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Multidisciplinary Subject

In recent scenario in India the Home Science course is a study about science involving food and nutrition, human development, health, environment and some other departments in the science field. Home Science is defined as the study required to develop home or family life within a changing society by taking the help of scientific knowledge and methods and its primary aim is to promote better-living. The major branches of this course are the following:

- ***Food and nutrition***
- ***Human development***
- ***Extension education***
- ***Clothing and textile***
- ***Resource management***

Human development is relatively a new field of scientific inquiry. If we trace the development of this subject, we find that the formal study of human development began with efforts to understand children's development since 18th century. Such child studies gradually expanded to include the whole life span. In the late 19th and early 20th century psychologists familiar with the evolutionary theory of Darwin began seeking an evolutionary description of psychological development. Most prominent was G. Stanley Hall. He attempted to correlate ages of childhood with previous ages of humanity. He published a book 'Adolescence' in 1904 and he also became interested in aging and published 'Senescence' in 1922.

Other notable psychologists who focused on developmental aspects were John Broadus Watson (1878-1958), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Erik Erikson (1902-1994). Watson conducted researches on animal behaviour, child rearing ("Little Albert" experiment) and assumed that all behaviour is learned from, and shaped by the environment. Freud, who is the pioneer of the concept of psychoanalysis believed that psychoanalytical stages were developmental. Erikson was interested in how social interaction and relationships played a role in the development and maintained that personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the

person experiences a psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome on personality development.

From the above discussion it is evident that human development can be considered as a branch of psychology with the goal of understanding people - how they develop, grow, and change throughout their lives. In a broader sense, this discipline helps individuals better understand themselves and their relationships. The knowledge of this discipline can be used in various professional settings and career paths like work in healthcare facilities, clinics, assisted living facilities, hospitals, mental health clinics, or homeless shelters. Thus from *psychological perspective*, the focus of application is more on assessing, evaluating, and treating people.

Human development, as a branch of Home Science cannot deny the *sociological perspective*. In order to promote better living, which is the primary goal of Home Science, the subject Human development should focus on the social, political and economic factors influencing human development. In fact the concept of ‘Human development’ grew out of global discussions on the links between economic growth and development during the second half of the 20th century. By the early 1960s there were increasingly loud calls to “dethrone” GDP: economic growth had emerged as both a leading objective, and indicator, of national progress in many countries, even though GDP was never intended to be used as a measure of wellbeing. In the 1970s and 80s development debate considered using alternative focuses to go beyond GDP, including putting greater emphasis on employment, followed by redistribution with growth, and then whether people had their basic needs met.

In 1990 the first Human Development Report introduced a new approach for advancing human wellbeing. Human development – or the human development approach - is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices. Human development is about the real freedom ordinary people have to decide who to be, what to do, and how to live.

Thus from *sociological perspective* human development can be defined as the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being. Human development focuses on improving the lives people lead rather than assuming that economic growth will lead, automatically, to greater wellbeing for all. Income growth is seen as a means to development, rather than an end in itself. Human development is about giving people more freedom to live lives they value. In effect this means developing people’s abilities and giving them a chance to use them. For example, educating a girl would build her skills, but it is of little use if she is denied access to jobs, or does not have the right skills for the local labour market.

Human development is, fundamentally, about more choice. It is about providing people with opportunities, not insisting that they make use of them. No one can guarantee human happiness,

and the choices people make are their own concern. So the process of development – human development - should at least create an environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop to their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives that they value.

As the international community moves toward implementing and monitoring the 2030 agenda, the human development approach remains useful to articulating the objectives of development and improving people’s well-being by ensuring an equitable, sustainable and stable planet.

Given the *psychological* and *sociological* perspectives, it can be said that the current approach favours a merger of various disciplines. Human Development, as a branch of Home Science, is a multidisciplinary course made up of contributions from researchers in the areas of health care, anthropology, nutrition, child development, biology, gerontology, psychology, and sociology, among others. Consequently, the findings can be part of a collaborative effort to understand human lives. Many academic disciplines contribute to the study of development and now it is taught under psychology, sociology, human development, or family studies.

The main goals of this discipline are to *describe and explain changes*. This course describes observations during development, then examines how theories provide explanations for why these changes occur. The ultimate goals are *prediction and modification of human behaviours for well-being and better living*.

Key Issues in Human Development

There are many different theoretical approaches regarding human development.

Human development focuses on how people change, and the approaches address the nature of change in different ways:

- Is the change smooth or uneven (continuous versus discontinuous)?
- Is this pattern of change the same for everyone, or are there different patterns of change (one course of development versus many courses)?
- How do genetics and environment interact to influence development (nature versus nurture)?

In order to address these issues, the different domains (physical, cognitive, psychosocial) of human development are studied in details.

Why do we study Human Development?

- To *gain a better understanding* of one’s own life experiences. This can help people personally reach an understanding of what childhood events shaped their adulthood.
- To *gain knowledge* of how social context impacts development. This knowledge can be invaluable for professionals like teachers as they gain a deeper understanding of their students.

- To **help others understand and contextualize** the ups and downs of life. This helps therapists and psychologists better aid their clients in self-discovery.
- To **understand how societal change can support growth and development**. This understanding helps decision-makers in schools change the educational culture for the better.
- To **support the physical and mental health of individuals** throughout their life span. Professionals like doctors, nurses, and therapists must understand human growth and development to better support their clients.

Career Opportunities

- A **human development degree** applies to a wide spectrum of career paths like healthcare, education, childhood psychology, organizational psychology, public policy, business, and so on.
- These specializations can guide one to specific **careers like working in child care, social work, community activism, or human resources**.
- The knowledge of human development provides a **strong foundation** for students seeking graduate or professional degrees in areas such as health sciences, psychology, counseling and prevention science, family studies, gerontology.

So the Human development students are ready for careers in public and private human service agencies in the following areas:

- Early Childhood Education
- Special Education - Special Educational needs coordinator
- Organizational Management
- Social Work - Community Development worker; Social worker; Community advisor
- Child and family advocacy - Domestic violence services
- Health services - Mental health agencies
- Services for adolescents and older adults
- Special needs services

Finally, we can say that the subject Human development is a wide-reaching and ever-changing discipline and its knowledge can be invaluable to people **personally** as they continue to learn and grow throughout their lives and **professionally** as they learn to apply what they have learned to their careers.
