



PSYCHO ANALYSIS – A FREUDIAN CONCEPT

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Abstract

The founder of psycho analysis movement was Sigmund Freud (1856- 1939). The present conceptual paper throws light on his views on different aspects of psycho analysis. According to him, each behaviour of the individual is the resultant of the dynamic interaction among three forces: id, ego and super ego at the conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious level. He had always considered the influence of the sexual drive as absolutely crucial point in his theory. Freud also placed great importance on two instincts: 'Eros' and 'Thanatos' as the ultimate cause of all human actions. He developed his own techniques of free association and dream analysis to explore and fathom into the unconscious motives of the individual's personality. Freud organized his personality theory around five psycho-sexual stages of development which affect the individual's whole life. He opined that all behaviour is caused or motivated even forgetting is also motivated. This paper also focuses on critical evaluation of Freud's theory by Neo-Freudians who deviate from Freud but claim to be psychoanalysts. Though Freud's theory of psycho analysis is vehemently criticized still his views continue to influence modern education.

Key words: Psycho analysis, instincts, free association technique, dream analysis.

Introduction

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was the founder of psycho analysis. He originally was engaged in dealing with some neurotic individuals and he was in search of the reasons of neurosis. The result of his long investigation gave birth to the theory of psycho analysis.

Freud's views on Psycho analysis

His views on mind:

Conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious

Freud has divided mind into 3 imaginary layers, such as conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious. These 3 layers are otherwise known as the topographical aspect of mind. Freud has given maximum emphasis on the concept of unconscious. He compared the human mind to an iceberg and opined that 9/10th of the mind is unconscious and only 1/10th is conscious and sub-conscious. According to him, unconscious is that dark chamber or deeper layer of the mind which contains wishes, desires, thoughts and experiences of which we are unaware at a given moment. It occupies the major portion of human personality. It is the storehouse of all our repressed and unsatisfied desires. That is why, we cannot study a human being by observing his overt behaviour only. Most of our repressed desires, feelings and thoughts remain in unconscious and continually influence our behaviour. Therefore, to understand human behaviour, we must know the unconscious desires, wishes, etc. of the individual. We can probe into the existence of unconscious through dreams, slip of tongue and pen, forgetfulness of the individual, solution of the problem received by the individual during sleep, analyzing the system of psychoses and neuroses.

Id, Ego and Superego

According to Freud, each behavior is the resultant of the dynamic interaction among 3 forces – Id, ego and superego at the conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious level.

The Id is the original system of personality; it is the matrix within which the ego and the superego become differentiated. It is unconscious in nature and has not direct contact with reality. It is inborn and instinctual in nature. That means, it always tries to satisfy the biological instincts and impulses. It is illogical and abnormal in the sense that it contains no social values or morality. Thus, it cannot differentiate between good and bad. It is always dominated by pleasure seeking principle. It is wish-fulfillment.

The ego refers to the 'I' or 'self' that thinks, feels or does. It is based on the reality principle. It is largely conscious and partly sub-conscious. It controls the satisfaction of illogical, anti-social desires by maintaining a balance between the id and superego desires. Thus, it is the logical, ordered or organized aspect of personality.

The superego is the moral, judicial aspect of personality. It is the conscience. It is the internal representative of the traditional values and ideals of the society as interpreted to the child by its parents and others. It represents the ideal rather than the real and strives for perfection. It represents the do's and don'ts of our society. The superego is conscious in its nature.

Now it is crystal clear that id is biological and seeks pleasure, ego is psychological and tests reality. The superego is moral or social life and seeks perfection. Under ordinary circumstances, these 3 different principles

work together as a team under the administrative leadership of the ego. This can be cited through an example – suppose the id of an individual wants to visit a picture just before the final exam. The superego says “no don’t visit the picture, you have your exam.” The ego makes an adjustment between the 2 wishes by taking a decision that the picture will be visited after the exam is over.

Views on Instincts

Freud placed great importance on instincts as the determinants of human behaviour. Instincts are inborn and constitute the sum total of psychic energy available to the personality. He proposed 2 types of instincts: life instincts or ‘Eros’ and death instincts or ‘Thanatos’. Life instinct is the source of the feeling for survival while death instinct refers to the unconscious feeling to die and that the goal of life is death. The life instincts perform their function through the form of energy which is called ‘libido’.

Views on free Association Technique

Freud employed the technique of free association to explore the unconscious motivation of the individual. The individual is asked to lie on a couch in a relaxed mood and to express his feelings, thoughts and desires spontaneously without any restraint. The role of the therapist is to a greater extent, a passive one. He encourages the individual to express his thoughts freely and facilitates free association. He helps the individual to achieve insight into his problems and conflicts.

Views on Dream Analysis

According to Freud, the dream is essentially a disguised satisfaction of desires that have been repressed during waking life. Dreams are far more meaningful and far more elaborate than they seem. Every dream has both a manifest and latent content. The manifest content is the story one tells in recounting the dream – the dream as its face value; but the latent content holds its true significance. Thus, Freud developed a theory of dream analysis and symbolization of dreams for the purpose of knowing the significance of a particular dream from the psychological point of view.

Views on Stages of Development

Regarding the development of personality Freud felt that the first five years of the child’s life are decisive for the formation of his personality. He organized his personality theory around psycho-sexual stages of development in terms of

reaction of a particular zone of the body. To him, there are 5 distinctive stages of psycho-sexual development: Oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital through which the child moves. He viewed that oral, anal and phallic stages are the most important stages, which affect the individual’s whole life.

Oral Stage (Birth – 2 years)

During the first year of life the infant’s greatest source of gratification is assumed to be sucking. The principal erogenous zone is mouth.

Anal Stage (from 2 to 3 years)

In the anal stage the erogenous zone changes from mouth to anus. Toilet training is the special feature of this stage.

Phallic Stage (from 3 to 6 years)

At this stage self-manipulation of genitals is the important source of getting pleasure. According to Freud, 2 complexes namely Oedipus and Electra complexes develop at this stage. The love of the little boy towards his mother and hatred towards his father is called Oedipus complex. The love of the little girl towards her father and hatred towards the mother is known as Electra complex.

Latency Period (from 2 to 12 years)

Freud believed that when child enters latency period there is lessening of the sexual urge and new libidinal development takes place in this period. Boys take interest in masculine things and ignore girls.

Genital Period (from 12 to 20 years)

The beginning of genital period is characterised by reawakening of sexual urges due to physio-chemical changes associated with sexual maturity. The individual feels pleasure in having hetero-sexual relations during this stage.

Views on Psychic Determinism

From a large number of case studies Freud developed a principle on psychic determinism. He opined that every behaviour has a cause, a meaning and a significance. But the organism and environment are so complex that any particular cause to an individual's action cannot be ascribed. In that case it cannot be said that the action or unusual behaviour is accidental. Rather it means that the cause of the motive behind this action lies in the unconscious. Freud was of the opinion that "all behaviour is caused or motivated even forgetting is also motivated".

Evaluation of Psycho-Analytic Theory of Freud

Freud has rendered valuable service to humanity through his psycho-analytic method. The society will ever remain indebted to him. Due to Freud's researches we have started giving more importance to childhood, because all our conflicts begin with childhood. Freud has played a vital role in making the present age the 'age of children'. He really deserves tremendous credit for his clear cut analysis of the unconscious motives. Karen Horney (1885-1952), a Neo-Freudian, asserts that Freud's fundamental theoretical contributions are the doctrines of psychic determinism, unconscious motivation and emotional, non-rational motives. But sometimes we note exaggeration in Freud's conclusions giving the touch of universality through individual examples appears to be a weakness of Freud.

For example, it is difficult to agree completely with the theory of 'Oedipus'. A large majority of healthy young persons do not find the trace of 'Oedipus complex' in their experiences of childhood. Regarding Oedipus complex, Horney feels that "it is not a sexual aggressive conflict between the child and his parents but an anxiety growing out of his basic disturbances, for example rejection, overprotection and punishment in the child's relationship with its mother and father.

Again, we do not think it proper to recognise sex instinct as the basis of all life activities. As against this theory of Freud, Adler (1870-1937) said it is strong will for power or the urge towards dominance and superiority that is the base of all human activities and not the sex instinct.

Erikson (1902-1994) also criticised Freud's views on stages of development. In this regard he developed a theory that is derived from psycho analysis but stressed psycho-social rather than the anal, phallic, and genital psycho-sexual stages described by Freud.

Freud's theory emphasized biological drives, parent-child relationship and unconscious feelings. It did not, however, give much importance to the cultural factors or social interactions. All the neo-Freudians: Fromm (1900-1980), Horney (1885-1952) and Sullivan (1840-1920) emphasize the influence of social variables in shaping personality. All of them, in one way or another, constitute a reaction a reaction against the instinctivist position of Freudian psycho analysis, yet each of the theorists acknowledges their indebtedness to the seminal thinking of Freud. In general they enlarge the scope of Freudian psychology by providing room for the social determinants of personality.

Allport (1897-1967) considers Freud's contributions as "unique and epoch- making formulations and observes that ever since psycho analysis has served as one and the only pivot for all through going dynamic psychologists."

Freud's Views and its Impact on Education

Psycho analysis has given rise to many movements and practices which have provided a stimulus to new education. It has changed the concept and aims of education. Education is no longer considered to be achieved through external regulatory means such as punishment and rewards. The aim of education is the development of the whole personality, the development of emotions for socially desirable purpose.

Psycho analysis has laid stress on the importance of the child's early experiences in the process of education. Early experiences upto the age of five years lay down the foundation of personality of the child. This implies that the early school years especially the pre-school years and the elementary school years must be made as enjoyable and as productive as possible. Love, affection and sympathy in early childhood develop positive attitudes in the child towards life. On the other hand, punishment and other negative reinforces create problems.

Freud discovered unconscious motivation which plays important role in the process of learning. Without motivation no learning is possible. Therefore, the success of a teacher lies in motivating children to learn.

Psycho analysis has laid down great importance to the process of catharsis. So importance to emotions has been emphasized in the process of education. Children should get opportunities to express their emotions and motivates freely in the class and outside the class. Curricular and co-curricular activities should be given due importance in school so that pent up feelings of the children may be released.

Psycho analysis has thrown light on the causes of maladjustment in children. The teacher should understand the causes of maladjustment and should try to avoid the situations that are responsible for the child's maladjustment.

The learning materials connected with unpleasant or painful experiences are likely to be forgotten. So it is the duty of the teacher to see that learning situation must be accompanied by satisfying consequences, so that learning will be more pleasurable and effective.

Teacher plays a significant role in the life of students. He can influence the behaviour of his students in interpersonal relationship, and can form positive attitudes towards life. The teacher should be positive and concentrate on what students can do.

It has stressed the importance of play in the education of children. This emphasis on play has given rise to play therapy as an important technique in the treatment of scholastic and emotional problems.

Psycho analysis brings out the importance of proper environment for the education of children. The environment in the school and home should be such as to reduce the chances of repression and increase the

chances of sublimation. It should provide opportunities for spontaneous and creative activities for all sublimations. It has given impetus to such movements as 'child guidance', 'mental hygiene', 'paedo-centricism' and 'freedom of the child'; Thus, what is progressive in New Education can be traced to the influence of psycho analysis.

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