

Family Life Education and Changing Development Scenario

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Introduction:

Family has always been at the foundation of Indian society, and even contemporary people continue to take pride in the centrality of family life. But, the fast pace and all-embracing socio-political and economic changes in recent years are having a significant impact on individuals and families. In the age of electronic media, the family is being exposed to ideas, ideals and lifestyles that are challenging the structure and stability of family as a social institution. Indian families are not well prepared or equipped to face the competitive and challenging world of today. Either, they are lacking correct information or receiving misinformation from dubious sources that are doing more harm than good. Young people are exposed to an entirely new pattern of living and a new set of mores, values and standards that are being widely accepted but which stand in contrast to those which were promoted by their parents and grandparents.

History of Family Life Education:

By the end of the twentieth century, the family life education movement in North America had experienced considerable growth in the number and kinds of programs available and in the scholarship underlying these programs (Arcus 1995). These developments were not unique to North America, however, as other countries throughout the world have sought ways to help families deal with social and economic changes. Some examples of international family life education initiatives include the Marriage

Encounter movement, founded in Spain but present in other countries; The International Family Life Education Institute, Taiwan; Marriage Care (formerly Catholic Marriage Guidance), United Kingdom; The Australian Family Life Institute; and family planning and sexuality education programs throughout the world. The United Nations named 1994 as the International Year of the Family, further attesting to the importance of providing support for families globally.

Framework of Family Life Reproductive Health and Population Education by IIPF, UNESCO/UNDP:

Family life, reproductive health, and population education are interrelated. While each one has a specific focus, they also overlap. Family life education is defined by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) as "an educational process designed to assist young people in their physical, emotional and moral development as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, parenthood, and ageing, as well as their social relationships in the socio-cultural context of the family and society" (IPPF, 1985). Reproductive health education is described by UNESCO/UNFPA as educational experiences "aimed at developing capacity of adolescents to understand their sexuality in the context of biological, psychological, socio-cultural and reproductive dimensions and to acquire skills in managing responsible decisions and actions with regard to sexual and reproductive health behavior" (UNESCO/UNFPA, 1998b).

Population education is defined by UNFPA as "the process of helping people understand the nature, causes and implications of population processes as they affect, and are affected by, individuals, families, communities and nations. It focuses on family and individual decisions influencing population change at the micro level, as well as on broad demographic changes" (Sikes, 1993). Population education addresses such issues as rapid population growth and scarce resources as well as population decline in light of increasingly elderly populations.

The Goal of Family Life Education:

- Family life education professionals consider societal issues - economics, education, work-family issues, parenting, sexuality, gender and more - within the context of the family. They believe that societal problems like substance abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, debt, and child abuse can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as part of larger systems. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems.
- Family life education provides information to families through an educational approach, often in a classroom-type setting or through educational materials.

Objectives of Family Life Education:

- Family Life Education will enable people to understand the importance of the family as the basic bio-social group in society.
- It helps to know and explain different types of marriages, family structure and life cycle of the family.
- To understand the matters relating to sexual relationship, fertility regulation, family planning, before marriage, and child-bearing age.

- To grasp the comparative benefits of smaller family sizes and its effect on quality of life both for the individuals involved, for the extended family, and for the nation as a whole.
- To publicize governmental population and family policies.

The Stages of the Family Life Cycle:

- Leaving home and becoming a single adult is the first stage in the family lifecycle, and it involves launching, the process in which youth move into adulthood and exit their family of origin. In a successful launching, the young adult separates from the family of origin without cutting off ties completely or fleeing to some substitute emotional refuge.
- The new couple is the second stage in the family cycle. This stage involves not only the development of a new marital system, but also realignment as the families of origin and friends include the spouse.
- Becoming parents and a family with children is the third stage in the family life cycle. When they enter this stage, adults move up a generation and become caregivers to the younger generation.
- The family with adolescent's presents the fourth stage of the family life cycle .Adolescence is a period in which individuals push for autonomy and seek to develop their own identity.
- The family at midlife is the fifth stage in the family life cycle. It is a time of launching children, linking generations, and adapting to midlife changes. Because of the lower birth rate and longer life of most adults, parents now launch their children about 20 years before retirement, which frees many midlife parents to pursue other activities.

- The family in later life is the sixth and final stage in the family life cycle. Retirement alters a couple's lifestyle, requiring adaptation. Grand parenting also characterizes many families in this stage. Besides promoting survival of its members, the family unit of our evolutionary ancestors performed the following vital services for society:

Family in the Indian Context:

The family in its most common form- a lifelong commitment between the man and woman to feed, shelter, and nurture their children till they reach maturity- arose tens of thousands of years ago among our hunting-and-gathering ancestors. No two families are the same; they vary as much as their individual members. Nevertheless, the families do share some common features. In particular, they all change over time, and certain processes operate in all of them. As we go through life, our families go through a life cycle.

Such a situation of Indian family calls for an education which can teach youth with regard to the knowledge, attitude and skills required for a successful family living. Family Life Education (FLE) has tremendous potentials to do so. Though the idea of FLE is relatively new to India but as part of a comprehensive mental health effort in India, it holds great promise as a keeper and restorer of the family unit. The range of marital and family difficulties, and examines how an FLE movement might take root in the context of the current mental health system and social service practice. It also discusses the content, scope and potential benefits of FLE training and services in meeting the tremendous needs of married couples and families.

The Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals:

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) mark a historic and effective method of global

mobilization to achieve a set of important social priorities worldwide. They express widespread public concern about poverty, hunger, disease, unmet schooling, gender inequality, and environmental degradation. By packaging these priorities into an easily understandable set of eight goals, and by establishing measurable and time-bound objectives, the MDGs help to promote global awareness, political accountability, improved metrics, social feedback, and public pressures.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a set of seventeen inspirational "Global Goals" with 169 targets between them. Spearheaded by the United Nations, through a deliberative process involving its 193 Member States, as well as global civil society, the goals are contained in paragraph 54 United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 of 25 September 2015. The resolution is a broader intergovernmental agreement that, while acting as the Post 2015

Sustainable Development Goal -3

Ensuring healthy lives and promotes well-being for all at all ages Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development. Significant strides have been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing some of the common killers associated with child and maternal mortality. Major progress has been made on increasing access to clean water and sanitation, reducing malaria, tuberculosis, polio and the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, many more efforts are needed to fully eradicate a wide range of diseases and address many different persistent and emerging health issues.

Conclusion:

Family life education professionals consider societal issues - economics, education, work-family issues, parenting, sexuality, gender and

more - within the context of the family. They believe that societal problems like substance abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, debt, and child abuse can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as part of larger systems. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems

Preparing individuals and families for the roles and responsibilities of family living is nothing new. Because knowledge about human development, interpersonal relationships, and family living is not innate, societies have needed to develop ways through which they may transmit the wisdom and the experience of family living from one generation to succeeding ones. Some societies transmit this knowledge through formal means such as puberty or initiation rites. For the most part, however, individuals learn about family living in the family setting itself as they observe and participate in family activities and interactions in their own and other families.

As societies change and become more complex, this pattern of informal learning about living in families becomes inadequate. The development of new knowledge, advances in technology, and changing social and economic conditions create situations where the teachings of previous generations are no longer

appropriate or sufficient. In these circumstances, societies must find or create new ways to prepare individuals for their family roles and responsibilities. One of these new ways is family life education.

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