



Negative Behavioural Change In Youth - A Psychological Study: Christian Ministry Perspective

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate the negative behavioural change in youth and its impact on the life of an individual, in the family and society. How a youth would get drifted from right and positive behaviour to the negative behaviour. Due to the negative behaviour the youth in early age going through wrong thinking, bad feelings, emotional stress, and low self-esteem and psychological depression. At the same time what are the ways and means to overcome the negative behavioural attitude. The society and the Church needs to have concern and to serve the youth when they go through the behavioural change at the right age. The therapies are available for counselling the youth from their negative behaviour to be changed to the positive behaviour. The whole life is all about the behaviour. When the behaviour is good then the family, the society and the nation would be good and pleasant. Therefore, in this article author tried to bring out the psychological study of the youth from their negative behavioural change.

Index Terms - Youth, Tinking, Feeling, Emotions, Negative behaviour, Positive behaviour, Psychological depression

1. Introduction

There is a drastic behavioural change in the lives of youth in many families of Indian communities especially in Christian communities. The changes are found in their thinking, feeling, and behaviour. Behavioural change is important in the youth when they grow physically, but if it is in a negative way there comes the problem. The development of the society or future nation or nation building is based on the proper and positive behaviour of the youth. Therefore, behaviour of the youth is most important. In this paper the presenter would like to try to bring out some of the impacts of how and why the youth have developed to the attitude of the misbehaviour and how can they be brought back to a good behaviour.

2. Methodology

The Methodology that the presenter uses here is Reality Therapy which has been developed by William Glasser. And the reality therapy uses a specific process in making the behavioural changes in an individual.¹ The reality therapy is basically strongly enhanced by choice theory. The presenter uses case study method in this presentation and to make this paper theoretical and the choice theory will be applied.

¹ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling*, (United States: Thomson Brooks/Cole, 2004), p8.

3. Meaning and Concept of behaviour

In the year 1931, John B. Watson has published an article calling for a radical shift. In which he argued mental states, the contents of the mind, are unobservable events which are outside of the science. He has expressed in the paper that the psychology is not the experiences of human but rather behaviour overt actions which can be observed and also measured.² But, the behaviour therapy was not well accepted before 1960s with in psychology, social work, education, or psychiatry. It was in 1970s the behaviour therapy has started applying to a large number of areas 'such as business, industry, child raising, improving athletic performance, and enhancing the lives of people in nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, and other institutions.' The theories, those have been learned, have explained the personality, but few integrated into practice of behaviour therapy.³ Glasser uses the analogy of a thermostat to explain human behaviour. The thermostat is used for controlling the house temperature, by sensing the actual physical quality of the temperature.

According to Glasser, the human mind also is working same as analogy model of thermostat. Human also sense the world and respond as the thermostat senses the heat of a house and responds. The perceptions are processed in the brain, and individuals chose how to respond to these perceptions. This is done in 'comparing stations' or 'comparing places.' The brain then organises or reorganises this behaviour, resulting in thoughts, actions, and feelings.⁴

4. Deferent perceptions of behaviour and misbehaviour

There are deferent perceptions of the scholars on behaviour and misbehaviour. The scholars like B.F. Skinner, Albert Ellis, Albert Bandura, and Abraham Maslow have their own perceptions on not only behaviour but also misbehaviour. Therefore, their perceptions on behaviour and misbehaviour evident.

4.1. B. F. Skinner: According to Skinner, haphazard contingencies of reinforcement are strengthening behaviours that jeopardise our survival, notably overpopulation and pollution. And he also advocates, that to avoid such a catastrophe, the design of contingencies that will strengthen appropriate behaviours without wasting essential reinforces.⁵

Skinner dismisses neurosis as another explanatory fiction that suggests the existence of mythical inner causes. Instead, he defines psychopathology as behaviour that is disadvantageous or dangerous to the individual and for that matter to other people, too. Such behaviour can result from poorly designed contingencies of reinforcement, but is more often due to punishment. The more frequent the punishment, the greater the number of behaviours that generate conditioned aversive stimuli, and the more inhibited the individual. A child may engage in temper tantrums because the parents have reinforced such behaviour with attention and concern. Or a busy parent may fail to respond to the child's polite requests and answer only louder calls, thereby shaping the child in the direction of becoming noisy.⁶

4.2. Albert Ellis: The Rational emotive therapy has been developed by Albert Ellis in 1950. Later this therapy has been changed as rational emotive behaviour therapy. Albert says that the cognitions, emotions and behaviours interact significantly and have a reciprocal cause and effect relationship and thus it has become a multimodal and integrative approach. He purely talks about cognitive behaviour. Cognitive means 'to know' or 'to think'. Our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and perceptual influence the type of emotions we experience and also the intensity of those emotions. Cognitive therapy is a treatment design to help people learn to identify and monitor negative ways of thinking, and to alter this tendency and think in a more realistic manner.⁷

² Robert A. Baron, Donn Byrne and Barry H. Kantowitz, *Psychology Understanding Behavior Second Edition*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 12.

³ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling*..., p280.

⁴ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling*..., p402, 403.

⁵ Robert B. Ewen, *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 7th Edition, (New York: Psychology Press, 2010), p305.

⁶ Robert B. Ewen, *An Introduction to Theories* ..., p303.

⁷ Zubeno Kithan, *Pastoral Care and Counseling*, (Kolkata: SCEPTRE, 2013), p321.

4.3. Albert Bandura: Bandura's major interest was on the acquisition of behaviours. And he believes that people acquire behaviours through the observation of others, then imitate what they have observed.⁸ And Bandura also says that one of the assumptions of behaviourist thought is that free will is illusory, and that all behaviours are determined by the environment either through association or reinforcement. To the behaviourist, abnormal behaviour results from defective conditioning, reinforcing, or modelling. The behaviourist functions from the position that if a neurotic behaviour can be learned, it can be unlearned also.⁹

4.4. Abraham Maslow: Through the Maslow's theory of actualisation regarding the behaviour, of the being of human that in every person there is an intrinsic good nature. "Given a good environment, this intrinsic goodness will be strengthened. Conversely if the environment is restrictive and oppressive, the individual may develop neurotic patterns."¹⁰

5. Theory of Reality Therapy

The reality therapy is specific one in its goals and procedures than many other theories. Glasser says that the goals of reality therapy emphasise fulfilling needs by taking control over choices in life. Assessment that has been integrated into reality therapy and is based on the principles of choice theory. According to Glasser the conduct of reality therapy requires both attention to the relationship and specific procedures to bring about change. In the process bringing the change, the reality therapists use strategies such as questioning, being positive, humour, confrontation, and paradoxical techniques.¹¹

6. Goals of Reality Therapy

The common goal of reality therapy is to help individuals meet their psychological needs for belonging, power, freedom, and fun in responsible and satisfying ways. The counsellor works with the client to assess how well these needs are being met and what changes should take place to meet them. Glasser says that when the symptoms are high in range then the client will be unable to fulfil his/her needs. And in order to fulfil their needs the individuals should not entertain others into their pursuing of needs. In order to help people to meet their needs the reality therapy takes an educational approach. In reality therapy no role play for unconscious processes and dreams and the determines how realistic the wants of clients are and whether their behaviour (i.e. doing, thinking, feeling, and physiology) is helping them realise their wants.¹²

7. The Process of Reality Therapy

Glasser conceptualises reality therapy as a cycle of counselling that is made up of the counselling environment and specific procedures that lead to change in behaviour. In the process of reality therapy there would be established a friendly relationship, which can be later blend into firmness. This relationship helps facilitate change through the application of specific procedures.¹³ There are few steps in the process of reality therapy.

- i. Friendly involvement: Reality therapy begins with counsellor making a sincere effort to build a relationship with a client that will sustain itself through the length of treatment.
- ii. Exploring total behaviour: Total behaviour consists of doing, thinking feeling, and physiology. Reality therapists believe that change in one's life or control over one's life occurs through doing.
- iii. Evaluating behaviour: The word evaluation consists of the word value. Here clients are asked to make value judgments about their behaviour.

⁸ George Varghese, A Study Book on Counselling, (Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 2014), p283.

⁹ George Varghese, A Study Book on ..., p288.

¹⁰ George Varghese, A Study Book on ..., p277.

¹¹ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling...*, p406.

¹² Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling...*, p 406.

¹³ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling...*, p 408.

- iv. Making plans to do better: When behaviour has been evaluated, the next question is what to do about it. Plans consist of doing specific behaviours that are often very detailed in nature. For instance, if my plan is to get up at 5:30 in the morning tomorrow, I should know if I have an alarm clock, where I will place it, what time I set it for, whom I will wake up if I get up early and so forth.
- v. Commitment to plans: When the commitment is made to the already prepared plans then those plans should be implemented. Reality therapists may use a verbal or written contract to ensure commitment. An advantage of a written contract is that it makes clear what is going to be done. And also, it is helpful to talk about consequences if the plan is not carried out as agreed.¹⁴

8. Strategies of Reality Therapy¹⁵

The reality therapy uses strategies of certain psychotherapeutic techniques in reality therapy, the following have been taken directly from Richard which I fully agree with.

- i. Questioning: Questions play an important role in exploring total behaviour for evaluating what people are doing, and making specific plans.
- ii. Being positive: The reality therapist focus what the client can do and takes opportunities to reinforce positive actions and constructive plans. Positive statements are made to statements of misery and complaint. For example, if a client says that 'I am angry about what Suresh has said to me today,' then the reality therapist say that 'what are you going to do so that you will not choose anger at Suresh?' The emphasis of the counsellor's questions is on positive actions.
- iii. Metaphors: Reality therapist uses client's language so that all the discussions will be understood by the client. For example, if a client says that 'when he left, it was like the roof fell on me,' the therapist says that 'what does it feel like when the roof falls on your body?' Here therapist is congruent with the client's personal perceptions.
- iv. Humour: Reality therapists, due to friendly involvement, try to develop with their clients, humour fits in rather naturally. 'Because fun is a basic need, according to reality therapy, it can sometimes be met to a small degree in the therapy session itself.'
- v. Confrontation: According to the reality therapy the counsellor does not accept client excuses and do not give up easily in their work, confrontation is unavoidable. In confronting, the Therapist can still be positive in dealing with client excuses.
- vi. Paradoxical techniques: In reality therapy, generally plans are made directly with the client. Many times clients do not follow the plans that are made. The paradoxical techniques are those that give contradictory instructions to the client.

8.1. Quality Community: The idea of a quality community, an entire community that has made the commitment to change to choice theory- a community in which you wouldn't have to be concerned that the people you encountered would be trying to be concerned that the people you encountered would be trying to make you do what you didn't want to do and in which the people all around you would think, before they did anything, will this bring me closer to the others in the community or will it tend to move us further apart? In such a community, when you would use choice theory to deal with others, you could count on others doing the same.¹⁶

8.2. Motivation and Emotion - Behaviour: Bohannon says that the scientific subjects of behavioural research concerned the various mechanisms involved in emotional expression. In the late 19th century Darwin applied his new evolutionary theory to behavioural similarities across animals and humans. He

¹⁴ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling*..., pp 408-412.

¹⁵ Richard S. Sharf, *Theories of Psychotherapy and Counseling*..., pp 414-416.

¹⁶ William Glasser, *Choice Theory A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*, (HarperCollins e-books), p285; Choice theory _ a new psychology of personal freedom (PDF Drive). pdf

noticed some striking behavioural analogies between angry cats, dogs, and humans. For instance, all of them threaten with open mouths with bare their teeth.¹⁷ Therefore, there is motivation and emotion behind every behaviour of an individual in his/her actions.

8.3. Attitude - Behaviour: Attitudes involve both affective and cognitive components. These components interact intimately with one another, so that cognitions about attitudinal objects are not felt to be meaningfully analysable without consideration of affective forces. Krech and Crutchfield define attitude globally as “an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual’s world.”¹⁸

8.4. Terrorism – Behaviour: According to Grotberg that the ‘terror makes the people their sense of safety and security and that is what it is intended. The terror wants people to be fearful and to withdraw, and to submit, and it makes people to give up their hopes and dreams, and also self-confidence.’¹⁹ The term terror relates to human behaviour.²⁰

8.5. Subliminal Behaviour: According to Dember the behavioural change will occur when a person is looking at somebody and listens saying something. He says that the message presumably reaches the viewer in a form that is effective in modifying one aspect of his behaviour without modifying another. For example, in response to the message “Buy popcorn” he does so, but without being aware that the message has been presented to him.²¹

8.6. Know yourself: Vijaya Kumar has compiled a good number of different topics which helps to learn about the behaviour and personalities of an individual by going through the self-evaluation questionnaire. Through the self-evaluation one can know him/herself and learn to live within the limits, yet to the fullest extent of their capabilities.²²

9. Case Study

A young adult Ajay (name changed), 24 years, from a village of Telangana State. He has two sisters, who are married now, and mother. His father expired three years ago. He has studied 5th standard. After which he joined his parents for agricultural labour work. He, at the age of 20, joined in fortune shop as a sales boy in one of the towns of Mahabubnagar district. His parents due to financial crisis left the agricultural-labour work and joined as daily workers in a brick factory in a distant place in Nalgonda District. Ajay’s parents were very much struggling for raising their children because of no agriculture-labour work due to the arrival of new technological agricultural devices and machinery arrived to the land-lords of the village. Therefore, they have decided to go for a distant place and work in the brick factory in Nalgonda district. The parents asked Ajay to join them, but he did not want to work in the brick factory, so, he denied. And he decided to work in a fortune/ration shop, in one of the towns in his own district, Mahabubnagar. He got a job as a salesman in one of the shops he desired by the help of his friends. He was successfully doing his job. His parents were also doing their work well along with two teenage daughters, adjusting with the problems that they confront every day.

Ajay was doing his job promptly and at the same time he was with the fellowship of his friends who had helped him getting this job. Several times they have expected and forcefully have taken drink parties from him. After a year, one day his parents were at home back at his village. He called his father on phone and said that ‘papa, if anybody comes and asks about me, tell them that you don’t know about where I am and you also don’t share anything about me and my job. If possible you better leave village and go to some other place and live.’ His father did not understand anything but realised that he is in threat and in some danger. He tried to contact him but no use. Ajay had changed his mobile number. Few days later, a team of people came to his house and enquired about his son, but Ajay’s father said he is not there. And we don’t

¹⁷ John Neil Bohannon, *Readings in Psychology Research and Applications*, (Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, 1989), p144.

¹⁸ Peter Suedfeld. *Attitude Change the competing views*. (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2007), p 87.

¹⁹ Chris E. Stout, *Psychology of Terrorism Coping with the Continuing Threat*, (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2010), p199.

²⁰ Chris E. Stout, *Psychology of Terrorism Coping with ...*, p201.

²¹ William N. Dember. *The Psychology of Perception*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p12.

²² Vijaya Kumar, ed., *Evaluate Yourself Psychology Professional guidance to help you live well with yourself and with others*. (New Delhi: A Sterling Paperbacks, 1995), p14.

know about anything. And mean while he asked the team what happened actually. They said your son has robbed two lakhs of rupees from our shop. If he comes and returns the money that's fine otherwise we would take serious action against him. Ajay's father said, we will try to find out where he is and try to make him to give back the amount, forgive us. Ajay's father tried to enquire of his son but was not able to find him out. People in the village were discussing on this issue and some people have visited Ajay's father and said why did your son does like that; you did not teach him the lifestyle properly. On the third day in the evening Ajay's father was seen in his agriculture field hanged on the tree. The next day Ajay, informed by his friends, has come home with full of grief and attended his father's funeral. He has surrendered the amount of rupees one lakh fifty thousand to his shop owner and one year later he paid back rupees fifty thousand. His mother told him not to leave home, but to work in the village, and she also said whatever we have we shall be satisfied with it; focus on your work and responsibilities that you have now; don't spoil your life. Ajay understood the reality of his family and life. He decided to stay at home. Since two and half years he is with his mother. His two sisters got married. He is fulfilling his responsibilities gradually.

9.1. Analysis of the Case study: The case study tells about how a person gets into trouble. The young adult Ajay when he was with his parents in his childhood the life was good, going smooth. When his parents because of the financial crisis decided to leave to distant place for a secured work, he decided not to go with them. But, looking at the life style of his friends who are living in a town, he also wanted to do a job along with them having their fellowship. He has adopted the ways of enjoyment that some of his friends have followed. He has undergone the change of behaviour of the community and attitude and motivational behaviours. Therefore he has followed the emotional and subliminal behaviour so that he could do the robbery of rupees two lakhs. He just followed his friends words and the emotions.

10. Moral and Ethical Issues Relating to Behavioural Change

When a person commits a misbehaviour or crime he/she will feel low self-esteem. Even if any family member does it the remaining family members would feel it. Then they will develop insufficient warmth, affection, failure to meet with people and their expectations, and inability to fit in their peer group or with the people in the society. They also will have negative and critical thinking, anxious, sad, unmotivated doubtful, harsh on oneself and think that I will not be eligible for anything, no value.

10. 1. Depression relating to Behavioural Change: When a person feels that he/she has done some crime then there are chances for him/her to go into depression. It is known that depression is a psychiatric disorder characterised by an inability to concentrate, insomnia, loss of appetite, feeling extreme sadness, guilt, helplessness and hopelessness. The characteristics of depression are interpersonal depression, physiological depression, cognitive depression and behavioural depression. Therefore, the person will have mental, physical, psychological and motor problems.²³

10.2. Stress relating to Behavioural Change: Stress is internal or external pressures cause a physiological or psychological response. Stress causes changes in almost every system in the body, affecting how people feel and act. Stress places a negative impact on physical, emotional spiritual, mental, and relational life of a person. Stress eventually may lead the person to drug and alcohol addiction or even to the suicidal act.²⁴

11. Response of the Church and pastor towards the Behavioural change

The behavioural change in the life of every human being beginning from the childhood is most important. But it, gradually, should be appeared in physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological growth of a person in a positive way. When the positive behavioural change is not evident then people end up in negative aspects, then there is a great responsibility laid on the shoulders of the Church. The people who are suffering with behavioural changes need special care and counselling. The church has to visit them and show them empathy. Church and pastor have to tell the person that he or she is being made in the image of God so he or she has value and their importance in the sight of God. God made a way for the humanity and He has sacrificed His Son for both male and female. There is a way for reconciliation with God and people. So, when a person comes to the word of God then the Spirit of God would lead him or her out from the

²³ Gilbert, Paul, Counselling for Depression, (New Delhi: SAGE Publication, 2004),

²⁴ Francine Shapiro, and Forrest Silk Margot, E.M.D.R. The Breakthrough Therapy For Overcoming Anxiety, Stress, And Trauma, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p176.

psychological, physiological and emotional problems. When Church take up the responsibility then there is a way out for the people who have behavioural change.

The reality has to be taught in the Church and in fellowship groups so that youth and adults should know about the reality of life, reality of family, reality of the fellowship, reality of the world. The reality would help them to choose their work and life-style. Even parents should talk the reality of their family and situations with the youth and adults, so that they can make up their mind and choose proper ways to walk in their lives.

12. Conclusion

In this paper the presenter brings out that there is a desperate need to talk and discuss on reality of the life and family in and among the families, because there is behavioural change in every person in the families. So, nobody knows what will happened in the next movement in the life of family members. Therefore, reality therapy and choice theory is most useful and helpful to the people who already in the attitude of misbehaviour in the process of behavioural change. The reality therapy and choice theory is really a meaningful and useful for the people to come back to their appropriate behavioural change.

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