

Behavioral Development: Building Blocks of Individual's Character and Society

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"Good Behavior wins even an enemy"- Chanakya

Have you ever thought why people act or behave the way they do?? We all look same, have same physical features, yet our view of looking at the world is so different?? Well, it is what we called behavioral development. Growing up is not only a process of change in our physical traits but it is also change in our mental abilities & behaviors. According to American Psychological Association, Behavioral Development applies a behavior analytic method to the field of human development and behavior change across the lifespan, by examining both the acquisition of basic skills and the development of more complex behaviors. It is a journey of development & maturity of an individual within various chapters of life. This journey is shaped by different forces prevailing in human life ranging from genetics, environment, culture, religion, access to technology & media and value systems. It is vital to understand this important area of human life as it shed light on how the individuals grow, familiarize, change & steer the realities & complexities of life which eventually forms the world as we it today.

The basis of behavioral development begins with the early stages of life where genetics play the key role developing the traits of individual's persona & skillset. The first stage is infancy where motor skills, social skills & understanding of basic norms of an individual starts to develop & skills like walking & speaking are achieved. According to early childhood development theories, major development of brain takes place in these first 5 years of human life. This stage demands love & caregiving so that sense of security & a solid base for social & emotional development is established. Next stage is of Middle age where children expands their social circle beyond family and sense of relations begin to inculcate. Here school plays a vital role in behavioral development. Third stage is Adolescence where an individual form emotional intelligence, sense of cooperation, confidence, trust, sense of identity & undergo certain physical changes. This stage demands guidance with trust is required by elders so that they can find an inspiration to look upon in life. In this stage the search of identity becomes the focal point for an individual with

questions of values, morals, self-identity & goals. Finally, an individual reaches adulthood where he/she experiences certain changes in life related to career choices, partnership, parenthood & adaptation to various demands & challenges of life overcoming of which brings confidence & self-esteem.

Islamic teachings highlight a holistic approach to behavioral development, encompassing the spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of an individual's life. As Holy Quran says, "O ye who believe, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow – and fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do." (59:18), encourages individuals to be aware of their actions, nurturing mindfulness and ethical behavior in all aspects of life. On the other place, Holy Quran Says, "O ye who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient." (Quran 2:153), giving us an important concept of patience & remain connected with the roots of faith is the key to success in material & spiritual life. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion, and empathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with restlessness and fever." Concept of Zakat also stresses the importance of compassion & service to humanity which gives birth to society laid on the foundations of peace, justice & tolerance.

There are various factors which influences behavioral development like role of our genetics, role of religion/moral values in our lives, environment in which we live, culture & exposure to different experiences contributing to our behavioral development. The role of technology in behavioral development cannot be ignored. The digital age has introduced new ways of learning, socializing, and engaging with the world, inducing behavior across all stages of life. Young children are increasingly exposed to digital devices, impacting cognitive development and changing the way they perceive and interact with the world. Screen time has become a significant aspect in shaping attention spans, problem-solving abilities,

and social skills. People especially teenagers navigate the challenges of self-identity heavily influenced by social media along with the pressure to get up to online norms whereas Adults adapt to the demands of a technologically driven society, balancing the benefits of connectivity with the potential drawbacks of information overload and digital stress. Economic & social disparities, trust in institutions and ecosystem of justice can also play major role in impacting behavioral patterns of different segments of a society.

Positive behavioral development has amazing impacts on individuals & society as a whole as it shapes how individuals will contribute in a society. Behavioral development influences work habits, problem-solving skills, and creativity. Individuals who have developed strong intellectual and interpersonal skills contribute to a more productive and innovative society. It also promotes empathy and effective communication by recognizing that individuals may be at different stages of development, requiring different approaches. A workforce with diverse talents and adaptive behaviors is better equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving world. Finally, recognizing that behavioral development is a lifelong process encourages a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

It's important to recollect that everyone's journey of behavioral development is exceptional. We all learn and grow at our own pace and that's okay! The important thing is to keep learning, adapting, and becoming the best version of ourselves while enjoying the journey. At a larger picture, understanding behavioral development is helpful in promoting the well-being of individuals and society at large. It guides interventions, informs education and caregiving practices, fosters healthy relationships, and contributes to the creation of supportive societies for ideal growth and development.

"Behavior is sometimes greater than knowledge, because in life there are many situations where knowledge fails, but behavior can handle everything"