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## UNIT 12 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT<sup>12</sup>

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### Structure

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### Learning Objectives

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the impact of social structures on development
- identify the ways in which caste, class, gender, ethnicity, poverty, inequality and deprivation in the Indian context affect development, and
- Analyze the role of cultural factors as influencing the process of development.

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## 12.0 INTRODUCTION

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The process of development is a complex interplay of variegated influences that lead to diverse implications. Amidst the many factors that influence development, a major role is played by the social structures and the socialization processes within which people are embedded. Keeping in mind

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the inherent diversity of the human condition and the numerous social systems and processes that affect development, it is important not to generalize findings derived from specific cultural settings onto others. This Unit, thus, explores the various ways in which social structures and culture impacts a bearing on development-related processes.

## 12.1 Social Structure and Development in the Indian Context

Any given society presents a mosaic of many different contexts and influences that lead to a variety of psychosocial outcomes. Over the years, many psychologists have pointed towards the need for contextualizing the discipline of psychology, and explore the specific features of different cultures which account for cross-cultural differences to emerge among a variety of psychosocial variables. Within the field of developmental psychology, these cultural differences continue to provide relevant explanations about human development. Looking at the trends in research on human development in India, the blatant transplant of Western theories, linguistic practices, epistemological and ontological assumptions, and methods of research are easily visible. Many Indian researchers have thus, emphasized the need for decolonizing the discipline of psychology and offering culturally-relevant knowledge systems (Saraswathi, 1999; Sinha, 1997).

The Indian society is a complex society, one which includes significant diversity across a wide-range of dimensions. Some of such dimensions include gender, caste, social class, religion, ethnicity, linguistic diversity, family types, and regional variations in cultural practices. Needless to say, in such a culturally complex environment, development does not follow a single, uniform trajectory. Instead, the processes responsible for human development become a lot more complex, and mediated by the implications of the aforementioned social structures. Thus, even in the same cultural context, the developmental trajectories of a specific group of people may pose a contrasting picture when compared to a different group, mainly due to the kind of privilege their group may enjoy within the society. To understand such implications better, the following sections will discuss the role of such social structures in any society, while also highlighting their complexities and implications in the Indian context. Before moving forward, it is important to understand that such social structures do not influence people as an isolated phenomenon, but on the basis of an array of intersections and overlaps of these social categories.

### 12.1.1 Caste

The term ‘caste’ denotes a system for social stratification, wherein groups of people are accorded differential status, treatment and privileges. According to Bêteille (1965, pg. 46), caste is “characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system.” The notion of purity versus impurity is also associated with caste.

In the Indian context, caste is understood in terms of *varna* and *jati*. Four varnas are described in the Hindu system of caste: the Brahmins (priests and healers), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), Vaishyas (businessmen), and Shudras (artisans and manual laborers), with the first three regarded as ritually purer than the Shudras. Based on this notion of purity, some groups of people are also regarded as the untouchables. Apart from the varnas, there are hundreds of culturally and hierarchically distinct subsects known as *jatis*. They are hard to define and often vary across religions, regions, and settings. Furthermore, caste is also relevant as a political construct in India, and is the basis of its reservation policies (Vaid, 2014).

As castes have a bearing in the economic, social, ritualistic, and political domains, it also impacts the developmental trajectories of people belonging to particular castes. Direct implications of the same can be seen in child socialization goals set by parents and child rearing practices employed in the family context (Rao, McHale, and Pearson, 2003). For instance, in the Brahmin community (considered to be the highest caste in India), daily practices undertaken in the family reveal a ritualistic focus on domains such as learning, cleanliness, piety, immersion in religious texts, etc. Since the higher castes enjoy greater privilege, they also enjoy greater means for achieving outcomes necessary for well-being. Thus, growing up in such a context facilitates children's academic achievement and entry into prestigious and intellectual occupations. In this way, cultural practices may enable alternative pathways in development (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010). On the other hand, belonging to the lower castes involves social discrimination and economic deprivation, educational and occupational outcomes for many groups are severely restricted. Research shows that there is considerably lower participation of the lower caste and tribal youth in schooling (Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002).

In a study by Desai & Dubey (2011, p. 44), they pointed that, "even for children from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, something about school environment results in lower levels of skill acquisition on the part of Dalit and Adivasi children, resulting in a long-term cycle of disadvantage". Thus, even when people from disadvantaged communities secure entry into prestigious institutions and occupational settings, they continue to face discrimination (Deshpande 2011; Jhodhka, 2010; Thorat & Sardana, 2009).

### 12.1.2 Class

The term 'social class' indicates stratification of people in a society on the basis of factors such as, wealth, status and influence. While some people may have greater access to resources as well as social capital, others are often not as privileged, thereby leading to differential outcomes for members of different social classes. In order to build a contextual understanding of development, it becomes important to locate the influences of social class in shaping socialization processes responsible for varied developmental outcomes.

There are many descriptions of different social classes, based on three factors:

- a) Educational level of the parent or caregiver;
- b) Economic resources available with the family; and
- c) Occupation of the Parent or caregiver (Berns, 2015).

Most commonly, distinctions are made between upper-class, middle-class and lower-income groups, as explained below:

**Upper Class Families** - In upper class families, people enjoy considerable wealth (usually inherited) and status in society. Children are considered to be carriers of the family's legacy and they are accordingly exposed to opportunities and privileges that are expected to prepare them for adult roles. Such children grow up amidst affluence, with access to good nutrition, material goods, hired caregivers, private schooling, and live in elite neighborhoods. While such children may be equipped with many privileges to succeed, they also experience pressures to conform to the family's standard (not just the immediate family, but often from the extended family as well).

**Middle Class Families** - For middle class families, status is usually attained via personal achievements, education and hard-work. In such families, parents commonly expose their children to many avenues that would help cultivate their talents, and children are encouraged to become self-reliant, and achievement-oriented. Such children also receive sufficient nourishment and stimulation from their home environment as well as the other settings in which they are situated. They learn to value the role of hard-work and possessing harmonious relationships with others in facilitating their goals. Like upper-class parents, parents in middle-SES families also emphasize on cognitive and psychological characteristics, such as happiness, curiosity, self-direction, etc.

**Lower-Income Families** - There are many barriers for healthy development in lower income families. To begin with, depending upon family circumstances and parental income, the resources available with the family are usually limited and even insufficient. This has implications right from prenatal development based on the level of care given to the mother during the prenatal period. Infants may be born with low birth weight and birth defects. Children may suffer from malnourishment and deficiencies, like anemia.

Due to economic pressures, the socialization processes are also significantly affected. As compared to middle-class and upper-class families, parents in lower-income families tend to stress on external characteristics such as politeness, obedience, and respect for elders (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005). Lack of economic security also limits the resources and opportunities that parents can devote to their children's cognitive and academic development. In fact, in such conditions, children are often expected to contribute to family income early on. Therefore, school drop-out rates are significantly higher in children from lower-income households (Berns, 2015).

It is also important to understand the intersections of caste and class in the Indian setting, with many groups of people belonging to upper castes also

possessing higher class privilege. Thus, they tend to possess greater means for ensuring healthy development, excelling in education and occupational settings, and have better access to resources and sufficient social connections (Saraswathi, 1999).

**Check Your Progress I**

1) Name the different social structures which pose important implications for human development.

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2) Briefly explain the basis of division of different castes in the Indian setting.

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3) What are three major categories used to describe different social classes?

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**12.1.3 Gender**

As social categories, sex and gender play a major role in determining the trajectory of development across the lifespan. While sex is determined on the basis of variation in biological attributes, gender is a multi-faceted phenomenon that pertains to socially constructed notions of masculine and feminine roles, attributes, and identities that govern behavior. In this context, culture plays a crucial role in terms of shaping the variegated socialization agents that enable an understanding of gender among people.

**12.1.3.1 Gender Typing**

Right from infancy, gender differences across the major domains of development start becoming visible. For instance, children’s temperament and other aspects of psychosocial development that emerge during infancy seem to be shaped by gender. Studies show that boys show higher levels of activity, irritability, and impulsivity, while girls present greater effortful control and cooperativeness. This in a large part, can be attributed to the differential treatment of boys and girls right from the beginning. For instance, boys are encouraged to be physically active early on, but girls are not. Similarly, expressions of certain emotions are discouraged for girls (such as anger), while the same may be encouraged for boys. By the age of 3 to 4, children exhibit gender-stereotyped beliefs, personality traits, engage in activities accordingly, and even prefer same-sex peers. Moreover, they also

display considerable rigidity with respect to the same (Berk, 2018). However, as children age, they often experience a broadening in their view of gender.

### 12.1.3.2 Identifying Environmental Influences

**Parents** - It is important to acknowledge that it is common in most societies for parents to encourage different behaviors, activities and goals for their sons and daughters. From the smallest of things (such as which toys should the child play with; e.g., cars for boys and dolls for girls) to bigger life decisions, people are taught early in life what is suited for them based on such categorizations. This includes encouragement of gender-typed behaviors (e.g., display of aggression or compliance), beliefs (e.g., “boys are stronger than girls”), and attributes (e.g., emphasis on gender-typed personality traits) during infancy itself and further leads to the development of notions of masculinity and femininity, and enables self-categorizations on the basis of gender and fuels gender-typed behaviors.

Although, a positive influence in the context of the family is linked to maternal employment. Research indicates that children with employed mothers show less gender-stereotyped behaviors.

**Peers** - Apart from the influences of the family, children are also heavily influenced by their peers. Association with same-sex peers is linked with development of gender-typed play preferences, activity level and even aggression (Martin et al., 2013). Furthermore, same-sex peers reinforce gender-typed behavior, but criticise or ridicule cross-gender behaviors. Boys are more easily teased or labelled when they engage in behaviors that are associated with girls. They also show aggression more physically, while girls are conditioned to aggress relationally.

**Teachers** - Differences pertaining to gender are also fueled in the school setting. Like parents, teachers also reinforce gender-typed behaviors and engage in different strategies to deal with boys and girls within the classroom. Studies show that boys tend to receive more attention from the teachers than girls (Chen & Rao, 2011). Teachers also often encourage students to participate in different activities and fields on the basis of the cultural notions of what is suited for their gender. For instance, treating language arts as “feminine”, versus mathematics and science as “masculine” may enlarge stereotype threats among the students and further lead to self-fulfilling prophecies, with important implications for their success in these fields.

### 12.1.3.3 Gender Identity

A crucial developmental task is to formulate a gender identity - a representation of oneself on the basis of masculine and feminine attributes. Studies show that children as young as 24 to 30 months indicated their gender identity (Campbell et al 2002; Stennes et al. 2005). There are many factors that influence the development of gender identity. These are explained below:

**Social Learning Theory** - According to social learning theory, the acquisition of gender identity emerges during early childhood as children pick-up gender-typed behaviors based on their observations of others around them and the reinforcement of certain behaviors. In this way, modeling and reinforcement influence children's self-perception and allow the internalization of gender-typed ideas.

**Cognitive-Developmental Theory** - The cognitive-developmental theory, on the other hand, emphasises the development of self-perceptions before gender-related behaviors. According to this perspective, children first develop notions about gender constancy and later use this information to direct their gendered behaviors. However, support for this theory is limited.

**Gender Schema Theory.** Gender schema theory presents an interesting amalgamation of both the role of social learning and children's cognitions in shaping their notions about gender-roles (Martin & Halverson, 1987). Based on their observations, children learn many gender-based attitudes and behaviors that further influence their gender schemas (masculine and feminine categorizations). As these schemas become more refined, they start impacting the ways in which children process information and guide their behavior.

#### 12.1.3.4 Implications of Gender as a Social Category

In any given society, notions related to gender have a profound impact on people's development across a variety of domains. In the Indian context, it poses many serious implications. With respect to issues related to gender, an important concern in the Indian setting is reflected in the dominant preference for the male child. Studies show that across different social groups, people believe that the male child would lead to the continuation of the family's lineage, contribute to household income and look after the parents in their old age. This preference for the male child is associated with high rates of sex-selective abortions and female infanticide in India (Agnihotri, 2003).

Gender-based discrimination is also common within the family, with the sons being provided better nourishment, education, and more opportunities than the girls. Gender disparities are salient in both literacy rates and school completion rates (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010). Parents also often impose these gender-based expectations on their children, which affect their self-esteem. For example, there is a heightened focus on physical appearance of girls more so than the boys, leading to many young girls invariably experiencing dissatisfaction with their bodies and thus, lowered self-esteem.

In the patriarchal context of some Indian families, young girls may grow up recognizing the inferior status and lesser privileges being given to them. Another salient feature of socializing girls in Indian families also pertains to the superordinate status being given to marriage in society. Considering this, from early childhood, girls are taught to value interpersonal relationships and develop an interdependent self so that they are prepared for their future roles as wives and mothers (Saraswathi, 1999). Therefore, as children's knowledge about their own social groups rises, they may also develop in-group and

outgroup biases (Heyman, 2001; Yee & Brown, 1994) and recognize the prevalence of gender inequality in society (Neff et al. 2007).

#### 12.1.4 Ethnicity

Another important influence on the process of development is exerted by ethnicity. Often confused with the term race, 'ethnicity' is a much broader term that is employed to categorise groups of people on the basis of their cultural identifications and expressions. Some demographic factors used to describe ethnicity include territory, common language, diet, attire, and culture. Thus, it includes both biological and socially inherited characteristics. It is also common for developmental psychologists to explore socially constructed notions of ethnicity (Quintana, 2007). Research exploring the role of ethnicity in the developmental context has pointed out many important insights. Many history-graded influences are peculiar to members of a particular ethnic group. Moreover, people in ethnic groups can also be described in terms of shared characteristics, such as collectivism and individualism. In collectivistic groups, there is greater emphasis on interdependence, group cohesiveness, social responsibilities, and success and wellbeing of the group. While individualistic ethnic groups encourage individual success, personal goals, and autonomy (Hofstede, 1991; Trumbull et al., 2001).

Furthermore, ethnic differences in physical, cognitive and socio-emotional development have been identified on many important variables. Some examples include:

- a) Ethnic differences in physical growth (such as height and weight) and even level of exercise (Santrock, 2019).
- b) Parenting practices and family environments vary according to ethnicity (e.g., Jones & Lindahl, 2011).
- c) Ethnic differences that play a contributing role in the development of temperament. As compared to American and European infants, East Asian infants reflect an easier temperament. They exhibit lower levels of irritability and distractibility, and higher levels of self-regulation, compliance and cooperation (Chen et al., 2003).
- d) Gender-role expectations are informed by ethnicity. In some ethnic groups, there is a more salient division between masculine and feminine attributes as compared to other ethnic groups (e.g., McHale, Crouter, & Whiteman, 2003).

##### 12.1.4.1 Development of Ethnic Identity

Another important focus of developmental researchers pertains to exploring people's ethnic identities that reflect their sense of belongingness to a particular ethnic group and influences a broad array of their experiences. There is considerable evidence that highlights that ethnic identity exploration is a salient feature of adolescents' and young adults' identity-related processes (Phinney, 1989; Quintana, 1998). Adolescents' values, worldviews



and goals also reflect the ideologies of their ethnic community (e.g., Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007).

Notable work in this area was conducted by Phinney (1989), where they extrapolated Marcia's (1966) work on ego identity statuses (i.e., identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion) to explain ethnic identity development. Findings show that during adolescence, development of racial-ethnic explorations and identifications reveals consistent, normative patterns (Quintana, 2007). Feelings of pride associated with one's ethnic group are linked with positive psychosocial outcomes, such as adjustment, wellbeing, etc. On the other hand, ethnic differences also become a basis for discrimination. In many societies, poverty and marginalization is magnified among ethnic minorities.

Understanding issues related to ethnicity poses much complexity in the Indian context considering the massive diversity prevalent in the country. For instance, there are numerous bases on which people make their identification, such as identities based on religion, caste, class, language, political ideology, rural/urban context, region, nation, affiliation with tribes, etc. Thus, the development of ethnic identity can turn out to be considerably complex.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- 1) What are the various environmental influences which enable gender typing?  
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- 2) Name the theories used to explain the development of gender identity.  
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- 3) What are some common domains in which ethnic differences in development have been highlighted?  
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**12.1.5 Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation**

While we have discussed the types of social classes earlier, a crucial developmental context in which a huge part of the world exists is marked with poverty. Social inequality is prevalent in most societies to variable degrees, and many marginalized communities find themselves struggling with poverty. Although there are many definitions of the term 'poverty', simply put, it can be described as a state of severe deprivation which renders people incapable of meeting their basic needs, such as access to food, safe

drinking water, sanitation facilities, shelter, health, and education. A major feature of poverty pertains to lack of income, however, it is also explained vis-a-vis the experience of exclusion, lack of choices and dignity, and susceptibility to violence.

Researchers often attempt to understand deprivation as a continuum, that is, depending upon the extent of deprivation, it can be labelled as mild, moderate, severe, and extreme. Thus, people in poverty-stricken families and communities face a wide array of negative outcomes, such as malnutrition, ill health, increased mortality, illiteracy, joblessness, homelessness, insecurity, and social discrimination. Furthermore, the effects of poverty are more salient for members of minority groups and women.

In the developmental context, the implications of poverty are complex and multifold. Children from deprived backgrounds suffer from many physical, cognitive, and social limitations. They may experience poor physical health, slow or deficient cognitive development, limited access to education, mental illness, and a host of externalizing behavioral problems. Child labour is also a serious threat in the Indian context (Sarawathi & Dutta, 2010).

In poverty-stricken families, due to the level of deprivation experienced, many stressors persist on a daily basis which contribute to a tumultuous family environment. This includes negative impacts on family members' mental health (it is common for people to experience irritability, anxiety, depression, and substance abuse), strain in parents' relationship with each other, as well as their relationship and communication with their children (Berns, 2015). Under such stressful environments, it is common for parents to employ harsh, punitive disciplinary practices (Conger & Dogan, 2007).

Furthermore, children growing up amidst high-poverty contexts are also often situated in high-risk neighborhoods, accompanied by unsafe environments, lack of prosocial or positive role models, limited institutional resources, and negative peer influences (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005). Schools in poor communities are also underfunded and lack sufficient facilities and resources. It becomes even more difficult for teachers to motivate students in such poorly stimulating environments, thus, delinquency and drop-out rates remain high.

To tackle such problems, a range of interventions directed at helping children and adolescents overcome the challenges posed by poverty are implemented across different social settings. While some target the upliftment of the school setting, others focus on the family environment and children's academic, emotional, and social skills. An important consideration in this context is to create holistic and multifaceted programs that would target a host of social issues that together create many barriers in children's development (Kagan, 2013).

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## **12.2 CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The process of human development and culture are inextricably entwined. Across all major domains of development, the changes undergone by an

individual take place in many contexts, with their cultural context having a significant bearing on many important variables. However, a focus on the cultural context as an important consideration in the field of developmental psychology has been largely limited. Academic discourse in the field continues to remain embedded in the Western models, with scholars from many cultures simply trying to emulate the findings produced in an alien context into their own. This appears to be particularly prevalent in the Indian context (Saraswathi, 1999).

Research has highlighted that philosophical and linguistic constructs from one's own culture are better at explaining our behaviors and experiences than when they are adapted from a different cultural setting. In the Indian context, Kakar (1979, 1982) emphasised the role of the Indian philosophical tradition, heritage, and social institutions in the ways in which they influence the process of development. Kakar stressed on the limited application of Western knowledge systems in indigenous contexts, emphasised the imperative need for contextualizing human development according to the cultural contexts particular to Indian society. For instance, the epistemological assumptions that may be effective in one cultural context, may not be suited for another. In such a scenario, external generalizability of such studies conducted in India is questionable. On the other hand, culturally-rooted epistemological positions and its congruent methodologies may provide a more insightful understanding of development within that particular culture.

In the Indian context, traditional systems such as yoga, meditation, introspection and even healing practices rooted in religion may offer a more meaningful understanding of many psychological phenomena. Furthermore, the adoption of Western tools and methods may not only be a poor fit because of their cultural underpinnings, but may be completely unsuited for many people from socially-disadvantaged groups who may not possess the necessary experience to properly participate in such endeavors (Mohanty and Prakash, 1993). An ongoing problem, thus, pertains to the selection of samples from fairly privileged sections of society while ignoring the marginalized classes. In this scenario, the picture of human development that emerges remains incomplete and exclusionary.

Keeping this in mind, a reframing of a researcher's positionality is crucial and to better understand the nature of development, it becomes important to first raise the right kind of questions which would be inclusive of and representative of a wider population. Considering this, moving away from the Western obsession with positivism and towards seeking culturally-relevant, lived experiences of members of a community will be more helpful (Saraswathi & Dutta, 2010). Finally, researchers also stress on increasing investment and engagement in applied research which would be more suited for countries like India.

### Check Your Progress 3

1) Define the term 'poverty'.

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2) Briefly describe some of the outcomes associated with living in poverty.

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3) Which traditional systems in the Indian context can help explain many psychological phenomena?

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## 12.3 SUMMARY

Now that we have come to the end of this Unit, let us list all the major points that we have learnt:

- The process of development is a complex interplay of variegated influences that lead to diverse implications. A major role in this regard is played by the social structures and the socialization processes within which people are embedded.
- The Indian society is a complex society, one which includes significant diversity across a wide-range of dimensions. Some of such dimensions include gender, caste, social class, religion, ethnicity, linguistic diversity, family types, and regional variations in cultural practices.
- As an important social structure, caste mediates people's diverse experiences and has a bearing in the economic, social, ritualistic, and political domains, while impacting people's developmental trajectories.
- The category of social class is usually divided in three groups i.e., upper-class, middle-class and lower-income groups, and profoundly impacts the opportunities available to people of the different groups.
- Gender is another important variable. Right from infancy, gender differences across the major domains of development start becoming visible, with children being socialized to internalize gender-typed values and behaviors. A major task also pertains to the development of a gender identity i.e., a representation of oneself on the basis of masculine and feminine attributes.
- Furthermore, people belonging to the same ethnic group share common biological and social characteristics. Ethnic differences in physical,

cognitive and socio-emotional development have been identified on many important variables, such as physical growth, parenting practices, temperament, and gender-role expectations.

- Social inequality is prevalent in most societies to variable degrees, and many marginalized communities find themselves struggling with poverty. Children from deprived backgrounds suffer from many physical, cognitive, and social limitations. They may experience poor physical health, slow or deficient cognitive development, limited access to education, mental illness, and a host of externalizing behavioral problems.
- Finally, academic discourse in the field continues to remain embedded in the Western models, with scholars from many cultures simply trying to emulate the findings produced in an alien context into their own. Thus, future researchers need to focus on cultural specificity and relevance of the work undertaken by them.

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## 12.4 KEYWORDS

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<b>Caste</b>	A system for social stratification, wherein groups of people are accorded differential status, treatment and privileges. It is characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life, and involves a ritual status in a hierarchical system.
<b>Social Class</b>	Stratification of people in a society on the basis of factors such as, wealth, status and influence.
<b>Gender</b>	Socially constructed notions of masculine and feminine roles, attributes, and identities that govern behavior.
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Representation of oneself on the basis of masculine and feminine attributes.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	A categorization of groups of people on the basis of their cultural identifications and expressions. It also involves demographic factors such as territory, common language, diet, attire, and culture.
<b>Poverty</b>	A state of severe deprivation which renders people incapable of meeting their basic needs such as access to food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, shelter, health, and education.

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## 12.5 REVIEW QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the role of culture in shaping development across the lifespan.

2. Discuss the influence of caste in determining development in the Indian context.
3. Explain the characteristics of different types of social classes.
4. What is the difference between gender typing and gender identity?
5. Using research evidence, elucidate the implications of ethnicity for human development.
6. Describe the consequences of living in poverty for children's psychosocial development.
7. What are some issues that developmental psychologists should keep in mind when studying human development in the Indian context?

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## 12.7 ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

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- For more information on patterns of gender development:

[https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511#\\_i31](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100511#_i31)

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-lifespandevelopment/chapter/gender-differences-in-life-expectancy/>

<https://www.lifespan.org/lifespan-living/understanding-gender-identity>

- For more information on caste in India:



<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-soc-071913-043303>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/culturalanthropology/chapter/indian-caste-system/>

- *For more information on culture and lifespan development:*

<https://mathias-sager.com/2017/08/21/approaches-to-lifespan-development-and-cultural-considerations/>

- *For understanding poverty as a developmental context:*

<https://nyaspubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1196/annals.1425.023>

<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.18.1.463>



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