



## **EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH**

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### **Abstract:**

Mental health is one of the important factor in all round development of a student. People who are mentally healthy are in control of their emotions and their behavior. They are able to handle life's challenges, build strong relationships, and recover from setbacks. This article will focus on the different aspects of mental health, theoretical background of emotions, effect of emotions on behavior, mental health of students and supportive efforts that should be taken by schools and teachers for development of mental health of students.

**Keywords:** *“Mental Health” (MH), Emotions, Emotional Intelligence.*

### **Introduction:**

‘India’s destiny is being shaped in the classrooms’ is the statement of Kothari Commission (1964-1966). That means our students are the future of our nation. Nowadays, due to vast progress in science and technology, everyone has a bottomless sea of information and knowledge in front of us. Use of this knowledge and technology by these students with positive way is essential. For this purpose their proper mental development is required.

Our father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi said that all round development is the physical, mental, moral, social and psychological development of student. All round development can be done by three ways. Cognitive development, which is related to intelligence of students; psychomotor development, which is related to different skills in students; and affective development, which is related to emotions of students.

Proper development of different emotions like love, interest, attitude in students will lead to good mental health of student. Overall good health of student is not merely the absence of disease but it means the proper functioning of the physical parts of the body, chemical reactions

inside the body and the harmonious functions of the body. Thus, good health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

So we should focus on “Mental Health” of student along with his physical health. Mental health problems in India are growing in leaps and bounds. So development of mental health is an urgent need for all round development and healthy growth of students.

### **Objectives:**

- 1.To discuss different aspects of mental health.
- 2.To discuss what type of education is essential for proper mental health.
- 3.To suggest various activities for strengthening mental health of students through education.

### **Conceptual definition of Keywords:**

- 1.Mental Health (MH): A state of well-being in which the individual realize his/her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his/her community – W.H.O.(1948)
- 2.Emotions: It is a moved or stirred up state of feeling that is the way it appears to the individual himself. It is a disturbed muscular and glandular activity – that is the way it appears to an external observer – R. S. Woodworth (1945)
- 3.Emotional Intelligence: It refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships – Goleman D. (1998)

### **Different Aspects of MH:**

To focus only on affective domain for proper development of MH is not the proper way. Cognitive domain and affective domain are the two sides of a coin. Without cognitive development, affective development is not possible. Thus, cognitive development is supplementary for affective development. Also affective development is related to emotional intelligence.

Good MH is not just the absence of MH related problems but it means

- 1) Presence of positive characteristics.
- 2) Ability to deal with stress and problems.
- 3) Good relationship with people.
- 4) Properly balanced mind.
- 5) Self-confidence & high self-esteem.

### **Theoretical background of MH & Emotional Intelligence:**

Emotion is a complex and difficult concept with at least five aspects- Motivational, biological, cognitive, experimental, and behavioral aspect.

- 1) Motivational aspect: Emotion can act as incentives and motivate us to seek out certain emotional states.

- 2) Biological aspect: Emotion includes biological activation. The body is fired up for action.
- 3) Cognitive aspect: Emotions occur within a context and the nature of the emotional experience will depend on cognitive interpretation of that context.
- 4) Experimental aspect: Everyone has own feelings in emotional circumstances. This is the most difficult aspect of emotions to deal with scientifically because like all experiences, feelings are totally private and unobservable by others.
- 5) Behavioral aspect: Emotions give rise to emotional expressions- facial expressions, crying, laughing and gestures of all sorts.

Various theories have tried to integrate these aspects of emotion, emphasizing one or another of them.

- James- Lange theory- Emotion is a feeling of changes in body physiology.
- The Cannon-Bard theory- Feelings, behaviors and physiological changes occur in parallel as a function of stimulus triggering activity.
- Juke-box theory- It stresses on combination of cognitive and arousal factors.
- Opponent- process theory- When arousal is changed by either a pleasant or an unpleasant stimulus, there is always an opponent process to counteract the first emotional reaction.

Thus emotions are related with various traits of our body. In development of human being, emotional intelligence is increasingly relevant because the emotional intelligence principles provide a new way to understand and assess people's behaviors, management styles, attitudes, interpersonal skills and potential.

According to Howard Gardner (1983), one should have deep understanding of self and should be able to predict his own emotions. Those who are having good interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, communicate effectively and emphasizing easily with others.

According to Daniel Goleman (1995), Emotional Quotient (i.e. a numerical measure of emotional intelligence) embraces two aspects of intelligence.

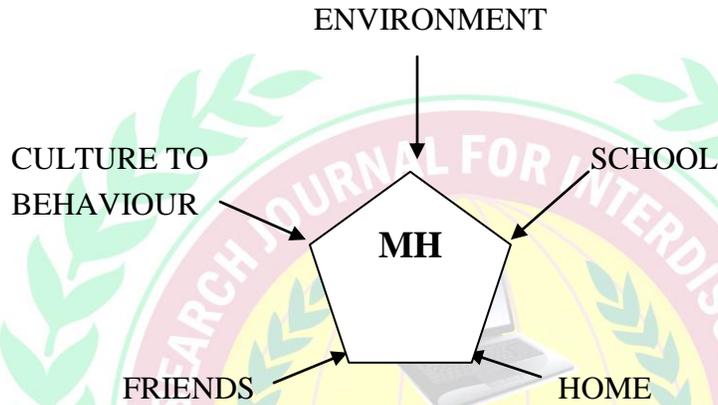
- Understanding yourself, your goals, intentions, responses and behavior i.e.
  1. Knowing your emotions
  2. Managing your own emotions
  3. Motivating yourself
- Understanding others and their feelings i.e.
  4. Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions
  5. Managing relationships, i.e., managing the emotions of others.

### **Features of Emotions:**

1. There are two dimensions of emotion, the qualitative dimension of pleasantness-unpleasantness and the quantitative dimension of intensity.
2. We have emotions due to our intensity of feeling. The depth of intensity differs from individual to individual.
3. The expression of emotions is universal in nature i.e. it is found in all living beings.
4. Every individual has his own outlet of emotions in his own way.

5. Expressions of emotions are related to a person, object, idea or work.
6. Sometimes the expression of emotions leads to the loss of thinking power.
7. Emotional expression is related to our instinct.
8. Emotions persist for some time and then they disappear.
9. Expression of emotions leads to changes in our behavior.
10. Emotions rise abruptly but die slowly.

**What affects the MH of student?**

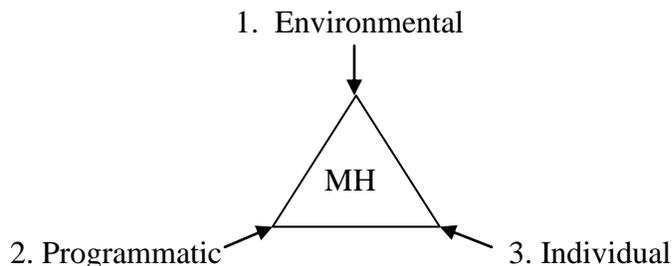


**Factors at home and school which disturb the emotional development of children:**

Some of the important factors that disturb the emotions of children are

1. Lack of security.
2. Economic disparities.
3. Faulty methods of teaching.
4. Fearful atmosphere in school.
5. Emotionally unbalanced teacher.
6. Traditional concept of discipline.
7. Poor physical conditions in schools.
8. Disregard of individual differences.
9. Lack of co-curricular activities.
10. Drawbacks in examination system.

Schools can support children's MH on three levels.



1. Environmental- Creating a supportive school climate that will enhance mentally healthy traits such as self-confidence, self-esteem and respect for others.
2. Programmatic- Implementing programs at specific issues and social skills development.
3. Individual- Providing personal counseling to students whenever they need.

If we understand our emotions fully, we would be able to control and to express them appropriately. Knowledge of emotion has potentially far reaching application in the area of MH. The ability to control emotions would have an impact on our physical health as well as our MH.

Depending on this theoretical part, following efforts should be taken by schools and teachers to improve MH of students.

**A. To improve physical health:**

The mind and the body are linked. We always say that sound mind in a sound body. That's why taking care of body is a powerful and essential first step towards mental and emotional health. Due to exercise, body get energized and also lift our mood. For good physical health of students, teacher should develop following good habits in students.

- To take proper rest.
- To eat nutritive food for getting energy.
- To exercise daily to relieve stress and lift your mood.
- To get at least 10-15 min. of sun per day.

**B. To make supportive relationships:**

This is the foundation of emotional health. So teacher should develop positive relationships of students with peers. Personal interactions of classroom teacher with student establish a close bond between them.

Love should be the basis of all work. Teaching should not be based on fear. Don't give them heavy home task that is often impossible to complete without help and guidance which is not always available at home.

It is also essential for a teacher to develop a positive relationship with parents as, sense of trust between teacher and parent will transfer to child. For this try:

- To arrange field trips.
- To give group activity.
- To do social work to increase interactions between students and society.

- To arrange different competitions to enhance healthy relations.

**C. Through different dynamic teaching methods:**

Whenever teacher takes students participation in teaching learning process, students get to know that they are valued to the teacher. Then they become more attentive. Respect for teacher in their mind increase. Also self-confidence in students increases. For this:

- Use discussion method for some topics which are familiar to student.
- Use problem solving method whenever possible.
- Use audio-video aids for clearing intangible concepts.
- Give proper examples which will be a model for student.

**D. Ask students to discover new things:**

Teacher should motivate the students for learning and discovering new things which increases feel good factor in student. Always try to engage them in meaningful and creative work. For this:

- Give them different projects.
- Ask them to arrange different events in schools.
- Keep a session in a week about telling what new they have learned in that week.

**E. Teacher should be a role model for student:**

As students are always following their teacher, teachers should be very alert in their behavior traits. They should be self-disciplined and should develop it in students also. Practicing self-discipline results in a self-control in students and it naturally leads to overcome negative thoughts in mind. For the emotional development of children, teachers themselves should be emotionally developed.

**F. To develop feeling of positive regard:**

Ask students to do things that positively impact others. Whenever anyone appreciates students, then it helps to build self-esteem. Welcoming and greeting the students on special occasion, putting up 'Did you know?' bulletin board in the hall for students to share important events, reinforces that students are valued members.

**G. Give students a proper platform to express their feelings in appropriate way:**

Develop student –teacher relationship in such a way that student should feel free and secure while talking with you. Keeping feelings of stress, sadness or anxiety inside can make student feel worse. So by interacting properly with students, you can make them free whenever necessary. Give proper advice and support if required.

**H. Adapting to change:**

Some children react negatively to change, particularly if they are experiencing emotional stress. So teachers should focus on these students and help them in adjustments at school or at home by encouraging parents to notify them of any unsettling changes at home.

**I. Equal treatment irrespective of income:**

Sometimes poverty is the cause of emotional disturbance for some pupils in certain situations. When poor children come across rich ones in the school, they may develop jealousy, worry, and inferiority complex, if they cannot make proper adjustment with hard realities. Heavy financial demands may also disturb the poor children emotionally as they are often unable to meet the same easily.

Resources of poor students should be studied individually with their education. Simple living should be a guiding principle in all the educational institutions.

**J. Creative and democratic concept of discipline:**

Traditional methods of discipline are faulty. Sometime schools are just like jails. Such discipline is negative. It may serve the purpose superficially but in reality the things are far from being satisfactory. There should be positive devices of discipline. Discipline should be creative and constructive. Children should be made responsible for handling their own affairs as far as it is possible.

**K. Provision of co-curricular activities:**

All the children and especially adolescents need provision for the expression of their pent up emotions and for redirection of their emotional behavior. In the absence of such provision, emotional stability is not possible. Various co-curricular activities organized properly can solve this problem quite satisfactorily.

**L. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation:**

The evaluation system is faulty whenever chance factor counts much in the system. It does not measure all round development of the child and causes disturbance. Evaluation should be more continuous and objective.

**M. Emotional control can be accomplished in one of the two principal components of emotion-**

General arousal: Child in need of emotional control are overly aroused. Relaxation technique is useful to control their emotions. One of the best ways to relax is by deep breathing- taking large breaths and slowly exhaling.

Cognitive appraisal: For controlling emotions, one must learn to control and modify his cognitive appraisals. We need to be able to control our thinking.

Two most common features of meditation and yoga are deep breathing and repeated thoughts about a mantra. The deep breathing will lower your arousal and focusing your thoughts on the mantra will prevent you from making any cognitive appraisal of your situation. The two techniques used in combination are an excellent treatment for reducing emotional stress.

**Summary:**

It is said that 'There is no development without health and no health without mental health'. MH is not only essential for individual well-being, but also essential for enhancing development of society. If we are concerned about development of MH of students, then

emotional disorders in childhood, and the factors that give rise to them, should be taken very seriously.

In order to strengthen MH of students, problems in childhood must be given a higher priority. What is important is that, at each turn of the way, we make the well-being and emotional health of children and youth a priority. Connecting with people around us, being active in various activities, learning different skills, making healthy social networks and being aware of present moment including our feelings and thoughts will definitely lead to good MH.

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