

Social Change and Adolescents' Mental Health

Abstract

Adolescence is a time of rapid and difficult changes unlike other period in a human's life. Both physical development and cognitive elopement enter dramatic new stage. The physical changes of puberty single the onset of sexuality; cognitive abilities progress to the sophistication needed for mathematics and complex word use.

The psychological changes taking place centre on the adolescents' need to revise their opinion of themselves, i.e., to construct a new self-concept to take account of the changes they are experiencing. Social relationship outside the family becomes much more important than before. It is no wonder that this is widely regarded as the most turbulent period of life and that adolescents restlessly seek their own identity.

Keyword: Adolescents' mental health, social change, personality, mental healthcare.

Introduction

Social change as a continuous process in an inevitable phenomenon. If we look into the history of social development, we find such events which have changed the life-style of mankind. Discovery of fire, discovery of metal, invention of agriculture and industrial revolutions are examples. We have in our life time realized a totally new social force: a stream of change so accelerated that it influences our sense of time, and affects the way we feel around us. We no longer feel as the man did in the past. Actually, a new humanism is on the horizon. This time embraces whole mankind. The capacity of a social system to undergo social change with disintegration depends on the mental health of the individual, i.e., the unit of community. The functional relationship between social change and mental health is in congruence with another dynamic relationship of psychiatry; i.e., and individual can breakdown into mental illness if he has to undergo a sudden crisis in life. He can also break down if his personality is unstable and incapable of carrying even his own normal life events. Researches in this regard show that mental health is related to perceptions of specific types of community problems such as; poverty, racism, discrimination, unemployment and domestic violence. (Hendrya and Ahern, 1997; Schaufeli, 1997).

Similarly, a study revealing the relationship between family structure and mental health status conducted by Singh (1996-97) is that mean scores of adolescents from nuclear families was higher on dimensions of alienation, non-conformity, while adolescents from joint families scored higher on egocentrism, expression and emotional display and concluded that mental health status of adolescents of joint families was better than that of nuclear families.

Thus, the relationship between the family structure and mental health and status proves the above hypothesis that mental health and social change in terms of social disintegration has a dynamic relationship.

Mental Health Interventions

Ours being a pluralistic society and a developing one, is a home of 40-45% of illiterate poors of the total population whose 'psyche', cognitive styles and mental health are determined by socio-cultural and economic factors. This contention is in line with a study conducted by Conger and Petermen (1984). They observed that the patterns of value formation may vary widely among particular adolescents as a result of influence that range from parent-child relationship to cultural or sub-cultural pressure and even the rate of social change. Factors like education, social class, caste and socialization all play an important role in determining the set of personal values an individual comes to possess as he becomes adult and these in turn are predominantly affected by the rate of modernization. An empirical study conducted by Ratchagar and Venkatammal (2003) revealed that the rural Indian youth very often becomes victim of mental illness due to social discrimination, poverty,

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family burdens, lack of education and unemployment. Emphasizing the need for mental health interventions of the community it is imperative on the part of behavioural scientists in general and the Psychologists in particular to pave the ways and means of mental health care of our community at large.

Following Recommendations Are Worthmentionin

Social Education and Community Participation

Social change has tremendous effects i.e., positive and negative both on the mental health of the community. Therefore, it is important to see that social change should not be too rapid and radical for the people to adapt it. This means that people should be mentally prepared for any social change for this purpose social education and community participation are very important tools to help people to adapt to any social change. This conception of mental health intervention programmes may be understood by the government of India in a big way.

Unrealistic targets are fixed, but people are not prepared for this. Further the Gatte agreement, Dunkel Proposal and now modern Act for restructuring the higher education system are such examples which need to be examined carefully so that the mental health of Indian community may not suffer negatively in any way. Research in this area shows that social change has positive effects on the mental health if the pace of change is smooth and community as a whole is prepared to receive it.

Promotion of Mental Health by Ensuring Healthy Personality Development

Mental health is said to be the capacity of an individual to form harmonious relationships with others and to participate in or contribute constructively to change in the social environment. Personality, on the other hand, is the dynamic organization of those psycho-physical faculties which help the individual to adjust uniquely in the environment around him. Thus, a good adjustment is the core of both of the concepts viz, mental health and personality.

This means that a well adjusted personality begets a good mental health; because mental health is not only the absence of mental illness; it is also the development of mature, stable and well adjusted personality. Therefore, emphasis should be given on the healthy personality development.

For the purpose role of parents in home, role of teachers in schools are paramount. Hence, it is recommended that a community training programmes with the help of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists must be launched effectively so that the parents and teachers be able to know the techniques of healthy personality development and help their children in right direction.

Because much of the stress we experience is caused by our thought patterns and our self-perception can increase or decrease our reaction to stressors. How we interpret events and therefore experience them is often determined by our personality. If we become aware of these thought patterns, we can work to reduce negative thought patterns and stress responses. It is evident that our personality type affects our mental health.

Prevention of Mental Illness

In addition to some inevitable socio-cultural and psychological backgrounds of mental health problems, there are certain cases who become the victims because of some genetic and biological factors. Therefore, preventive measures are also advisable for the care of mentally ill persons and to promote mental health of the community. Principles of community psychiatry should be implemented in the target group and they should be encouraged for participation in a big way. For implementation of this programme effectively a team of doctors, psychologists, social workers and teachers is required to make the community aware of the need of the mental health care and after achieving the confidence of the community different techniques, viz. primary prevention, secondary prevention and tertiary prevention be used.

Mental Health Care and Psychotherapy

In the present day situation when people suffer very often from mental stress, anxiety, life-events and other mental illness, an indigenous paradigm of mental health care and psychotherapy based on "yoga" and use of Indian system of medicine (i.e. Ayurveda) are highly recommended by many Psychologists and Psychiatrists like Bushan (1996-1997); Rao(2000) and Wolf(2001).

In a series of studies, it has been observed that spending time in Yoga and meditation-camps improved positive measures and decreased negative symptoms when compared with those in compared with those in controlled groups. Yoga, breathing techniques and exercises have used for centuries to calm and center the body. Progressive muscle relaxation and guided Somato- Psychid relaxation are also beneficial in overcoming and different kinds of emotional problems caused due to stress or tense situation. Some other relaxation techniques like self-hypnosis, biofeedback and meditation systems are very helpful in managing our health.

Most importantly our emotions are a substantial part of what makes us human. It is important to realize that we can control our emotions and direct them in ways that can help us to be more sympathetic, kind and loving; that is why Daniel Golman has brought out the importance of E.Q. or Emotional Intelligence in maintenance of mental health; whereas Zohar and Marshall emphasized on S.Q. or Spiritual intelligence in upholding happiness and good mental health

Onclusion

Thus, in essence an attempt has been made to establish a dynamic relationship between mental health of the community and social change. Social change can lead to social disintegration if it is too rapid and ruthless. Secondly, if the mental health of the community is poor or is not ready to accept it, may also lead to social. So, it is reasonable to adopt any tool of social change which may influence the life style of the community in a big way; should be implemented after making the whole community aware of it. Finally, the mental health care of community can be insured by implementing social education, community participation and an indigeous paradigm based on Indian system of medicine and

techniques of Yoga.

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