

UG (SEMESTER IV)

HSC CC 408

**HUMAN DEVELOPMENT II: DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE
AND ADULTHOOD**

**HAVIGHURST'S DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS:
ADULTHOOD, MIDDLE AGE AND OLD AGE**

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OBJECTIVE OF THIS UNIT:

In this unit, we shall discuss the meaning, characteristics and sources of developmental tasks. At the same time, we shall also discuss the different developmental tasks during adulthood, middle age and old age.

INTRODUCTION



- Robert James Havighurst was a professor, physicist, educator, and aging expert.
- He proposed that all individuals progress through a series of developmental stages, each comprising a series of developmental tasks.
- Havighurst died of Alzheimer's disease at the age of ninety.

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS

- The term “developmental task” was introduced by Robert Havighurst in the 1950’s.
- A developmental task is one that arises predictably and consistently at or about a certain period in the life of the individual.
- He believed that learning is basic to life and that people continue to learn throughout life. According to him a developmental task is a task which an individual has to and wants to solve in a particular life-period.
- A developmental-task is the midway between an individual need and a social demand.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENTAL TASK

- Developmental tasks are based on the aspirations and need of the society.
- Every society and culture has certain norms.
- Every society expects its members to follow these norms. These norms are in terms of certain essential skills. Mastery over these skills leads to happiness and failure leads to unhappiness.
- Some tasks are same for everyone, regardless of where he lives as they are about human biology.

Example : learning to crawl and walk.

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- Some tasks are different in different societies. Examples: tasks of getting occupation in some culture at very young age.
- The tasks in different age levels depend upon the person and the society he lives in.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT



Havighurst identified the following six major stages in human life:

- Infancy & early childhood (Birth till 6)
- Middle childhood (6-12)
- Adolescence (13-18)
- Early Adulthood (19-30)
- Middle Age (30-60)
- Later maturity (60 and over)

SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENTAL TASK

Developmental tasks arise from three different sources. In his bio psychosocial model, the first important issue is biology, second is psychology and the last one is the sociology. He identifies three sources of developmental tasks:-


- First, some tasks are mainly based on physical maturation example, learning to walk, talk, and behave acceptably with the opposite sex during adolescence; adjusting to menopause during middle age.

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- Another source of developmental tasks involves personal values and aspirations. These personal factors result from the interaction between ontogenetic and environmental factors, and play an active role in the emergence of specific developmental tasks (example, choosing a certain occupational pathway).
- The third source of developmental tasks relates to socio-structural and cultural forces. Such influences are based on, for instance, laws (example, minimum age for marriage) and culturally shared expectations of development.


ADULTHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS (19-30 YEARS)

- **Selecting a mate:** *Until it is accomplished, the task of finding a marriage partner is at once the most interesting and the most disturbing of the tasks of early adulthood.*
- **Learning to live with a marriage partner:** *After the wedding there comes a period of learning how to fit two lives together. In the main this consists of learning to express and control one's feeling that is anger, joy, disgust, so that one can live intimately and happily with one's spouse.*
- **Starting a family:** *To have the first child successfully.*

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- **Rearing children:** *With the gaining of children the young couple take over a responsibility far greater than any responsibility they have ever had before. Now they are responsible for human life that is not their own. To meet this responsibility they must learn to meet the physical and emotional needs of young children.*

 - **Managing a home:** *Family life is built around a physical center, the home, and depends for its success greatly upon how well-managed this home is. Good home management is only partly a matter of keeping the house clean, the furniture and plumbing and lighting fixtures in repair, having meals well cooked, and the like.*

 - **Getting started in an occupation:** *This task takes an enormous amount of the young person's time and energy during young adulthood. Often he becomes so engrossed in this particular task that he neglects others. He may put off finding a spouse altogether too long for own happiness.*

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- **Taking on civic responsibility:** *To assume responsibility for the welfare of a group outside of the family such as a neighbourhood or community group or church or a political organisation.*
 - **Finding a congenial social group:** *Marriage often involves breaking of social ties for one or both young people, and the forming of new friendships. Either the man or the woman is apt to move away from former friends. The young man loses interest in some of his former bachelor activities, and his wife drops out of some of her purely feminine associations.*

MIDDLE AGE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS (30 – 60 YEARS)

- Achieving adult civic and social responsibility
- Establishing and maintaining an economic standard of living
- Assisting teen-age children to become responsible and happy adults
- Developing adult leisure, time activities
- Relating oneself to one's spouse as a person
- Accepting and adjusting to the physiological changes of middle age
- Adjusting to ageing parents.



Havighurst has divided these tasks into four major categories:

- **Tasks relating to physical changes:** *These include the acceptance of, and adjustment to physical changes that normally occur during middle age.*
- **Tasks relating to changed interests:** *The middle aged person often assumes civic and social responsibilities and develops an interest in adult oriented leisure time activities which were not taken care of during early adulthood.*
- **Tasks relating to vocational adjustments:** *These tasks revolve around establishing and maintaining a relatively stable standard of living.*
- **Tasks relating to family life:** *The major tasks include relating to oneself to one's spouse as a person, adjusting to aging parents, and assisting teen age children to become responsible and successful adults.*

OLD AGE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS (60 YEARS AND ABOVE)

Old age has often been characterised as a period of loss and decline. During this time the man or his wife very likely will experience several of the following-


- decreased income
- moving to a smaller house
- loss of spouse by death
- a crippling illness or accident
- a turn in the business cycle with a consequent change of the cost of living.



Havighurst forward the following developmental tasks for this view-

- **Adjusting to decreasing physical strength and health:** *Physical strength* begins to decline from age 30 to age 80 and above. Most weakening occurs in the back and leg muscles. Bones become increasingly brittle and tend to break easily. Muscle tissue decreases in size and strength. Exercise can help maintain power and sometimes even restored strength to the unused muscles.
- **Adjusting to retirement and reduced income:** *Retirement* requires adjustment to a new life-style characterised by decreased income, lesser activity level, and increased free time. Retirement causes extreme stress in males because in our society a significant part of men's identity depends on their jobs.

Health may even improve for some after retirement. Retired individuals may find more time for social and hobby-related activities especially if they have adequate economic resources and are healthy to engage in these activities.

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- **Adjusting to death of spouse:** Elderly persons are not afraid of death. This task arises more frequently for women than for men. After they have lived with a spouse for many decades, widowhood may force older people to adjust to loneliness, moving to a smaller place, and learning about business matters etc.

 - **Establishing an explicit affiliation with one's age group:** *Social convoy* is a cluster of family members and friends who provide safety and support. Some bonds become closer with age, others more distant, a few are gained, and some drift away. Elders do try to maintain social networks of family and friends to preserve security and life continuity.

 - **Meeting social and civic obligations:** *Other potential gains in old age* relate to the task of meeting social and civic obligations. For example, older people might accumulate knowledge about life and thus may contribute to the development of younger people and the society.

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- **Establishing satisfactory physical living arrangements:** *The principal values that older people look for in housing are:*
 - i. quiet
 - ii. privacy
 - iii. independence of action
 - iv. nearness to relatives and friends
 - v. residence among own cultural group
 - vi. cheapness
 - vii. closeness to transportation lines and communal institutions - libraries, shops, movies, churches, etc.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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