges faced by the youth and ways to deal with them.

The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

Objectives

1. To introduce the concept of youth, gender and identity and their interface;
2. To define youth in the Indian context – socio cultural, economic, and legal perspective;
3. To introduce the social and psychological perspectives on identity;
4. To introduce theories of development: physiological, cognitive, emotional, social and moral;
5. To present gender and identity issues: discrimination, sexuality and cultural issues;
6. To discuss the impact of globalization and youth identity and culture; and
7. To introduce the challenges faced by the youth in general and specific to Indian context.

The Course **BPCG-172: Youth, Gender and Identity** consists of four Blocks and a total of nine Units which you need to study and complete during the six months duration of your second semester. You will have continuous evaluation through *assignment* and a *Term-End examination* (TEE) at the end of the Semester. Assignments are available on the IGNOU website. You can download the assignments on www.ignou.ac.in > student support > downloads > assignments. Refer to the instructional guidelines on the assignment for your assignment preparation and submission. You can also refer to the previous year question papers available under downloads to prepare for your term-end exam.

You will need to go through the course material in this book presented in different Blocks and Units to do your assignments and prepare successfully for the exam. Each Unit is like a chapter written in a structured way. It contains *Self Assessment Questions* (SAQs) in between the sections in the Unit so that you can check your progress and go back to the content for more clarification. This will help make your learning better. Further, there are *Unit End questions* also at the end of the Unit that facilitates your overall understanding of the Unit. *Key Words* section highlights the key words in the Unit that will help you recall the main terms and concepts learned in the Unit. *References* section will help you refer to specific studies and articles to gain more understanding of a particular point discussed in the Unit. At the end of each Unit, you are also provided with

Suggested readings for your further understanding of the Unit. Thus, the teacher is built into the course materials to help minimize the gap or distance between the learner and the teacher.

IGNOU follows a multi-pronged approach to teaching and learning. Thus there are **printed course materials**, **audio** and **video materials** also. The soft copies of the course materials are also available on the IGNOU website through **egyankosh**. Interaction between the teacher and learner is also facilitated through **Gyanvani** (interactive radio counseling), **Gyan darshan** (tele conference) and **Web conference**. Gyanvani is available on FM 105.6 Gyandarshan is a television channel, a must carry channel for all the cable operators. Information about Gyanvani and Gyan darshan monthly schedule is available on the IGNOU website. Web conferences are held by the Faculty of Discipline of Psychology and you will get the information about the same from your Regional centre. You can make use of all these features of learning at IGNOU to take your learning to a higher level and make it a truly enriching experience.

Brief Introduction to Blocks and Units

A brief outline of each of the four Blocks and the Units contained therein is given below for your reference which you can go through before studying the Units in detail.

BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION

Block 1 will introduce you to the concept of youth. Youth as a stage of life has been variously defined and it is important to have a clear and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of it to inform the policies and interventions for youth. *Block 1 consists of two Units.*

Unit 1 Youth: Concept and Identity discusses the concept of youth and elaborates its meaning in terms of socio cultural, economic and legal aspects. Further, it explains the concept of identity in youth. The various indicators of identity and theories pertaining to identity development in youth are also described.

Unit 2 Developmental Aspects of Youth focuses on the developmental aspects of youth such as physical, cognitive, social, emotional and moral. Developmental tasks at this stage are described. Various issues pertaining to each of the facets of development are discussed.

BLOCK 2 YOUTH AND IDENTITY

Block 2 Youth and Identity focuses on the central concept of identity. A significant task of the stage of youth is the development of identity. In the absence of a successful identity development, the youth faces identity crisis that can negatively affect the various facets of development. *Block 2 consists of three Units.*

Unit 3 Social and Psychological Perspectives on Identity discusses the youth identity in terms of social psychological aspects. It highlights family as an important context for identity formation and development. Further, intergenerational relationships including parent-youth relationship, are discussed in the context of youth autonomy and identity development.

Unit 4 Education, Career and Peer Group focuses on educational institutions as contexts of identity development. It also discusses workplace identity and relationships. The peer group dynamics as important for social development is also highlighted.

Unit 5 Youth Culture: Influence of Media and Globalization explains the meaning of youth culture and the influence of media and globalization on the youth culture.

BLOCK 3 GENDER AND IDENTITY

Block 3 - Gender and Identity elaborates gender as an important indicator of identity. Gender as a social construction affects the youth identity in many ways. *Block 3 consists of two Units.*

Unit 6 Gender, Youth Identity and Sexuality talks about gender socialization and changing gender roles in the society. It also discusses sexuality in the adolescents and youth, and highlights healthy sexuality.

Unit 7 Youth, Identity and Globalization emphasizes the influence of globalization on aspects like work and culture; and thereby impacting the identity development in youth.

Block 4 – Challenges related to Youth, Gender and Identity highlights the various concerns and challenges faced by the youth. These challenges are important to address as they impact the health and the future of the youth. *Block 4 consists of two Units.*

BLOCK 4 CHALLENGES RELATED TO YOUTH, GENDER AND IDENTITY

Unit 8 Aggression, Violence and Mental Health among Youth focuses on the issue of aggression and violence among youth which has become a major concern in the present day society. The theories of aggression are described and the risk factors leading to aggression are explained. Finally, the ways to address this crucial issue were highlighted.

Unit 9 Challenges Related to Work Life Balance, Equity and Equality points out the issues related to work life imbalance, equity and equality. It explains the various models of work life balance. Challenges of work life balance may have various consequences such as physical, psychological, social and organizational. Finally, the Unit discusses ways of addressing the work life challenges and promotion of equity and equality.

Block 1
Introduction

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BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION

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UNIT 1 YOUTH: CONCEPT AND IDENTITY*

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Concept of Youth
 - 1.3.1 Meaning of Youth in terms of Socio-cultural, Economic and Legal Aspects
 - 1.3.1.1 Socio-cultural Perspective
 - 1.3.1.2 Economic Perspective
 - 1.3.1.3 Legal Perspective
- 1.4 Identity of Youth
 - 1.4.1 Concept and Definition
 - 1.4.2 Theories of Identity
 - 1.4.2.1 Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development
 - 1.4.2.2 James Marcia's Theory of Identity Status
 - 1.4.3 Indicators of Identity
 - 1.4.4 Multiplicity of Identity
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Key Words
- 1.7 Answers to Self Assessment Questions
- 1.8 Unit End Questions
- 1.9 References
- 1.10 Suggested Readings

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning and concept of youth;
- Define youth in terms of socio-cultural, economic and legal aspects;
- Understand the concept of identity in youth through Erikson's theory and Social Identity theory; and
- Delineate the indicators of identity and understand multiplicity of identity.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

“Youth is happy because it has the capacity to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.”

—*Franz Kafka*

Youth is a dynamic stage in the life span development that can become a vibrant force in any society's progress. Youth is generally considered to represent the future of any nation. No society can develop and grow without attaching significance to youth and harnessing their energy and potential. Substantial learning and acquisition of skills and attitude happens during this time. It is a

* Dr. Shivantika Sharad, Assistant Professor in Psychology, Vivekananda College, New Delhi

stage marked by energy, enthusiasm, hope, openness to learn, motivation, and creativity that makes “youth” a valuable human resource.

According to ‘World Population Prospects: The 2015 revision’ Population Database of United Nations Population Division, India has the world’s highest number of 10 to 24 year olds amounting to over 242 million young people (Youth in India, 2017). As per India’s Census 2011, youth (15-24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1%) of India’s total population and this is a considerable number that calls for reaping “demographic dividend” by harnessing the potential of the youth.

Therefore the study of youth, their psychosocial development and related issues is an important endeavor. Family, school, neighborhood, social norms, peers, work settings etc. influence youth development and their formation of identity.

Youth also face a lot of issues and challenges like that of identity formation, building effective relationships, combating peer pressure, taking on mature roles and responsibilities, issues of body image and so on.

The youth of today’s India inhabits a hybrid culture that is at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. Due to increased urbanization, globalization, communication, technology revolution, they experience generation gaps and tensions. They also experience competing ways of life that presents them with conflicting choices. They are also at the risk of delinquency, substance abuse, high risk sexual behavior, as well as the risk of being radicalized. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that today’s youth faces a more complex transition to adulthood.

A lot of efforts are being made for positive youth development across the globe. Our country too is encouraging youth to be actively involved in civil society by providing them with education, skills, health awareness and other enablers to productively contribute to the economy.

1.3 CONCEPT OF YOUTH

The word youth is etymologically derived from the old English word *geong* (meaning youthful, young, recent, new, fresh) and Sanskrit word *Yuvan* meaning youth or young man. Oxford English Dictionary defines youth as “being young, early part of life especially adolescence”.

Youth is commonly conceptualized as a period of transition in which young people strive to meet the social markers of adulthood, such as getting work, starting families and being recognized as full and productive citizens (Banks, 2015, p. 2). United Nation defines youth as those people belonging to the age group of 15 to 24 years. According to World Health Organization (CAH, WHO), ‘adolescence’ comprises of those in the age span of 10 to 19 years, “youth” as those in 15-24 years age group and the two age groups is labeled “young people” covering the age group of 10-24 years. National Youth Policy of India (2014) defines the youth population as those in the age group of 15-29 years. It recognizes the fluid nature of youth as an age group. It is mostly characterized by the age group when a person completes/ leaves formal education and enters the job market and gets employed.

Thus there are variations in the age range of youth, yet we can say that it is that period of life when one is transitioning from the dependence that childhood

entails towards independence of adulthood. Thus the period of youth may vary from culture to culture.

The term youth is often used interchangeably with adolescence and young adulthood. However, you can see some differences between a youth and adult as given in the Table below:

Table 1aT: Some Differences between a Youth and an Adult

Youth	Adult
Youth is considered as someone who is not yet an adult. A significant part of youth corresponds to the stage of adolescence.	Someone who is considered grown up and mature.
Youth is seen as a being in the process of becoming. The stage is marked by a search for one's identity.	Adult is seen as a being who has become someone or has arrived or has a distinct identity.
Youth are also perceived as powerless and vulnerable. They face a lot of pressures from their family and society at large. In many societies youth are not given enough say in decision making, even if it is pertaining to their own lives.	Adult on the other hand is perceived as powerful and strong, having independent decision making ability.
Youth are considered less responsible. Popular notion of the youth connects them with risk taking and hence engaging in more risky behaviours. They also represent youth as rebellious.	Adults are perceived as responsible and hence are given more responsible positions and roles. Popular notion of an adult is someone who engages in measured and careful behaviour.
Youth are open to new experiences and have creative ideas.	Adults are largely represented as being conformist, having less flexible and more fixed thought patterns as compared to the youth.
Youth are also perceived as dependent, having less knowledge.	Adults are considered independent and more knowledgeable.

Youth is perceived and understood from a variety of perspectives. Some view youth positively and as a human resource that can contribute positively to the development of society (at present as well as in future). Thus a lot of investment is done in youth in order to create productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to India's economic development. For instance, a number of organizations and programs in India are focused towards youth development such as National Service Scheme (NSS), Scouts and Guides, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, National Youth Corps, National programme for Youth and Adolescent Development, Youth Hostel, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development and so on.

On the other hand, youth is also viewed as a problematic stage of transition. If we consider the entire human life span, no other developmental stage is as varied as the stage of youth with regard to the age group, their needs and expectations,

their own as well as of the society. It is thus simultaneously perceived as a challenge and as a resource to the nation. This makes it all the more important to focus on this valuable resource.

As you can see in the box below, youth can be seen from different aspects:

- Youth as a demographic dividend
- Youth as a potential to be nurtured and developed
- Youth as a transition phase that requires instilling social values and morals
- Youth as a change agent
- Youth as a challenge to be dealt with
- Youth as non-adults
- Youth as risky behaviours
- Youth as a problem.

Self Assessment Questions I

Answer the following as TRUE or FALSE.

- 1) Youth all over the world share universal social and cultural aspects.
- 2) Youth as a demographic dividend means youth has a lot of money.
- 3) Youth is seen as a process of becoming, while adults have already become somebody.
- 4) Adulthood is a period of major transition.

1.3.1 Meaning of Youth in Terms of Socio-cultural, Economic and Legal Aspects

It is important to understand that youth is not just an age related process or stage. Youth is also an ongoing construction by the social and cultural forces. Schooling, family, job market conditions, globalization, technological advancements – all these have significant impact in shaping the youth experience.

Youth, all over the world, though similar in their biological age, yet they differ in their economic, social, cultural and legal aspects. In this Section, we will define youth from economic, socio-cultural and legal perspective, particularly with reference to India.

1.3.1.1 Socio-cultural Perspective of Youth

Youth is not just related to age. Age refers to a biological reality. However, the meaning and experience of age and ageing or growing up is influenced greatly by the society, culture and historical era we inhabit. Thus youth is socially and culturally constructed. It is necessary to make note of the fact that the inherited assumptions in youth psychology are largely borrowed from developmental psychology about universal stages of development (that are the same across cultures). However, like any phase of development, youth too is not devoid of influence of culture. Youth is a dynamic notion and it keeps evolving with time and space. Cultural context and historical moment determine how youth is defined, understood and developed. In this regard it is important to understand

the ecological perspective offered by Bronfenbrenner (1986, 2004), according to which development is affected by multitude of factors. This theory posits that development reflects the influence of several environmental systems – microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The **microsystem** is the setting in which the individual lives and includes the person’s family, peers, school, and neighborhood. The interaction of the youth with parents, peers, and teachers helps him construct the experience of youth. The **mesosystem** involves relations between microsystems or connections between contexts. Examples are the relation of family experiences to school experiences, school experiences to religious experiences, and family experiences to peer experiences. The **exosystem** consists of links between a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role and the individual’s immediate context. For example, a youth’s experience at home may be influenced by his/her mother’s experiences at work. The **macrosystem** involves the larger culture in which individuals live. This refers to how a youth is shaped by cultural norms, practices and values. The **chronosystem** consists of the patterning of environmental events over time and transitions over the life course, as well as socio-historical circumstances.

Thus from this perspective, youth is seen as a social process and not just an age group of people. This perspective regards internalization of cultural values an important developmental task of youth in all cultures. In a globalizing world with multiplicity of values and religions, with diverse economic conditions, parenting practices and social norms, youth develop differently. For instance, in developing countries like India, children from lower socio economic families are expected to start working at an early age. Youth growing up in a country under military regime or facing terrorism will be very different from a youth growing up in a country where the government ensures safe transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth who lives on the street for whom survival is the solitary concern will be very different from a youth living in an affluent family for whom growth and education is the only concern. Further, there are many ways in which growing up in the 2000s in the industrialised world is fundamentally different from what growing up in the 1970s entailed. Male and female youth are also very different. Thus gender also plays a very important role in defining youth.

The socio-cultural perspective helps us to appreciate the heterogeneity that exists within the youth population. Thus, youth is not merely a category. It is also a dynamic process of experiencing life by virtue of being at a certain stage of development. It does have some universal or common patterns, because of the correspondence with adolescence that is characterized by universal biological process. Nonetheless, we need to recognize the significant role of social institutions (e.g., family, school), culture (values, beliefs and practices) and of changing economic and political circumstances and their impact on youth.

The period of youth is crucial because it is the threshold to adulthood. National Youth Policy apart from promoting youth as a productive work force, also aims at creating a strong and healthy generation with social values and community ties that participates in civic engagement activities. It supports youth at risk and creates equitable opportunity for all disadvantaged & marginalized youth.

1.3.1.2 Economic Perspective

The economic perspective looks at the youth as a demographic dividend. Demographic dividend refers to the economic growth that occurs because of the

shifts in the age structure of a working population of a country. It occurs when the proportion of working population out of the total population (or the population that is dependent on the working population) is high. Since youth make a significant portion of India's total population, if they are trained to be productive and nurtured appropriately to develop their potential, it would translate into the economic growth of the nation. Thus youth becomes a demographic dividend.

The National Youth Policy (NYP-2014) of India proposed a holistic 'vision' for the youth of India. Their vision was to empower the youth of the nation and facilitate the growth, development and achievement of our youth. The Government of India has also formulated the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 that provides an umbrella framework to all skilling activities being carried out within the country, and to align these to common standards and link skilling with demand centres. Under the skill development mission of the GOI, a flagship scheme titled "Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana" (PMKVY) has been launched by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship which aims to benefit 10 million Indian youth. It is a skill Certification Scheme that is expected to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training, which in turn will help them secure a better livelihood. PMKVY envisions to link the aptitude, aspiration, and knowledge of the skilled workforce it creates with employment opportunities and market demands. Thus providing placement opportunities to the trained and certified candidates is the major thrust of the Scheme.

1.3.1.3 Legal Perspective

In legal parlance the word that is used for youth is juvenile. Juvenile is derived from the Latin word *juvenis* meaning young or a young person. Interestingly, it is seen globally that legal system formulates separate approaches for individuals considered juveniles and those considered adults. For legal purposes generally children and adolescents (usually aged 18 or below) are treated differently from older youth (aged 18/21 above). There is a separate legal system for crimes committed by juveniles. Juveniles are tried in courts differently from adults. The minimum age at which a person can be labeled juvenile varies from nation to nation. Legally it is termed as the minimum age of criminal responsibility. It is the age below which a person is completely immune from any criminal liability because the person lacks psychological maturity and judgement to understand the consequences of his/her actions. Next comes the age below which a person is considered vulnerable and immature and hence cannot be made fully responsible for one's actions. This is the period of childhood and adolescence and crime committed during this stage is dealt with by most nations under special laws known as juvenile justice laws (Bhatia, 2014). Juvenile delinquency or crime committed by juveniles is on the rise and one of the major issues faced by our country.

In India those aged 18 and under are called juveniles, while in Singapore it is 16 and under. In the United States, there is no uniform national age from which a child is accountable in the juvenile court system. It varies between States, ranging from age 15 to age 17. The age of criminal responsibility in India is 18. However, according to Juvenile Justice Act 2015 (enforced in January 2016), juveniles of age group of 16 to 18 years are to be tried like an adult for heinous or barbaric offences committed by them. Recently, extensive attention has been accorded to rules governing the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and the imposition

of criminal responsibility above that age depending on a youth offender's ability to assess the implications and wrongfulness of his/her act. The Youth Criminal Justice Act 2003 of Canada hails the age of 12 as the lower limit for the age of criminal responsibility. In England and Wales, it is 10; Italy it is 14, Belgium 18, Sri Lanka it is 8 years. In Sri Lanka children between 16 and 18 are treated as adults. Pakistan sets the limit as 7 for most offences, and those between 7-12 in some cases. China too has much stricter laws for juveniles.

Apart from legal liability, the Indian Constitution has granted the right to vote to all Indian citizens of sound mind above the age of 18.

Self Assessment Questions II

- 1) What are the environmental systems that affect development according to Bronfenbrenner?

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- 2) Define demographic dividend.

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- 3) What does the "age of criminal responsibility" mean?

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- 4) Why is it necessary to build the skills of the youth?

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1.4 IDENTITY OF YOUTH

Let us first read the following two vignettes.

Case 1

Mehreen is a young girl of 15. She is born in a Muslim family that holds orthodox values. She stays in a joint family. Mehreen is the first girl in her family who is

studying in a co-educational school, thanks to the support of her parents. She wants to become a dancer, but has never shared this with anyone. As she completes her higher secondary schooling and is ready to go to college, she faces a lot of hurdles. Her uncle and elder brother oppose strongly her joining a college, and instead press for her marriage. She is however determined to pursue higher education and set an example for other girls in the family. With the support of her parents, she gets admission in a good course in a decent college. As she starts her college, she is pressurized by her peers to wear certain type of clothes, behave in a certain manner while her family restrains her. In times of conflicts she reaches out to one of her teachers, whom she considers as a role model. Her passion for dance flourishes as she joins the dance society of her college and participates in many competitions and shows. Her eyes twinkle with joy as she performs on stage. She wins many accolades and awards. Her passion for dance deepens. The three years of college pass swiftly for Mehreen. She doesn't experience significant conflicts while being in college, except the minor tussle of choosing between what her family says and what her friends do.

Mehreen now wants to join a dance academy and that isn't easy for her. Her family now expects her to get married to a person of their choice. Mehreen feels shackled as she knows what she wants in life. Her dream of becoming a dancer cannot remain unfulfilled.

- *In your opinion, what is Mehreen's real identity?*
- *To what extent do you think family and parents shape one's identity?*

What should Mehreen do – get married or fight to become a dancer?

Case 2

Ramesh is a very friendly and cheerful boy of 19. He has many friends who keep him company. All his friends perceive Ramesh to be a carefree and fun loving. While his friends are contemplating about their future goals, Ramesh watches on with amusement as this isn't his cup of tea. As Ramesh stands on the threshold of his adult life he is confronted by the quest to find himself. All his friends already know what they want to do. Ramesh finds himself isolated in his confusion. Ramesh finds this very amusing. He doesn't know what he would be doing in future. He realizes that he was never confronted by this question. All these years in school and in college he was happy and was just flowing with life. But now as he is graduating, he needs to decide. He thinks he can be a researcher, an army officer, a singer, a teacher and even a chef.

The above two case vignettes show how identity is deeply connected with the answers to the questions “Who am I? What am I all about? What is different about me?”. Such concerns become extremely significant when one enters adolescence. Adolescence is usually about biological changes and one's struggle for identity. Adolescence is a phase where they are defining themselves by trying and exploring a variety of roles and tasks.

1.4.1 Concept and Definition

Identity can be generally defined as a sense of who an individual is. This sense of who I am and how I am different from others is often referred to as self-identity. In psychological terms, identity can be defined as the perception of the self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space (Erikson,

1968). Apart from one's own perception, it is also the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity. Identity is like one's personal style, one's individuality and at the same time one's 'meaning for significant others'. Identity is a kind of self-structure which gives individuals a sense of who they are and who they imagine themselves to be in the future.

According to James Marcia (1966) identity is an internal self-constructed, dynamic structure of one's needs, drives, abilities, beliefs, and self-perceptions as well as an inner organization of one's individual history and socio-political stance. Identity is dynamic, as it keeps changing and evolving with time, with new elements being added and old element being discarded.

1.4.2 Theories of Identity

The concept of identity cannot be understood in its entirety without referring to the work of German born American Psychologist, also a follower of Freud, Erik Erikson and, James Marcia who refined and extended Erikson's work on identity. Let us now learn both these theories.

1.4.2.1 Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Perhaps no single theoretician has had a greater impact on our perceptions of adolescent personality development than Erik Erikson. Erikson (1968) set forth a theory of ego development to account for the interactions between psychological, social, historical and developmental factors in the formation of personality. He gave a psychosocial theory of lifespan development in which he emphasised on eight stages of development that unfold as we go through life. At each stage, a unique developmental task confronts individuals with a crisis that must be resolved. The crisis is seen as a turning point in the individual's life marked by vulnerability as well as growth potential. Seeing it in the context of youth development, there are two stages that an individual has to deal with:

- **Identity versus Identity Confusion:** Faced during the adolescent years this is the fifth stage in Erikson's theory and marks an individual's struggle for finding and defining one's identity. Healthy exploration of roles and forms of identity leads to a positive identity development and acquisition of the virtue of fidelity, i.e., faith in one's self.
- **Intimacy versus Isolation:** Erikson's sixth developmental stage is experienced during the early adulthood years (20s and 30s), with the key developmental task of forming intimate relationships. The virtue of love is acquired during this stage as one forms healthy friendships and mature relationships.

Erikson's (1968) famous work "Identity: Youth and Crisis" has provided a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding identity formation. He also described major factors that contribute to identity formation during adolescence, particularly the social and cultural factors. Parenting and socialization plays a major role in helping individual's form their identity.

1.4.2.2 James Marcia's Theory of Identity Status

James Marcia (1966; 1980) has extended Erikson's theory to develop a basic groundwork for a specific identity formation model. Marcia proclaims that

attaining an identity status incorporates two main dimensions: (i) going through the phases of crisis (presence or absence of a crisis period), and (ii) the presence or absence of well-defined and stable commitment to values, beliefs, and standards belonging to the domains of religion, political stance and choices in occupation. Crisis would mean the struggles adolescents face while trying to choose among various meaningful options or alternatives, whereas commitment refers to how much an adolescent is willing to invest in the task in order to attain it. Marcia has conceptualized four types of identity formation (Fig. 1.a) which have been elaborated below.

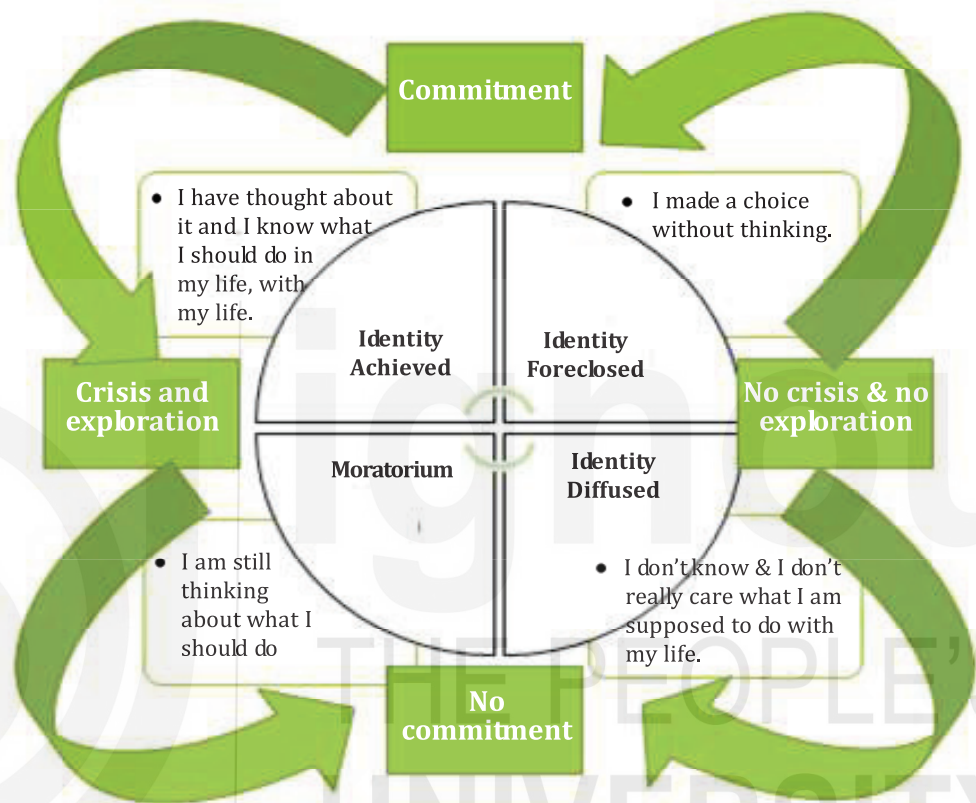


Figure 1aF : Marcia's Theory of Identity Status

Now let us describe each of these identity status below.

Status 1 - Identity Diffusion

This means low commitment to a particular identity. Youth who are usually 12-18 years of age or even beyond, can be diffused – wherein they are unable to commit to a particular identity. There is low exploration motive as well where the individual is neither compelled to explore nor commit to any definite direction in life. There is no responsibility taken for choices or decisions made, often found endorsing contradictory statements about themselves. The individual does not show much concern for anything; they are mostly uninterested in ideological matters. They remain emotionally remote, solitary and almost schizoid. Out of the four identity statuses, diffused individuals are often found to be lowest in domains of moral thought and cognitive complexity. They often engage in shallow relationships; remaining uninvolved.

Status 2 - Identity Foreclosure

This involves obligation to an identity without passing through any crisis stage. In other words, there is little exploration of choices. This is usually the case when parents hand down their tradition of choices and there is no conscious decision making on part of the individual. The individual is highly committed to an identity but may feel negative consequences later in life for not being allowed to choose a path on one's own. Thus, they seem to be cognitively rigid, especially when it comes to personal or ideological issues. Their social network helps them choose their goals and values while the individual gets influenced by the environment he/she is a part of. Parental goals and their own goals are often ambiguous and diffuse to them. They become what others intend them to be. Even though they have positive relations with parents, in case they are in a situation which is against their parental values, it is quite possible for them to feel very vulnerable and helpless. These individuals seem rejecting or disinterested in those who are dissimilar to themselves.

Status 3 - Identity Moratorium

This is a stage of vigorous exploration, but low commitment to any specific identity. They seek out different opportunities and choices in life to discover the path best suited for them. They are known to have more intense yet briefer relationships, often found to be vacillating between extreme concern for others or total self-absorption. Adolescents and young adults come to conflicting terms with authority figures as they explore their identity. While they are struggling, they need to strike a balance between their parental wishes, the societal demands or their own capabilities/skills and talents. They tend to have engaging, intense relationships with people of authority, whenever questioned in terms of their identity. They do best when given freedom to explore and receive guidance and support from family members.

Status 4 - Identity Achievement

The individual has undergone crisis and genuinely explored before making a commitment to a particular identity. Thus, moratorium stage leads one to the achieved status where the individual has high commitment with regard to chosen identity. People with identity achievement status have carefully analyzed several occupational choices and reevaluated past notions – they have gone through a crisis phase and they have chosen an occupation and ideology best suited for them after exploring. They do not care whether their decisions meet conflicting ideas of parents. They seem to function at high levels of moral reasoning, are tolerant of ambiguity and also are more capable of intimacy. They appear solid, are directed yet flexible whenever stimulated by any compelling thought of action.

The above two theories elaborate on the personal aspects of identity. Personal identity defines the individual's uniqueness. It helps us understand how one's self is different from the other. Social aspects of identity are those defining features which help us distinguish between the groups we belong to (called in-groups) from that of others (called out-groups).

You will learn more about the concept of identity in youth in the subsequent Unit 3.

Self Assessment Questions III**Match the following:**

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) identity achievement | a) no exploration, no commitment |
| 2) identity diffusion | b) ongoing exploration, no commitment |
| 3) identity moratorium | c) explored and then committed |
| 4) foreclosure | d) not explored, but committed |

Fill in the blanks:

- 1) is the fifth stage of Erickson's psychosocial theory of development.
- 2) Youth with identity status usually identify with their parental goals.
- 3) identity defines individual's uniqueness, while identity is defined by individual's group memberships.
- 4) Identity is defined as perception of and continuity of one's existence in time and space by Erikson.
- 5) stage of identity gradually leads to identity achievement.

1.4.3 Indicators of Identity

Forming an identity is an important task when the individual chooses their values and beliefs, their gender orientation, their occupation, and social standing in the world. They constantly face vast variety of choices as well as negotiate the given aspects of identity like ethnicity, religion or caste.

Thus my identity could be marked by my unique psychological features like my values, preferences and my ideology, as well as by my social category of belongingness like religion, gender, race etc. we can have multiple indicators of identity.

Here it may be noted that *Social identity* is usually defined as that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from knowledge of his or her membership in a social group and results from social categorization. *Social categorization* typically results in the classification of the self into a particular group. For example, a man may think of himself primarily as being male in some situations, whereas in other situations, he may think of himself primarily as being an Indian. Thus an individual has multiple "social identities" due to their group memberships along different dimensions of human diversity. Social identity refers to the aspects of the self-image that derive from these group memberships. In other words, it is an individual's perception of what defines the "us" associated with any group membership that has been internalized (like defining one's self as, "I am an atheist" if one identifies with a group of people who do not believe in God). This is different from the notion of personal identity which refers to self-knowledge that derives from the individual's unique attributes (like defining oneself as a seeker if one thinks one is defined by this quality).

Below are given some of the indicators of identity that influence the identity development of the youth.

a) **Caste**

Most of our conceptualization of caste comes from the Vedic “varna” and thousands of “jatis”. The varnas in the Vedic period were occupational divisions in the society. The priestly class was classified as Brahmans, the warriors and nobles as Kshatriyas, the tradesmen and artisans as Vaishyas and the labourers as Shudras. This categorization by virtue of exclusion also created a fifth class, the untouchables and tribal people. The conceptualization of jatis is far more complicated. These are fluid categories which can depend upon occupational roles (like jewelers, business, artisans, farmers, landlords etc), area of living (regional or geographical), the varna and religion. Caste names often describe castes’ traditional occupation.

While the varna-jati categorization is specific to the Hindu religion, it also applies across other religions. For Christians and Sikhs, their varna-jati categorization is based on the last family member before the conversion. The Muslim community too has their own caste.

These caste categories are important markers of identity in Indian context. Due to the longstanding casteism in India that has been extremely oppressive, a number of affirmative actions have been started for people who had been marginalized owing to their low caste identity. One such action is reservation of seats in educational institutions and jobs.

b) **Class**

Another marker for identity is social class, which is an embodiment of social and economic status. It is also referred to as socio-economic status.

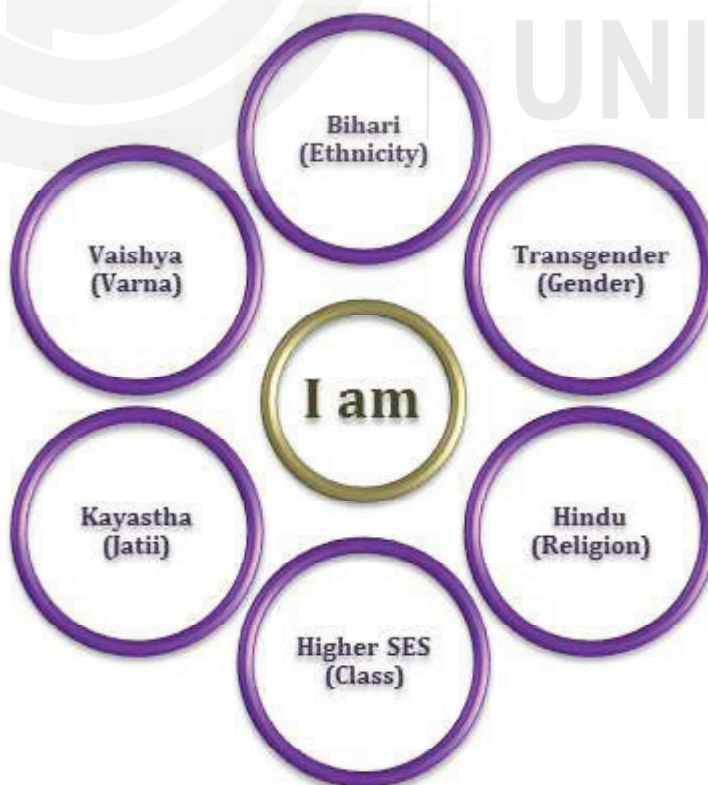


Figure 1bF : Different Identity Indicators in India

Class incorporates one's income, education, and occupational prestige. One can identify as middle-class, upper-class, lower-middle-class, lower-class, or poor as an identity label. Social class is also reflected in one's life style as well as occupational categories, like labourer, white collar job, class IV employee, bureaucrat etc. It has an inbuilt hierarchy in itself, and is also associated with caste in Indian context.

c) **Gender**

One of the significant markers of one's identity is gender. It is different from *sex* as the latter indicates one's biological sex, whereas gender includes the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours assigned to a person's biological sex by the particular society and culture. Thus socialization plays an important role in influencing one's gender roles. *Gender roles* refer to the behaviour and personality patterns associated with the particular sex, male or female, in a given culture. It may be noted here that the person may exhibit gender roles that may not be commensurate with the assigned biological sex, e.g., a girl may show boy-like behaviour, dress up like boys and engage in activities deemed more appropriate for boys by the society. If the behavior is according to the cultural expectations and meets the norms of the culture, it is known as *gender-normative*; and if the behaviors do not follow the cultural norms and expectations, they are called as *gender non-conformity*.

Since youth is the stage when one's gender identity is taking its final shape, it is necessary to consider it as to how does it shape the youth's identity. *Gender identity* may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics. Rather, it refers to the personal orientation of the individual and is not influenced by societal norms. Thus, a person can have an inherent sense of being a male or female or the third gender. Since it is internal, it is not visible to others. An individual's gender expression or presentation, including physical appearance and behavior that communicates aspects of gender or gender role may or may not conform to a person's gender identity.

Gender identity is different from *sexual orientation*. Gender identity refers to who you feel like, e.g., a boy or a girl; whereas sexual orientation refers to who you are attracted to sexually. You may feel like a male and you feel sexually attracted towards males. There may be other variations also in the transgender spectrum that you may identify with. In majority of the cases, there is congruence between the biological assigned sex and the gender identity of the person, e.g., you are born as a female and you identify yourself with being a female. However, there are also cases where one's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent. *Transgender* is someone whose gender identity or gender expression does not match with the gender assigned at birth according to what society deems normative based on external biological sex characteristics. The population statistics of India indicate that out of the total population of 124.72 crores (2011 census), 4.88 lakhs are transgenders. This was the first time that the data on transgender was collected in the census, which also indicates their growing visibility. The term *gender queer* is also used here which refers to a person whose gender

identity falls outside of the gender binary (i.e. identifies with neither woman nor man or identifies with both genders). Queer is one whose gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression does not conform to the dominant societal norms.

As mentioned earlier, gender non-conformity refers to when there is a discrepancy between gender expression/gender identity and the gender norms associated with the assigned sex at birth with the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics. This leads to discomfort and distress in the individual which is called *gender dysphoria*.

Thus we can see that gender is an important indicator of identity of youth and we need to understand it in terms of the particular societal and cultural expectations. You will learn more about gender and identity in Unit 6.

d) **Religion**

India is a land of multiple religions. Religious identity is one of the foremost social identities as it comprises of one's belief systems and practices. Many aspects of our lives are governed by one's religion. The 2011 census reports that 79.8% of the Indian population follow Hinduism, followed by Islam which is practiced by 14.2% of Indian population. Christianity (2.3%), Sikhism (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%) and Jainism (0.4 %) are the other major religions followed by the people of India. For some people religious identity is not salient as they either do not believe in any one particular religion, or are atheist. Think about your own self and discover for yourself how much your religion contributes to your identity. You need to keep in mind that religious identity is different from religiosity. One can give salience to one's religious identity for instance as a Christian, yet not participate in rituals like Sunday mass. However, the same person would ascribe to strongly held notions of the said religion and believe in sharing and helping others and celebrate festivals associated with Christianity.

e) **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity refers to a group of people that share common characteristics like language, culture, region, traditions, religion, and tribal or national origin. India is a country of multiple ethnicities. Ethnicity involves a feeling of consciousness among the ethnic group members that such shared characteristics exist. Some examples of ethnicity include tribal groups like Bhil (of Madhya Pradesh), Khasi (of Assam and Meghalaya), Gonds (of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar), Lepchas (of Sikkim); regional identities like purabiya, Bihari, Keralite, Delhite; linguistic identities like Malyali, Tamilian, Bengali, Oriya.

There could be other salient markers of one's identity like one's nationality, the sports team one belongs to, one's educational institution etc. In the above section we have outlined only a few markers that have been traditionally established to be important in defining ones identity.

Activity 1: Create your Social Identity Wheel

Description:

Reflect on the group memberships that you have. Make a list of them. Which amongst these are really important to you? Think about the different roles that you play, who you are as a person, what you mean to others. Write these too. Now answer the following questions:

- What four identities are most salient (important) to you? Why are they salient?
- How each of your social identities have influenced your experiences of who you are, and how you see yourself?
- What four identities do you think others see first when they see you?
- How each of your social identities have influenced how others see and treat you?
- Do you think you have accrued some benefits as a result of each of your social identities? What are the benefits experienced?
- What are the disadvantages or costs that you have experienced as a result of each of your social identities?
- What areas of your identity wheel were difficult for you to arrive at? Why? Based on your answers you can complete your identity wheel. The identity wheel worksheet can be found here:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/bam-1-wheel.pdf>

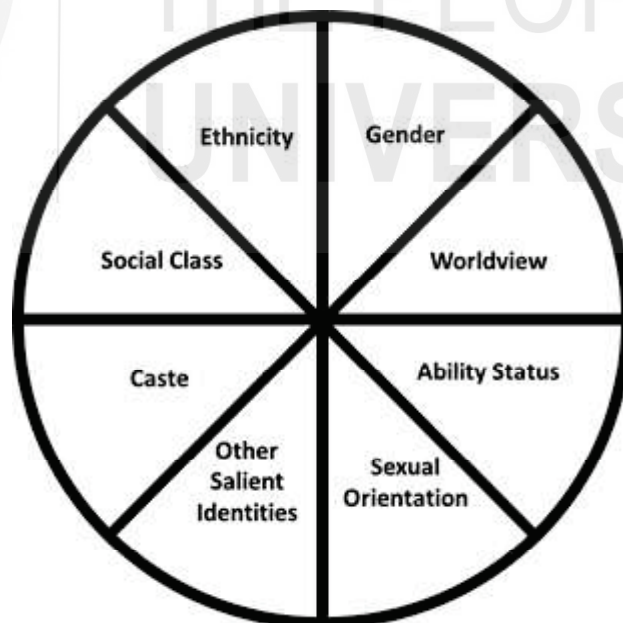


Figure 1cF : Identity Wheel

1.4.4 Multiplicity of Identity

It won't be wrong to say that we are as many selves as we have relationships.

Our self-concept is determined by social relationships and situational factors.

“There are as many selves as the number of groups we belong to”

-William James

However, these multiple selves need to be combined into an integrated whole to have an intact development.

“But the concept of the self loses its meaning if a person has multiple selves...the essence of self involves integration of diverse experiences into a unity...In short, unity is one of the defining features of selfhood and identity.”

- Roy Baumeister

Since we are a part of multiple social groups, we have multiple social identities. Our identity is fluid and takes the form of the predominant role that one is playing. For example, a woman who is a mother as well as a police officer adopts the identity of a parent/mother when she visits her child's school for parent teacher's meeting. The moment she enters her place of work, her identity as a police officer becomes salient. The salience of one social identity over another becomes a deciding factor that influences the development of an individual. These identities thus shape the experiences, expectations and the reality of youth as they grow up. For instance, a dalit student growing up in Delhi who is a female is simultaneously affiliating to three social identities: that of a dalit, a female and a Delhi-ite. If this individual grows up in high-end neighbourhood, goes to an elite school and is always provided with all the basic necessities, her identity of a Delhi-ite (or a person growing in a metropolitan city) would be a salient force in shaping her. If she grows up in an environment of bullying where her caste identity is made fun of, then her caste identity would become the social identity that shapes her significantly.

How these multiple identities interact with each other impacts the adjustment of the individual. If an individual is conflicted about two aspects of his/her identity like being a homosexual and belonging to an orthodox religious group, his life experiences would bear its brunt. Observation of the dynamics of such interactions show:

- a) a positive feelings towards one's social identity contributes to one's wellbeing (like one is happy being an IGNOU student);
- b) strong group identity can shield against perceived threats of affiliating with that identity, for example, discrimination (like if I identify strongly with being a woman, I would be able to stand against discrimination against women, and would not be bothered by menacing remarks);
- c) national and ethnic identity are orthogonal in nature i.e. ethnic identity is unrelated to national identity (for example my being a Malayali has no relationship with my identity as an Indian),

- d) an individual with diverse ethnic and national identity, say a Kashmiri Indian, will have better psychological wellbeing if the individual adopt bicultural identity.

Self Assessment Questions IV

- 1) List four religious identity groups in India.

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- 2) What were the four major caste divisions?

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- 3) How is gender different from sex?

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- 4) What is gender dysphoria?

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1.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we discussed the concept of identity in youth. Before that we learned what is youth and how it is defined in different contexts. Socio-cultural, economic and legal perspectives of youth were described. Two main theories by Erikson and Marcia were discussed highlighting the youth identity. Various indicators of identity in youth were pointed out and their role in the development of the youth was explained.

1.6 KEY WORDS

- Youth** : Youth is defined by the United Nations as those people belonging to the age group of 15 to 24 years.
- Identity** : Identity can be defined in psychological terms, as the perception of the self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space (Erikson, 1968).
- Social identity** : Social identity is usually defined as that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from knowledge of his or her membership in a social group and results from social categorization.
- Gender roles** : Gender roles refer to the behaviour and personality patterns associated with the particular sex, male or female, in a given culture.
- Gender identity** : Gender identity refers to the personal orientation of the individual and is not influenced by societal norms. It may or may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth or to a person's primary or secondary sex characteristics.

1.7 ANSWERS TO SELF – ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

- 1) F 2) F 3) T 4) F

Self Assessment Questions II

- 1) The environmental systems that affect development according to Bronfenbrenner include microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.
- 2) Demographic dividend is the economic growth that occurs because of the shifts in the age structure of a working population of a country.
- 3) "Age of criminal responsibility" in the juvenile justice system is the age below which a person is completely immune from any criminal liability because the person lacks psychological maturity and judgement to understand the consequences of his/her actions.
- 4) Skill building in youth is necessary in order to make them more productive and thus reap the demographic dividend.

Self Assessment Questions III

Match the following:

- 1) c; 2) a; 3) b; 4) d

Fill in the blanks

- 1) Identity versus identity confusion
- 2) Foreclosure
- 3) Personal, social
- 4) Self-sameness
- 5) Moratorium

Self Assessment Questions IV

- 1) Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism
- 2) Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra
- 3) Sex is a biological category and is given to an individual by birth, while gender is socially constructed and it develops as an individual grows.
- 4) Gender dysphoria is the misalignment of an individual's physical or assigned gender and the gender with which he/she/they identifies, and the resulting psychological conflict and distress.

1.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the concept of youth.
- 2) Discuss Bronfenbrenner's perspective on youth.
- 3) Explain the concept of multiplicity of identity.
- 4) Discuss the identity development in youth according to Erikson's psychosocial theory.

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UNIT 2 DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF YOUTH*

Structure

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Concept of Development
- 2.4 Aspects of Development
- 2.5 Developmental Aspects of Youth: Adolescence Years
 - 2.5.1 Developmental Tasks of Adolescence
- 2.6 Physiological/Physical Development of Youth: Adolescence Years
- 2.7 Cognitive Development of Youth: Adolescence Years
- 2.8 Emotional and Social Development of Youth: Adolescence Years
 - 2.8.1 Body Image
 - 2.8.2 Peer Relations
 - 2.8.3 Parent-Child Relation
- 2.9 Moral Development of Youth: Adolescence Years
- 2.10 Developmental Aspects of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
 - 2.10.1 Developmental Tasks of Early Adulthood
- 2.11 Physiological/Physical Development of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
 - 2.11.1 Sexual Development
- 2.12 Cognitive Development of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
- 2.13 Emotional Development of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
- 2.14 Social Development of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
 - 2.14.1 Close Relationships
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 - 2.14.3 Loneliness
- 2.15 Moral Development of Youth: Early Adulthood Years
- 2.16 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.17 Key Words
- 2.18 Answers to Self Assessment Questions
- 2.19 Unit End Questions
- 2.20 References
- 2.21 Suggested Readings

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through the Unit, you will be able to:

- Know the adolescent and young adult stages of development;
- Describe the developmental tasks in these stages;

- Explain different aspects of development (physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, moral); and
- Understand specific obstacles individuals face in each aspect.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Youth years are the formative years of an adult, where most of the foundation for future development is laid. In order to contribute to the successful development of youth and also to devise effective youth development programs, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the physiological, physical, emotional, social, cognitive and moral development of youth. Knowledge about the diverse facets of physical and psychological development of youth facilitates work of psychologists, social workers, clinicians, psychiatrists, policy makers and government agencies. In this Unit we will learn some important theories that explain developmental aspects of youth as well as their key developmental tasks and challenges.

2.3 CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development has been defined as a pattern of change that begins at conception and continues throughout the life span (Santrock, 1998). The key word in development is 'change'. Nonetheless 'stability' or 'constancy' is also an important part of growing up. The newer aspects that we acquire as we grow, stabilizes to some extent and defines who we are as an individual at any given point of time. Apart from this, development is not just about growth or gains but also about decline and losses. As we grow our brain matures and so does our thinking. At the same time, we also see decline in certain childhood habits like thumb sucking. In older people their wisdom keeps on growing as they age, while their memory might deteriorate. Overall we can say that development is all about learning, maturing and adapting. Development is a lifelong process. We keep changing and evolving throughout our lifespan. This development can be gradual or rapid, and its pace varies from individual to individual. It is influenced by the context or culture in which the individual is embedded. The context is defined by one's family, school, socio-economic status, one's nationality, culture, traditions and practices.

2.4 ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Development is multi-dimensional. This means that development occurs in varied domains. It is not just about physical growth, but other aspects of growth as well. These dimensions include:

- **Physical/ Biological/Physiological:** This aspect of development comprises of any change in the individual's physical nature and functioning. For instance, increase in height, weight, changes in physical features, brain development etc.
- **Cognitive:** It implies changes in an individual's thinking, learning, intelligence, language, attention, memory, academic abilities, knowledge, problem solving, decision making, imagination, creativity etc.

- **Emotional:** Emotional aspects of development incorporate development of emotional connection or attachment, understanding one's own self, development of personality, managing one's feelings or emotional regulation. For example, a baby smiles when her mother holds her and cries on seeing a stranger is a part of infant's emotional development.
- **Moral:** Development of the ability to reason out right and wrong (moral reasoning) and behave accordingly (moral behaviour) is a part of one's moral development. Our understanding of morality changes as we grow. When we are kids we regard our parents as our moral compass, when we grow up we might make universal ethical principles as the bases of our moral reasoning.
- **Social:** Social development comprises of knowledge about other people, development of relationships like intimate relationships, friendships etc., development of interpersonal skills like communication, empathy etc.
- **Spiritual:** Another dimension of development that has been added includes spiritual development. It is defined as the development of one's consciousness, deeper awareness of one's self, growing connection with the transcendent or the Divine and engagement in spiritual practices to find deeper meaning in life.

It is important to note that these dimensions are not independent and they do not function in isolation from one another. Understanding of the developmental aspects of youth will equip us to better their lives through socialization, parenting, education, health care and counselling.

As mentioned in the previous Unit on Concept of Youth, the age group of youth as per National Youth Policy of India (2014) is 15-29 years. This is quite a broad age domain, and hence youth is not a homogeneous group. Youth falling in the lower age group have different concerns and needs, and play different roles and responsibilities as compared to youth at the upper age limit. An adolescent of 15 years has different developmental issues as compared to a young adult of 20-21 or an adult of 29 years of age. Each stage of development has specific markers. Thus it is necessary to divide the entire youth age bracket into sub groups to have a better understanding of their respective developmental issues:

- a) The first sub-group of 15-19 years: It covers adolescence. Contemporary researchers conceptualize adolescence as a period ranging from 10 to 24 (Sawyer, Azzopardi, Wickremarathne, and Patton, 2018). Reaching puberty at an early age due to improvement in nutrition intake has accelerated the onset of adolescence. At the same time, due to many social transitions like delayed completion of education, late marriages etc., the period of adolescence extends much beyond the 20s. Thus, this period of transition from childhood to adulthood has been expanded and now covers significant portions of our entire life span.
- b) The second sub-group of 19-29 years: This period has been classified by Arnett (2000) as emerging adulthood. It includes young adults in the process of completing their education and initiating their career through job. By the end of this time period, adults mostly have a relatively stable career and relationships.

We should remember that these sub-groups have been created for the purpose of understanding developmental aspects of youth in detail. The classification has fuzzy boundaries. For instance, adolescence has been broadly divided into three periods by developmental psychologists – early adolescence (11-14 years), middle adolescence (15-17 years), and late adolescence (18-21 years). At the same time, individuals in the age group of 20 - 24 years are also referred to as young adults.

2.5 DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF YOUTH: ADOLESCENCE YEARS

The developmental phase that serves as an intermediary between childhood and adulthood is called **adolescence**. This is a dynamic phase. Adolescence is a transition from rapid and flexible phase of development (childhood) to a less plastic and more settled phase (adulthood). Early scientific literature in this area suggested that adolescence is the period from the age of 10 to 19. Contemporary literature, however, differs. Millennium has ushered in technology, globalization of the culture and a workforce that was a product of both of these. Throughout the globe the age of sexual maturation has started declining as a result of improved healthcare systems. As self-exploration became a norm, the social roles which were considered the telltale sign of reaching adulthood (getting married, having fixed jobs, childrearing) have been pushed further ahead in the lifetime. Thus individuals are recognized as active agents of their own development. As a result, the contemporary definition of adolescence is much more plastic, spanning from 10 years and going on to the mid-20s.

2.5.1 Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

Developmental tasks are tasks that are specific to each of the stages in the human life span. Havighurst (1972) has described developmental tasks at each of the stages of development. These tasks are shaped by societal expectations from the individual and societal norms, e.g., learning to read and write is an important developmental task of middle childhood. Following are some important developmental tasks during adolescence.

- a) **Mature relationships:** The phase of adolescence ushers in a new ability to understand and relate to others. Relationships formed in this stage set the stage for future relationships and thereby it is essential to achieve new and mature relations with age-mates of both sexes during this stage.
- b) **Social roles:** A big part of adolescence is to recognize and realize one's gender identity. What follows this is a concentrated attempt to fulfil the social roles laid out by the specific culture for the given gender.
- c) **Accepting one's body:** Adolescence is synonymous with a sea-change in one's body. A part of going through this phase is to develop a sense of acceptance and ownership towards one's body. For certain segments of the society (transgender people and eunuchs) this task and the one mentioned above overlap greatly as they fall out of the spectrum of male or female and struggle to make sense of their bodies and find a place in the society.



Figure 2aF: Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

- d) **Emotional independence:** Adolescents begin by moving their emotional expectations away from parents. As they grow they must find an enduring emotional anchor within themselves, independent from parents and other adults.
- e) **Preparing for an economic career:** Adolescents increasingly continue to make choices which narrow down their fields of interest and effectively choose their career paths for adulthood.
- f) **Acquiring skills:** This phase of development also witnesses adolescents picking up vocational activities and equipping themselves with skills needed for productive occupation.
- g) **Acquiring values and an ethical system:** By the end of adolescence, individuals have developed a functional identity and have also started making moral judgments in accordance with the stage of post conventional morality of Kohlberg. These individuals have forged their own set of guiding principles and an ideology to serve as a roadmap for their behaviour.
- h) **Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour:** At the end of this stage, individuals are at the threshold of adulthood. This affords them freedom but also requires them to be conscientious members of society.

2.6 PHYSIOLOGICAL/PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: ADOLESCENCE YEARS

Adolescents experience striking physical growth and development. It is characterized by a major physical developmental milestone – that of the onset

of puberty and the myriad changes it brings along. A phase of rapid growth, called the **growth spurt**, precedes the onset of puberty.

Physical Development in Adolescent Girls: Sexual maturity in girls is evolutionarily aimed at making them adept for producing and rearing children. The body gets ready to produce an offspring by starting the cycle of ovulation and menstruation. Secondary growth characteristics involve development of breasts, appearance of coarse hair in the under arms and pubic regions. There is increase in the body's muscle mass which is devoted to the limbs and the hip bones widen in order to add curves associated with the female body. While the average age of attaining puberty differs greatly from region to region, a worldwide trend of gradually decreasing age of menarche has been observed. In India, recently girls as young as 8 and 9 years old have been reported to hit menarche with the previous recorded average being between 13 and 14 years. This has been called the **secular trend**, i.e. with improved health and nutrition (nurturance), the body gets prepared for its sexual roles sooner.

Motor development is refined in girls as they experience the growth spurt, but stagnates as the period of growth comes to a halt (i.e. the age of 14). This corresponds with the diminishing participation of girls in athletic activities and segregated physical educations for the sexes.

Physical Development in Adolescent Boy: Sexual maturity in boys is evolutionarily aimed at making them able for defending their territory and tribe. The growth begins around the age of 13 (when the girl's growth is about to come to an end). There is an increase in the size of the testes, prostate gland and seminal vesicles (all together responsible for the production and transportation of sperms and semen respectively). Secondary sexual characteristics in boys include growth of hair on the face, in the underarm region and the pubic area. The larynx or the voice box enlarges resulting in a deeper voice.

Boys experience a rapid growth phase with increase in the heart and lung capacity coupled with an enormous growth in skeletal muscles. This reflects in the enormous growth of their motor abilities.

Some differences in male and female development during puberty can be seen in Table 2aT below:

Table 2aT: Difference in Male and Female Development during Puberty

Event	Girls	Boys
Growth Spurt	10yrs	12yrs
Menarche (for girls) and Spermatarche (for boys)	11-13 yrs	12-14yrs
Action of sex hormones on body	Widening of the pelvic girdle, addition of fat in the arms, legs and trunk	Addition of larger skeletal muscles, increased heart and lung capacity
Pace of growth	Slow and gradual	Rapid
Growth stops by	14	Continues till the end of teens
Sleep requirement	More than 9 hours	More than 9 hours

MORE TO KNOW

- **Why does our height stop growing after a certain age?**
- **Why do girls develop curves as they attain puberty but boys don't?**

A part of the maturation is the widening of the hip bones. The hip is guarded by three fused pelvic bones which widen because of female hormones. This happens to facilitate pushing the baby out of the womb. Another part of female maturation is the development of breasts. Coupled with the addition of muscle mass in the limbs, females develop bodies which have curves. Since there is no such adaptation required in the bodies of the male counterparts, they continue to grow without curves.

Self Assessment Questions I

- 1) How is puberty different for males and females?

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- 2) Mention three major developmental tasks of adolescence.

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- 3) What does the term “secular trend” mean?

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2.7 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: ADOLESCENCE YEARS

By cognitive development we mean development of abilities to think, process information, make decisions, solve problems etc. During early adolescence/early teens cognitive abilities are largely governed by concrete thinking, egocentrism, and impulsive behaviour. Gradually, abstract reasoning starts to develop. The actions are no longer impulsive, but well thought out.

Cognitive development can be seen as a two-pronged growth, i.e., the growth of a) cognitive processes and b) cognitive abilities. One of the significant theories of cognitive development provided by Piaget conceptualizes cognitive development in four stages (see figure 2bf below). This model talks about distinct cognitive processes achieved at every consecutive phase. Adolescents have entered Piaget's final stage. They may consider themselves invincible and often still display impulsive behaviours.

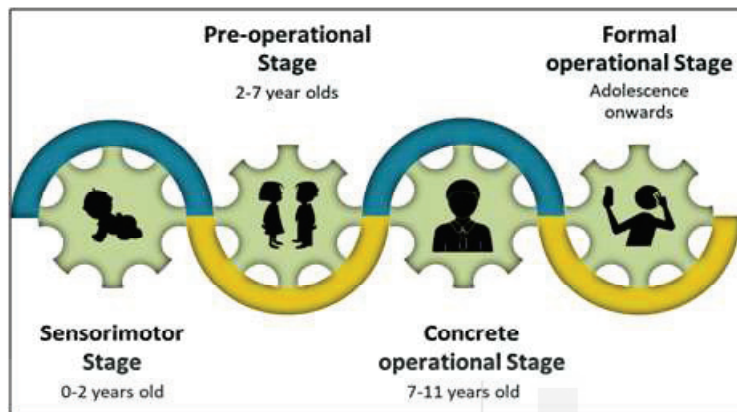


Figure 2bF: Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Let us first discuss the new abilities that adolescents attain according to Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Jean Piaget viewed children as little scientists who actively engaged with their environment and constructed their own understanding. He saw cognitive development as a process with discreet stages, with each stage corresponding to the attainment of superior cognitive skills.

According to Piaget, adolescents have entered the formal operational stage. Individuals attain the following abilities in this stage:

- **Deductive reasoning:** This is the ability to draw specific conclusions from generalized statements.
- **Abstract or propositional thought:** The ability to conceptualize and evaluate concepts which are outside the bounds of objective, testable reality. Before this stage individuals deal with concrete things. This stage opens up the possibility for them to mentally manipulate intangible things like – being able to recognize patterns in a random set, being able to formulate theories, being able to understand multiple underlying meaning in a single statement. For instance, the child at this stage would be able to understand that when asked not to play for too long because it is “bad” is an idea that can be challenged; that playing isn't inherently bad as long as the homework is finished and it isn't unsafe.
- **Metacognition:** The ability to think about one's own thoughts. Individuals at this stage are able to consciously recognize their own thoughts (“What am I thinking?”), regulate them, use them to assess one's abilities (“I don't like History and I didn't score very well during the last test. I should put in more effort this time.”) and solve problems using this insight (“Okay, let me see. I need to make 24 out of 4, 5, 9, 12, using +, -, *, and / symbols. Let me test and try different alternatives.”)

- **Systematic problem-solving:** This ability evolves from the pre-operational ability to use trial and error method of solving problems. Now the individual uses a set of systematic steps to solve problems. For instance in the above math problem, an adolescent will quickly take out factors to know which numbers can be multiplied or divided to achieve the result and which numbers would take them farther away from the goal; rather than proceeding in a haphazard manner.
- **Hypothetico-deductive reasoning:** Deductive reasoning also assists individuals to construct and test hypotheses. A hypothesis is a theory or a proposition of the structure “If A then B”. Individuals are able to mentally thinking of multiple possibilities for an action (If A then B, C, D) and systematically test how accurate the propositions are.

MORE TO KNOW		
	Inductive Reasoning	Deductive Reasoning
Meaning	To draw <i>generalized conclusions</i> from <i>specific</i> statements.	To draw <i>specific conclusions</i> from <i>generalized</i> statements.
Example	When a mother asks her baby boy to say “Namaste” to his grandparents and neighbours, the child’s ability to draw a general conclusion that he is supposed to say “Namaste” to elderly people as a greeting is inductive reasoning.	When a mother asks her child to not “mess around” when there are guests at home, the child’s ability to draw a specific conclusion that spreading toys, shouting and running are a part of making a mess is deductive reasoning.

Now let us try to understand how the cognitive processes enhance as we grow with the help of another theoretical framework called information processing model. This model likens the human mind to a computer or an information processor which takes in information, processes it, stores it and uses it for further analysis and understanding. Different processes help this computer to function. As we reach the stage of adolescence, these processes are enhanced for peak functionality. These processes are:

- **Attention and Memory:** Individuals are better adapted to the attentional requirements and differentiate between relevant and irrelevant stimuli. In a stark contrast from the pre-nursery students who have to be engaged rigorously and still fail at staying seated and focused, adolescents increasingly develop attention to sit for one and two hour lectures. They can also continue to focus on their object of interest, even with distractions around. They use memory strategies to enhance their retention and recall of stored information. Research shows that the brain continues to grow through adolescence even into early adulthood, and therefore memory (particularly working memory) continues to develop during adolescence.
- **Cognitive self-regulation:** With the development of meta-cognition, individuals are better accustomed to recognize, alter and regulate their thinking. For instance, when an individual recognizes a thought pattern, they have the agency to exercise control on that thought (“I am too worried about tomorrow’s test and can’t stop thinking about it. Maybe I should distract myself.”).

- **Processing capacity:** As a combined effect of brain development and abstract thought, individuals are able to hold more information and efficiently manipulate and organize it. This process includes forming new schemas or connections between existing information, concepts and categories.

2.8 EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: ADOLESCENCE YEARS

Middle adolescence is characterized by increasing detachment from family and the development of deep bonds with peers (see Figure 2cF). Teens gradually become less dependent on family and an emotional separation from parents occurs.

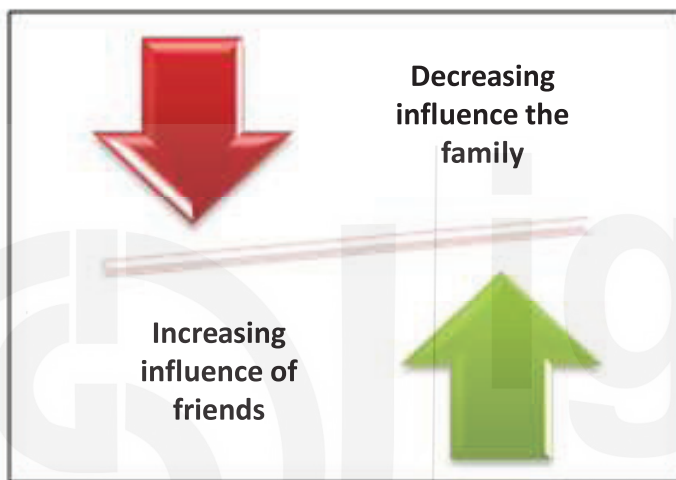


Figure 2cF: Social Development Trend in Adolescents

2.8.1 Body Image

Adolescents also adapt to new body image as well as to their emerging sexuality. Body image is a mental representation – our perception of our body type, how we look and our physical attractiveness. Physical growth leads them to be preoccupied with their bodies. Adolescent girls who mature early struggle to deal with their changing bodies and might even experience name-calling. Adolescent boys who mature later than their peers too deal with negative peer reactions and bullying. Negative experiences during this period, particularly relating to the body lead to psychological conditions such as body image issues, eating disorders, internalised shame regarding the gender or sexual identity.

This is also a phase of **significant identity development** as discussed in Unit 1. Adolescents become acutely conscious of the need to have a distinct identity, while at the same time struggling to be accepted by their peers. Greater cognitive development means a better understanding of available choices and decision making. As discussed above, this leads to conflicts regarding personal freedom with parents. Peer influence is a dominant psychosocial issue during adolescence, especially during the early stages. Adolescents also start investing in hobbies as an attempt to both socialise and increase their competencies.

2.8.2 Peer Relations

Adolescents usually associate within small groups of five to seven individuals with similar backgrounds, thoughts and values. These smaller groups are called cliques. When a number of cliques come together and are loosely organised they are referred to as crowds. These small and large groups provide individuals with emotional support and security throughout this phase of development. It has also been seen that friendships are significantly different for boys and girls. While the former come together for events and activities (for instance, a game of football), girls come together to share experiences (Burhmister, 1996). Friendships play a pivotal protective role throughout adolescence and pave the way for future expectations and relationships.

Another form of relating to the peer is through dating and romantic relationship which is perceived differently across cultures. Some Western cultures have a transparent and encouraging atmosphere towards such relationships; Eastern cultures on the other hand are perceived to be hostile towards them. This phenomenon is however very different for individuals who do not belong to the heterosexual majority. Sexual minorities are grappling with the reality of their respective sexualities. The transgender individuals are faced with hostility and disdain for their “wrongly” growing bodies. Dating for such individuals is either an attempt to renounce their inner identities (for example, when LGBT individuals try dating in a hetero-normative fashion) or a fearful journey in which they risk exposing themselves for ridicule and bullying.

2.8.3 Parent-Child Relation

As mentioned above, adolescence is a phase of individuals seeking emotional separation from their parents while their cognitive abilities make them more argumentative. This puts the onus on parents to balance between handholding and giving freedom. Parents invest greatly in the child’s early development and help the formation of key habits and values. At this phase however, they are required to acknowledge their child’s identity and start moderating the level of control they exercise. Based on the dimensions of control/demandingness and

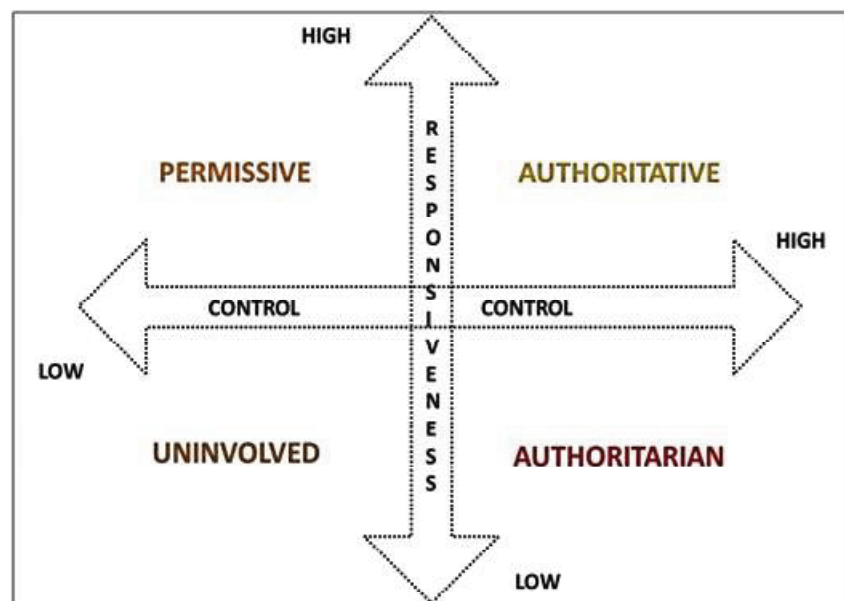


Figure 2dF: Parenting Styles by Baumrind

responsiveness, Baumrind (1991) has classified four types of parenting styles as given below in Figure 2dF. Adolescents struggle to establish themselves as independent thinkers who are worthy of respect while still wanting to be loved and cherished as a child. Hence it is crucial that we understand the different parenting styles and the need for using an effective parenting style with the adolescents.

As peer acceptance is a strong need in the adolescents, it also results in acquiring unhealthy behaviours such as smoking, alcohol consumption, using drugs, and engaging in irresponsible sexual activities. This mostly occurs during middle adolescence due to peer pressure. By late adolescence social autonomy, impulse control and vocational plans start to take shape. Social relationships are developed. Another challenge of this period is the worldwide practice of bullying. Bullying in the modern age takes various forms, such as cyber bullying, name-calling, eve-teasing, sexual exploitation, physical and verbal aggression and extreme forms of shaming. Victims of bullying go through a range of experiences, from stress disorder and depression to even suicide.

Self Assessment Questions II

Match the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Deductive reasoning | a) High control, low responsiveness |
| 2) Inductive reasoning | b) High control, high responsiveness |
| 3) Authoritative parenting | c) Going from specific to generalized |
| 4) Authoritarian parenting | d) Going from generalized to specific |

2.9 MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: ADOLESCENCE YEARS

Development of morality was studied by noted cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget. As you can see below in Figure 2eF, he posited that morality is either heteronomous (contingent on the other) or autonomous (views rules as changeable if need be).

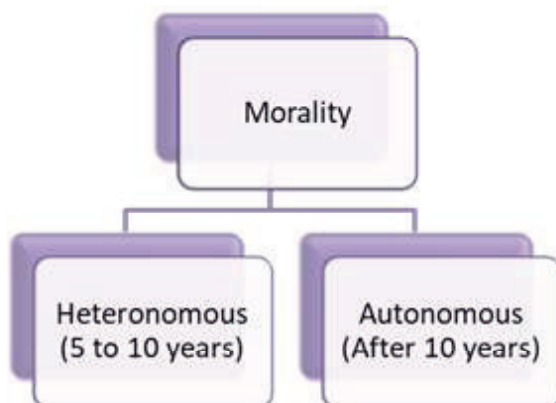


Figure 2eF: Jean Piaget's Morality Framework

These distinctions were further developed by psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg who used the method of story-telling to collect data and develop his theory of moral development. One of his famous story is depicted in the picture below (Figure 2fF: Heinz Dilemma). He conducted a cross-sectional study to examine

the development of morality across age groups and posited a stage theory of moral development, comprising of pre-conventional, conventional and post conventional stage. These stages are depicted in the Figure 2gF.

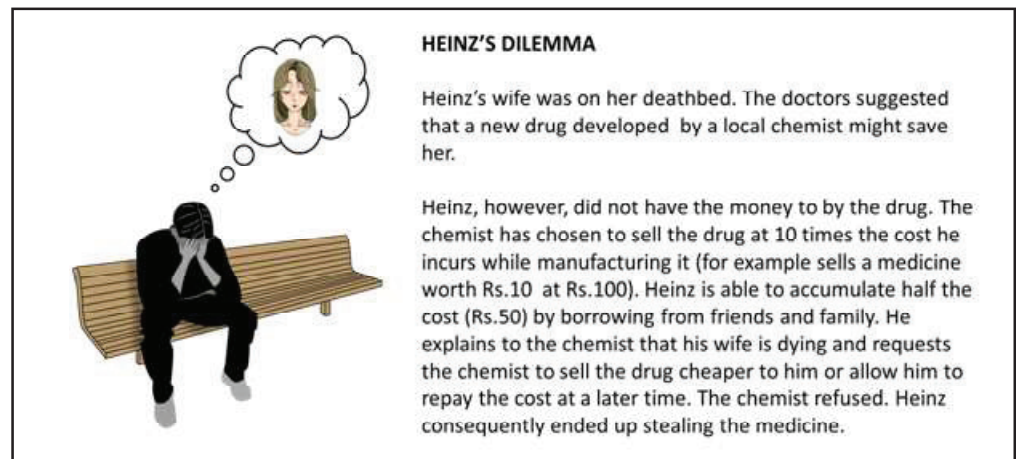


Figure 2fF: Heinz dilemma used by Kohlberg to arrive at the stage theory of moral development

Adolescence is usually characterized by conventional morality. Conventional morality is moral reasoning based on societal do's and don't's. Individuals initially adopt moral behavior to be perceived as "good" people in the eyes of others (**Conformity**) in order to maintain social relationships and later evolve this to a general stance of upholding laws as a symbol of good morality (**Law and order**) to maintain social order.

However, the transition from early to late adolescence sees a shift from conventional to post-conventional morality. Individuals develop a stronger sense of self and thereby, a stronger sense of "my values" and "values that are central to me". These developments help them adopt a more humanistic view of morality, valuing human rights and universal human ethics over systemic rules.

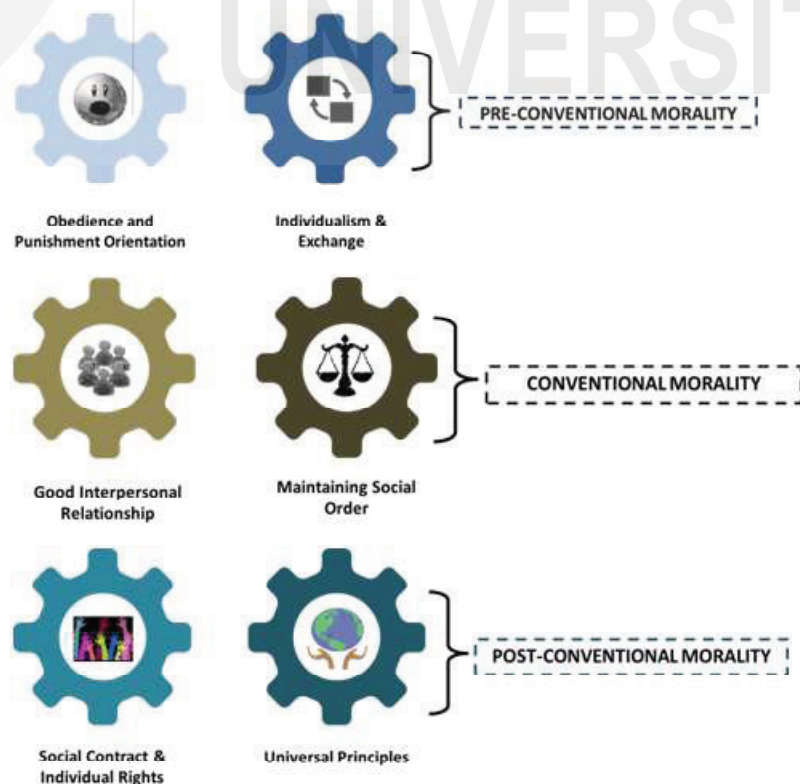


Figure 2gF: Kohlberg's Model of Morality

Self Assessment Questions III

Identify the stage of moral development for each of the statement below.

- 1) Heinz decides that stealing the medicine is right thing because his wife expects him to do so and he doesn't want to disappoint her.

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- 2) Heinz decides not to steal the medicine because he doesn't want to go against the law.

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- 3) Heinz decides not to steal the medicine as he doesn't want to be perceived as a thief by his friends and family.

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- 4) Heinz decides to steal the medicine but also go to prison for the crime.

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2.10 DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULthood YEARS

A significant part of our youth years falls under what developmental psychologists call early adulthood (a period ranging from 19 to 35 years of age). However, as stated earlier there are no clear boundaries demarcating adolescence and young adulthood. In fact, Arnett (2000) classified the period between adolescence and adulthood as emerging adulthood. The key developmental aspects of early adults are establishing a secure personal identity that would entail committing one's self to certain ideological values and selecting a long term vocation or career, forming mature friendships and mature intimate relationships, as well as reorientation of family ties.

2.10.1 Developmental Tasks of Early Adulthood

Early adulthood usually is a busy time of life, buzzing with a lot of activities. The developmental tasks of youth include: i) achieving autonomy and making oneself independent, ii) establishing one's personal identity, preferences, and philosophies, iii) becoming more emotionally stable, iv) setting up one's career and getting education in that direction, v) developing intimate, long-term relationships (including marriage and starting a family), vi) setting up a home and managing a household, vii) becoming a parent, making marital adjustments and rearing children and viii) becoming active in community life and taking civic responsibility. Accomplishment of these tasks defines the developmental aspects of early adults.

2.11 PHYSIOLOGICAL/PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULTHOOD YEARS

Most young adults aged 19 and above would have completed the process of physical maturation like attaining full adult height and having secondary sexual characteristics. The brain development is also more or less complete by the age of 25 (Health Encyclopedia, University of Rochester Medical Center). Early/young adults are at the peak of their physiological development. Their organ systems are functioning at their best. However, by mid to late 30s individuals start to feel a slight decline in their health, and some signs of ageing set in like a decline in the time one takes to respond or increase in the time one takes to recover quickly from physical exertion or reduction in manual dexterity. On the whole, young adults feel energetic and strong. Yet, this is also the age when they start using unhealthy substances like alcohol and tobacco, or fall in the trap of unhealthy lifestyle and eating habits. At this stage, health is more a matter of behavioural choice than anything else.

2.11.1 Sexual Development

Young adults, who are now fully developed sexually, enter into intimate sexual and emotional relationships. There is an increasing understanding of their own sexual orientation. They now also understand that sexuality is connected to commitment in a relationship. This involves progression to achieving significant developmental tasks like marriage and bearing children. Men reach the peak of their sexual responsiveness in their late teens and early twenties. Sexual arousal can easily occur in response to physical stimulation or fantasizing. Women are more sexually responsive throughout their 20s and 30s and may peak in the late 30s or early 40s owing to their greater self-confidence and diminished inhibition about sexuality. For most couples, early adulthood is the time for having children. However, in urban youth there is an increased tendency towards delaying marriage until late 20s or early 30s. Education and career is accorded primary importance during these years in contemporary times. Thus the social clock of youth seems to be shifting from early adulthood towards mid-adulthood. Social clock is the term given by Neugarten (1968) which means age graded expectations regarding major life events like career, marriage, becoming a parent, buying a house etc. Adherence to social clock patterns helps maintain stability in the society.

2.12 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULTHOOD YEARS

The young adults usually identify career goals, and prepare themselves to achieve them. Most of them either pursue higher education or take up a job. They possess skills with respect to a particular area of work or hobby like computers, mathematics, science, social science, art etc. They have pronounced understanding of abstract concepts and decision making skills. They can look at their own behaviour objectively, are aware of the consequences of their behaviour as well as their strengths and limitations.

As has been discussed in the previous section under cognitive development of adolescence, Piaget conceptualized the last stage of cognitive development as formal operations stage. However, the early adults reach beyond the stage of formal operational thought, what is referred to as the *post-formal thought* (Riegel, 1975). Thus abstract thinking is just one characteristic of young/early adults' thought. With experience of early adults (as compared to adolescents) comes an understanding that possibilities do not always convert into realities, as their thinking gets mature and takes into consideration the practicalities. Thus, post-formal thought is practical, flexible, realistic and dialectic. It is characterized by the understanding that there could be multiple perspectives of looking at a problem and that solutions to a problem are context dependent. There is a greater appreciation of complexity and contradictions that we face in life on a daily basis. Thus young adults through their dialectical reasoning are able to reconcile two opposing viewpoints. So, rather than seeing a particular issue as either good or bad or right or wrong, they tend to look for middle grounds. They become gradually aware that there is always some degree of goodness or badness in everything.

Self Assessment Questions IV

State whether the following are True or False.

- 1) Young adults have ego-centric cognition.
- 2) Post formal thought refers to understanding that all ideas can become reality.
- 3) Young adulthood is marked with physiological decay and decline in physical abilities.
- 4) Developing intimate relationships is a developmental task of young adulthood.

2.13 EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULTHOOD YEARS

The emotional and social development is strongly linked during early adulthood. As discussed in the previous chapter, the young adults deal with the psycho-social crisis of intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1950, 1968). The issue here is to develop intimate and close relationships with a partner. This stage is marked by the young adult's perception that peer groups are less important as determinants of one's behaviour (unlike adolescents for whom peers and friends at times become the second family). Young adults feel empathetic towards others. They also experience development of romantic and love relationships. It is also the period when young adults have established a fair sense of their identity, including their body image. Their relationships with parents mature and is marked by greater independence.

One of the biggest emotional accomplishments of this stage is gaining adult status, and is also the reason why at this stage the focus is more on the future. The striving towards independence and becoming an "adult" reflects in the developmental tasks discussed above. Launching a career becomes the central task. This requires attaining critical qualifications, receiving induction training

at the entry level of an organization, or even preparing for being selected in a job. In India, a lot of youth devote their early 20s in preparing for Civil Services examinations and examinations for Public sector organizations. However, it is also a known fact that in our country youth unemployment rates have been high and pose a serious threat to the development of youth. This stage of building a career and finding employment can be quite stressful for the youth.

One of the important theories of adulthood has been given by Daniel Levinson, titled *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. Levinson (1978) extended some of Erikson's ideas and built on social psychological theory to explain the relationship between the developing youth and the societal demands. Based on in-depth interviews of males and females, Levinson (1986) arrived at the understanding that development is a sequence of seasons (or eras), with each season beginning with a *transition* and followed by a phase of *stability* marked by harmony of inner self and outer demands. He suggested that period of **transition** last about 5 years and periods of “**settling down**” last about 7 years. The phases in the adult development include the following:

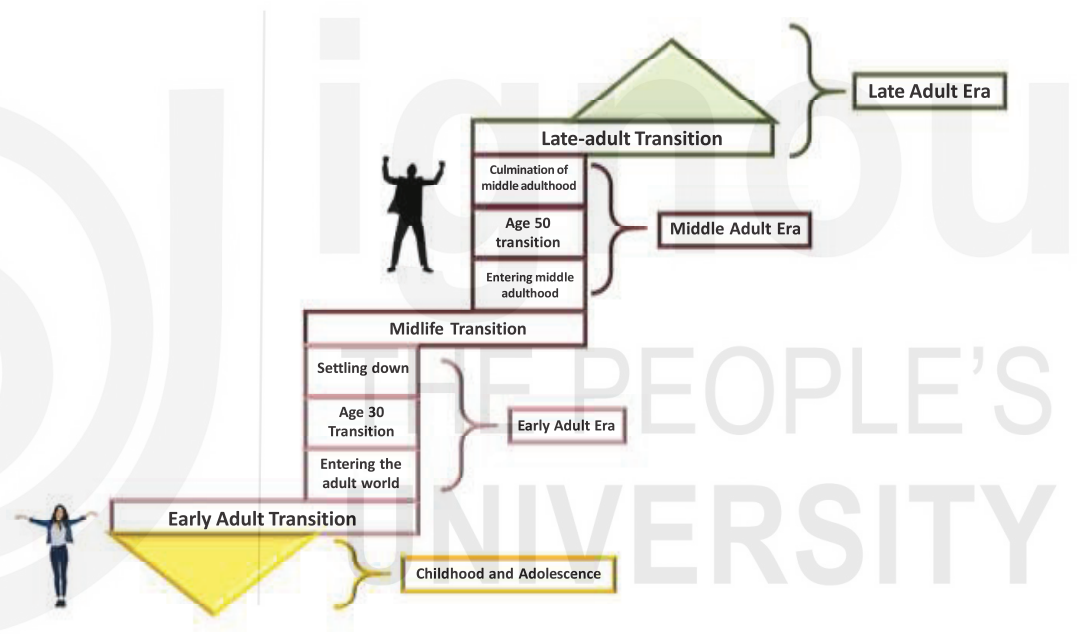


Figure 2hF: Levinson's Seasons of Life Theory

The stages are shown in Figure 2hF above with a) early adult transition: 17–22 years; b) entry life structure for early adulthood (entering the adult world): 22–28 years, c) age-30 transition: 28–33 years; d) culminating life structure for early adulthood (settling down): 33–40 years; e) midlife transition: 40–45 years; f) entry life structure for middle adulthood: 45–50 years; g) age-50 transition: 50–55 years; h) culminating life structure for middle adulthood: 55–60 years; i) late adult transition: 60–65 years and j) late adulthood: 65 years–death. Now let us consider in detail the first three phases of early adulthood that comprise youth years.

- 1) **Early adult transition (17-22):** this phase is characterized by **leaving home and parental family, and making first significant choices** about career and education. Young people, at this stage, are working towards autonomy from their parents and framing a ‘*Dream*’ of what they hope to become in life, their vision of their life. Dream is motivational as it guides their efforts

and choices in occupational and personal spheres of life. Levinson posited that women held a “*split dream*” – their dream was both about their future work/occupation and family life, and coordination of the two.

- 2) **Entering the adult world (22-28)** incorporates committing to an occupation, defining one’s goals and finding intimate, personal relationships.
- 3) **Age 30 transition (28-33)**: This phase of change entails re-evaluating and reviewing previous choices about work and relationships. It may also entail making modifications in one’s attitude toward love and work. Realization of one’s dreams brings up aspects of its imperfections and deficits. Reality might not converge with one’s fantasized image. Thus, young adults undergo a moderate degree of self-questioning – reviewing their dream, the choices they have made and the problems in their lives.

2.14 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULTHOOD YEARS

Apart from launching one’s career, young adults also explore a new world of romance. Erikson emphasized that a secure sense of identity fosters attainment of intimacy. This has also been supported by research evidence. A person’s commitment to values and goals prepares him/her for interpersonal commitments as well (Kroger, 2007). Thus career development and investment in intimate relationships go side by side. Relationships with parents also undergoes significant change, with increasing importance of independence and responsibility.

2.14.1 Close Relationships

The quest for intimacy and love leads the young adults to develop close relationships. Finding romantic love and choosing a romantic partner is another important task of youth years. Usually people look for similarity in their partners. A number of biological and social factors influence mate selection. Sternberg (1986) has offered a **triangular theory of love** that comprises of three components which gradually become important as the romantic relationship progresses. These components are passion (desire for sexual activity and romance), intimacy (emotional warmth and concern for other’s wellbeing) and commitment (cognition of being in love and deciding to maintain that love). Initial period of romantic relationship is characterized by intense sexual attraction or **passionate love**. Gradually, passion takes a backseat and **companionate love** (of intimacy and commitment) emerges. Love balanced with all the three components is called **consummate love** (see Figure 2iF). Commitment is the element that is necessary for relationships to survive. In western culture passionate love becomes the basis for marriages, where the individual considers partner’s uniqueness and his/her autonomy in the relationship. On the other hand, in Eastern cultures with collectivistic values like China, Japan and India, decision to marry someone is based on obligations to parents and family members. Arranged marriages are still very common in these cultures.

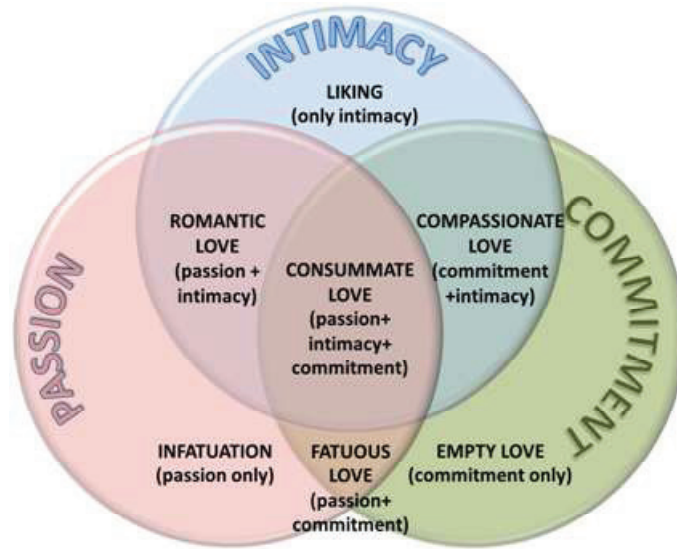


Figure 2iF: Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 1986)

2.14.2 Friendships

In friendships too young adults look for similarity – similarity of age, sex, cultural and socio-economic background., interests etc. Friendships are necessary for development as they boost self esteem and provide support and acceptance.

Trust, intimacy, and loyalty form the basis of all relationships. Self disclosure and sharing is at times more in friendship than in marriage. There are gender differences in the level of sharing with friends. Females tend to share more with their friends as compared to males, who share more with their partners. Females have more long term and more intimate (same sex) friendships as compared to males.

2.14.3 Loneliness

Many young adults are vulnerable to **loneliness** that is lack of intimate tie with a partner or lack of satisfying friendships. Loneliness tends to peak in youth years, the late teens and early twenties (Rokach, 2001). This is because period of youth involves change in social groups from school to college to workplace and necessitates development of new relationships in new settings. Young adults also desire a perfect relationship from their partners and anything falling short leads to loneliness. Loneliness triggers search for satisfying relationships. However, they can also lead to depression in some individuals.

Self Assessment Questions V

State whether the following are True or False:

- 1) Loneliness is a key feature of old age only.
- 2) Having a stable career and intimate relationships is a developmental task for young adulthood.
- 3) Young adults relate to their parents in a distant and needy manner

Answer the following briefly:

- 4) What is age 30 transition?
- 5) What is Sternberg's triangular theory of love?

2.15 MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH: EARLY ADULTHOOD YEARS

The phase of young adulthood ushers in post-conventional morality. As individuals have formed a stable identity and an independent set of values, they stop looking outside for moral validation. The stage of post conventional morality is characterized by understanding the limitations of generalized legal frameworks and accommodating changes to these laws in specific circumstances (for example, in Heinz's case, saving a life is more important than persecuting theft). This is the fifth sub-stage of moral development and is called Social Contract and Individual Rights stage. The last sub-stage is called the Universal Principles stage and is defined by the existence of values which are independent of rules and laws and are applicable to everyone. It must also be noted that moral development stops being linear after the stage of conventional morality. Individuals go back and forth, depending upon situations and people, between abiding by external or internal standards for moral judgment. The young adult is capable of choosing moral principles and respect the rights of others. In cases of conflict with others over ethical issues, depending upon the issue they tend to settle down on a state of mutual satisfaction.

2.16 LET US SUM UP

The Unit discussed the developmental processes that the youth (comprising of adolescents and young adults) go through. We discussed the physical growth in adolescence; the changes that they go through during puberty and how they deal with their changing bodies. Then we explored the cognitive aspects of development in terms of a) achieving new cognitive abilities and b) enhancing existing cognitive processes. These developments shape the socio-emotional growth during this period as adolescents experience emotional separation from the family and invest in friendships and other peer relations. The increasing influence of peers sometimes results in unhealthy habits like drug abuse. This is also a period of transforming morality from self-centered to society-centered. The culmination of this period sees a humongous growth in all areas of development. As individuals go through the culmination of adolescence, they stand on the threshold of adulthood. This period of relative hand-holding and relative freedom is called young adulthood. The period sees peak physical capabilities and the emergence of dialectical thought. Individuals explore intimate relationships and invest in deep friendships. They also try to "settle down" i.e., have a stable career and build a family. Individuals who struggle to achieve these socio-emotional and career benchmarks experience loneliness, a prominent feature of young adults. Morality also transforms to post-conventional moral thought at this stage.

2.17 KEY WORDS

- Adolescence** : refers to the developmental phase that serves as an intermediary between childhood and adulthood is called.
- Growth spurt** : is a phase of rapid growth, which precedes the onset of puberty.

Secular trend	: denotes that, with improved health and nutrition (nurturance), the body gets prepared for its sexual roles sooner.
Deductive reasoning	: is the ability to draw specific conclusions from generalized statements.
Body image	: is a mental representation – our perception of our body type, how we look and our physical attractiveness.
Age 30 transition	: is a phase of change (28-33 years) that entails re-evaluating and reviewing previous choices about work and relationships. It may also entail making modifications in one's attitude toward love and work.
Triangular theory of love	: comprises of three components of passion, intimacy and commitment Sternberg (1986).
Post conventional morality	: is characterized by understanding the limitations of generalized legal frameworks and accommodating changes to these laws in specific circumstances.

2.18 ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions I

- 1) Refer to table 1.1
- 2) Emotional independence, adopting relevant social roles, forming mature relationships
- 3) The increase in global healthcare has led to better health and hygiene of individuals which in turn is making the global average of puberty attainment come down. This is called secular trend.

Self Assessment Questions II

Match the following:

- 1) d, 2) c, 3) b, 4) a

Self Assessment Questions III

- 1) Good interpersonal relationship stage
- 2) Maintaining social order stage
- 3) Good interpersonal relationship stage
- 4) Maintaining social order stage

Self Assessment Questions IV

- 1) False
- 2) False
- 3) False

4) True

Self Assessment Questions V

1) False

2) True

3) False

4) Re-evaluating one's dreams and other major decisions made so far

5) Sternberg's triangular theory of love consists of three main components of passion, intimacy and commitment.

2.19 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1) Explain Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

2) Discuss the emotional and social development in the adolescence years.

3) Describe the parenting styles and explain the implications for the development of the adolescents.

4) Describe the cognitive development of the adolescents.

5) Elaborate on the social development of the youth in the early adulthood years.

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