

Application Of Positive Psychology in Improving Mental Health of Adolescents in India

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is an individual's transition from childhood into adulthood during which physical, psychological and social changes take place. It is a phase when they are more likely to involve in thrill seeking behaviour which can give rise to physical or mental health issues among them. It is estimated that 9.8 millions of adolescents aged 13-17 suffer from mental illness around the world. The mental health of adolescents is a growing concern in India as it has the largest adolescent population. During this phase they face many challenges like searching for self-identity, deal with peer pressure, academic pressure, cyber bullying etc.

According to the Mental Health Survey which was carried out in 2015-2016, it was reported that there is 7% prevalence of psychiatric disorder amongst adolescents around the globe. Adolescents in India are suffering from depression, anxiety and other mental health. Globally India has the highest suicide rate.

To tackle the issue of mental health it is the need of the hour to apply positive psychology in one's daily life. Positive psychology focuses more on strengths and virtues of the individual which enable the individual to thrive and survive.

Positive psychology helps an individual to shift their negative outlook to a more optimistic view which ultimately helps in improving one's quality of life. There are a number of positive psychology interventions like practicing mindfulness, gratitude, self-awareness, realizing one's worth, enhancing resilience etc. which can make a person happy for a short term but if continued can improve one's psychological health.

Keywords: *Mental health, Positive Psychology, Adolescents, India*

The word adolescence is derived from the Greek word '*adolescere*' which means '*to grow to maturity*'. It is a transition between childhood and adulthood. It is a period where rapid psychological, physical, emotional and social changes take place. It is a phase where an adolescent is more likely to engage in risky and thrill seeking behaviour posing a significant threat to physical and mental health. During this phase they deal with many challenges like bullying, peer pressure, academic competition, self-identity etc. All this leads to mental health issues among adolescents. Further influence of social-media and digital world sow the seeds for various mental health issues as there is disparity between adolescent's reality and perception of future. The presence of psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and

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Received: October 11, 2022; Revision Received: November 17, 2022; Accepted: December 25, 2022

Application Of Positive Psychology in Improving Mental Health of Adolescents In India

stress at this stage is worrisome as it can lead to poor academic performance, lack of communication with friends and family, drug abuse, suicidal ideation, school dropout, delinquent behaviour.

Globally 10-20% of adolescents experience mental health conditions. With a population of 253 million, India is home to 21% of world's adolescents. Studies have reported that one in every six Indian child is affected with some form of mental disorder. According to the mental health survey the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in adolescents in India is 7.3%. These psychiatric disorders increase the risk of suicide.

Suicide is one of the major mental health concern around the globe. India has the highest adolescent suicide rate in the world. Various studies have found out that adolescents in India are highly vulnerable to suicide as they don't seek guidance in challenging situation and may turn to self-harm.

National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) 2022 report has revealed that 13,000 students took their lives. The main cause of committing suicide was failure in examination. The state which has highest number of suicide among students is Maharashtra followed by Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Gujarat. Further the number of suicide was slightly higher among girls compared to boys. Other reasons reported for death by suicide in children by NCRB were family issues, love affairs and illnesses. But various researches have shown that there is a combination of several stressors in a vulnerable individual that leads to suicidal ideation or death by suicide. All this indicates the vulnerability of adolescents and their mental health. Application of positive psychology in one's life can help in dealing with the challenges of life.

According to Martin Seligman, the field of Traditional Psychology (Clinical Psychology) focuses on identifying the root cause of the mental health issues. But Positive Psychology focuses on the strengths people possess that can be developed to make their life worth living.

Application of positive psychology in one's daily life is the need of the hour to tackle the issues of mental health. Positive Psychology focuses on building individual strengths, promoting well-being. It investigates in what ways happiness can make a person less vulnerable to any adverse mental condition. Below are the principles of Positive Psychology through which an individual can achieve mental well-being.

- 1) **Count our blessings** –Make a list of things that make us happy and people who mean the most to us.
- 2) **Learn lessons from negative experiences** –The past experience makes a person more resilient to the stress and helps an individual to overcome the adversity.
- 3) **Practicing gratitude** – Gratitude means being thankful for the things or people we have in our life. Practising gratitude consistently on a daily basis is an effective technique to reprogram the brain. The person will start focusing on the positive aspects of his/her life.
- 4) **Life skills** –It is a set of skills that enables an individual to use it effectively to handle issues of our everyday life.
- 5) **Assertiveness** –It is the ability to say no to request or to state an opinion without being self-conscious. Assertiveness makes the person feel confident and thus enhances self-esteem.
- 6) **Improving relationship** –Forming of social relationship promotes well-being of an individual. Connecting with people gives purpose and meaning to the life.

Application Of Positive Psychology in Improving Mental Health of Adolescents In India

- 7) **Be positive** –Stay positive in life. It will help the individual to maintain a sense of hope and optimism during the tough time.
- 8) **Experience positive emotions** –One should engage in those activities that makes them happy. This will bring enjoyment into daily life.
- 9) **Optimism** –It is the ability to view the world from a positive point of view. Being optimistic helps in coping with difficult life events. An optimistic person is always hopeful that their efforts will be fruitful and effective.
- 10) **Focusing on one's strength** –Research have found that identifying our strengths and using them effectively can increase our happiness quotient.

Applying the above stated principles of positive psychology and practicing on daily basis by adolescents in their life will help them to achieve a balanced mind. It further helps them to develop traits like integrity, resilience, high self-esteem and optimism. These traits can be applied by adolescents and will ultimately help them to attain a meaningful life. It can further help them in finding better strategies for managing mental illness, correcting negative behaviour and increasing their happiness and productivity.

CONCLUSION:

Positive psychology can significantly contribute to enhance the mental health of adolescents in India by addressing the unique challenges faced by them. It helps adolescents discover their strengths and navigate complexities, this will boost the self-esteem and confidence. Integrating the principles of positive psychology in the life of adolescents can help them become emotionally resilient and ultimately improve their mental health.

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Application Of Positive Psychology in Improving Mental Health of Adolescents In India

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Acknowledgments

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed to ensuring this paper in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be mentioned.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Chavda A.J (2022). Application Of Positive Psychology in Improving Mental Health of Adolescents In India. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 7(4), 140-143. DIP: 18.02.021/20220704, DOI: 10.25215/2455/0704021