THE HUMAN LIFE CYCLE -

EMBRYO, FETUS, INFANT & CHILD

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THE LIFE CYCLE THEORY

FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS:

• Development occurs in successive, clearly defined stages and the sequence is invariant.

• Each stage is characterized by events or crises that must be resolved for development to proceed smoothly.

• Each phase contains a crises point which distinguishes it from other stages.
WHAT ARE THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PHASIC NATURE OF LIFE?

The following factors were proposed by Theodore Lidz, M.D.:

• Physical maturation of the organism.
• Cognitive development.
• Roles and expectations established by society.
• Internalization.
• Time.
STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

8 STAGES:

- Prenatal period – conception to birth
- Infancy – birth to 12m
- Toddler – 12m to 2.5 yrs
- Preschool – 2.5 – 6 yrs
- Middle years – 6 to 12 yrs
- Adolescence – 12 to 19 yrs
- Adulthood – 20 to 65 yrs
- Late adulthood -> 65 yrs
IN THE PRENATAL PERIOD:

- EMBRYO – Conception to 8 wks
- FETUS – 8 wks to birth
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM
OTHER FACTORS AFFECTING FETAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

• Maternal stress – ACTH, Adr, Nor-adr
• Genetic disorders – Down’s, NTDs, IEMs, X-linked
• Maternal drug use – alcohol
  - smoking
  - others
• Radiation
FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

- Low nasal bridge
- Epicanthal folds
- Minor ear abnormalities
- Short palpebral fissures
- Indistinct philtrum
- Flat midface and short nose
- Micrognathia
- Thin upper lip
THE INFANTS’ MENTAL PROCESSES

- Reflexes at birth
- Language and cognitive development
- Emotional and social development
- Temperamental differences
- Attachment
- Stranger anxiety
- Separation anxiety
TEMPERAMENT

• Each newborn has innate psychophysiological characteristics known as temperament.
• There are 9 dimensions to temperament:
  1. Activity level
  2. Distractibility
  3. Adaptability
  4. Attention span
  5. Intensity
  6. Threshold of responsiveness
  7. Quality of mood
  8. Rhythmicity
  9. Approach/withdrawal
Attachment is the relationship the baby develops with its caregivers.

- Attachment is of 3 types:
  1. Secure attachment
  2. Insecure/Avoidant attachment
  3. Insecure/Ambivalent attachment
EXPERIMENTS REGARDING ATTACHMENT THEORY

- **HARRY HARLOW** – studied the effects of social isolation on rhesus monkeys

  baby monkey with terry cloth surrogate
• JOHN BOWLBY
✓ Studied the effects of early separation of infants from their mothers.
✓ Also stated the importance of physical contact in comforting an infant.
• MARY AINSWORTH

✓ Found that interaction between mother and baby during attachment period influences baby’s current and future behaviour.
✓ Proposed the ‘secured base effect’.
STAGES OF SEPARATION

Proposed by Margaret Mahler

1. Normal autism – birth to 2m
2. Symbiosis – 2-5 m
3. Differentiation – 5-10 m
4. Practicing – 10-18 m
5. Rapprochment – 18-24 m
6. Object constancy – 2-5 yrs
PARENTAL FIT

• How well the mother or father relates to the infant

BASED ON THIS:
1. Difficult children
2. Easy children
3. Mixture of the two

✓ GOODNESS OF FIT - term used to characterise the harmonious interaction between mother and child.

✓ GOOD ENOUGH MOTHERING – mother should be able to resonate with the infant’s needs.
TODDLER PERIOD

• Language and cognitive development - 1 or 2 words, short sentences, listen to explanations.

• Emotional and social development - social referencing, like to explore, demonstration of love and protest, apprehension with strangers.

• Sexual development - gender identity, gender role.

• Sphincter control and sleep - toilet training, fear of dark

✓ PARENTING – firmness about boundaries but encouragement of emancipation
PRESCHOOL PERIOD

• Language and cognitive development – sentences, think egocentrically, are not yet capable of empathy.

• Emotional and social behavior
  - express complex emotions
  - ‘band-aid’ phase
  - sibling rivalry
  - play- parallel play → associative play → cooperation and sharing
  - drawing
  - imaginary companions
  - television
MIDDLE YEARS

- **Language and cognitive development** – language expresses complex ideas, logic over fantasy, organised thinking, concentration, complex motor skills, empathy
- **Chum period** – friends become very important
- **School refusal** – separation anxiety
- **Sex role development**
- **Sleep and dreams**
OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILD DEVELOPMENT

- Birth spacing
- Birth order
- Family stability and Divorce
- Steparents
- Adoption
- Day care centres
- Parenting styles – authoritarian
  - indulgent-permissive
  - indulgent-neglectful
  - authoritative-reciprocal
THANK YOU