

Q What is Adolescence? Enumerate and Explain the important characteristics of Adolescence

Ans. Adolescence is the most important period of human life. Poets have described it as the spring of life of human being and an important era in the total life span. The word 'adolescence' comes from a Greek word "adolescere" which means 'to grow to maturity: A number of definitions have been given by psychologists from time to time. Some psychologists define it as the transitional period of life. The child experiences a number of changes in this transitional period. The period runs between childhood and adulthood is sometimes called the period of teenage.

According to A.T. Jersild, "Adolescence in that span of years during which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood, mentally, emotionally, socially and physically-

Jean Piaget define adolescere as; "the age of great ideals and the beginning of theorist as well as the time of simple adaptation to reality".

Chronologically, adolescence comes roughly in between the years from 12 to the early 20's. The onset of adolescence varies from culture to culture depending on the socio-economic condition of the country. In this period, great changes occur in all developmental dimensions of the individual.

Characteristics of Adolescence:

1. A Period of Rapid physical Development:

Adolescence is marked by rapid physical growth and development. According to Cole, "Adolescence is a period of growth in all systems of the body". During this stage, an individual attains biological maturation, which means increase in height, weight etc. Sometimes the growth is disproportionate due to the lengthening of hands and feet, which makes the body awkward and clumsy, resulting in improper coordination of the limbs of the body. Mainly due to this, the adolescence are extremely self-conscious and over-sensitive about their physical appearance

2. A period of Sexual Development:

Sexual development is undoubtedly the central fact of adolescence, and therefore, it is essential to provide sex education to both boys and girls at this

stage. Many changes pertaining to sex and sex organs occur in boys and girls, which though quite normal and natural, are misunderstood as some type of abnormality, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety. This makes it absolutely imperative to provide education and guidance to the adolescents boys and girls in the matter pertaining to sex.

4. A period of Emotional Exuberance and imagination:

This is a period of emotional instability and fantastic imagination. Adolescence is highly emotional, and most of his actions and decisions are based upon emotions rather than an rational judgment. His moods vary from highly hilarious to deeply depressed. In the word of Ross, "the adolescents lives an intensely emotional life in which we can see once more the rhythm of Positive and Negative Phase of behavior in his constant alternations between intense excitement and deep depression".

These emotion is full of energy which the education is must try to channels. Here list the function of the educationist and the teacher. On account of tremendous emotional energy the adolescence are capable of performing even the most difficult tasks. Therefore, the teacher must keep before the adolescence the desirable objects and try to channelise their energies for the attainment of useful and lofty ideals.

The imaginative faculties are also at their highest peak during adolescence. This is, therefore a pe-

riod of poetry and art. The basis of artistic and literary greatness are formed during this period, as this is a period of fantasies and make believes.

5. A period of Idealism:

Adolescence is a period of idealism. High ideals are formed at this stage of life. An adolescent is full of humanitarian feelings and altruistic emotions. He hates selfishness and is not yet debased by the crude realities of life. He can easily be persuaded to take even great risks for the attainment of any lofty ideal.

6. A period of intellectual Attainments:

Human intellect flowers at this stage. Intelligence also reaches its maximum at this stage. This is, therefore, a period of great intellectual attainments. Both boys and girls develop keen interest in reading and writing and their interest widens to a very great extent.

The individual differences also begin to show themselves at this stage. Some people develop taste for literary and artistic pursuits; others become interested in scientific type of studies, while some others may like to engage themselves in some practical type of activities. The central fact, of course, is that adolescence is a period of great attainments, and therefore, the teachers should try to make the best use of their time and energy, and should guide them to attain their objective.

The intellect acquires extra sharpness at this stage. In fact, all the individual faculties are at the red hot point at this stage. This is mostly a period of exuberant imagination and day dreaming. But, by

and by the fantasies fade and realities crop up in the minds of adolescence. In the words of James S. Ross, "Fantasies fade and reality is faced. The young man of eighteen is a man of the world, pre-occupied with practical problem, and proud of his knowledge of affairs and his practical efficiency. He chooses a career which is frequently that of his earlier hero, and gradually pursues his way to complete manhood.

7. A period of social Development:

The gregarious instinct fully matures at this period. Therefore this a period of making lasting friendships. At this stage, most of the boys become members of a group, or a gang. They are mostly guided by the group mind; The interests of the group are uppermost in their minds, and therefore, for a slight class of interest of an individual, the entire group works in his support. Their behaviour in such matter is impulsive and an individual is likely to commit wrong and undesirable acts because of the group mind. But, if the group is rightly guided, it is most likely to do many useful things for the good of the society.

7. A period of Moral and Spiritual development:

Adolescence age, as has been mentioned earlier, is an age of idealism. Adolescents are, therefore, moved by height ideals. These ideals are essentially moral and spiritual in nature, This is also an age of hero- worshiping and therefore all his moral and spiritual feelings are centered round a special person. At this stage, the feelings of the individual are pure and pious and they are moved by

moral consideration. But at the same time, they do not like hypocrisy and deceit and their liking is for truth and straight forwardness. They may not believe in rituals and dogmas, but they believe in a moral code of conduct.

Sometime they have high spiritual aspirations and consequently, try to seek guidance and blessings of some spiritual leader. The basic fact is that they are pure at heart and their minds have not yet been polluted by the selfishness and greed prevalent in the society.

From the study of the characteristics of Adolescence, we infer that this is the stage of extremes and therefore experienced and mature guidance of the teacher and educators is absolutely essential for adolescents. For this purpose, the first requisite is to win the confidence of the students. It is only then, that they will accept the advice and guidance of their teacher

Q. What are the development needs of adolescents? Discuss them in brief.

Or

Describe the psychological needs of adolescents. How can these be looked after?

Ans. Adolescents is the most sensitive period in the development of an individual. It is the 'recapitulation of the first period of life. During this period, the adolescents in badly adjusted physically, mentally and emotionally. He becomes the focus of attention in the family. So, he becomes extremely self conscious and is given to blushing. During this period of rapid growth and development, the ado-

lescents becomes conscious of his/her varied needs which are related to the biology of his body as well as his placement in the social set-up in which he is placed some of the important needs of the adolescents are discussed below.

Development Needs of Adolescents.

1. Biological Needs

Adolescence is the period of rapid physical growth. The biology of his/her body plays a significant role. This gives rise to a number of - biological needs. These are as under.

- (a) **Need for oxygen, water and food:** The needs for oxygen, water and food is fundamental for a growing individual. Oxygen, water and food are the basis of an individual survival and existence. This is specially so in the case of an adolescent. He \ She must be provided with rich and nutritious food. In order to get the benefits of good food, he \she must engage himself \ herself in games and sports and morning exercises also to keep his body in good shape , morning exercises also . To keep his body in good shape, morning exercises and evening play help a lot.
- (b) **Need for Rest and Sleep:** Adolescence is also a period of restlessness. An adolescent is very active and full of energy. He\She needs proper rest and sleep. His/Her need to maintain proper body temperature and protection from threats of physical environment like hazards of weather, environmental pollution, accidents natural calamities must be taken care of.

- (c) **Sex:** Adolescence is the period of sexual awakening. He\She has the need for satisfaction of the sex urge or desire to seek sex experience. Although this need is not for the survival of an individual, it is the strongest human urge in the satisfaction of which lies his proper growth, development, adjustment and well-being. Moreover, the satisfaction of this need and normal sexual behavior is most essential for a happy domestic life and the continuity and survival of the human species.

Social Needs

A number of adolescents needs are associated with his/her socialcultural environment They are acquired through social learning Although such needs are not linked with the survival of the organism yet deprivation of these may lead to a state of social and psychological insecurity Some of these needs are as under.

- (a) **Independence:** An adolescent feels that he/she has long being living under the dominance of parents and elders. Now, he/she gets an urge to become a free and independent individual. He/ she wants to hold free opinion on various social issues that confront him/her.
- (b) **Need for self-assertion:** An adolescent has an inherent desire to get an opportunity to rule or dominate over others It may vary in intensity from person to person but it is exhibited by him/her in one or the other situation He/she may show it in dealing with their juniors servants their pets and even in animated things like dolls or pictures This need to assert oneself gives birth to an important

motive called the power motive which works as a strong determinant of one's personality and behaviour.

- (c) **Need for recognition and social approval:** Each one of us has an inherent desire to gain recognition, appreciation and esteem in the eyes of others. An artist may thus desire to be known for his art, a young woman may desire to be appreciated for her beauty, good manners or housekeeping especially by their peers. A student may show this desire by excelling or others student of his class and thus of gaining the required social status, prestige or approval from his fellow students, teachers, and parents.
- (d) **Need for company:** Man is called a social animal in the sense that he has a strong urge to be with his own kind and maintain social relations with them. The real impact of this need can be felt by those individuals who are faced with social rejection or solitary confinement. An adolescents has the dire need for the company of opposite sex.
- (e) **Need for Social Security:** An adolescent often experiences social insecurity. Since he is neither recognized as a child nor counted in the category of adults. His/Her need to feel socially secure is satisfied in the family or in the company of peer groups:

III Emotional Needs:

An adolescent is emotionally very sensitive from the emotional point of view, he needs the following:

- (a) **Need for Love and Affection:** Every one of us has a strong desire to love and be loved. An adolescent boy or girl has this desire in the strongest sense. It is very intense for his positive emotional development and for gaining in emotional maturity.
- (b) **Need for Self-Expression:** An adolescent is quite observant. He/She wants to express his/her views on various social, family and political matters of day to day interest. He/She should be provided with adequate opportunities for expression and development of his/her potentialities.
- (c) **Need to achieve:** Like every human being, an adolescent has a strong desire to achieve some or other goals like money, fame, reputation, merit etc. Getting satisfaction from one's own accomplishments is the most dominant factor in the life of an adolescent.

■ **What are the Problems of adolescents? Discuss the role of Education in solving these Problems.**

Or

"Adolescence is the Period of stress and strain". Explain.

Ans. Some of the fundamental needs and problems of adolescents are discussed below:

1. **The Problem of Rapid Growth and Development:**

The Characteristic of rapid growth and development at this stage itself creates a big problem for the adolescent. The change is so rapid and sud-

den that he finds it difficult to properly cope with it. He is neither a child nor an adult, and therefore, feels awkward in the company of others. This poses adjustment problems for him. The remedy lies in providing congenial and understanding environment.

2. The Problem of Sex:

James. S. Ross says, "Sex, than is the fundamental fact of adolescence, if not of all life." "Like the overflow of a great river." Says Slaughter, "It irrigates and fertilizes great tracts of life's territory," and the whole business of adolescent education is the "long circuiting of the instinct", the redirection of its energy into legitimate and useful channels. But this is not so easy.

Sexual energy poses a n number of problems, like anxiety, a feeling of guilt and adjust problems. Because of social taboos, the sexual energy cannot find the desired outlets, and consequently the sexual feelings are repressed. These repressed feeling may often outburst into undesirable behavior, or often, otherwise, may cause mental imbalance or abnormality. The individual may become introvert and lose all interest in outer world. If so, it is a case for the psychiatrist to tackle. The remedy is not to repress but to sublimate the sexual instinct. This means channel] sing the Sexual energy for the attainment of some desirable objectives, specially in the field of art or literature, physical exercise and keeping busy also helps in solving this problems.

3. **The Problem of emotional instability:**

An adolescent is emotionally highly unstable. He experiences intense emotional feelings. Mood-Swings are quite normal with the adolescents, but if these are more frequent and are extremely intense in nature they may be an indication of a deep sense of dissatisfaction or frustration. May be that his emotions are being thwarted, resulting in frustration and instability of mind.

What is needed is that the parents and the teachers should try to understand the feelings and emotions of the adolescents and should try to satisfy them. The remedy lies in the psychological understanding of the adolescents and fulfilling their needs and emotional requirements.

4. **The Problem of a Sense of Insecurity:**

For a balanced development of personality a feeling of security is absolutely essential. Generally Children at the adolescent stage are dependent upon their parents for the fulfillment of their needs. They have physical needs, intellectual needs, and emotional needs, needs regarding recreation and needs regarding their friends or social needs. All of these may not be important from the parent's point of views, but they may be very important from the point of view of children. If all such needs are not properly satisfied, and if they are refused pointblank, they begin to experience a sense of insecurity, a feeling that they are not being looked after properly. This feeling of insecurity is very damaging for the balanced development of personality and may lead to serious psychological problems.

Therefore, it is imperative for the teachers and especially the parents, that the various types of need and requirements of the children are properly attended to the remedy lies in handling the adolescents psychologically.

5. The problem of proper Adjustment:

A balanced personality is a well adjusted personality. An individual is required to adjust to his total environment. For adolescent, it means adjustments with parents and others members of the family; adjustment with the teachers and the educational institution, adjustment with society etc. Due to the reasons inherent in the adolescent and prevailing in the environment and society, the adolescent experiences a number of adjustment problems. Sometimes nobody is willing to see the point of view of the others or perhaps, they find it difficult to understand each other. This clash of values results in serious problems of maladjustment and heavy mental strain for the adjustment.

The remedy, perhaps, lies in allowing more freedom to the adjustment, because, it gives natural craving to think and act independently at this stage. The necessary guidance may be given, but very tactfully and indirectly. Let the adolescent take his own decision and enjoy freedom, of course, within /limits.

6. The problem of Lack of Maturity.

Another important problem of the adolescent is that though he lacks experience and maturity, he is not ready to accept this fact. He has definitely grown in intelligence and he has begun to see the

world from his own point of views, he is naturally craving for independence in thinking and in his actions, he has formed softy ideals and ventures to transform the whole society, but, the difficult is that he lacks maturity while is bye-product of experience. This seriously affects his adjustment and there is a clash between the idealism of adolescent and the realism of the environment. This leaves the adolescent bewildered and confused.

Guidance, therefore is very essential at this stage because experience and maturity is something that you cannot buy or borrow. The rashness of the adolescent must be subdued by the maturity of the adult.

7. The problem of social values:

Every society has its own customs and traditions, which it wants to maintain and perpetuate. Every individual has to follow these social values or social code of conduct. But the adolescent may not see eye to eye with these social values which are out of date and therefore, superfluous. His independence of thinking may come into clash with the prevailing values. But, he is told that he has to accept the tradition and values of society. This clash of values produces various types complexes in the mint of the adolescent.

This is, indeed a very serious problem because the values and traditions of society are so powerful that the individual has to bow before them. And if he does not do so, he may have face social disgrace. The situation can be remedied only if the society begins to take a liberal view regarding

these things. After all, the society will progress only if certain modifications are accepted and incorporated in it. The adolescent also must try to understand the usefulness and utility of social values and thus try to adjust with the society in which that are living.

8. **The problem of Economic Independence:**

Economic independence is fundamental to the development of a balanced personality. It is rather a condition of existence. An adolescent wants to be independent in almost everything, more so in the case of money matters. It is very essential that there should be bright prospect before them. The prevailing system of education utterly lacks in this respect. The remedy lies in education and economic planning. If everyone is guaranteed suitable job, most of the problems of adolescents will automatically be solved.

Role of Education :

- (1) Adolescents worry a great deal about the physiological changes that occur in them. We must therefore, take them into our confidence and explain the nature and significance of these changes to them. Girls need to know about menstruation. Boys worry and feel guilty about their urge to masturbate. Honest replies to their queries could help to eliminate much of the fear and anxiety that the adolescent experiences.
- (2) Educators must remember that teenaged boys and girls are growing into adult men and women, Therefore, interests and abilities will differ and hence provision must be made for this. The school library and the work-rooms must be adequately

equipped in order to cater to the differing tastes and needs. It would however be a -grave error to segregate them, especially in a co-educational school. The school must help them to mix so that they may shed that awkwardness which the teenagers experience when they are confronted with a member of the opposite sex.

- (3) Adolescents may seem to be extremely critical and difficult people. But experience will prove that they are amenable to reasoning. They welcome discussions and they feel very happy if they are asked to help or to give their views. But they resent adult attempts to impose views on them. Hence it is advisable that parents should be reasonably lenient in matters of dress and hair-style. They may discuss the matter with them and then leave them free to accept or reject the parental view.
- (4) Adolescents demand independence. Hence the teacher must provide possible opportunities for self-study, and selfexpression. The teacher would do well to allow the students to participate in the planning of the class and school activities. These youngsters are also mature enough to shoulder responsibilities. Moreover educators have noticed that rules framed with the assistance of the students can be easily enforced and they are readily obeyed.
- (5) Teachers must be patient and tactful in all their dealings with adolescents. They should guard against hurting feelings or unnecessarily challenging these young people. We must remember that youth gangs are very strong. Though they can do

excellent constructive work, provocative situations can arouse very destructive tendencies in them.

- (6) Teachers may feel that adolescent students only try to find their faults. Simplicity and sincerity and a friendly attitude however works wonders with these young people. The teacher must make the adolescent feel that she is really interested in them. Once they spot a friendly adult who is ready to understand them, they become the nicest people on earth.
- (7) Teachers should not adopt double standards while dealing with adolescents. They easily locate the double standards adopted by the teachers and than the gap between the two goes on widening.