

ADOLESCENCE—THE STAGES OF STRESS AND STROM

Rimita bhar

INTRODUCTION—

During the Adolescent years, an individual experiences many changes, which occur physically, mentally as well as socially. At the onset of Adolescence, most youngsters experience a period of very rapid physical growth(the adolescent growth spurt) accompanied by the gradual development of reproductive organs and secondary sexual characteristics. These changes occur over a period of about two years and culminate in puberty. Girls mature earlier than boys. Adolescents are also developing mentally and beginning to hold their identity apart from their family. They are beginning to realize their social responsibilities and want to play an important role in the society. Secondly, the society also begins to view them differently as adults and they are expected to behave in a responsible way and abide by the norms of society as well as develop a social role for themselves.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOUR----

Behaviour was defined by Watson as an action, which can be seen the observed in an objective way. This means behaviour is the way in which an individual carries out his activities. Behaviour of an individual is influenced by the internal body environment as well as external environment around Him.

Adolescent behaviour has been studied from very early times. Plato characterized the adolescents to be argumentative and easily excitable while Aristotle described them as impulsive, prone to excess and exaggeration and lacking self-restraint. The period of adolescence in the life of an individual is characterized as problematic and has been studied for a long time.

Adolescents are characterized by—

- 1) Anxiety
- 2) Mood swing
- 3) Confusion/ indecision
- 4) Lethargy
- 5) Argumentation
- 6) Anger/ irritability
- 7) Experimentation

This behaviour is normal behaviour pattern in Adolescents.

1) ANXIETY—It is an un-easy mental state concerning impending or anticipated ill. According to Herlock, Anxiety is marked by apprehension, uneasiness and foreboding from which the individual cannot escape; it is accompanied by a feeling of helplessness because the anxious person feels blocked unable to find a solution of problems.

2) MOOD SWING--- The Adolescents are characterized as moody. Sometimes they feel pleasant and on the other times they are depressed. This is due to their disturbed physiological condition because of effect of hormones.

3) CONFUSION/ INDECISION--- Erickson characterized the adolescents with identity vs confusion crisis. The physical and intellectual changes during adolescence disrupt their sense of continuity and personal wholeness. They pay great attention on how other people view them. Their choices are usually supported by the reaction of parents and other people. They are not able to make decisions and keep on changing their roles. So, they are said to be in a state of confusion/ indecision.

4) LETHARGY--- Adolescents tend not to eat properly and rapid pace of their growth makes them undernourished. As a result they become weak and lethargic.

5) ARGUMENTATION--- Adolescents are greatly influenced by peers and they enjoy doing things with their group. Since they are growing up they

want to take decisions themselves and want to do things their way, while adults (parents and teachers) want them to behave like mature individuals. This leads to arguments between them.

6) ANGER/ IRRITABILITY--- In Adolescents, thwarting of desires, interruption of activities in progress, constant fault finding, teasing, lecturing, or making unfavourable comparisons with other children lead to anger. Older children when fail to realize their goals, they become angry at themselves or at the people they believe have stood in their way.

7) EXPERIMENTATION---- Adolescents show risk taking behaviour. They want to try doing different things. They are greatly influenced by their peer group. They want to be viewed as adults and tend to indulge in, alcoholism and even drug abuse. They may even want to indulge in sexual activity, which make them prone to STIs and AIDs.

CAUSES FOR TYPICAL ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOUR—

Adolescence is a very crucial stage of development. All types of changes- Biological, Physical, Social, Cognitive etc. take place during this stage. The reasons for change in behaviour have been separately discussed below-

1) PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT- During the Adolescents years, most children experience the growth spurt i.e. a rapid increase in height and weight. Accompanied by this growth spurt is the rapid development of reproductive organs that signal sexual maturity. Due to these changes, an Adolescent becomes conscious of the physical body changes taking place. They are characterized by long arms and limbs. As they are in the state of transition their body proportion have not attained maturity, they sometime feel awkward and uncomfortable on looking at themselves. They are worried about their looks due to manifested physical changes and also fear about the opinion and the reactions of their peers and adults.

Anxiety maybe expressed in readily recognizable behaviour such as depression, nervousness, irritability, mood swings, restless sleep, quick anger and extra ordinary sensitivity to what others say or do. Anxious children are unhappy because they feel insecure.

2) **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**—According to the Piaget theory of cognitive development, the Adolescent is placed in the formal operations stage of development, which is marked by the beginning of logical and abstract thinking. This means that the Adolescents can visualize about concepts that have little no basis in concrete reality. They are capable of forming multiple hypotheses. These leads the Adolescents to think beyond concrete reality and he begins to visualize things from various perspectives. The transition from concrete to abstract thinking allows the Adolescent to translate ideas and understand the consequences of actions in ways not possible for them before. They enhanced abilities also lead to a rapid accumulation of knowledge that opens up a range of issues and problems. Thus the Adolescents begin to challenge everything, and want to experiment with new things. They tend to become argumentative and stubborn.

3) **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**--- During Adolescence individuals face a crisis of identity and role confusion. They pay great attention on how other people view them. They experiment with roles. They attempt to find out what kind of person they are and they adapt the characteristics of other people to see if their characteristics fit them.

Adolescents behaviour is characterized by egocentrism and autonomy. The physical changes coupled with the new thinking abilities, make them over conscious and they tend to become self-centred. As the Adolescents begin to socialize, they desire autonomy that should be emotional, behavioural and of values.

CONSEQUENCES OF MALADJUSTMENT—

For development of healthy society, it is essential that the transition from childhood to adulthood is smooth. An individual should be able to take his new role in a normal way.

Adolescence is marked by dominance of unpleasant emotions, which are hazardous to good personal and social adjustments because unpleasant emotions tend to colour children's outlook on life and their self-concepts. They also encourage the development of patterns of adjustment that are obstacles in the good social relationships. If unpleasant emotions and negative thoughts processes about self are frequent and severe they can affect child's adjustment and may lead him into hazardous acts.

Since Adolescent behaviour is marked by risk taking and they tend to fall to peer pressure to experiment they may indulge in smoking, drug abuse and may also be involved in exploitation of technology for unsocial behaviour or acts.

According to the survey report published in Delhi Times on 16.09.06 there has been increase in on campus smoking in Delhi schools. A recent survey conducted by the Vidya Sagar Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences in 22 city schools reveals that 25-40% students in the age group of 15-18 confess to having "tried" cigarettes or alcohol, considered even drugs that can lead to a life time of addiction. Students also accept that drugs are finding their way into school bags.

Drug abuse, use of Alcohol and smoking are also examples of maladjustment in Adolescents. Along with this, the Adolescents are also prone to STDs and AIDs due to their urge to experimentation, risk taking behaviour and increased sexual activity.

DEFENCE MECHANISM OF ADOLESCENTS—

A defence mechanism is an unconscious psychological mechanism that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful stimuli. In Psychoanalytic Theory, Repression is considered as the basis for other Defence Mechanism.

VARIOUS TYPES OF DEFENCE MECHANISM---

- 1) DENIAL
- 2) REPRESSION
- 3) DISPLACEMENT
- 4) PROJECTION
- 5) REACTION FORMATION
- 6) REGRESSION
- 7) RATIONALIZATION
- 8) SUBLIMATION
- 9) LYEING
- 10) ACTING OUT
- 11) DISSOCIATION
- 12) COMPARTMENTALIZATION
- 13) PROJECTION
- 14) STEALING
- 15) LOGICAL ACCEPTANCE OF ILLOGICAL FACT.

ROLE OF COUNSELLING—

In today's times it is essential that adolescents are guided and they are imparted correct and apt information. As teachers, we should have great responsibility in guiding the youth of our country. Teachers have an opportunity to interact with students regularly and so they need to understand the mindset of their pupils and help them to adjust to the society in a normal way. They should look into the fact that adolescents do not succumb to the pressure and also they should try to impart life skills education to them so that they integrate the right life skills in themselves and grow into a healthy and contributing citizen of the country.

CONCLUTION---

In this paper we discussed about the typical behavioural features in adolescents. The Adolescents suffer from anxiety, mood swing,

lethargy, irritability, etc. This is due to the fact that they are always in stress. This is because of the developmental changes taking place in their body as well as their changing social role and responsibilities. We also discussed that Adolescents need to realize that changes taking place in their body are normal process of growing up.

Secondly, they have to be provided adequate and accurate information about sexual health. The teachers as well as, family members should also help in proper adjustment of adolescents so that they do not indulge in experimentation and risk taking behaviour. This is important for the healthy development of the society.

REFERENCES---

- 1) Hurlock, E. B(1978) Child development, Graw Hill: N. Y.
- 2) Kagan . J and Segal. S (1988): Psychology: An Introduction, Sixth Edition, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc: USA.
- 3) Parsons, Henson, Sardo Brown: Educational Psychology.
- 4) Chauhan, S.S (1997) : Advanced Educational Psychology, Vikas Publising House Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi.
- 5) Aggarwal, J. C : (1995) : Essentials of Educational Psychology, Vikas Publishing House : New Delhi.