

ISSN: 2349-2147



Modern Research Studies

Editor-in-Chief
Gyanabati Khuraijam

**An International
Journal of
Humanities and Social
Sciences**

An Indexed & Refereed e-Journal

www.modernresearch.in

**Title: New Perspective in Mental Health: Motive
Gratification versus Spiritual Thinking**

Author/s: Preeti Wadhvani

**Volume 1, Issue 2
September 2014**

pp. 162–170.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles/contributions published in the journal are solely the author's. They do not represent the views of the Editors.

Email: editor@modernresearch.in
mrsejournal@gmail.com

Managing Editor: Yumnam Oken Singh

New Perspective in Mental Health: Motive Gratification versus Spiritual Thinking

Dr. PREETI WADHWANI

Assistant Professor

Department of Education

Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, India

Abstract: Mental health of an individual is a holistic purview of his personality that is not only important for his psychological well-being but also is vital for his physiological health, and collectively impacts the direction of growth of a civilization. So far, the mental problems have been explained as the result of prolonged obstructed motives and non-gratification of individual's needs. Human thinking abilities are factors that play a vital role in ascertaining human behaviour in face of obstructions. Other than the previously established rational and emotional dimensions, the spiritual dimension of thinking has emerged as a crucial determinant of sound mental health in an individual. This conceptual paper attempts to view and explain the concept of mental health with a new perspective in the light of recent studies in the field of neuroscience focusing upon the thinking abilities of human beings.

Keywords: mental health, depression, gratification, higher thinking abilities, behaviour, spiritual thinking.

Introduction

Mental Health of human being signifies their overall well being, referring to those behavioural patterns, perceptions and feelings of individuals that determine their overall level of effectiveness, success and excellence in functioning. On the positive side, it entails one's adjustment, emotional stability, sense of security, confidence and

positive self attitude. Ill mental health is depicted by psychotic and neurotic disorders emerging from maladjustment of an individual.

Researches state an alarming increase in mental health problems in human beings despite wealth, health and technological facilities growing at an unprecedented rate. Irrespective of all gains in culture, most people experience a reinforced sense of helplessness, isolation and stress. Victor Frankl (1985) in late nineteen fifties stated that 25 percent European students show an “existential vacuum”, more or less a marked degree of a sense of pervasive boredom in life and it was found in 60 percent of American students. Covey (2006) quotes the finding of Harris interactive poll of 23000 U.S. residents, which stated that only 35 percent people had a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and why. One out of five was enthusiastic about his goal and only 13 percent had high trust and cooperation in relationships with others. Claridge (1997) indicated 60-70 percent population in developed countries is thought to suffer from some degree of schizoid personality disorders including depression, fatigue, stress, alcoholism, eating disorders, and suicidal tendency.

Is Motive Gratification a Determinant of Sound Mental Health?

Psychologically explained, when a need generated or goal directed motive is obstructed by a barrier it results in frustration. A prolonged situation of this kind has hitherto been accepted as the cause of maladjustment or disequilibrium in the mental health leading to states of stress and other neurotic and psychotic disorders. The issue to be focused upon here is, if motive gratification is the determining factor of one's sound mental health, then in current times the cases of ill mental health should have been on decline as man is equipped with advanced aids in the present civilization like never before and is in a position to fulfill his motives to a greater extent. The improved standard of living has made it possible for him to rise up on the ladder and also satisfy his psychological and sociological needs other than physiological ones.

Hence, this is a strong pointer that motive gratification or motive obstruction is not the crucial determinant in individual's adjustment and mental health. Further, people within the same situation

with similar needs and alternatives possess different mental states in face of motive obstruction, which again indicates towards some other ability that gives different direction to the behaviour in similar situations. In face of obstruction and non-gratification of motive, one may use defence mechanisms to adjust, or succumb to the situation showing disorders in behavior. But there may be a few who rise above the situation with a holistic zeal to transform the situation without getting into a disturbed mental state.

Crucial Role of Thinking Abilities

This indicates towards a significant determinant of sound mental health, ‘the thinking ability’ that guides the direction of behaviour. The motive doesn’t give the direction to the behaviour, Genetics and Environment do influence the behaviour but it’s the thinking abilities of the individual that determines the direction of one’s behaviour. Studies in cognitive neuroscience have proved the existence of rational and emotional thinking in human beings with dedicated neural centres in the brain. An individual’s behaviour in a situation reflects the input from both the rational and emotional thinking process as there is a significant, moderate and positive relationship between Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient (King and DeCicco, 2009) and both work in a coordinated and integrated way (Damasio, 1996). When behaviour emerging from motives doesn’t get input from both rational and emotional thinking in an integrated way and any one of these abilities gives more to the behaviour, it results in a disturbed response indicating unsound mental health.

For example, the need to accomplish/achieve if obstructed, the subsequent behaviour that may follow can be that one might feel sad and try to cope up with the setback in socially approved ways using defence mechanisms to get adjusted. But a consequent state of depression shows imbalance of reason and emotion. Further, accomplishment can result in joy but a state of euphoria subsequently following the accomplishment despite motive gratification indicates ill mental health, as the behaviour isn’t getting in an integrated and coordinated way from rational and emotional centres of the brain. Similarly, curiosity if obstructed can result in a consequent state of

phobia for the unachieved goal indicating the un-integrated reason and emotion in behaviour. If successful fulfillment of motive is followed by a consequent state of obsession, where mind is continuously haunted by the idea, it again indicates ill mental health in a situation of motive gratification.

These conditions can be attributed to an inability to integrate the rational and emotional thinking due to non-connectivity with the integrating factor resulting in an imbalanced personality self. The behaviour gaining expertise from the rational and effectiveness from emotional thought is more balanced when the input from both is unified and coordinated, making the coordinating factor more important than the other two. This indicates towards the presence of an integrating and coordinating factor which pertains to another dimension of thinking giving psychic wholeness to human beings.

The integrated cognitive and emotional thinking abilities enveloped as intelligence soon appeared to be a shallow paradigm as the IQ-EQ model fell short in explaining the complex behaviour in totality and the physiological-psychological well being in human beings. Researches explore that despite sound cognitive-emotional state, improved standard of living, and all gains in technology most, people are found to be distracted, frustrated, and bogged down and not thriving in their life.

The philosophical causes were clearly seen gaining prominence over the physiological and psychological ones in explaining the holistic well being of individuals. Psychologists asserted to highlight the previous imbalance in psychology in the form of its preoccupation with repairing the weakness in life and catalysed the change to amplify the strength and virtue by tapping the set of buffers of positive human traits already present in them to fight with the problem (Seligman, 2002). Searching the human potential, it was indicated that sole reduction of negativity doesn't necessarily promote optimal functioning (Riskind, Sarampote, & Mercier, 1996; Snyder & McCollough, 2000) there is presence of thinking abilities in human beings to be tapped through intervention that can help resolve the negativity leading to physiological and behavioural problems (Gillham et al. 1995; Seligman, 1991). There

were witnesses towards a shift in perspective where the focus of researchers moved from studying the problems and illness to strength and potential in human beings which sets them apart from the rest of the species.

Spiritual Thinking as a Determinant of Tranquil Mental State

The important aspect of human behaviour necessary to mention here, which gives a notable turn to the whole issue, is that other than merely exhibiting coordinated balance between reason and emotion, human behaviour, while seeking solution to the crisis, has the potential to super function rising above reason and emotion maintaining positive mental health in face of obstructions. Thinking in human beings can rise above reason and emotion, raise fundamental, existential and philosophical questions, long to have higher meaning, purpose and direction in life, seek fulfillment by indulging in service oriented contributory acts, rise above self to connect with all existence, transcend the knowledge and experience to seek the infinite and unseen, integrate the vision-passion and principles with an exemplary strength outgoing all abilities.

Neither rational thinking nor emotional thinking can give the above mentioned abilities. It is the third dimension of Intelligence, which is transpersonal, integrating, transcendental, searching, persisting and transforming thinking that supports these abilities and maintains tranquil mental health in face of obstructions. It's this dimension of Intelligence termed as spiritual thinking characterized by relatively fast 40 Hz oscillations fully present synchronously across the whole brain, and deep within it as moving waves from front to back in awake, rapid eye movement sleep state and slightly present in dream free deep sleep state, giving the base to transcendence in thinking (Pare and Llinas 1996).

Gardner (1999) also pondered, while reframing his theory of Multiple Intelligence, upon "existential intelligence" explaining it as dealing with existential and spiritual questions but was hesitant to give it a place in his theory, as the neural basis of it was not available then. Simultaneously with psychology, there was witnessed a shift of

perspective in neuroscience too and it moved its focus from identifying brain's malfunction to brain's super function coming with findings of, dedicated neural machinery in brain to address the philosophical & spiritual issues, a criterion feature of the species (Ramchandran and Blakeslee 1998); discovery of neural basis of coherence and integration in thinking (Singer 1999; Singer and Gray 1995); consciousness proved to be intrinsic property of brain which shapes the perceptual stimulation from outside de-emphasizing the dominating role of sensory input in determining the ongoing cognitive process and leaving wide implications for understanding the nature of consciousness (Pare and Llinas 1995); scientific explanation of the brain's ability to transcend body, time and space orientation by the findings that the sensory input to the region processing information about space, time and body orientation in brain is blocked during deep meditative concentration erasing the mind's distinction between the self and non-self supporting transcendence, and self is perceived as endless and intimately interwoven with everything (Newberg et al. 2001).

According to Zohar and Marshall (2000), this newly discovered neural activity gives integrated, transcendental, holistic and transformed thinking that enables human beings to rise above the situation while dealing with it and enjoy good mental health. This assertion is further strengthened by the research findings of E.E.G. showing increasing coherent waves in a meditator's brain (Banquet 1973; Benson 1975), and spiritual thinking emerging as a significant predictor of low anxiety and psychological risk (Wadhvani 2013).

Spiritual Intelligence in Action

The legends exhibited this ability and transformed the world. Few examples are cited where this ability made people rise above crisis and maintain a tranquil mental health in troubled times and emerge with splendid changes. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was instrumental in establishing India as an independent nation, though he held no formal authoritative position from which he could lead people. His moral authority created such social cultural norms that it ultimately shaped the political will. Nelson Mandela won the Nobel Peace Prize for dedicating his life to fight against apartheid. Impelled by his

imagination and conviction, he could envision a world far from the restricted confines of his experience in prison for 26 years. Mother Teresa dedicated herself whole hearted, freely and unconditionally to the service of the poor and was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Stephen Hawking (1942-), Helen Keller (1880-1968), Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) are examples and many such others show a presence of an internal strength in human beings, which breaks all capacity limitations and makes them outgo their physical and mental capabilities. The feature of this strength is a firm belief that leaves every reason and feeling behind to pursue the goal in spite of all odds. It enables to do what rationally might have seemed impossible. This strength doesn't have its source in rational ego or subconscious emotion as both of them are driven and directed by it. Neither personal, logical, precise, rational thinking nor interpersonal, associative emotional thinking can give the above exhibited abilities. It is the spiritual dimension of Intelligence, which gives transpersonal, integrating, transcendental, searching, persisting and transforming thinking that supports these abilities.

Having crossed the industrial age and passing by the knowledge age, man has to prepare now to enter the wisdom age. There has been a tremendous rise in opportunities but challenges and liabilities too have grown manifold. An Individual finds it easy to fulfill the requirements of his body, mind and heart. But his spirit aspect gets ignored at large, which needs the greatest attention in the current competitive environment to emerge as a thriving tranquil contributing individual. The repercussions of this fractional approach to mental health ignoring the importance of nourishing the higher thinking abilities comes forth as behavioural problems despite flourishing conditions.

References:

- Banquet, P.P. 1973. "Spectral Analysis of the EEG in Meditation." *Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology*, 35: 143-151.
- Benson, H. 1975. *The Relaxation Response*. New York: William Morrow.
- Claridge, G. (ed.). 1997. *Schizotypy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Covey, S.R. 2006. *The 8th Habit – From Effectiveness to Greatness*. London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd.
- Damasio, A.R. 1996. *Descartes' Error*. London: Macmillan.
- Frankl, V.E. 1985. *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Gardner, H. 1999. *Intelligence reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gillham, J. E., K.J. Reivich, L.H. Jaycox, & M.E.P. Seligman. 1995. "Prevention of depressive symptoms in school children: A two-year follow-up." *Psychological Science*, 6: 343-351.
- King, D.B. & T.L. DeCicco. 2009. "A Viable Model of Spiritual Intelligence." *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 28: 68-85.
- Newberg, A.B., A. Alavi, M. Baime, M. Pourdehnad, J. Santana & E. d'Aquilli. 2001. "The measurement of regional cerebral blood flow during the complex cognitive task of meditation: A preliminary SPECT study." *Psychiatry Research*, 106: 113-122.
- Pare, D. and R. Llinas. 1995. "Conscious and Pre-Conscious Processes As Seen From Standpoint of Sleep-Waking Cycle Neurophysiology." *Neuropsychologia*, Vol.33, No. 9: 1155-1168.

- Ramachandran, V. S. & S. Blakeslee. 1998. *Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind*. New York: William Morrow.
- Riskind, J.D., C. Sarampote, & M. Mercier. 1996. "For Every Malady a Sovereign Cure: Optimism Training." *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly*, 10: 105-117.
- Seligman, M. E. P. 1991. *Learned Optimism*. New York: Knopf.
- . 2002. "Positive Psychology, Positive Prevention and Positive Therapy." In *Handbook of Positive Psychology*. ed. by C.R. Sydnor & S.J. Lopez. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Singer, W. 1999. "Striving for Coherence." *Nature*, 397: 391-393.
- Singer, W. & C.M. Gray. 1995. "Visual Feature Integration and the Temporal Correlation Hypothesis." *Annual Reviews of Neuroscience*, 18: 555-586.
- Snyder, C. R. & M.E. McCollough. 2000. "A Positive Psychology Field of Dreams: "If you build it, they will come...." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 19: 151-160.
- Wadhvani, P. 2013. "Factor Analysis Study of Rational Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Spiritual Intelligence, Psychological Risk, Change Proneness, Anxiety, Attitude towards Teaching, and Values of Teachers of M.P." Unpublished Thesis (Education). Indore, MP: Devi Ahilya University.
- Zohar, D. and I. Marshall. 2000. *Spiritual Intelligence – The Ultimate Intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.