

Genesis of Problems during Adolescence: Suggested Remedies for Challenging Period of Life

Dr. JAYARAM KANAKALA

Assistant Professor, School of Distance Education
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam-530003, Andhra Pradesh

Dr. SUJATHA NANDIKA

Assistant Professor, University College of Education
Adikavi Nannayya University
Rajahmahendravaram-533296, Andhra Pradesh

Dr. NARASIMHAM YABAJI

Pedagogy and IE consultant
Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh

Smt. K. PRATHIMA DEVI

Research Scholar, Department of Education
Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam
Tirupati-517502, Andhra Pradesh

Smt. G.KAVITHA LATHA

Research Scholar, Department of Education
Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam
Tirupati-517502, Andhra Pradesh

Abstract

Stanley Hall was regarded as the 'Father of Psychology of Adolescence'. He attempted to determine the effect of adolescence on education. Hall and Sigmund Freud shared the same beliefs on sex and adolescence. Adolescent is confused about the roles he is expected to play. He is neither an adult nor a child. This ambiguous status presents a dilemma and contributes greatly to the adolescent in identity crisis or ego-identity. As Erickson has explained, the identity the adolescent seeks to clarify is who he is, what his role in society is to be, is he a child or an adult? Teenage self-esteem is often affected by appearance or by how teenagers think they look. Teens' use of language also reflects their sensitivity to how their peers perceive them. Being aware of the issues of disabilities, problems and internal sufferings of adolescents, teachers can help them to the proper tools and resources so they can thrive. Parents also can support their children's special learning. Encourage the adolescent to share ideas and thoughts and to think independently to develop his or her own ideas.

Key Words: adolescents, children, complex nature, learning, parents, teachers, teenage

Introduction:

Physiological changes begin at puberty and reach to maximum by the end of adolescence which results in complex nature of cognitive development. It is a period of heightened emotionality. There are marked changes in the social interests and behavior. New patterns of social groupings take place. Their language development is influenced by the type of environment they live in. Adolescents' interest in opposite sex, physical hazards, social relations, adjustment with environment etc. are their important problems. Considering these issues, adolescence is regarded as *a period of stress, strain, storm & strife* by Stanley Hall. The adolescent has many needs which are peculiar to his stage of development. Adolescence need not be a period of bitter struggles. Much bitterness is created by parents and teachers who fail to understand the adolescents. Therefore, it is their responsibility to look

into their children's development in all dimensions and provide suitable environment to overcome the difficulties.

1a) Problems of Physical Development in Adolescents:

The process of physical growth and development plays a significant role in the proper adjustment and progress of the individual. Adolescence is the period of rapid growth and dramatic bodily changes. Adolescents feel difficulty in accepting their physique. They want to look glamorized but their appearance may be different because of the physiological changes. They are troubled by skin eruptions like acne and pimples. The physiological changes and secretions in the body create health problems to adolescents. The beginning of menstruation in girls and ejaculation in boys along with secondary sexual characters develop nervousness in them. They take time to adjust with changes and develop shyness, frustration and uneasiness for the changes. Some teens will develop these bodily changes more slowly than their peers. As a result, they may feel disappointed by comparing themselves with physically mature friends. This can lead to feelings of frustration and loneliness.

1b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Physical Development:

Parents and teachers need to educate the adolescent by explaining the biological processes that are taking place during adolescence. This scientific knowledge helps the adolescent to understand the bodily changes and get rid of the shyness and anxiety towards their physical spurt. Providing nutritional diet, involving them in physical activities like sports and games are helpful in proper growth and strengthening of muscles. They should be given knowledge of health, personal hygiene, cleanliness, various diseases and their prevention etc to keep them fit for growing.

2a) Problems of Cognitive Development in Adolescents:

Like in physical development, adolescents of the same age may not have the same thinking and reasoning skills. An adolescent's thinking may not match the adolescent's appearance. Cognitive development during adolescence predisposes young people to take more risks than adults, and taking risks is an important part of growing up. Adolescents may find that some academic subjects are easier for them to learn or are more interesting than others. They begin to question authority and society's standards. They begin to form his or her own code of ethics and develop intolerance of opposing views.

Learning disabilities such as auditory processing disorder, dyslexia, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can affect cognitive development. An adolescent struggling with mental health challenges may have decreased motivation and have a harder time with cognitive tasks, such as planning and decision-making. Use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs in the teen years is associated with increased risk for disorders.

2b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Cognitive Development:

Parents and teachers can help protect adolescents from unhealthy risks by being aware of risk factors. They can support adolescents by watching out for mental health warning signs and providing them with treatment. If teens are made to abstain from certain alcohol and drugs they are remain healthy and attentive.

Compliment and praise the teen for well-thought-out decisions. Help him or her in re-evaluating poorly made decisions. School libraries should provide excellent books for intellectual expansion. They should include the biographies of great leaders, adventurous and heroic exploits books, scientific and religious books etc. The teacher should arouse interest in them to read books. Vygotsky identified the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) which is defined as the gap between what a student can do alone and what the student can achieve through teacher assistance.

3a) Problems of Emotional Development in Adolescents:

With so many changes taking place in their brains and bodies, teens are often on an emotional roller coaster. Happy one minute, totally disappointed the next, moody and tired, taking risks and challenging authority are common features. It is characterized by emotional instability and heightened

emotionality. They have more anger, sometimes in the form of aggression also. It is evident from nail biting, tension, conflicts, quarrels with parents, siblings and others in their behavior. They are easily irritated in case of being unfairly treated, sarcastic remarks, intruding his rights by siblings, thwarting of self assertion, overwork, hunger, sleepless night, frustration, obstruction in activity etc. But, sometimes, he learns to conceal his true emotions. Stanley Hall noted that relational aggression occurs more frequently in females while physical aggression occurs more often in males.

The adolescents have high aspirations for himself, for his family and friends. The more unrealistic his aspirations the more angry, hurt and disappointed he will be. He feels that he has not lived up to the goals he set for himself. Inconsistency in parental attitude can cause confusion and uncertainty. An adolescent is afraid of the approval or disapproval of parents for the decisions taken by him. They have fear towards their future, their vocation, their health and academic achievement. Shame and punishment can make an adolescent feel worthless and inadequate.

3b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Emotional Development:

Encourage the adolescents to exercise as physical activity helps keep the serotonin (creates good feelings and happiness) levels up. Let them talk. Listen to them without judging and avoid giving them advice when they are not ready for it. Do not criticize them. Remember that adolescents are sensitive and may not take criticism well. Indulging in a creative activity can help them channelize their emotions. Gaining your child's trust is important if you want to help him with behavioral issues. Encourage them to be true to themselves and not take on a personality just to please others. Help him by telling him what you do when you are feeling sad, angry, jealous, etc. He can try those solutions to come out of his own emotional issues. You will have to intervene if you see them falling into bad company.

When disciplining your child, replace shame and punishment with positive reinforcement for good behavior. Remember to point out the things your child does right, not just the mistakes. Be generous with praise. The emotions should be properly trained and their emotional energies should be diverted towards the constructive ends.

4a) Problems of Social Development in Adolescents:

Man is born in society, develops and progresses in the society. Adolescents have the problem of adjustment with parents at home and with teachers in school. They may also have problems in meeting with people in offices, being alone in room, meeting with the members of opposite sex, speaking in the presence of elders and so on. The adolescent spends most of his time outside the home with members of the peer group and they have greater influence on his attitudes, values and behavior. Searching for identity can be influenced by gender, peer group, cultural background, media, school and family expectations. Schools put emphasis on developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.

However the adolescents are not able to use the skills in practical situations. The active and intelligent adolescents acquire them quickly and others become deprived of those skills, which later become a problem for them. Overprotection or making decisions for teens can be perceived as a lack of faith in their abilities. This can make them feel less confident.

4b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Social Development:

Staying connected with your teen can be an important part of supporting your child's social and emotional development. Your child will learn from observing relationships where there is respect, empathy and positive ways of resolving conflict. Get to know your child's friends, and make them welcome in your home. This will help you keep in touch with your child's social relationships. It also shows that you recognize how important your child's friends are to your child's sense of self.

Tell your child how you feel when your child behaves in different ways. Be a role model for positive ways of dealing with difficult emotions and moods. Talk with your child about relationships, sex and sexuality. Reinforce the positive aspects of your child's social and emotional development.

Celebrate their success. Adolescents accept responsibility for themselves and get some status. So you should introduce self governments in the school and train them in accepting the role and perform it successfully.

5a) Problems of Moral Development in Adolescents:

The adolescents face problems of developing values in harmony with those of the adult world and their own world. He wants to build his own moral code on the basis of concepts of right and wrong which he has changed and modified during his development. Building a moral code is difficult for them because of the inconsistencies in standards of right and wrong in his daily life. They sometimes knowingly deviate from the norms of the society. The adolescents change the laws according to their needs. Society's rules and laws are replaced by those of peers. A desire for special approval by parents no longer determines moral judgements. In this stage one's ethical principles are self chosen. They are based on abstract concepts such as justice, equality, rights and so on.

5b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Moral Development:

Teach your child about decision-making and make it a point to recognize when he or she has made a good decision. Help your child learn to focus on his or her strengths by pointing out all of his or her talents and abilities. Reinforce the values that are important to you and your family. The love for humanity and ideals should be utilized in rendering social services and community services in the neighbourhood and distressed areas. You should provide suitable environment for providing religious education in its true sense and moral education for practising moral qualities. Adolescents have greater ideals so the emphasis should be shifted from the rituals to ideals in their original spirit. The religious instruction and moral education can play a leading role in the proper development of adolescents. So teachers should set examples and create suitable environment for living truthfully and morally.

6a) Problems of Language Development in Adolescents:

Although children develop language fluency well before adolescence, their oral and written language use evolves over the teen years. During this time, the child should demonstrate improvement in abstract thinking skills, which will enable him to make word associations and to understand syntax better. Semanticity and productivity are the major characteristics of their language development. Speech defects are less in girls compared to boys. It is seen that the girl's speech is indirect and complex whereas the boy's speech is direct and simple.

Teens who have language development disorders may exhibit a variety of symptoms, such as forgetting, failure to take turns when speaking, incorrect grammar usage and poor vocabulary. Relying heavily on lectures and books to convey information, teens with language development deficiencies may fall behind in all their subjects. They have difficulty in organizing information and understanding instructions. Their social relations also may suffer if they have difficulty in interpreting body language or understanding informal language use, such as slang, idioms etc.

6b) Suggested Remedies for Problems of Language Development:

Books can be used in many ways to develop language and literacy skills. Teachers are suggested to avoid complicated words, long sentences and difficult instructions. Speak to them using language they can understand, and explain any new words. Speech and language skills do not just evolve on their own. They are part of a bigger picture involving social interaction, play, observation, manipulating objects, listening and attending. All these factors are working together and often, without one, it is difficult to develop another. This can build self-confidence and does not put pressure on them to talk and respond to the adult all the time. If the teen has difficulties still, a specialist may be able to help him develop alternate strategies for learning new information and improving his language skills.

Conclusion:

If we, as teachers, realise and visualise the problems and anxieties of these adolescents, which are growing larger day by day, then we would certainly feel like helping them. Basically, it will mean

fulfilling their “need for positive regard”, as Rogers puts it. Specifically, it means providing sex education and career education which requires to be in-built in every subject or study to the extent possible. Interest clubs, hobby clubs, subject clubs or activity clubs, all provide opportunities for exploration of reality and role models. Every teacher, to his or her interest, can choose to work with adolescents in a club and guide.

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