

TEENAGE CRISIS & ITS RESOLUTIONS

A Seminar Paper at World Vision Sponsored "SUMMER CAMP" at Amber: By Dr. H. D. Angam

INTRODUCTION:

Normally young people of age 12-23 are identified as adolescence or youth. Adolescence is a period of transition. This is a period of changes i.e. period of dependency to independency. During this period, individual try to undergo new formation, restructure and establishment of his/her own identity. This is also a period of preparation for entering adulthood.

Adolescence is further divided into three stages i.e. early adolescence (12-15), middle adolescence (16-18), and late adolescence (19-23).

Some of the characteristic traits are given below:

- (a) **Early Adolescence** : > Conscious of their physical appearance
 - > Want independent in life
 - > Desire to belong to their own peer/group.
 - > Have many religious doubts
 - > Develop the capacity to think in abstract things
 - > Often experience emotional ups and downs.
- (b) **Middle Adolescence**: > Establishing personal identity in society
 - > Like arguments and debate
 - > Growing struggle with sexuality
 - > Friendship/relationship became more important to the individual
- (c) **Late Adolescence**: > Have a sense of independency
 - > Interest becomes specialized
 - > Wide social interest
 - > Seek practical knowledge
 - > Want to be a leader
 - > Longing for companionship of the opposite sex
 - > Realistic in taking decision for the entire future

THE NEED ISSUES OF YOUTH

There are essentially three important "need issues" among the teenage today.

- (a) **Self-Hatred**: This is expressed in feelings of worthlessness, self-criticism and loneliness. Some of the factor could be – feeling of personal failure, lack of self-confidence, loneliness resulting from a low self esteem, bothersome class room relationship, and academic problems in study, concern over family relationships, and anxiety over one's relationship to God.

Love and concern are the two key factors that need to help them positive attitude toward self. A warm relationship can make self-free from destructive feeling of self hatred.

- (b) **Psychological Orphans**: many teenagers are preoccupied with distressing family situations. The following are some of the factors. Family pressure such as trouble relationship with one of the parents, poor communication between the parent or among the family members, lack of closeness in the family, lack of social concern, unresponsive to the need of others.
- (c) **Social Protest (Outrage)**: Socially motivated teenagers display an important characteristic trait in the society/ community. The traits are as follow; humanitarian concern especially toward the suffering people, a desire to change in specific areas, involvement in helping activities, concern with national issues, and criticism of the institutional set up i.e. church, club or any organization.

Young people should be given an opportunity to express and invite them to decision making. They need to be heard and appreciated their views and observations. This practical and personal involvement will help them a potential Hero and Heroine in building social upliftment as well as social development.

It is generally believed that youth are inexperienced, inconsistent and incapable. So, responsibility will end up in chaos. Many parents complaint that their children (sons/daughters) never listen to them. They express openly that they are in the living hell.

GAPS TO BE BRIDGED

There are three important gaps that need to be readdressed.

(a) Generation Gap:

The segregation of youth on the basis of age is identified as the “Generation Gap.” In simple word, old thinking and new thinking. One of the ways to bridge the generation gap is to introduce “Apprenticeship.” The following points are few steps to introduce Apprenticeship.

1. Having them observe you while you handle a given task.
2. Having them work alongside of you.
3. Having them work while you observe.
4. Letting them have a go on their own.

(b) Cultural Gap:

Culture is “the totality of ideals, beliefs, skills, tools, customs and institution into which each member of the society is born.” (Anthropologist Heiberts)

The old folks are wondering the culture of today. They compared with their ways of understanding things such as mannerism, etiquette and social behavior. They feel that they are living with some animals in the home (not able to control). Today’s youth culture is also known as pop culture, rock culture or bollywood culture (Hollywood culture).

The culture in India is the direct product of religion and inseparable by nature. Young people no longer prefer to live in the parent culture. A young people feels the parent culture as “outdated one,” as well as full of do’s and don’t. There is a shift of fascinations attributed by mass media and print media of our times. The best principle in bridging the gap is “contextualizing and not compromising.”

(c) Communication Gap:

The communication gap happens when both the youth and parent have narrow or closed minds, thereby limiting their understanding to their own views. Many parents are closed to the whims and views of their children. And their children in turn shut themselves up, never to let the parents know what their likes and dislikes are about. There should be an open mind to receive without any prejudice. Communication is indeed the key to unlock the closed doors and bridge both generation and cultural gap. Effective communication removes apprehension and leads to comprehension. Therefore communication should be nurture and developed in order to bridge the widening gap of youth and parents.

TEENAGE CRISIS:

(a) CURIOSITY: A strong desire to know certain things. Curiosity may be broadly of two kinds viz. Constructive and Destructive Curiosities. Few common destructive curiosities that may be worth cited are (a) drug & alcohol, (b) heroine, and (c) opposite sex intimacy/ pre-marital relationship. Constructive curiosities such as: why the apple fall downward not upward (Newton)? Why water boil and steam comes out (James Watt)? Why is the body weight lighter inside the water (Archimedes)? Why and how the birds fly in the air (Wright brothers)?

(b) EXPERIMENTATION: When curiosity is put into practice, whether it turns out white or black, it is known as experimentation. Nike motto is “Do it.”

(c) FALL OUT/ RESULT: When destructive curiosities are being experimented, the outcome is painful experiences. It is like the sting of scorpion or like venomous snake bite. There is hardship and suffering afterward.

RESOLUTIONS:

- (a) Self decision is fatal.
- (b) Decision through peer pressure is more fatal
- (c) Decision with Parental approval proves to be lasting.

Two Universal Teenage Problems:

(a) Love affair: Love is not at all bad if used in proper time. Untimely love affair, such as puppy love affair is destructive.

(b) Luxurious Lifestyle: Living hi-fy lifestyle at the expense of parental purse is the source of family problems. When you can earn yourself, live the way you like without burdening your parents

Mathew, Ramesh B. *Understanding Christian Youth Ministry*, Shantinagar, Bangalore: IEM, 1996.

Doungel Henkholun. *Youth Trend*, Zion Street, Central Lamka: Thawnsaau Publication Trust Inc, 2004.