

Efficacy of Non-Directive Counselling for Enhancing Mental Health of Prejudice and Discrimination Victims

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Abstract: This research investigates the type and level of social discrimination and the mental health of youth from both government and private colleges and for this questionnaire survey method will be used. The research carried out for this study is exploratory in nature. The study includes exploring the types and impact of social discrimination on youth of India. The nature of data obtained for the study will be both quantitative and qualitative. Victims of prejudice and discrimination will be selected from the population on which the previous study has been done. Firstly, we must assess the mental health of the victims and the factors influencing their mental health. Then, there will be an assessment of the effect of prejudice and discrimination on their mental health. The intervention will take place with non-directive counselling technique to enhance their mental health for 3 months and so. After the intervention a post-test will be conducted to measure the difference on the mental health of the victims. The data obtained will be tabulated and interpreted and discussion will be formulated based on the findings.

Key Words: Non-directive counselling, Mental health, Prejudice, Discrimination, Gender Biasness, Irrational behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The efficacy of non-directive counselling for enhancing the mental health of the population that is affected by prejudice and discrimination must be measured and evaluated for intervention and their personal betterment. By the implementation of these techniques we are supposed to strengthen the psychological state of the victims. The intervention is necessary for the victims in order to have a healthy personality and positive lifestyle. The counselling for such victims can be either directive or nondirective, depending on their exposure and experience. Historically counselling has played a vital role in solving emotional and psychological problems of individuals, especially those with exposure to traumatic situations. Individuals seek advice in various circumstances and counselling is playing a pivotal role in helping individuals to overcome their present and future problems. Counsellor provides facilities to help people achieve the desired change or make the appropriate choice. The client alone is responsible for the decisions or the choices he makes, though the counsellor may assist in this process by his unconditional positive regard and understanding relationship.

Counselling is the assistance given to the client by the professional counsellor or psychologist in order to help the client develop an insight to the positive outlook of life. It helps in altering the perspective and comprehending the other side of the coin. Counselling is a sort of assistance and an interactive process between the counsellor and the client or a group of clients and it is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client.

Non-directive counselling: Non-directive counselling has been referred to in the literature as ‘supportive listening’ or ‘listening-visits’ (Gamble et al 2002) and is associated with the descriptors ‘client-centred’, ‘empathic’, ‘non-judgmental’ (Bartels et al 1997), ‘unstructured’ and ‘participant-led’ (Gamble et al 2002).

“The nondirective approach was propounded by Carl Rogers in the 1940s and influenced other individual and group psychotherapeutic methods. Nondirective counselling is also called client-centered or person-centered counselling. It is an approach to the treatment of mental disorders that aims primarily toward fostering personality growth by helping individuals gain insight into and acceptance of their feelings, values, and behavior. The function of the therapist is to extend consistent, warm, unconditional positive regard toward clients and by reflecting the clients’ own verbalized concerns, to enable them to see themselves more clearly and react more openly with the therapist and others. Pace, direction, and termination of therapy are controlled by the client; the therapist acts as a facilitator.”

Mental Health: Mental Health is a level of psychological state or an absence of mental illness. It is an ability of an individual to create a balance between personal and professional life and enjoy both in order to achieve psychological resilience.

According to WHO (2001), Mental Health includes “Subjective Well-Being, Perceive self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one’s intellectual and emotional potential, among others.” “It is the psychological state of a person who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioural adjustments.” (WordNet search: Princeton University, 2014).

General symptoms of disruptive mental health include: disturbed eating and sleeping habits, low level of energy, numbness, helplessness, withdrawal from social interactions, increased smoking and drinking alcohol, chronic anxiety, frequent mood swings, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships issues, self-destructive thoughts, overthinking, confusion, depressing thoughts, aggressive behaviour, irritation and frustration, etc. while healthy and positive mental health serve people to cope with stressing situations, effectiveness and efficiency in work-life, acknowledge their potential and efficacy, and make useful contribution to their society. People can maintain their positive mental health by fostering positive thinking, exercising and maintaining good physical health, proper sound sleep and healthy eating habits, healthy social interactions, developing and enhancing coping skills, act of kindness, etc.

Factors Affecting Mental Health-

- **Psychosocial factors** are influences that affect a person psychologically or socially and are the blend of certain psychological and social factors. There are multidimensional constructs encompassing several domains such as mood status (anxiety, depression, distress, and positive affect), cognitive behavioural responses (satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and locus of control), and social factors (socioeconomic status, education, employment, religion, ethnicity, family, physical attributes, locality, relationships with others, changes in personal roles, and status). Psychosocial factors and influences differ across individuals and may contribute to the development or aggravation of mental and physical disorders. Some common psychosocial factors that affect mental health and psychological well-being are: grief and loss of loved ones, physical health problems (health issues), depression and anxiety, loneliness, fear of failure, discordant family, severe peer pressure, financial crisis, low self-esteem, disruptive self-concept, uncertain trauma and identity crisis.
- **Socio-Cultural Factors** involve a set of beliefs, customs, practices and behaviour that exists within a population. It is a blend of social as well as cultural factors that influence a person in one way or the other. In general, Socio-cultural factors are customs, lifestyles and values that characterize a society. More specifically, cultural aspects include aesthetics, education, language, law and politics, religion, social organizations, technology and material culture, values and attitudes. Social factors include reference groups, family, role and status in the society. Some of the important socio-cultural factors that have an influence on one’s mental health and psychological well-being includes; gender biasness, irrational behaviour of society, stereotyping, class discrimination, intolerant attitude, partial ethnicity, social insecurity, racism, stigma, casteism, political values and disturbing interpersonal or intrapersonal interactions.

Prejudice: The term prejudice has been derived from the Latin word ‘**Praejudicium**’ which means ‘judgment in advance.’ (Prejudice and Discrimination: J.L. Chin-2004). Prejudice has come to have multiple connotations: i) A judgment or opinion formed beforehand without thoughtful examination of the pertinent facts, issues, or arguments; especially an unfavourable, irrational opinion. ii) The act or state of holding preconceived irrational opinions. iii) Hatred of or dislike for a particular group, race, religion, etc. Prejudice is an irrational and biased attitude (usually negative) towards a person founded solely on the individual’s adherence to a social thought pool. It is concerned with some Unfavourable attributes. It deals with certain unreasonable and judgmental feelings towards a person or a group because of some social stigmas. Prejudice is a resultant of a negative mindset that often leads to inferiority complex.

Discrimination: Discrimination is the response based on prejudice and can be further described as the behaviour or actions, usually negative, towards an individual or group of people, especially based on prejudice emanating from diversity of sex/race/social class, etc. Discrimination is an unfair action towards a person or a group often on the basis of prejudice. It is concerned with the unjust treatment against a particular person or a group. It deals with distinction, exclusion, humiliation, unwanted, offensive, and intimidation acts. Strong prejudice generally lies behind hostile actions; it is the overt discriminatory practices which exert harmful effects on the unfortunate objects of bigotry and hatred.

Strategies to Enhance Mental Health: Some useful strategies that can enhance one’s mental health are:

- Awareness creation
- Brainstorming

- Meditation
- Counselling
- Foster positive thinking
- Practice acts of kindness
- Create stress free environment
- Try to cope with anxiety and depression

Measures to be undertaken to Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination: Prejudice and discrimination as stated earlier are root causes of human conflict and on an individual level they have the notorious capacity to ruin personalities and lives altogether. Therefore, it is important to mitigate their impact and influence and to eradicate them from the society. Some important and useful measures that can be undertaken to reduce prejudice and discrimination in our society are:

- Acceptance and appreciation of differences and diversity
- Respect secularism and democracy
- Profess and spread the idea of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
- Inculcate the idea and concept of healthy discussion
- Focus on development of society and nation instead of individual
- Dissemination of information regarding human rights
- Development of laws and regulation regarding discrimination and prejudice
- Efforts to alter negative perceptions

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Alice H Eagly and Antonio: “Are People Prejudiced Against Women? Some Answers from Research on Attitudes, Gender Stereotypes, and Judgments of Competence” have wrote about positive attitude towards women being higher as compared to men in results obtained from samples collected in universities in the US and Canada. They have compared these findings with the results obtained from the Goldberg-paradigm experiments on judgments of women's and men's competence, which are generally supposed to be indicative of attitudes and stereotypes of people.

Harold D. Fishbein: “Peer Prejudice and Discrimination - The Origins of Prejudice” has provided an analysis of the evolution and historical perspective of prejudice and discrimination its transformation over the years. It highlights how particular transformative mechanisms are used to both activate and stop prejudice and discrimination from taking place or to alter these behaviours once they are deep seated. The book also helps us to understand the limitations in removing prejudice and discrimination and how we can increase tolerance and acceptance of those who perceive as outsiders.

George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger: “Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination” have analysed the swift changes in the field of research and study related to prejudice and discrimination. The study has also attempted to analyse the changes in the scientific perception of inter group relationships. The book focuses on discrimination in the context of racial and cultural segregation and attempted to define the concept of race from popular and sociological perspectives. The book also looks at the use of prejudice and discrimination for power and prestige in group conflicts. The book has also outlined the individual sources and cultural factors responsible for the emergence of prejudice and discrimination. The book talks about the various types of responses to discrimination and the consequences of prejudice and discrimination in terms of the resultant personal, social and economic costs.

3. METHODOLOGY:

Objectives:

1. To determine and select the victims from the experimental group, and conduct the pre-test to assess their mental health.
2. To assess the effect of prejudice and discrimination on their mental health.
3. To intervene with the nondirective counselling on the randomly selected victims.
4. To implement the strategies and techniques to enhance the mental health of the victims of prejudice and discrimination
5. To implement the strategies and techniques to reduce prejudice and discrimination among the youth of India.
6. To conduct a post-test to assess the difference on the mental health among the victims.

Hypothesis:

1. There will be an effect of social discrimination on mental health of the victims.
2. There will be a positive impact of intervention with the help of nondirective counselling on the mental health of the victims.
3. There will be significant difference between the mental health among the victims after the intervention.
4. There will be a significant difference between the results of pre-test and post-test of assessment of mental health.

Sampling:

The study was conducted on 30 respondents from the general population that is facing or have faced the prejudice or discrimination at some point of life. Sample was collected randomly by stratified random sampling method as it is a convenient method and gives accurate results which can be easily measured. The data was collected through questionnaires which was first put on a pilot study and later amended and elaborated.

Tools and Techniques:

For assessing the level of social discrimination and mental health of the respondents, following questionnaires have been used:

1. **Perceived Discrimination Scale**- developed by Williams, Jackson, & Anderson (1997). We have used the Indian adaptation of this Perceived Discrimination Scale is given by Dr. V.N. Yadav & Dr. Surajmal.
2. **Prejudice Scale Test**-developed by Dr. Rajiv L Bharadwaj & Dr. Harish Sharma (2010).
3. **Mental Health Battery (MHB)**: developed by A. K. Singh and Alpana Sengupta (2012).

4. ANALYSIS:

Data analysis - Statistical Processing:

Statistical processing has been done using tools like coefficient of correlation and regression to understand and establish relationship between prejudice, social discrimination and mental health. The validity has been checked with the Theoretical method found to be 0.83 and with Construct method is 0.66 and the reliability has been tested with the test-retest method is 0.69 and Split-half method is 0.94. 5-point Likert scale Scoring Pattern is applied for the manual assessment of the scales that have been used. The conduction of this study is objective by nature and individual administration is done. The significance has been calculated at 0.05 levels.

N=30	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation
Prejudice	84.32	881.25	29.68
Discrimination	86.77	886.50	29.75
Mental Health	81.70	128.40	11.33

5. RESULT:

Results: The results depict a significant difference among the concerned variables focussing on the inclusion and exclusion of the extraneous variables that could influence the responses.

N=30	Pre-test Observation	Post-test Observation
Mean	81.7	89.3
Variance	128.4	143.13
SD	11.33	11.96

- *P value= 0.037 @ 0.05 Level
- *T value= 2.186
- Df=28
- Sed=4.25

6. DISCUSSION:

Overtime, the goals of psychology have always been to cure the mental illness, reduce stress and anxiety and enhance the positive lifestyle of the people around the world. However, as the studies suggested, the focus has been the study of mental health and reducing the negative energies and strengthen a healthy and positive personality. Based on these earlier findings as well as theoretical consideration, this research study has measured the rate of social discrimination faced by youth. Other than the previous studies, this study also looks forward to understanding and assessing the factors responsible for the prejudice and discrimination. An intervention with the help of nondirective counselling have been done to measure the difference in the pre-test and post-test to assess the mental health and the effect of prejudice and discrimination on the mental health of the victims. Between the intervention of counselling sessions with the victims of prejudice and discrimination it has been noticed that the victims have faced different types of prejudice and discrimination based on gender, socio-economic status and community at different levels which have adverse effects on their mental health and have caused stress and deteriorate their physical health as well.

7. CONCLUSION:

The results depict that the objectives of the study have been accomplished, as we have conducted a pre-test and a post-test with the intervention of nondirective counselling to assess its impact on the mental health of the victims. With the intervention of counselling we have created awareness among the victims regarding the constitutional laws and regulations as well as their legal rights towards the discriminated behaviour of others in public places. We have also implemented the strategies and techniques to enhance the mental health of the victims and made efforts to reduce prejudice and discrimination in the surroundings of the victims to make a difference in their mental health level and spread positivity in near future. These efforts of intervention actualize the difference in the mental health among the pre-test and post-test results. The results show that the victims have better mental health after the intervention of counselling sessions and hence our hypotheses have been proved right as we found that there was an adverse effect of social discrimination on the mental health of the victims and a positive impact was made with the help of intervention of nondirective counselling and we have also found that there is a significant difference the between the results of pre-test and post-test assessment of mental health of the victims and this significant difference is a result of successful intervention of counselling sessions of the victims. This study has also been concentrating on recommendation of the techniques for managing and mitigating this discrimination from occurring in future. Moreover, the study is contributing to suggest measures and actions to be taken at macro-level.

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