

# ADOLESCENT/YOUTH AND FAMILY DYNAMICS AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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The author examines the stage of adolescence/youth with reference to the fulfillment of the developmental tasks of the adolescents/youth, those of their parents, as well as the developmental tasks of the families in the Indian context. Developmental programmes are suggested for the adolescents/youth and for their parents, emphasising their interpersonal relationships. Technology of education is also suggested for this topic.

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## Key Concepts

*Adolescence:* Adolescence means 'to emerge', to achieve identity. Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood extending from the eleventh year to the twentieth year, thus encompassing the teenage years (Mahale, 1987).

*Youth:* Youth has been defined by the United Nations (1980) as being in the 15 to 24 age range.

This paper, therefore, is concerned with individuals between 11 to 24 years of age.

*Generation:* According to Ortega (1958), contemporaries who are of the same age and have some 'vital contact' with one another are said to belong to the same generation. Each generation is defined on the basis of its respective biological age.

*Generation Gap:* Each generation has its own perspective and outlook on life. Here we are concerned with two generations — one of the youth and the other of the parents of the youth. The generation gap is the product of a socialisation process coloured and vitiated by idiosyncratic parental preoccupations — preoccupations with their own past rather than being centred around the future of society. Thus a conflict of generations arises between the new and the established or old attitudes and values (Gangrade, 1975).

*Attitudes:* The attitude is defined 'as a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner' (Davis, 1968).

*Values:* The value is defined as a set of principles whereby conduct is directed and regulated as a guide for individuals and a social group (Davis, 1968).

*Autonomy:* Autonomy has been defined by Newman and Newman (1984) as 'the ability to behave independently and do things on one's own'.

*Ego identity*: Erikson (1958) has stressed that the specific unique task of adolescence is the establishment of 'ego identity'. According to him, during puberty and adolescence, all sameness and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned because of the rapidity of physical development and sexual maturity. There is tremendous anxiety about who one is and what will become of one. This drives the adolescent to close inspection about himself/herself in his/her attempt at a new integration of personality and a sense of identity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The family, like the human being, moves through more or less predictable stages in life. According to "the Duvall Eight-stage Family Life Cycle", a family enters the teenage stage when the oldest child becomes thirteen years old and leaves it when the first child gets married or leaves home for work as a young adult (Duvall, 1977).

According to Duvall (1977), the *family's* developmental tasks at this life stage are as follows.

- (1) Providing facilities for widely different needs within the family.
- (2) Working out ever changing financial problems.
- (3) Sharing the responsibilities of family living.
- (4) Keeping the parents' marriage relationship in focus.
- (5) Bridging the communication gap between generations.
- (6) Keeping in touch with relatives.
- (7) Maintaining the ethical and moral stance that is meaningful to them.

Within the family, the adolescent and his/her parents also have their own developmental tasks to perform at this stage. The developmental tasks of *adolescents* are as follows.

- (1) Accepting one's changing body including pubertal changes and learning to use it effectively.
- (2) Achieving a satisfying and socially accepted masculine or feminine role.
- (3) Locating oneself as a member of one's own generation by developing more mature relations with one's age-mates.
- (4) Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults.
- (5) Selecting and preparing for an occupation and economic independence.
- (6) Preparing for marriage and family life.
- (7) Developing the intellectual skills and social sensitivities necessary for civic competence.
- (8) Establishing one's identity as a socially responsible person (Duvall, 1977).

Developmental tasks of *parents* of adolescents are as follows:

- (1) Coping with developmental changes in themselves as they reach middle age.
- (2) Believing in their adolescent children, helping them to gain self confidence and to establish their personal identity and self concept.

- (3) Building a good relationship with their adolescent children.
- (4) Setting reasonable limits while gradually involving the adolescents/youth in family decisions (Adapted from Duvall, 1977).

The above perspective rests on the assumption that high interdependence exists between family members and that members must change the rules for interacting at this stage of family development. This stage of family life is likely to be a time of personal crisis for, both, young people and their middle-aged parents. During this stage, both are caught up in feelings of role confusion and frustration as both strive to cope with developmental changes in themselves and the tasks to be attained, which affects their interaction with each other. Generational differences, if not conflict, are inevitable and largely predictable. They can be positively related to the adolescent's attainment of a well-integrated adulthood. However, for this to happen, both adolescents and their parents need to be prepared to meet this life stage and its developmental tasks successfully.

In the traditional Indian joint family system, lines of authority were clearly laid down, with age, sex and generational status as important determinants of the authority a person can wield in his/her family. Expressive overt behaviour from any family member, specially the youth was restrained.

However, in recent times the pattern of family life has been changing and parents have been more liberal in the upbringing of their children. As a result, parents find that their children do not have the same attitudes and values with which they themselves were brought up. Consequently, they find themselves unprepared and at a loss as to the manner in which to grapple with the problems they face in relating to their volatile and expressive adolescent children. They often tend to retreat into the security of tradition and earlier patterns of parental authority, which only creates more tensions. In this crucial stage of transition, the adolescents and their parents need guidance and direction in preparing for and successfully completing the developmental tasks of this somewhat turbulent family life stage.

For developing the course material for this topic, Indian literature on family development and situation of adolescents have been looked at below within the above framework.

### **Developmental Tasks of Adolescents**

Boys and girls enter the adolescent years as children and leave them as adults. It is during these years that young people mature and develop the ability to live their lives as autonomous persons. The major thrust of this stage of life is physical maturation. Boys become men and girls attain womanhood during pubescence, with the development of primary and secondary sex characteristics.

#### *1. Acceptance of changed body and physique*

The first and probably the most difficult developmental task for adolescents is the

acceptance of their changed body and physique because these radical body changes have physical as well as psychological repercussions. The emergence of adult sexual potency is a source of disturbance and anxiety and may push the young person into clandestine experimentation leading to an increase in promiscuity, teenage pregnancies and venereal diseases. Rao (1982) has mentioned studies by Joseph (1973) and Park (1972) which show that the incidence of venereal disease in youth is on the increase and has begun to constitute a sizable health problem in India too.

### *2. Achieving a satisfying and socially accepted masculine or feminine role*

A young girl's response to pubertal changes depends upon her attitudes towards herself as a female, and her feelings about her identification figure, the mother. Parents are the primary sex role models for their growing children. Therefore their understanding of and respect for their own sex roles as well as each other's sex roles plays an important part in their children imbibing a correct concept of sex roles. For example, a wife who complains constantly about her housework and who considers herself a victim of her own sex and lacks the pep and push, presents a very Unhappy picture of womanhood to her teenage daughter. Similarly, a husband who hates his job or who feels that he has been pushed into an unsatisfactory marriage, who finds raising and supporting a family a burden and has no time for his children, is not likely to present a very attractive picture of the male role for his adolescent son. Thus parents' own attitude towards their sex and their child rearing patterns will form the foundation of sex orientation in the life of their child. Jaya Nagaraja, a practising psychiatrist (1983), has cited many case studies where adolescent have had difficulty in sex role identification, and have been driven to immature sexual involvement because of parental attitude and negative portrayal of sex roles by the parents.

### *3. Locating oneself as a member of one's own generation by developing more mature relations with one's age-mates*

As adolescence is a time for social expansion and development, adolescents tend to centre a great deal of their lives about the activities, interests and attitudes of their peers and the peer group assumes greater importance. The peer culture sets patterns for staking their claim to adult pleasures of sensuousness. They learn to drink alcohol, smoke, gamble, etc. Nearly all adolescents desire acceptance in the eyes of their age-mates and will go to extreme lengths to gain and maintain such acceptance. Hence, selection of friends and extend of interaction with them can be a potential area of family conflict. According to a study by Gangrade (1975), placing greater reliance on peer group was more pronounced in adolescents whose parents were illiterate, conservative or authoritarian. Though a majority of both parents and adolescents in this study were of the opinion that adolescents should have the final say in selection of friends, comparatively, more parents felt that this should be mutually decided upon or that parents should have the final say. They felt that their children were not mature enough to discriminate between good and bad people and it was the duty of parents to safeguard them from bad company.

As for mixing with the opposite sex, majority of the adolescents in this study reported that they avoided open clashes with their parents on this issue, but did not care for their parents' opinion when they were out of the house. They reported that the college environment provided them enough opportunities to mix with friends and build close relationships. This behaviour pattern was also observed by Garg and Parikh (1976). Their indepth case studies of youth have highlighted the strong ambivalences felt towards peers — the need to differentiate and yet to merge. Their encounters with peers aroused a host of anxieties which generated a sense of loneliness, isolation and erosion of self or a loss of sense of significance which had to be coped with before reintegration of self could take place.

#### *4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.*

Sociologists and psychologists have viewed adolescence as a key developmental period for an increase in the exercise of autonomy. Pardeck and Pardeck (1988) are of the view that parenting style, family interaction and transitions related to the family life cycle influence the development of autonomy in adolescence. The parenting style that appears to best promote autonomy in adolescents is one that includes a love oriented approach by parents, integrated with an authoritarian stance that allows adolescent input, but also sets limits. Healthy conflict over everyday issues important to both adolescents and their parents is normal part of the developmental process leading to adolescent independence. Intense prolonged conflict however is detrimental to the development of autonomy. A mid-life crisis in parents is also predictable at this stage of the family life cycle. However, if parents are not prepared for the mid-life crisis they experience concurrently with their child's adolescence, they may negatively affect their own emotional well-being and that of their children.

Poole, Sunberg, and Tyler, (1982) did a comparative study of adolescents' perceptions of family decision making and autonomy in India, Australia and the United States. Their findings show that Indian adolescents reported lesser opportunity for acting autonomously. The father had significantly more say in decision making with both boys and girls in India. Their findings point to the fact that Indian families do not place such a high value on independence and self-reliance, and generally have not trained children for autonomy, and responsibility other than obeying their elders and doing their family duty. There is also some evidence that in the Indian culture, some power and authority are vested in other family members and in other adults.

Garg and Parikh's (1976) analysis of the situation of youth was that experimentally the youth in India felt that the demand for obedience emotionally blinded the parents to the youth's own growing sense of responsibility, adequacy and growing understanding of situations. For all practical purposes, in the eyes of the parents they remained children and they chafed under this attitude. The persistence of the demands for obedience in the same manner as in early childhood neutralised many positive contributions of the parents towards the child's growth because it effectively denied the very growth the child himself or herself was experiencing.

One of the consequences, according to Garg and Parikh (1976) was to reinforce dependency and with it guilt about independence and self-directed action. It kept alive the doubts about the self's ability to handle situations without the guidance and/or contribution of the elders and parents. A need to always get his/her own initiative authenticated by the authority became a part of the growing self. Thus, on the whole, the youth found themselves in a conflict. The sense of conflict becomes polarized between the themes of 'living for oneself and 'living for others'.

##### *5. Selecting and preparing for an occupation and economic independence.*

It is during this period that the young person tries to think and aspire towards his/her future career. They need to evaluate the educational accomplishment in relation to the vocations aspired to by them. They have to realise what their responsibilities will be when they grow into adulthood. In the fulfillment of this development task the family plays an important role, as all the youth's aspirations, values and goals are indirectly influenced by the family situation in which they were moulded, during the whole childhood period.

In a study by Gangrade (1975), there were some differences in the two generations with respect to occupational aspirations. The youth were more inclined towards occupations which offered adventure, challenges and better monetary prospects while parents were more concerned with the security offered by any occupation. Parents rejected altogether some occupations like business, employment in industry, government administrative jobs and armed forces for women, while the female adolescents showed an inclination to step into all types of occupations suited to their qualifications.

According to Mahale (1987), the family's socio-economic status may either open or shut many opportunities for the young people and thus directly influence their educational and vocational plans.

According to Sathe (1987) the rural adolescent girl in India is usually illiterate or a school dropout. She is invariably married around the time of puberty and passes on to motherhood and so has no scope to think of economic independence. Majority of the boys in the villages are semi-literate. They hardly have a choice of vocation as they are expected to work with their elders as soon as they are able. As far as the adolescents and youth in urban areas are concerned, though girls may take higher education, it is basically seen by the girls themselves and their parents as a means to get a husband with a better standard of living. Very few girls are career oriented. Urban male adolescent youth usually do not take higher education but try to take up some employment and later get married.

In his study of urban schooling adolescents, Mahale (1987) found that the young people at this stage thought of only a few occupations without much regard to either the demands of the occupation or their own ability to study for it, or their parents' economic capacity to educate them for it. Their choices were subjective and

emotional and based on glamorous notions. He concluded that they needed advice and information in this matter.

The position seems to change as the adolescents grow into young adults. This is the conclusion reached by Garg and Parikh (1976), who have stated in their analysis of the situation of youth who were in the process of completing their higher education. According to them the youth felt confident of their abilities, but they were extremely doubtful of the quality and nature of the environment and work setting.

One element of anxiety pointed out by Garg and Parikh had to do with independence from parents. Many a parent demanded that their son work closer to home and live at home. The parents' argument was that he would save on rent and food. This economic plea was resented by some youth. Many youth felt the responsibility and burden of contributing to a sister's marriage, a brother's education, and meeting other financial liabilities of the family. Quite a few felt the responsibility towards the lonely, occasionally widowed and sacrificing mother, strongly. The anguish in the decision making lay in the deep entrenched matrix of obligation to parents.

#### *6. Preparing for marriage and family life*

Nearly all marriages in India are arranged marriages, specially in the villages. Selection of the spouse is done by elders in the family and within the same caste or sub-caste. Love and self-choice marriages are exceptions. According to Sathe (1987), most girls in rural areas are married around the time of puberty. Again there is great social and family pressure on the young couple to prove their fertility within a year of marriage. Fertility control is not left to the choice of the couple since the rearing of children is considered a family responsibility.

According to Mahale's study (1987) of schooling adolescents and their families, the general tendency among parents of all educational levels is that their attitude towards their daughter's marriage is more conservative than towards their son's marriage. Inter-religious and international marriages are not approved. Inter-caste marriages are more tolerated for sons than for daughters. Marriage was a topic least discussed in the family.

Gangrade's study (1975) gives similar findings on this aspect. According to this study, marriage was one of the crucial areas where the two generations differed to a great extent. The urban educated youth had distinct opinions about marriage. Though many stated that they preferred arranged marriages, most of them felt that they should have a final say in the choice of their life partner. Most of their parents were also of the same opinion. But all the youth who preferred love marriages found that their parents had the opposite view. Only higher income group students who preferred love marriages found their parents in agreement with them. Some students were uncertain of their marriage plans because they felt dependent on their parents' reactions. Some did not want to go against their parents as they did not want to hurt them, some because they were too scared of their parents to go against

their wishes. However, a good number of boys and girls wanted the freedom to choose their life partners.

### *7. Establishing one's identity as a socially responsible person*

A specific unique task of adolescence is the establishment of 'ego identity'. The family, specially the parents play a major role in shaping this process. This is a period of strain in most families. As adolescents strive to establish their identity, and to emancipate themselves from their parents, the parents tend to feel that their children undervalue them — and the adolescents believe that adults generally depreciate teenagers. However, when parents accept themselves as they are, with all their weaknesses and strengths, and when they accept their several roles at this stage of development without undue conflict or sensitivity, they set a pattern for a similar sort of self-acceptance in their children. A young person is more likely to accept himself or herself, when there is a climate of acceptance within the family, an acceptance based on respect for each member as a person.

Garg and Parikh (1976) have very graphically brought out through their case studies of urban Indian youth how in the midst of acute identity diffusion, certain strands of the emergence of a new identity and a reintegration of self also appeared and in time gained momentum.

### **Developmental Tasks of Parents of Adolescents**

The middle-aged parents of adolescents too have to cope with developmental changes in themselves and their adolescent children. Every family requires a certain conduct of its members, it sets limits to their freedom and enforces the conduct by giving punishment or by extending rewards. It is accepted that discipline is a process of training and learning that fosters growth and development. However, more important than the method of disciplining is the attitude of the disciplinarian, that is the parenting style in terms of the degree and kind of control that parents exert over their adolescent children.

Garg and Parikh (1976) observed that parents in India made it clear to their children that unquestioned and unstinted obedience was expected from them, though they generally did not use actual words. Complying with the belief that 'parents know better' was the basis of all decision making such as selection of colleges, careers, jobs and marriage. Not only this, but any initiative by the son or daughter was a challenge and was objected to. Parents become anxious about losing control over their children, and reacted by creating doubt in the young person's mind about his or her ability to become a self-caring responsible and independent individual.

Mahale's study (1987) showed that parents exercised greater control over their daughters than their sons, resulting in some degree of frustration among daughters, specially when they sensed injustice and discrimination.

The findings of a study by Dhammi, Sathyavathi and Murthy (1978) showed that youth perceived their fathers as dominating and domineering, mothers were perceived as more loving than fathers. Youth perceived themselves as more loving than their fathers.

Gangrade's study (1975) showed that parental authoritarian attitude was the most controversial aspect between the two generations. Youth particularly resented parental interference in their personal matters like mode of dress, selection of and free mixing with friends, leisure time activities, extent of relationship with the opposite sex and marriage. In this study too, the father-child relationship was typically one of authority, but with the mother, it was close intimate and loving. The students stated that they wanted a father who would guide them, not impose his will on them. The study further revealed that though the young people resented parental authority, they accepted it as inevitable and submitted to it because of their social and economic dependence on their parents. More youth resorted to defying parental authority secretly. Comparatively, a larger proportion of girls than boys were submissive. In this study, because a majority of the youth did not openly clash with their parents the youth still had affectionate relations with their families, though not companionable, and a majority of them expressed their desire to live with their parents after marriage. Interestingly, more boys than girls wanted to live in joint families after marriage.

Thus, the parenting style that appears to best promote positive development in adolescents is one which includes a love oriented approach by parents, integrated with an authoritarian stance that allows adolescent input, but also sets limits. This requires that fathers take more interest in their growing children and both parents are democratic, affectionate and nurturant. The critical question for parents is deciding when to expand the options for the adolescent in the decision making process; the adolescent needs these expanded options to make mature and independent decisions in his or her own life.

### **Family's Developmental Tasks**

It would appear to be self-evident from all that has been said so far that parents and the family system need to interact differently with the adolescent versus the younger child. The nature of this interaction and its quality will play a critical role in the adolescent's transition into a well-adjusted social personality.

#### *1. Providing facilities for widely different needs within the family and working out financial problems*

Gangrade's study (1975) revealed that there was absolutely no difference between the two generations in the preferential ranking of essential and non-essential items of family consumption. According to Gangrade, this complete agreement between the two generations on the family consumption pattern may be due to the fact that the youth were indifferent and non-interfering in this matter and therefore reported the actual situation in the family.

Garg and Parikh (1976) have suggested that family structure affected the youth's development. According to them, youth who as children were separated from their parents for the sake of education and grew up with grandparents or uncles learned to infer that sources of affection, dependency and closeness are not always reliable in moments of stress and need. This bred feelings of rejection. They felt like dependents in exile and fantasised about reunion and restoration with the family, and displayed ambivalence in interpersonal relationships.

Other physical situations which have not been studied but which would affect the accomplishment of this family developmental task are extreme poverty and preoccupation with acquiring basic means of subsistence; residential mobility; and family structures such as single parent families, female headed families, and so on.

### *2. Sharing the responsibility of family living*

The parents can generally decide about the household responsibilities of various family members, and this generates some degree of healthy conflict between parents and adolescents. Some of the major findings of a study by Biswas (1988), were that adolescents who came from a democratic family structure, characterised by cooperation between mother and father in doing and taking decisions, household duties, and social and economic activities, appeared to be more adjustable in reacting to frustrating situations. On the other hand, adolescents from either dominant or autocratic family structures where parents did not take decisions jointly in cooperation with each other seemed to be more hostile in expressing frustration and also showed fewer signs of conformity and patience.

In most families, some degree of conflict occurs over normal everyday issues such as the youth helping in household chores. In Gangrade's study (1975), both generations unanimously favoured young people helping their parents in domestic work. As for husbands helping their wives in domestic work, there was surprisingly a larger number of fathers than youth who favoured this.

Mahale's study (1987) has pointed out that in his sample, large sized families demanded more help from their children in housework than small sized families. In large sized families, the girls were required not only to help in cooking, washing and cleaning, but also in looking after younger siblings. Thus different sized families differed in the way domestic responsibilities were distributed among children. Girls resented discrimination in allocation of work.

Participation in household duties need not always lead to conflict if parents are able to help adolescents perceive housework not as mere duty towards the family but as education in developing good habits and avoid making sex discrimination in allotment of tasks.

### *3. Keeping the marriage relationship in focus*

By the time a couple has been married for 15 years or more, they may have become

so preoccupied with their parental responsibilities that their marriage no longer holds a central place in their lives. When the children were young, a major part of the parents' time was utilised in concerns related to child rearing. The working parents have been more absorbed in his/her work roles and associations. So putting the marriage back in focus may be an important family developmental task at this stage. Parents need to perceive each other as partners and companions as they guide their children and plan their future together. They need to look after their personal grooming and health, and need to encourage each other's development as a person and support each other's interest.

A study by Rao, Channabasavanna and Parthasarthy (1982) points out that marital disharmony among parents makes the adolescent anxious and disturbed and affects the healthy development of his personality.

#### 4. *Bridging the communication gap between generations*

Adolescents turn increasingly to their peers to share intimate confidences during this period. Parents need to understand that young people must identify with their own generation if they are to emerge as full-fledged young adults. They should therefore refrain from prying, otherwise this will alienate them even further from their teenagers. However, we find that communication weakens between the generations, in many families. In Gangrade's study (1975), most students reported that their communication with their parents was confined to family matters, and they did not discuss their personal matters with them because they were of the view that their parents were orthodox and conservative, and would not only be unable to see their point of view, but also show their disapproval in an authoritarian manner. The youth felt it was better not to disclose their personal matters to their parents and avoid tension and unpleasantness in the family. According to Gangrade, lack of communication was also reflected in the fact that most of the parents of these adolescents criticised the modern youth in general but were under the impression that their sons and daughters were very obedient and conforming to traditional values.

Garg and Parikh (1976: 242) in their analysis of the case studies of youth concluded that,

Youth after youth failed in his/her efforts to redefine the matrix of his or her relationship with parents. Infact, the youth started to experience the control and authoritarianism of the parents with a new force. As the anxiety of parents losing control of the youth mounted, their behaviour to evoke dependence through guilt became more manifest. Very often the youth realised that the parents needed reassurance but they did not know how to provide it. The more the youth tried to establish their identity as self-caring (sic) responsible and considerate individuals, the greater were the parents' reaction of doubt. Parents did not know how to give up their old role. Each effort of the youth made them feel helpless. So they reacted and the youth fretted and fumed. His

good intention(s) see-sawed. He re-experienced the fact that he was somebody for the outside, but a nobody for the home.

From these studies it is clear that parents need the love, confidence and respect of their teenage children. They need it for the sense of success and accomplishment it gives them, for they have invested a great deal of themselves in their children. But parents need to understand that they will gain and maintain that love and respect only when they dependably meet the developmental needs of their children. During adolescence, these needs are just as vital as at any other period of the child's development. Therefore parents need to restrain from prying and be available for companionable chats. Parents need to show ongoing acceptance and affection for their adolescents and willingness to listen if they are to improve their communication with their adolescent children.

##### *5. Keeping in touch with relatives*

The teenage stage in the family life cycle is a testing time for immediate relatives. If they pass the teenagers' vigorous standards of acceptability, they can contribute much and gain much from association with young relatives. If they remain rigidly rooted in old fashioned ways and ideas, young people will avoid them and will associate with them only under duress.

In Gangrade's study (1975), adolescents whose parents insisted on them visiting relatives or friends and attending social functions, stated that they found the activity boring and disliked it. Relatives are very much part of the Indian scene. An understanding grandparent can bridge the gap between the generations. So can sympathetic aunts and uncles. Ultimately adolescents too want to be worthy of the family, and want to measure up to their expectations of them.

##### *6. Maintaining the ethical and moral stance that is meaningful to them*

Adolescence is a period where idealism is natural and material goals are despised. So if we emphasise socially responsible behaviour in adolescents, we shall be more likely to have a larger proportion of good citizens in the future. During their search, adolescents need reliable points of reference. These are the years when parents must defend and adhere firmly to sound principles and standards of conduct. Safeguarding adolescents from life's disasters is as important as giving them room to grow.

Families with adolescent members face real problems at this stage. They may find themselves grappling with delinquent tendencies, irresponsible conduct, truancy, questionable companions, confusion about love, sex and marriage and blocked pathways to adulthood as adolescents go through the teen years.

Moral development may undergo a major shift during this stage as the social order is examined, justified, and finally preserved and supported. Parents and teenagers

can learn from one another as they examine the ideas and values and evaluate the policies and standards that they see in behaviour all around them.

### **Developmental Programmes**

Developmental programmes need to be planned independently for the adolescents and their parents.

Programmes for adolescents would have two main goals:

- to help adolescents/youth develop positive social behaviours, such as self discipline, responsibility, good judgment, and the ability to get along with others.
- to help young people to develop a strong commitment to their families, schools, positive peers, and communities, including a commitment to lead healthy lives (adapted from Lions-Quest Program; 1988).

To attain these goals, a series of experiential learning sessions need to be designed on the following themes:

- Changes and challenges during the teen years.
- Building self confidence through better communication.
- Learning about emotions and developing self discipline.
- Friends: improving peer relationships.
- Strengthening family relationships.
- Developing critical thinking skills for decision making.
- Setting goals for healthy living.

Developmental Programmes for parents are essentially aimed at enabling parents to support their adolescent/ youth's effort. Programmes for parents of adolescents have the following goals.

- to help parents to get in touch with their own teenage years so that they can better understand and accept their adolescent children.
- to aid their understanding of the different changes taking place in their adolescent children so that they are better prepared for them.
- to provide ways in which they can help their adolescents gain self confidence and establish their personal identity.
- to provide ways of listening and responding to young people that will increase communication within the family.
- to help parents establish consistent rules and limits that will help young people increase their self discipline and sense of responsibility.
- to help parents explore more effective ways of solving family conflicts fairly and peacefully.
- to help fulfill their developmental tasks during this family life stage.

To attain these goals, group sessions with parents could have the following themes:

- Typical adolescent behaviour and our reactions.
- A time of changes: adolescent development and its influence on behaviour.
- Communicating with adolescents: listening and responding.
- Living with adolescents: ways of getting along.
- Helping adolescents in development of independence and personal identity.
- In touch with each other: keeping the marriage relationship in focus.

### **Methods of Teaching and Learning**

A minimum of three hours would be needed for this topic. In the first hour, the teacher could give the students a broad idea of the developmental tasks of the adolescents, their parents and the family as a unit, highlighting areas of possible conflict.

The next two hours could be utilised for presentation of developmental programmes for adolescents and adolescents' parents respectively. The students who have volunteered to make these presentations, could first give an outline of the total programme. After this, one complete session could be role played with the students playing the role of an adolescent group or a parent group depending on the programme being presented. A discussion and an oral evaluation of the programme, its content and skills of the facilitator could be done at the end of each role play. The entire programme could be written out by the students and submitted. Grading could be on the oral presentation and written assignment.

A variety of teaching materials could be used during the lecture by the teacher as well as for the role play by the students such as case records, case studies, poems, photographs, and so on.

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