1. Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Psychology
Course Name	Psychology 01 (Class XI, Semester - 1)
Module Name/Title	Childhood - Part 3
Module Id	kepy_10403
Pre-requisites	Understanding of various domains of development – biological, cognitive, socio-emotional
Objectives	After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to understand the following: • Describe the various characteristics of development during childhood • Recognise the pubertal changes and their psychological effects during adolescence
Keywords	Pre-operational thought, Symbolic thought, Egocentrism, Animism, Intuitive thought, Centration, Concrete operational Self, Moral development, Gender identity, Gender roles, Gender typing, Puberty, Menarche

2. Development Team

Role	Name	Affiliation
National MOOC Coordinator (NMC)	Prof. Amarendra P. Behera	CIET, NCERT, New Delhi
Program Coordinator	Dr. Mohd. Mamur Ali	CIET, NCERT, New Delhi
Course Coordinator (CC) / PI	Dr. Anjum Sibia	DEPFE, NCERT, New Delhi
Course Co-Coordinator / Co-PI	Dr. Prabhat Kumar Mishra	DEPFE, NCERT, New Delhi
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	Ms. Deepika Pant	The Shri Ram School Aravali, Hamilton court Complex, Gurgaon
Review Team	Ms. Neelam Srivastava Dr. Swati Patra	Vasant Valley School Vasant Kunj, New Delhi IGNOU, New Delhi

Table of Contents :

Cognitive Development in Childhood:

Cognitive development in early childhood focuses on **Piaget's stage of preoperational thought** (see Table on Piaget's stages of cognitive development given in the previous module). In preoperational thought, child gains the ability to mentally represent an object that is not physically present. But they do not yet understand basic mental operations or rules.

    I.   You may have observed children draw designs/figures to represent people, trees, dog, house, etc. This ability of the child to engage in *symbolic thought* helps to expand her/his mental world. The progress in symbolic thought continues.

    II.   A salient feature of preoperational thought is **egocentrism** (self-focus), i.e. children see the world only in terms of their own selves and are not able to appreciate others' point of view. By egocentrism, Piaget does not mean that children are selfish, rather he explained that children at this stage believe that other people perceive things in the same way as they do. for example, when child hides behind a curtain and assumes that if she can't see someone's eyes they can't see her

    I.   Children because of egocentrism, engage in **animism** - thinking that all things are living, like oneself. They attribute life-like qualities to inanimate objects. For example, if a child while running slips on the road, s/he might show animism by saying "road hurt me".

    II.   As children grow and are approximately between 4 and 7 years of age they want answers to all their questions like: Why is the sky blue? How do trees grow? and so on. Such questions help the child to know why things are as they are. Piaget called this the stage of **intuitive thought**.

    III.   Another feature of thought during preoperational stage is characterised by children having a tendency for **centration**, i.e. focusing on a single characteristic or feature for

understanding an event. For example, a child may insist on drinking a "big glass" of juice, preferring a tall narrow glass to a short broad one, even though both might be holding the same amount of juice. The preoperational child is unable to pay attention to height and width at the same time. He/she focus (centering) on only one aspect of the situation, which is height in this case.

As the child grows and is approximately between 7 and 11 years of age (the period of middle and late childhood) intuitive thought is replaced by logical thought. This is the stage of **concrete operational thought**, which is made up of operations — mental actions that allow the child to do mentally what was done physically before.

I. Concrete operations are also mental actions that are **reversible**. In a well-known test, the child is presented with two identical balls of clay. One ball is rolled by the experimenter into a long thin strip and the other ball remains in its original shape. On being asked which has more clay, the child of 7 or 8 years, would answer that, both have the same amount of clay. This is because the child imagines the ball rolled into thin strip and then into a ball, that means s/he is able to imagine reversible mental action on concrete/real objects. What do you think a preoperational child would have done? S/he is likely to focus on only one aspect-length or height.

II. Concrete operations allow the child to focus on different characteristics and not focus on one aspect of the object. This helps the child to appreciate that there are different ways of looking at things, which also results in the **decline of her/his egocentrism**.

III. Thinking becomes more **flexible,** and children can think about alternatives when solving problems, or mentally retrace their steps if required.

IV. Even though the preoperational child develops the ability to see relationships between different properties of an object, s/he cannot do abstract thinking, i.e. s/he still cannot manipulate ideas in the absence of objects. For example, steps required to complete algebraic equations, or imagining line of longitude or latitude of the earth. The growing cognitive abilities of children facilitate the acquisition of language.

<u>Socio-emotional Development:</u>
The important dimensions of children's socioemotional development are the self, gender and moral development.
Emergence of self:

During the early years of childhood, some important developments in the self take place. The child due to socialisation has developed a sense of who s/he is and whom s/he wants to be identified with. The developing sense of independence makes children do things in their own way. According to Erikson, the way parents respond to their self-initiated activities leads to developing a sense of initiative or sense of guilt. For example, giving freedom and opportunities for play like cycling, running, skating, etc. and answering children's questions will create a sense of support for the initiative taken. In contrast, if they are made to feel that their questions are useless, and games played by them are stupid, the children are likely to develop feelings of guilt over self-initiated activities, which may persist through the children's later life also.

Self-understanding in early childhood is limited to defining oneself through *physical characteristics*: I am tall, she has black hair, I am a girl, etc. During middle and late childhood, the child is likely to define oneself through *internal characteristics* such as, "I am smart and I am popular" or "I feel proud when teachers assign me responsibility in school". In addition to defining oneself through psychological characteristics, children's self-descriptions also include social aspects of self, such as references to social groups like being a member of school's music club, environment club, or any religious group.

Children's self-understanding also includes *social comparison*. Children are likely to think about what they can do or cannot do in comparison with others. For example, "I got more marks than Atul" or "I can run faster than others in the class". This developmental shift leads to establishing one's differences from others as an individual.

Once the children enter school their social world expands beyond their families. They also spend greater amount of time with their age mates or peers. Thus the increased time that children spend with their peers shapes their development.

Moral Development:

Another important aspect of the child's development is learning to differentiate between the rightness or wrongness of human acts. The way children come to distinguish right from wrong, to feel guilty, to put themselves in other people's position, and to help others when they are in trouble, are all components of moral development. According to Lawrence Kohlberg, Just as children pass through the various stages of cognitive development, they pass through the various stages of moral development, which are age related. Kohlberg interviewed children in which they were presented with stories in which the characters face moral dilemmas".

Children were asked what the characters in the dilemma should do, and why. Kohlberg identified three levels of moral reasoning based on his analyses of the responses given by children. According to him, children approach thinking about right and wrong differently at different ages. The levels of moral reasoning as suggested by Kohlberg are:

Pre-conventional Level: The young child, i.e. before 9 years of age, thinks in terms of external authority. According to her/him, actions are wrong because s/he is punished, and right because s/he is rewarded. In response to Heinz dilemma, a child might say that Heinz should not steal as he could get caught and might be sent to jail.

Conventional Level: As the child grows, i.e. by early adolescence, s/he develops moral reasoning through set of rules of others, such as parents or laws of the society. These rules are accepted by the children as their own. These are "internalised" in order to be virtuous and to win approval from others (not to avoid punishment). Children view rules as absolute guidelines, which should be followed. Moral thinking at this stage is relatively inflexible. Thus for a child at conventional level of morality, "Heinz should steal the drug because it's the duty of a husband to take care of his wife."

Post-conventional Level: As adolescents grow, they gradually develop a personal moral code that is beyond the rules and laws of their society. Morality is based on abstract and ethical principles of justice that are viewed as universal. An adolescent might argue, "Heinz must steal as nothing is more valuable than human life. If he doesn't steal, he is putting property above human life which is not right as respect to human life is essential."
According to Kohlberg, advancement in moral development is linked with cognitive development and the opportunity to face moral issues that are discusses with someone at a higher level of moral development.

Concept of Gender

Is chess a man's game or woman's game or both? Is baking a woman's activity or a man's activity? What about driving, debating, and experimenting in a physics laboratory? Or consider some of the products sold on T.V. for young men and young women? What do they tell about how girls and boys should be?
Psychologists have meticulously researched on whether sex differences exist. Men perform better than women on tests of sit-ups, short-run speeds and long jumps. Women show better,

fine eye-hand coordination than men do, and their joints and limbs are more flexible than men's. What do you think is the origin of these differences? Are these essential, or in other words, are women born with certain 'feminine' traits, and men with certain 'masculine' traits? Or are these differences the creation of the world we live in? The most powerful roles into which people are socialised are gender roles. They specify the range of behaviours which are considered appropriate for males or females. While sex refers to the biological dimension of being male or female, **gender** refers to the social dimension of being male or female.

There are several aspects of gender. Among these, important ones are **gender identity**, our sense of being a male or female, which most children begin to acquire by the time they are about 3 years old and can accurately label themselves as boys and girls. As they grow, preferences can be evidenced in their toys and play. A **gender role** is a set of expectations that prescribes how females and males should think, act and feel. Parents are important influences on gender socialisation especially in the early years of development. Boys are given cars toplay with whereas girls are given dolls. Through rewards and punishments, they induce in children gender appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. Parents often use rewards and punishments to teach their daughters to be feminine (for example, sensitive to others, less assertive, reserved) and boys to be masculine (for example, aggressive, independent, and strong).

Peer influence is also considered to be a major contributor to gender socialisation. Children observe their parents and peers and often imitate the observed behaviour, thus aligning their behaviour with that of the same sex parent or peer.

Parents restrict school-aged girls more than they restrict school-aged boys, and assign boys and girls different types of chores. In everyday interactions, parents give their daughters a kind of 'dependence training', and their sons a kind of 'independence training'. Media, including cartoons and commercials are known to perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Research on gender stereotypes in commercials shows that across cultures authority figures in commercials were males, and women were more likely to be shown in dependent and domestic roles, or women were more likely to sell body products, and men more likely to sell sports products.

Once children learn the role of male or female, they organise their world on the basis of gender also. Children's attention and behaviour are guided by an internal motivation to conform to gender based sociocultural standards and stereotypes. Children also actively socialise themselves according to the gender mores of their culture. Once they have internalised gender standards, they begin to expect gender appropriate behaviour from themselves. Young boys may

refuse to wear feminine clothes in a fancy dress competition. When playing house (ghar-ghar), girls may refuse to play the father's role. Once they have identified with their own gender, children may model after a powerful cultural figure of the same gender.

The "**gender typing**" occurs when individuals are ready to encode and organise information along the lines of what is considered appropriate or typical for males and females in a society.

You have seen that by the end of childhood a more gradual growth rate enables the child to develop skills of coordination and balance. Language develops and the child can reason logically. Socially the child has become more involved in social systems, such as family and peer group.

The next section traces changes in human development during adolescence and adulthood.

ADOLESCENCE

The term adolescence derives from the Latin word adolescere, meaning "to grow into maturity". It is the transitional period in a person's life between childhood and adulthood. *Adolescence is commonly defined as the stage of life that begins at the onset of **puberty**, when sexual maturity, or the ability to reproduce is attained.* You must note, puberty is a biologically defined period, whereas adolescence is a broader social construct. It has been regarded as a period of rapid change, both biologically and psychologically. Adolescence leads to changes in body, thinking, interests, relationships, parental and societal expectations. Though the physical changes that take place during this stage are universal, the social and psychological dimensions of the adolescent's experiences depend on the cultural context. For example, in cultures where the adolescent years are viewed as problematic or confusing, the adolescent will have very different experiences from someone who is in a culture, where adolescent years are viewed as beginning of adult behaviour and, therefore, undertaking responsible tasks. Although most societies have at least a brief period of adolescence, it is not universal across cultures.

Physical Development:

Puberty or sexual maturity marks the end of childhood and signifies the beginning of adolescence, which is characterised by dramatic physical changes in both, growth rate, and sexual characteristics. However, puberty is not a sudden event, but is part of a gradual process.

The hormones released during puberty result in the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics. The primary sex characteristics include those directly related to reproduction i.e. maturation of the sex organs. Secondary sex characteristics include features or

signs of achieving sexual maturity which includes nonreproductive physical features, such as breasts in girls and facial hair in boys).

Pubertal changes in boys are marked by acceleration in growth, facial hair, and changes in voice. In girls, rapid growth in height usually begins about two years before menarche, the onset of menstruation. The growth spurt generally begins at the age of 12 or 13 for boys and at the age of 10 or 11 for girls. It is normal to have variations in the pubertal sequence. For example, among two boys (or two girls) of same chronological age, one may complete pubertal sequence before the other has begun it. Both genetics and environment play a part in this. There has been decline in the age children reach puberty due to various environmental factors.

Physical development during adolescence is also accompanied by a number of psychological changes. Hormones that drive puberty can also affect mood and behavior. Around puberty adolescents show an increase in interest in members of the opposite sex and in sexual matters and a new awareness of sexual feelings develops. This increased attention to sexuality is caused by factors such as individual's awareness of the biological changes taking place and the emphasis placed on sexuality by peers, parents, and society. Even then, many adolescents lack adequate knowledge or have misconceptions about sex and sexuality. Sex is a topic parents find difficult to discuss with children, so adolescents tend to become secretive about sexual concerns which make exchange of information and communication difficult. The concern over adolescent sexuality has become intense in recent times because of the risk of AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases.

The development of a sexual identity defines the sexual orientation and guides sexual behaviour. As such it becomes an important developmental task for adolescents. How did you think of yourself at the beginning of puberty? Adolescents are preoccupied with what they are like and develop individual images of what they look like. Another important developmental task during adolescence is accepting one's physical self/maturity. Adolescents need to develop a realistic image of their physical appearance, which is acceptable to them. It is important to keep in mind that puberty also involves cognitive and social changes along with physical changes.