



A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS ON MENTAL HEALTH POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

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**A CRITICAL REVIEW OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS ON MENTAL
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ABSTRACT:

The study aims to critically review the Islamic teachings on mental health policies and practices for the psychological well-being of public sector secondary school students. The major objectives of the study are to analyze the influence of Islamic teachings on the mental health policies and practices for school children. The study is conducted through purposive sampling technique for the selection of school Principals and senior Islamic education educators serving in public sector secondary schools in Punjab. Unstructured interview is used as a main tool of research for this study. Findings: The study concludes Islamic teachings provide a clear picture to streamline the mental health policies and practices for school children and concrete policies and practices in Islamic perspectives are essential need for the psychological well-being of secondary school students in any country of the world. In general, findings of the study are applicable anywhere for school education department concerning the significance of policies and practices for the psychological well-being of secondary school students and can also be used to improve the strategies for training school Principals and educators.

KEYWORDS: Islamic teachings, Significance, Psychology, Health, Policies, Practices.

Introduction

Gazorpur & Barkhodar (2003) investigated the question of mental health in the Holy Quran. They concluded that the teachings of the Holy Quran are very effective in streamlining the health policies and practices for the individuals of a society. The study concluded that terms used for mental health in the Holy Quran are, sakineh, ghalbe salim, hayate tayyebah, nafse motmaenneh, appearing in the chapters Fath, Naml, Safat and Fajr. Various studies concluded that remembrance of Allah keeps a person healthy mentally. The Holy Quran says: "Those are the people who have believed and whose hearts rest in remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest (Ra'd;28). A study at Sheffield University concluded that performing prayers five times a day keeps a person satisfied mentally. William James concluded that spiritual power is concerned with the prayers and recitation of the Holy Quran. Prayer is very effective in keeping a person spiritually healthy. Various studies concluded that prayers reduce the effects of stress and anxiety in the individuals.

Islamic teachings have particular emphasis on hope. Hope should be taught at school level to keep the school children mentally healthy. Similarly, dignity should be taught to keep the individuals spiritually

healthy. Imam Ali (pbuh) states that the individual who knows about the value of his dignity, he will find the world too small for him.

World Health Organization (2011) reports that 20 percent adolescents suffer from mental disorders like depression and anxiety at school level.

Swami (2010) determined that life satisfaction is attached with mental health of any individual. The National Institute of Mental Health (2013) determined that depression has been frequently perceived in the adolescents. In

various countries of the world, mental health has not been given such a preference and neglected at large scale. It has been reported that the mental disorders contribute thirteen percent of the global drain diseases (Mathers, 2008). According to World Health Organization Bangladesh (2019) in Bangladesh, mental disorders exist in adults and children and the ratio of effect of these disorders in adults is 16.1percent while 18.4percent in children. World Health Organization reports that, “about 7.5 per cent Indians suffer from major or minor mental disorders that require intervention of an expert” (India Today, 2017, April18). Similarly, China Daily (2018, May 24) reports that, “mental health specialists warned of rising mental health issues among Chinese children and adolescents”. According to Zhang & Zhao (2015)⁷ with the announcement of second national mental health work plan (2015-2020), China has paid more

attention towards mental health care (p-629). In Indonesia, the vision of mental health development program is, “Toward Healthy Indonesia 2010 Through Comprehensive and Integrated Mental Health Program” (National Mental Health Policy, 2001-2005, p-19).

The WHO (2013) elaborates that mental health policies should clearly define the strategies to address the mental disorders. Tilford (2006) elaborated that the major attention of mental health policies would have to address the mental illness. National mental health policy was framed in 1986 in Pakistan to address the mental health problems and issues. But unfortunately, this policy was completely implemented until 2002 (Karim et al. 2004). Unluckily, the assigned annual budget for upgrading mental health is very low which shows 0.4 percent of the entire budget of the health department in Pakistan. Mental health problems and issues have not been focused in many countries of the world (WHO, 2005).

Several studies revealed that school environment plays significant role in reducing mental health problems and issues but it depends on the geographic situations of the countries (Comer, 1984).

Islamic Teachings on Mental Health

Islam is a complete code of life that provides comprehensive guidelines regarding the mental health. Spirituality has an important role in healing

the mental disorders. Islam lays special emphasis on the mental health.

One mode of Islamic counseling is the healing through spiritual leader called, “peer”. Sufism plays an important role in healing the mental disorders. Sufis’ have played a vital role in healing the mental disorders (Jabbar & Al-Issa, 2000).

Use of alcohol and drugs cause the psychological and mental health problems. Islam prevents its followers to use the drugs and alcohol (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1997).

The Holy Quran says that, “They ask you concerning wine and gambling.” Say: “In them there is great sin, and some profit, for men, but sin is greater than the profit” (Quran 4:43). “O you who believe! Approach not prayers, with a mind befogged, until you can understand all that you say” (Quran 2:219.). Islam elaborates a very beautiful family with peace, pleasures and unity. Islamic family system is enriched with values and ethics that keep individuals psychologically healthy. Chahen (1999) highlights about the philosophical values that are based on beliefs for the happiness of the people. Islam pays particular emphasis on remembering of Allah in the whole life. The Holy Quran says, “Those are the people who have believed and whose hearts rest in remembrance of Allah. Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest) (Ra'd: 28). Islam elaborated well about how to address the mental health issues of the

individuals of the society. Therefore, anger is prohibited. Islam advises to control their anger. The Holy Quran says that “Those who spend of that which Allah has given them in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind: Allah loves the good”. (Al-Emran: 134). Islam emphasis on hope. Hope keeps the people away from the mental health disorders. The Holy Quran says that “Do not despair of God's mercy, for only the disbelievers get disappointed from God's mercy”.

Therefore, it's important to teach the school adolescents about the mental health in Islamic perspectives. Policies regarding the mental health of school adolescents should be streamlines in views of the guidelines and instructions of Islam.

Existing Situation of Mental Health Policies in South Asian Countries

According to (Humayun, 2016) in daily, “Dawn” mental health regulations can support to succeed quality in mental health care for the new generations in Pakistan. Mental health systems are established in various countries in South Asia such as India, Afghanistan and Nepal, where legislations concerning mental health were endorsed in 1987, 1997 and 2006 respectively. In Afghanistan, the mental health of an unpredicted number of students has been unobserved that have experienced serious

mental health problems and issues in the current war (De Pedro et al., 2011) Liu and Lu (2011) identified in the study that large percentage of the participants were reported with high level of academic stress in educational institutions. No more studies have been directed to explore the nature and causes of mental health disorders in Bangladesh (Hossain & Razia, 2018, p-3).

Discussion on Significance of Mental Health Policies for Secondary School Students

The collected data from the participants declare that a concrete policies and practices in Islamic perspectives are compulsory concerning assessment of mental health problems and psychological well-being of secondary school students in public sector schools worldwide. Most of the school Principals and Islamic education educators were agreed that mental health problems in adolescents was a worldwide issue and a number of secondary school students could be observed with some forms of mental health problems including loneliness, anxiety and depression because of low socio-economic circumstances anywhere in the world. Therefore, it is need of the day to train the teachers about the Islamic teachings on mental health. One participant shared that, “this is a universal phenomenon that mental health problems exist in the students belonging to financially deprived, physical and psychological broken families”. Similarly, another

participant replied that, “with clear and concrete policies, teachers can sufficiently support to overcome the mental health problems and issues in the students in the schools located anywhere in the world”. The participants were agreed that mental health problems in secondary school students could be reduced with special attention by teachers in South Asian countries.

Research Method

The participants were school Principals and senior educators serving in public sector secondary schools in Punjab. Unstructured interview was used as a tool research. For the experiences of the participants, unstructured interview is used as tool of research. Three districts were included in the sample of the study (Jhang, Chiniot & Sargodha). The participants were asked open ended questions concerning the mental health policies and practices at schools. The study was qualitative in nature. After collecting the data, thematic content analysis was used in which themes were identified to meet the objectives of the study. The researcher personally collected the data. On the basis of similarities and differences in themes of the collected data, data was analyzed to achieve the objectives of the study.

Conclusion & Discussion

The study concludes that clear and concrete policy in Islamic perspectives is one of the basic needs in school education department concerning the mental health sickness of secondary school students worldwide. The school Principals and educators need further professional training in Islamic perspectives to assess and to apply the strategies to overcome the mental health problems in the students including depression, anxiety and aggression anywhere in the world. The participants agreed that mental health policies and practices for secondary school students need to be improved within passage of time for the psychological well-being of students.

Schools play a significant role in improving children's mental health and preventing mental health problems. Teachers need to be aware of the significance of fulfilling their role in school-wide mental health care. It is also important to understand the impact of factors at four levels: school ethics. Schools need to manage the different aspects of the model at each of the four levels described in this article. It is also important that all teachers be able to identify the various mental problems and disorders they may face and implement actual approaches to deal with them. More information on children's mental health issues and how teachers can help in the School Mental Health Handbook (Atkinson & Hornby, 2002).

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