

## **A Study of child Development : Theoretical and Conceptual Issues**

**Dr. Kiran Kumari Thakur**

Deptt. Of Psychology

Dr. Jagannath Mishra College,

Muzaffarpur

B.R.A.B.U., Muzaffarpur

### **Introduction:-**

Rousseau influenced later writers like Pestalozzi ; and the work of Froebel and Stanley G. Hall inherited all this theorizing which passed into current educational discussions. Stanley Hall as the pioneer of the Child Study Movement of America stood half way between the philosophic fiction of past centuries and the controlled observations and experiment of the present. Studying children's minds and attitudes through questionnaires and reporting his results in terms of averages and percentages, Hall divined various discrete stage of child life and development. Moreover, being influenced by the nineteenth century doctrine of evolution, he believed that the soul, like the body, obeys the law of recapitulation according to which the history of individual growth repeats the course of racial development. The essence of the soul, he writes, "its process of becoming. It is not a fixed, abiding thing, but grows out of antecedent soul states as different from its present forms, as protoplasm is different from the mature body ..... the soul is a product of heredity. It is still in rough form and full of contradictions. Where most educated and polished externally, it still has inner veins where barbaric and animal impulses are felt .

This classification of the periods of growth was further elaborated by Rousseau, who made a plea for each stage of life having a perfection and maturity of its own. To Rousseau there was a correspondence between the growth of a person and the development of the race. The first period of life from birth to the age of two was that of infancy where the child "to all intents and purposes was like an animal in a state of undifferentiated feeling and scarcely more conscious of himself than in the prenatal life". This was followed by the period of childhood from two to twelve years of age where the child was said to be like a savage with his mind dominated by the senses and with no proper reasoning or moral considerations. The third period was that of pre-adolescence from twelve to fifteen where the child (now a boy) was able to live a self-sufficient life like Robinson Crusoe, with new physical strength and mental vigour making its appearance but conscience still remaining undeveloped. In the fourth period of adolescence proper, from fifteen to twenty-five, the youth in the eyes of Rousseau has a new birth, as it were, and with sexual functions emerging, true social life begins, "Soul is now added to intellect and sense of beauty, goodness and truth acquires a personal value Conscience rules life and virtue becomes possible .

It is important next to ask what is meant by the term " development" as applied to the human personality, and what is understood by a fully "developed or mature personality".

It was assumed by early thinkers that children were basically different from adults and that there were distinct stage in individual development ; and discussion of development carried echoes of spectacular initiation ceremonies marking the transition from childhood to adolescence. The basic idea here was that the child, on reaching puberty, experienced ad new birth, as it were, with sudden and dramatic changes in various aspects of his development. Later, Juan Luis Vives ( 1492-1540), re-echoing the idea of growth in stages, assumed that development in the early period of childhood was by learn ing through the senses alone, as the said that the senses were our firs t teachers in whose home the mind is enclosed. The next stage of development, according to him, was through imagination, and from that, there was a progression to the mind, of which learning was the life and nature.

A century later, Johan Amos Comenius ( 1592-1670), in the Great Didactic, clearly demarcated stages of growth. He divided schooling into four six-yearly periods of infancy, child-hood, boyhood and youth. Corresponding to these periods he advocated the establishment of four institutions : a mother school, a vernacular school, a gymnasium and a university for cultivating the senses, imagination and memory, understanding and the judgment, and finally the harmonizing will as if these mental functions developed systematically and one after the other during the four six-yearly periods of life.

The meaning of the word 'development' has become blurred because it has been substituted by popular speech. This term has been used by different people to denote various phenomens. Laymen, tribals, ruralites, westerns, orientals, rightists, leftists, politicians, all use it in different ways, Whena scientific term is used in popular speech, it often loses its significance.

The concept has a cognitively-pluralistic connotation, as it has a multi disciplinary significance. Economics, political-science, psychology, anthropolgy, and sociology have used the term in different contexts. The single term has a diverse conceptual connotation. The term has political implications, and has been used as a political instrument for the obtaining of votes, under-development' has been replaced by developing countries, which does not change the connotation but puts on a garb of respectability. Terms like 'newly developing countries', 'new emerging countries' have also been used to subsitutie the earlier term under – develope.

Interestingly, the term has trapped the intelligentsia, who often focus on the development process, ignoring the roots of 'under-development.' The developed countries have exploited the resources of developing nations. The network of exploitation, the hidden structures of exploitation, have been largely neglected by social scientists. Sponsored researches, generally, are oriented to the evaluation and study of the impact of planned developmental schemes initiated by the government.

Lewis and Scalpion did not make any distinction between these terms and international stratification system has been created through the coining of terms lide MDC (more developed countries) and LDC (less developed countries). These concepts paved the way for the inculcation of western values and ideas concerning development. The ruling elite desired their countries to be modelled on the western paradingm of development. The indicators of development were defined by western societies. Sponsored researches by international organisations, and financial support given by them, institutionalized the western paradigm.

This has several consequences of psychological, social and cultural dimensions. National pride and historicity of traditions were influenced negatively. The new development programmes changed the traditional social fabric to an extent and it was considered correct to replace it through creation of new institutions.

'Sociology of Development' is a recent branch of sociology. The economists' view of development has been the dominant one for a long time. Decision makers have often turned to economists rather than sociologists. Applied economics is a great deal more popular than applied sociology, sociologists have been conspicuously missing from planning offices, committees and commissions.

The reason for this lies partly in the internal academic structure of sociology. For decades, our gaze was fixed intently upon functionality and system maintenance, and social change, was kept tucked away in a corner of our consciousness. The international context of development and under-development is a significant area at a micro-level in the analytical framework. The neo marxist approach stresses the need to understand the world as a totality, as a single integrated unit. The induced dependence tends to be total economic, political, cultural, and social. There is enough money for population programmes, family planning, agriculture, health literacy and environment. The solutions and instrumentalities come from rich countries in the form of an aid or a loan. This is a mechanism to perpetuate economic dependence, cultural dominance, and political hegemony.

Whole hearted transplantation of western medical practice into countries, such as Zambia, has been a disastrous mistake. New solutions, which make use of cheaper and less sophisticated technology, as well as personnel with skills more limited than those of fully qualified physicians, are badly needed. Yet, this has not become possible because the elite want the same treatment which westerners have access to.

In China, success in the field of modern medicine is the result of the fact that it fits into the overall structure of the society.

Some believe that population is part of the richer world's scheme to maintain control over the rest. Hence, the notion of population explosion is related to imperialism. The western mode and model of development has created a network of subterranean exploitation, whereby under developed countries are systematically sucked of their natural resources, cultural imperialism is imposed on them, and they are economically so trapped through loans, aids, debts that, politically, they are perennially slowed.

The notion of development is linked with dependence. There is certainly a need for change through revolution in the existing world system. In fact, the world is divided into nations at the centre and nations at the periphery. The nations at the centre are the developed western countries who systematically create conditions of dependence for nations at the periphery; which are the developing nations. The centre within the nations of periphery consists of the elite who, for their development, support the ideology and instrumentality of the nations at the centre. Such a situation leads to perpetuation of under development, coupled with development of the elite of the nations at the periphery.

The micro level programmes at village level have improved the quality of life, but the very targets need reconsidering. Planners ought to start with the social and 'human' dimensions, and work backwards to the necessary growth rate.

Even if one were able to identify, quantify, and frame policies for the relief of poverty of the urban and rural deprived, they would be ineffective unless they took account of the reactions of interest groups of the elite.

Even news has become a marketable commodity, and the news media in the third World, even when they are in the hands of the government, operate as part of international corporate capitalism. The wholesale transplantation of western medical practices to developing nations has been a disastrous mistake and that new solutions which make use of cheaper and less sophisticated technology, as well as of personnel with more limited skills than those of well-blown physicians, are badly needed. Yet it has not been possible to break "medical imperialism," it is necessary to ask questions about education and literacy, and their social and cultural relevance for the developing nations.

Rich countries are polluting the environment and react to the 'eco-threat' very strongly. This is a plot.

The Theories of development are many. The functional, evolutionary, dialectical, psychological theories of development have been overshadowed in recent years by the advance of the 'Dependency' and the 'World-system' theories.

The concept of ethno-development has assumed great significance in the context of developing nations. Generally, the concept of development has been identified with the development of western nations, which emphasizes material, and mundane aspects of development along with formations of complex and large scale organisations for the accomplishment of economic growth. In such a notion of development, the person becomes the slave of technology, and there is emphasis on consumption for social conspicuousness. Obviously, in such a model of development, the individual and the social dimensions are relegated to the background. The plurality of cultures, as revealed in different societies, in the contemporary world, exemplify that human beings have developed different styles of life, customs, traditions, and institutions, which have emerged out of their cumulative experience. Thus, the institutions of social hierarchy, marriage, family, property, inheritance, etc., tend to differ from one society to another. Even systems of law, bureaucracy, justice, and polity are dependent upon indigenous situations and social experiences. A comparative study of different cultures reveals that each culture has its own mechanism to deal with problems, and hopes and aspirations.

The contemporary governmental programmes should be seen in the context of the structural and cultural peculiarities of our nation. These are of various types; some are intended for specific categories which have been deprived socially, politically, and economically for a long and continuous time. The programmes oriented towards SC/STs can be categorised as those which deal with specific categories. Similarly, programmes oriented towards women belong to the same category. The status of women in Indian society has several levels of understanding and analysis. These levels reveal ideology and difficulties of women in India glorified as goddess on one hand, and enslaved on the other. The actual process, customs and

traditions reveals that women, for several centuries, have been put to severe discriminatory treatment by different social institutions. She has been kept in Purdah and involved in domestic work.

Her glorification is a device to prevent any attack on the system which produces her factual subordination. Exploitation, and discrimination. She is structuarally deprived of fuller experssion of her potentials. She is confined to household tasks, denied public self expression, and suffers familial neglect. Her education, health and well being are part of institutionalised neglect, non care and non-support.

There are several levels of this discrimination. The rural woman is deprived, first because she is a woman; secondly, she is a rural woman; then she is exploited by market forces-low wages; and lastly, if she belongs to a low caste, the caste hierarchy itself leads to further discrimination. Thus, women, as such, constitute a disadvantaged group, but certain categories suffer more from multiplicities of deprivation.

**References :**

1. Johan Lewis, “ the social limits of Politically Induced change”, in Chander Morse et al., *Modernisation by Design: social change in the Twentieth Century*, Scientific Book Agency, Calcutta pp. 1-33.
2. Robert A. Scalpino, “Environment and foreign Contributions. Japan, in Robert E. Ward and Dankwart. A. Rustow (Eds.) *Political Modernisation in Japan and Turkey*, Princeton university Press, princeton, 1964, p. 65.
3. Emanuel De Kadt and Gavin williams, *Sociology and Development*, Tavistick Publication, Cambridge, p.1.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p.3.
6. Ronald Frankenberger and Joyce Lesson, In Emanuel de Kadt and Gavin Williams, *Op. Cit.* Pp. 255-278.
7. Ibid., pp. 258-270.
8. Emanuel De Kadt and G. Williams, *op. Cit.*, P. 14.
9. Eliot, *Income Distribution and Social Stratification; Some Notes on theory and practice*, *Journal of Development Studies*, 1972, p. 47.
10. Kadt and William, *op. Cit.*, pp. 6-9.