



MSW COURSE MATERIALS

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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OBJECTIVES

- To Develop an overall understanding of the principles of growth, their relevance, and application to behavior at various phases in the life span.
- To understand the role of hereditary and environmental influences in growth and Development of Individuals.
- To understand interactional nature of growth and behavior at various stages in the life span.
- To develop sensitivity towards needs and developmental tasks at each stage.
- To provide information on growth and development regarding physical and psychological social work practice.

UNIT I

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Meaning, Characteristics, Determinants of Behavior: Heredity and Environment. Nature and Principles of Development. Factors influencing development. Relative importance of Heredity and Environment. Psychology: meaning, scope of application in various fields. Different schools of psychology: Behavioral school, Humanistic school and Psycho analysis school. Importance of psychology for social workers.

MEANING OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth refers to structural physiological changes, while development refers to growth as well as those changes in behavior which result from environmental stimulation.

Characteristics of Growth

- Growth is not a continuous process. It stops with maturity.
- It is cumulative in nature.
- Rate of growth is not uniform. It proceeds more rapidly in the early years of life.

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- Growth takes place at different rates for different parts of the body.
- There is marked individual difference in growth.
- Growth follows a definite sequence or pattern.
- The Rate and pattern of growth can be modified by conditions internal and external to the body.
- The Tempo of growth is not even.
- Growth is a complex process.
- Growth is influenced by heredity and environment.

Determinants of Behavior: Heredity and Environment

- The Individual's personality is the product of both heredity and environment. In some cases, heredity may over power the development and in certain other cases environment may assert itself on growth and development.
- In either of these two cases the influence of one or the other cannot be completely wiped off. It is because of heredity and environment that individual differs in psychique, character and other personality traits.
- Therefore, it is of prime importance to the social workers to know what exactly is the part played by heredity and environment in the personality development of the child.

Mendel formulated three laws of heredity:

- Law of like begets like
- Law of variation
- Law of regression

There has been a controversy about whether heredity or environment is more important for the growth and development of an individual. The Hereditarians argue that inborn nature of an individual are the main factor in the development of personality and it solely determines the level to which the child can develop. They argue that the heredity is the base on which the edifice of the personality is built up.

Nature and Principles of Development

- Development is a process of interaction.
- Development is a continuous process.
- Development follows an orderly sequence.
- Development proceeds from general to specific.
- Different aspects of development are inter-dependent.
- Development is an individualized process.
- Each stage of development has its traits.
- Development is cumulative.
- Development is predictable.
- Development depends on maturation and learning.

Factors influencing Development

- Intelligence.
- Sex.
- Glands.
- Race.
- Air and Sunlight.
- Nutrition.
- Diseases and injuries
- Social and cultural factors.
- Family status.
- The Order of birth of a child.

Relative importance of Heredity and Environment

- ❖ Heredity and environment are so closely interlocked and hence one cannot be considered in isolation from the other. Both are equally important.
- ❖ Mc Iver and Page have said that every phenomenon of life is the product of heredity and environment. Each is as necessary to the result as the other. Neither can ever be eliminated nor can ever be isolated.
- ❖ Experiments relating to heredity have proved that it is not the sole factor which determines development of the personality of human beings. And similarly, experiments conducted in the field of environment also indicate that it is not the only factor influencing personality.
- ❖ In Alterberg's words, "each trait requires both heredity and environment for its development."

Psychology

Meaning

- The Word psychology has originated from two Greek words psyche and logos which mean soul and science respectively. Thus originally psychology was considered as the science of the soul.
- Subsequently the meaning of psychology has undergone many changes from time to time. It came to be described as the science of the mind, the science of consciousness and the science of behavior. The last among these has gained general acceptance in modern times.

Scope of application in various fields

- Clinical psychology.
- Counseling psychology.
- Evolutionary psychology.
- Industrial and Organizational psychology.
- Legal psychology.
- Neuropsychology.
- Occupational health psychology.
- Forensic psychology.
- Engineering psychology.
- School psychology
- Educational psychology

Different schools of psychology

- Behavioral school: Watson
- Cognitive school: Arton T. Beck, Albert Ellis
- Functional school: William James
- Humanistic school: Carl Rogers
- Systems psychology school: Gregory Bateson, Felix Guattari.
- Psycho analytic school: Sigmund Freud

Importance of psychology for social workers

- A clinical social worker needs series of psychological principles to solve the problems of mental health and disorders.
- Social workers are expected as professionals to have a basic knowledge about a client's personality.
- Psychology comes into play here because it deals with the structure of human personality.

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