

# Unit: 4: Adolescence (5<sup>th</sup> Semester)

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# Meaning of Adolescence

- The term 'Adolescence' comes from a **Greek word 'Adolescere'** which means **'to grow to maturity'**.
- Chronologically, the period of adolescence **starts between the ages of 10-14 years** and it usually **ends between the ages 17-21 years**. [Pratt, H.D. (2005). Adolescence. In N. J.Salkind (Ed.) Encyclopedia of Human Development (pp.29-35). SAGE Publications]
- This period can be sub-divided into **three developing stages: early (10-14 years), middle (14 -17 Years) and late (17-21 years) adolescence**. (Gender difference exists- Girls enter earlier than boys)
- The **onset of puberty characterises Early Adolescence**, the **peak growth and physical maturation describe Middle Adolescence** , and the **Late Adolescence is marked by the end of puberty and the integration of all functional skills**, i.e., skills in the domain of physical, motor, visual, auditory, perceptual, language, cognitive, psycho-social and specific integrative-adaptive (Pratt,2005)
- Adolescence period is also known as **'teenage'**.

# Definitions of Adolescence

- Adolescence is that span of years during which **boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood**, mentally, emotionally, socially and physically. (**A. T. Jersild**)
- Adolescence is a period of **growth in all systems of the body**. ( **Cole**)
- Adolescence is a process rather than a period, **a process of achieving attitudes and beliefs needed for effective participation in the society**. ( **Dorothy Rogers**)
- Psychologically adolescence is the age when the **individuals become integrated into the society of adults**. ( **Jean Piaget**)
- Adolescence represents a **period of growth and change in nearly all aspects** of the child's physical, mental, social and emotional life. It is a time of new experiences, new responsibilities with adults as well as peers.(**E.B.Hurlock**)
- Adolescence is a period in life that **begins with biological maturation** during which people accomplish a series of developmental tasks raised by the many biological-physical changes, cognitive changes, and socio-emotional changes. (**International encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences**)

# Characteristics of Adolescence

- Quick physical development
- Development of high intellectual capacities
- Emotional instability
- Social consciousness
- Moral consciousness
- Hero-worshipping tendency
- Heterosexuality
- Expression of creativity
- Spirit of adventure
- Self-dependence
- Self-respect and self-esteem

# Developmental Tasks of Adolescence

- Every culture or society expects its members to acquire a certain pattern of behaviour and master certain psycho-physical skills at different stages of development. **These expectations about the patterns of behaviour and skills are labelled as developmental tasks by Robert Havighurst.** These developmental tasks arise out of physical maturity, cultural pressures of society and the personal values and aspirations of the individual.
- According to **Robert Havighurst (1972)** developmental tasks of adolescence are as follows:
  - ✓ Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
  - ✓ Achieving a masculine and feminine social role
  - ✓ Accepting one's physique and using one's body effectively
  - ✓ Desiring, accepting, and achieving socially responsible behaviour
  - ✓ Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults
  - ✓ Preparing for an economic career
  - ✓ Preparing for marriage and family life
  - ✓ Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour-developing an ideology

**[Ref: Havighurst, R.J.(1972). Developmental tasks and education.(3<sup>rd</sup> ed) Newyork: McKay]**

# Adolescence as age of transition

- **Generally transition means that what has happened before will leave its mark on what happens now and in the future.**
- Children when they go from childhood to adulthood, **must “put away childish things” and they must also learn new patterns of behaviour and attitudes** to replace those they have abandoned. However, it is important to realize that what happened earlier has left its mark and will influence these new patterns of behaviour and attitudes.
- **In the age of transition, adolescents experience a variety of physical/biological, cognitive, social and emotional changes.**

## ☐ **Physical/biological transition**

- ✓ **Two significant physical changes:** Growth Spurt & Puberty
- ✓ Growth Spurt refers to the rapid increase in height, weight, size & shape (Girls enter earlier than boys)
- ✓ Puberty refers to the period during which an individual becomes capable of sexual reproduction (development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics)

# Adolescence as age of transition

## ❑ Cognitive transition

- ✓ **Changes in cognitive abilities:** abstract thinking, meta-cognition: introspection, multidimensional thinking, hypothetical and deductive reasoning etc.

## ❑ Social transition

- ✓ **Significant changes in social relationships** with peers, friends and with family members
- ✓ Increased time spend with peers, emergence of romantic relationships, reorganization in family relationships: conflict between adolescents and parents

## ❑ Emotional transition

- ✓ **Some important emotional changes:** Excessive sensitivity, Quest for an identity: self-concept & self-esteem, Feeling of uncertainty, Peer group pressure, Conflicting thoughts, Mood swings, Self-consciousness, Sexual feelings

# Adolescence: a period of storm and stress

- The term **‘storm and stress’** was coined by **G. Stanley Hall** in his book **‘Adolescence’** which was written **in 1904**.
- Hall viewed adolescence as **a period of inevitable turmoil** that takes place during the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- **‘Storm’** refers to a decreased level of self-control, and **‘Stress’** refers to an increased level of sensitivity.
- **Three main categories** of storm and stress described by Hall are:
  - ✓ **Conflict with Parents:** Adolescents tend to rebel against authority figures as they seek greater independence and autonomy.
  - ✓ **Mood disruption:** Hormonal changes and the psychological stress of adolescence can cause uncontrollable shifts in emotions.
  - ✓ **Risky behaviour:** The combination of a neurological need for stimulation and emotional immaturity lead to increased risk-taking behaviour during adolescence.



# Adolescence: a period of storm and stress

- **According to Hall**, reasons for termed adolescence as a period of storm and stress:
  - ✓ **Influence of biological aspects:** **Biological changes** of puberty, **Hormone changes** –account for many of the mood swings, **Physical growth-** make adolescents feel uncomfortable or awkward, **Neurological connections-** rapidly coming together and causing adolescents to seek stimulation.
  - ✓ **Influence of psychological aspects:** As adolescents **seek independence**, they rebel against authority figures, and strong associations with peer groups develop. **Attention-seeking and risk-seeking behaviours** also increase during adolescence. These characteristics contribute to **increased levels of conflict** in the adolescent period. **Emotions tend to vary widely** and change at a moment's notice. Adolescents are more likely to **experience feelings of depression, self-consciousness, embarrassment, loneliness, and nervousness** at this time more than any other time in their lives.,
  - ✓ **Influence of social aspects:** In adolescence stage, characteristics like **social consciousness, tendency to help others, self-respect** are normally visible among adolescence. If the young boys and girls failed to develop themselves towards these social qualities, than they create the **problem of social maladjustment**. That is why, **tensions and anxiety are increased** among adolescents.

**So, we can say that adolescence is a period of storm and stress as said by psychologist Stanley Hall.**

# Need and importance of studying Adolescence

- The first and foremost need of studying adolescence is **to understand adolescence as an important stage of human development.**
- Studying adolescence is needed **to understand adolescence as one of the most rapid phases of human development.**
- It is needed **to provide the adolescents with accurate, age appropriate and culturally relevant information, promote healthy attitudes and develop skills** to enable them to respond to real-life situations effectively
- Parents need to study this stage **to understand the changing behavioural and other characteristics and needs of their growing children.** Such understanding helps in establishing meaningful relationship with adolescents and in avoiding conflict with them.

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# Need and importance of studying Adolescence

- Studying adolescence is needed to understand the critical link between childhood and adulthood, which is characterized by significant physical, psychological and social transitions.
- Knowledge of adolescence psychology can help to understand that though these transitions are difficult but they also present opportunities to positively influence the development of adolescents.
- Adolescents themselves need to study about this stage so that they may face the challenges of this stage successfully and make a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Teachers and parents need to know the nature and changes that take place during adolescence. They must understand the problems of adolescents so as to help them solve these problems.
- Mental health of the adolescents is an important issue of concern. Adolescent psychology is needed to understand mental health issues in order to preserve, cure and prevent incidences of maladjustment and utilize their potentialities.

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# Need and importance of studying Adolescence

- Studying adolescence is needed **to understand the needs and developmental tasks for adolescents**. With such knowledge **parents can help adolescents** to shoulder their responsibilities, the **teacher and educator can frame** curriculum, teaching methods and school practices that help adolescents to develop skills to meet various responsibilities.
- Teachers need to study and understand adolescence to be **able to develop effective teaching and behaviour-management strategies**.
- Sound study about the various aspects of adolescent development is needed for **proper educational planning** for adolescents including curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Adolescents are in need of educational, vocational and personal guidance to solve their multifaceted problems of life. In order **to offer proper guidance** to adolescents, a sound knowledge about them is the first prerequisite.