RESEARCH ARTICLE

RECOGNIZING THE LOSS OF IDENTITY IN ADOLESCENCE

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a stage of maturity on the purview of physical, psychological, emotional, and social domain. The developmental task at the stage of adolescence is to create the identity free from role confusion. This stage is considered to be a period of turmoil in the life span of development in an individual. In the existing scenario the psychological wellbeing of the adolescence can be upgraded with the facilitating involvement of the parent and incessant social support. Mental Health in adolescence is considered to be a state of well-being where the adolescence realizes the potential imbibed within and is able to cope up the stresses, work productively and contribute their effectiveness to the community. The psychological wellbeing has to be vividly maintained among the adolescence, as the identity for their self will be the immediate effects of their attitudes which will produce a long term effect on their behaviors. This will have a greater impact on recognizing their personality with unique identity.

INTRODUCTION

Every individual experience growth from their childhood to adulthood both physically and psychologically. Especially in the stage of adolescent they cross the realm of childhood and popup to the glimpse of adulthood with drastic physical and psychological sprout. Adolescence is a transition period of development between childhood and adulthood, in which the children cross the dividing line between childhood and adulthood by gaining maturity. Adolescence is a period from puberty until adult status has been attained. The behavior and reactions of adolescence vary from family to family, from place to place and from time to time and also from one generation to another generation. The basic tasks of this stage are, the adolescents must have a secure sense and identify "who they are?" and "what they would be?" The initiative of this inquisitiveness with introspective questions embarks the adolescence booming in them. It is a literary movement full of idealism, commitment to a goal, and revolution against old, expression of personal feelings, passions and sufferings. In the current scenario adolescence is a product of both biological and social forces. The biological changes are universal in all primates, in all cultures and in all time. It is that the physical development is a concept which is understood and recognized by all in the same way as others have understood, else than the

psychological process is a construct which varies with vivid domains. The nature and the nurture of an individual imply its impact on the length of the period of adolescence and the number of hurdles a young person must overcome. The introspective questions like "who am I really like?", "Who will I become?" depicts virtually the development of identity. The identification of unexplored self-queries implies the sign of recognizing self at the adolescents. The personal value such as the self-esteem; the self-concept and the direction they pursue life predicts who they are. Adolescence begins with the onset of normal puberty, and ends when an adult identity and behavior are established. This period of development corresponds roughly to the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years, which is reliable with the World Health Organization's definition of adolescence. The young people face extra years of dependence on parents and postponement of sexual gratification which they prepare for a productive work life. On this aspect, adolescent is greatly extended and divided in to three phases,

- Early adolescence - a period of rapid pubertal change from 12 to 14 years of age.
- Middle adolescence - when pubertal changes are complete from 14 to 18 years of age.
- Late adolescence - when young person achieves full adult appearance and faces more adult roles from 18 to 21 years of age.

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Puberty has important psychological and social consequences. Typically the girls' reaction to menarche and the boys' reaction to spermarche are mixed. Prior knowledge and social support influence this response. Adolescent moodiness is allied to both sex hormones and changes in the social environment. Among adolescents being healthy means, functioning physically, mentally and socially well to their best (Millstein & Litt, 1990). The problems among the school going adolescent are interwoven with various factors throughout the developmental stages. The biological factors, psychological factors, social factors, family and cultural factors jointly contribute to their wellbeing. The personality achievement of gaining identity in adolescence is predicted by their life plans and coherent set of values. On the basis of Life Fulfillment Theory, Erickson explores the struggle of adolescence in their achievement or diffusion of identity. The effective family warmth and the appropriate social support facilitate the efficiency of the adolescent to progress with zeal.

The gender role preferences, the vocational choices, the religious and political values are the considerable domain of identification among the adolescents. The ratio in the domain of identification too varies among urban and rural adolescents according to their environmental exposure. The core of the self and the integrated learned responses construct the traits while the personality is built on their self. The intrinsic traits which are ought to be from birth within the self is nature from genes. The extrinsic traits which are nurtured from the environment are influenced by the institutions of the society, the family and school. The adolescents grow bolder with their age. The growth to be healthier, they should have something to do, something to believe in, something to love and someone to love and to belong to. The cognition and the conation attributes highly to their identity. The perceptual - conceptual -attitudinal concepts of the Self reflects on the physical, psychological and social approach of the adolescents in their life adjusting qualities, their feeling about themselves and their worthiness, their honesty, their courage, their present and future status, their self-esteem, pride, shame, aspirations, values and commitments. The real and social self plays a stronger and larger role in the adolescents rather than the ideal self in identifying their image.

By the level of self-concept and self-esteem the adolescents are grouped into various categories. The teen with high self-esteem comes under "Identity- Achieved" as they actively explore in moral and ethical thinking and have their ideal and real self to be more similar. The teens who lags behind Identity achieved are termed as "Moratorium" who feels more secure and reveal their real self to others. The teen who are alienated from their family and society transforms to be rigid, inflexible and at times intolerable comes under "Identity Foreclosure" and these adolescents tends to pick them up from authoritative personality. The least mature in the identity development comes under "Diffused Teenagers" who have 'I don't care' attitude and most likely use and abuse drugs. They entrust in fake luck and fate, hence sense hopelessness on their future. The diffused young adolescents pick them from their peers.

The overt scanning with telescopic vision and the covert scanning with peripheral vision initiates among the adolescents accordingly to their gender aspects. The expectation at most of the time leads to disappointment. The personal expectation and the parental expectation and the societal expectations vary and diverge to unexpected reflection and refraction of thoughts and feelings, which kindle unexpected behaviors among the adolescents. The internal stresses due to the social expectations move the adolescent away from their identity and are reflected on indifferent aspects of behavior and in developing weaker interpersonal relationships and bewilder on responsibility. Responsibility is a learning process. When the adolescents are dumped with unrealistic expectation than there prevails a wear and tear scenario. These perplex them to be in a chaotic state to dwell on the trait of fight or flight mode. When the demands exceed their personal resources or when the adolescents feel to be pulled and pushed in various aspects, they feel sad, frustrated and hopelessness about life, accompanied by loss of pleasure in most activities and feel disturbed in their sleep, appetite, concentration, and energy. These are the most common psychological problems of adolescents, which is ought to be the depression. Depression in teenagers should not be neglected as a temporary side effect of puberty. Adolescent depression can lead to long term emotional problems which have to be considered seriously. Without treatment, depressed teenagers have a high chance of becoming depressed adults. Parents of depressed children and adolescents have a high incidence of depression and other psychological disorder. The depressed are stressed parents often engage in maladaptive care giving. As a result their child's emotional self-regulation, attachment and self-esteem may be impaired, with serious consequences of many cognitive and social skills. Profound depression often leads to suicidal thoughts, which is often transformed into action. When a teenager tries to take or succeed at taking their own life through suicide, depression is one of the factors that proceed.

Suicidal rate increases over the life span. It is lowest in childhood and highest in old age, suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people, after motor vehicle collisions and homicides. Suicide tendency occurs in two types of young people. One is the highly intelligent but introverted, withdrawn, and unable to meet their standards or those of important people in their lives. The other the larger groups showing anti-social tendencies. These young people show their dejection through bullying, fighting, stealing, and increased risk taking and drug use. Besides turning their anger and disappointment inward, they are unsympathetic and destructive towards others. The fragile self-esteem of these teenagers quickly disintegrates in the face of stressful life events. Common circumstances just before suicide include the breakup of an important peer relationship or the humiliation of having been caught engaging in irresponsible, anti social acts. Belief in the personal fable leads many young people to conclude that no one could possibly understand the intense pain they feel. As a result, their despair, hopelessness, and isolation deepen. Loss of identity in depressed teenagers, accompanied by absence of a sense of personal continuity can flicker suicide attempts in them.

After a suicide, family and peer survivors need support to assist them in coping with grief, anger, and guilt over not having been able to help the victim. Teenage suicides often take place in clusters. When one occurs, it increases the likelihood of others among peers who knew the young person or heard the death through the media. In the view of this trend adult should keep an especially watchful eye on vulnerable adolescents after a suicide happens. The adolescents with submissive trait hurt and hinder themselves, while the aggressive adolescents with diffused identity hurt and hinder others. Juvenile delinquents are children or adolescents who engage in illegal activities.

Young people who are under arrests admit them that they are guilty of an offense of one sort or another. They do not commit major crimes. Instead, they engage in petty stealing, disorderly conduct, and acts that are illegal only for minors, such as underage drinking, violating curfews, and running away from home. Prevention must be started in early and take place at multiple levels. Positive peer cultures have to be equipped to create a scenario in which the pro social activities replace the antisocial behavior. They have to be supported with social skill training, anger management training, training to correct cognitive distortions like misperceiving others intension as argumentative and blaming the victim and moral discussions to promote 'catch-up' to their age-appropriate moral reasoning.

The physical growth too contributes its impact in the adolescents. As the body grows and takes on maturity, eating disturbances appear in many young people. The adolescents worry about their idealized image of attractiveness and fitness fades away when they lose it. Substance abuse and certain injuries also occur due to peer group pressure. Sexual activity brings with it the risk of personality damage and also to sexually transmitted diseases. Adolescents who experience either too much restrictiveness from parents or too little monitoring from parents tend to be highly peer oriented. They more often rely on friends for advice about their personal lives and future. They are more willing to break their parents' rules, ignore their school work, and hide their talents to be popular with their age mates. Peer conformity rises in early adolescence, but teenagers do not mindlessly 'follow the crowd.' Peers are more influential on dress, music, and social activities. The parents of the adolescents are influenced on life values and educational plans.

The vital problem among the adolescent is the lack of self-esteem. The lack of self-esteem among the adolescents deprives themselves to isolate from others and feel the loneliness. The continued temper tantrums of departures lead the adolescents to depression, which further extends to suicidal thoughts and attempts. The diffusion among the teen agers leads them to engage or participate in the anti-social activities and this extends to the juvenile delinquency. This results in poor scholastic performance and they stagger to attain their indomitable self. The youth of today are the pillars of our nation to enrich its worthiness. The entangled trait of the adolescents has to be oriented to a progressive societal participation and contribution with the appropriate guidance of the parents from the family and the mentors from the society. The consistency and the warmth is approximated and felt with the presence of CARE, TRUST, RESPECT from the parents, siblings, the members of the family and from their mentors and inspirational social personalities. Positive schooling is an approach to education which consists of foundation with care, trust and respect for diversity, where teachers develop tailored goals for each student to engender learning and then work with them to develop their plans and motivate them to reach their goals. The education includes the agendas of instilling hope in students and contributing to the larger society by enhancing their mental health and prevail them in the pursuit of recognizing their identity

In the current scenario the foreclosure identity exists profoundly among the adolescents as

- they are dumped with surplus information which induces dilemma to choose the needed

- they are maintained in a comfort zone by sophisticated parenting and
- Education restricts them from trial and error state and reduces the chance of loss and win approach. The trail is not allowed, due to lack of time and space for the virtual competency in this era of information. As the adolescents have nil trails they are unaware of the errors and the alternate paths are hidden with effortless inquisitiveness. They are not in the position to decide, they are in the position to receive instructions from the authoritative or dogmatic purview and follow without any perception of error identification or corrections.
- they are unaware of the fluctuations in normal functioning
- they feel feebly ease in adapting themselves to the troublesome scenario, as they meet their needs in a readymade form free from any struggle. It is researched that those who have played a lot with lose and win strategy will have more competency and adaptability with appreciable harmony with others.

The drooping cheeks ought to be replaced with upturned cheeks with squinting eyes, which reveals real happiness in the soul. This has to be evaluated with the mutual participatory discussions with adolescents, mentors and parents, to visualize a paradigm shift to terminate this pathology of foreclosure identity. Parenting is a sacred duty and Valluvar, a great Tamil poet and author of Tirukural, says "I consider nothing else as a great gift than educated children". Adolescents need unconditional love from their mother and controlled direction from their father. Home the cradle of democracy enriches the adolescents with co-operation, courtesy and love. The adolescents have to be enriched with certain responsibilities and be infused with interest and affection to attain their ambitions to gain their identity. The Adolescents, the parents and the mentors are in the maze to guide and facilitate the adolescents to explore their identity in a more positive way by delimiting and warding off their deviant feelings, thoughts and behaviors. The discussions among the adolescents at the home and school endorse their level of thinking to a high state. The warm and open communication with them provides the emotional support and also ensures their freedom to explore their values and goals by themselves. Opportunities must be provided to participate in extracurricular activities and in vocational training programs. This facilitates them to resolve and achieve their identity. This also enhances the adolescents to participate and engage to achieve their goal and enumerate them for their peaceful and harmonious livelihood far from the diffusion of identity. If their internal powers are accelerated in an apt way then the influencing external power for diffusion and foreclosure will be reduced.

The morality and the knowledge enforce the traits of self realization, character building, with external and internal discipline. This attitude of enriching self esteem among the adolescents will contribute a personal development in the life stages of the adolescents, which will be contributed to the family and the other institutions in their adulthood with more productiveness. This throws light of progress on the society and hence contributes to our national growth in various aspects. As a holistic view the effective identification of the identity among the adolescents pave path for an incredible national up gradation among the global scenario.

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