

Course Name: Adolescent Health and Well-being: A Holistic Approach

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Lecture 18 - Combating Special Situations

Hello, and welcome to another lecture in this course. Adolescent Health and Well-being: A Holistic Approach. Today, we are going to deal with Combating Special Situations. The various concepts that we will be covering in today's lecture are child marriage, delinquency, child abuse, sexual harassment, and suicide. The keywords for this lecture are the same.

Now coming to child marriage. What is child marriage? This refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child. Globally, the prevalence of marriage among adolescent boys is just one sixth that among young girls. And India accounts for nearly one third of the world's child brides. Those are huge numbers. Now having a look at the global distribution of the number of girls and women first married or in union before age of 18 by region, we can see that the South Asian region accounts for 45% of the distribution. So that is huge and India accounts to majorly of this distribution, followed by sub-Saharan Africa contributing 20% and East Asia and the Pacific contributing 15% to this burden. Coming to the child marriage in India. India has the highest number of child brides in the world with nearly one in three girls married before the age of 18. And these rates of child marriage vary across various regions and communities. Now what are the causes of child marriage per se? This child marriage has its roots in poverty, lack of education, gender discrimination, social norms and religious beliefs which have been prevalent over the last many years. This child marriage is often seen as a way to secure the future of the girls, to protect their so-called honour or alleviate the burden of dowry on part of the parents.

Now what are the consequences of child marriage? As far as the child marriage is concerned, this increases the risk of sexual and reproductive health problems among the adolescents. There is higher risk of maternal and child mortality. There is high risk of domestic violence as these individuals are not prepared for marriage yet they are too immature for the same. There is risk of limited life choices as they could be drop out from the schools as well and all of this perpetuates the cycle of poverty and illiteracy further. Now coming to the effects of child marriage. The effects can be on girls. Basically child

marriage, this can expose girls to a range of health and social risks. This could be early pregnancy, this could be various complications related to childbirth, it could be sexually transmitted infections such as HIV AIDS, they could go into isolation, they could resort to violence and limited opportunities as far as their education is concerned. Now what can be the effects on the communities? The child marriage can actually negatively affect various social, economic and political development of the communities by actually perpetuating poverty and actually reinforcing the gender stereotypes which are prevalent in the community. Now what is the effect on the world? Child marriage is not only a human right issue but also a global development issue and this actually hinders progress towards the ultimate attainment of sustainable development goals and the empowerment of girls and women. So, looking at child marriage from the legal and human rights perspective. According to the legal frameworks basically there are international and national laws which prohibit child marriage and protect the right of children and women but their implementation and enforcement still today is a challenge. The child marriage violates the fundamental human rights of girls and boys. These rights are right to life, right to health, right to education, right to non-discrimination and freedom from violence and exploitation.

What are the global initiatives and progress regarding child marriage? UNICEF has played a major role as far as child marriage and the global initiatives are considered. In 2016 the UNICEF together with United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA launched the global programme to end child marriage. This programme basically empowers the young girls at risk of marriage or who are already in union. This programme has reached more than 14 million adolescent girls worldwide. This programme imparts life skills training, comprehensive sexuality education and also supports the school attendance. Girls not Brides. Now this is a global partnership of more than 1000 organisations which is committed to ending the child marriage and empowering girls. As far as the progress is concerned although child marriage is still a significant challenge today. Progress has been made in reducing the rates in some countries through following multi-sectoral approaches and community engagement.

Now what are the preventive and response measures that are needed for child marriage? So as far as the prevention is concerned the prevention measures should address the actual root causes that we have discussed for child marriage be it poverty, education, gender inequality and the harmful traditions that have been going on from generations to generations. This prevention should involve various multi-sectoral approaches and community engagement as well. Now as far as the protection is considered the protective measures should ensure the safety and well-being of girls and boys at risk of child marriage and this has to be done by providing them health, health services, legal services, various social services and strengthening the already existing child protection systems. The preventive and response measures then we come across empowerment and participation. Girls themselves should be empowered to make their own informed decisions and to participate in decisions that ultimately, they affect their lives and their rights and for this education is a powerful tool. So, education should be important to them and this is a critical tool for their personal and social empowerment.

Now prosecution measures should hold accountable to those who actually perpetrate who facilitate or actually benefit from child marriage by enforcing the existing legal frameworks and by promoting a social non-change. As far as legislations are considered in India so we have the prohibition of child marriage act 2006 this would be discussed in greater detail when we discuss legislations in upcoming lectures. So that was about child marriage.

Let us move on to delinquency. Actually, the word delinquency is derived from the Latin word delinquere where that is away and linkware that is to leave thus meaning is to leave or to abandon. As far as delinquency is considered the juvenile rates are much higher among the boys and these rates are actually highest during early adolescence period. This is found more in the urban areas than the rural areas and also in the last few decades there is rise in incidence in juvenile delinquency as far as India is considered. Now what is delinquency? This basically is negative behaviour of the children and teens that may actually result in crimes or legal action against them. Any deviation from normal youth behaviour and this may include incorrigible so such persons or behaviour which cannot be mended. These individuals are ungovernable or habitually disobedient those actually who desert their homes those with behaviour problems and those who mix with immoral people and indulge in various antisocial practices. Now what are the causes of delinquency? Family conflict is one of the foremost reasons of delinquency. The breakdown of family structure this can lead to adolescence following the delinquent behaviour. Children from unstable home they may not receive the necessary love, they may not receive the necessary structure and support they need for their proper growth and development. Also, there is the level of parental supervision there could be harsh punishments levied by the parents on their children. There could be parental abuse that the children have been victim or they have observed the same maybe the parents might be criminal themselves or the children they have observed parental separation. So, all these are huge risk factors as far as delinquency is considered.

Next, we move on to peer group pressure. In this age peer group pressure is very high. The children they want to be with their peers they want to be accepted so it is the company that the children keep, it has an impact on their overall behaviour and many times negative peer pressure can lead to various risky situations, various high-risk behaviour and lead to delinquency as well. The other causes of delinquency are various societal and community factors such as poverty, now that maybe a root cause many a times poor education, violence, easy availability of drugs and firearms and substance abuse all these create a culture of delinquency in a community. There could be individual psychological factors such as various mental health issues, person suffering from trauma and actually lack of direction or purpose in life all these can contribute to delicate behaviour among the adolescents. There could be various other factors as far as delinquency is considered such as individuals grappling with low intelligence just out of their impulsiveness the rising urbanization, industrialization the more following of social media nowadays where there is lot of violence shown and people might get specially the adolescents might get influenced by the violence by the various high risk behaviours and delinquency shown by the

adolescents and also the absence of recreational facilities a few other factors which are cause of delinquency.

Now what is this effect of delinquency on the society as a whole? Now this can have a negative impact as far as communities are considered. Delinquency actually leads to an unsafe and unhealthy environment for everyone and this can actually result in a higher crime rate few among them and a decreased quality of life. Moving on to the economic cause as far as the society or community is considered the cause of delinquency might include the legal fees the loss of productivity and wages health care expenses and the social services involved as well and these causes are borne by the community as a whole. There could be re-involvement in crime so many adolescents who are actually involved in delinquency they may go on to become adult offenders later on in their lives. So, this leads to a vicious cycle of crime and punishment that actually becomes very difficult to break.

Moving on to the Juvenile Justice Act. The Indian government passed the Juvenile Justice of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2015 to provide for the care protection treatment and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law. Juvenile Justice Act we would discuss in greater detail when we discuss the legislations for the adolescents. Now what are the preventive measures needed for delinquency? There could be community-based programs or the prevention programs which could involve communities as a whole and actually providing the support, providing the much-needed resources and the opportunities for young people that can actually help and reduce the delicate behavior among the adolescents. There could be school based programs, interventions in the schools such as counseling such as imparting of life skills training that can actually prevent these adolescents from engaging in high-risk behaviors. Now what can be the various intervention strategies for delinquency? There could be therapeutic counseling where there could be individual sessions and group therapy sessions as well that can help the young people address their whatever underlying emotional issues are there or addressing whatever psychological issues that these adolescents are facing that is actually leading them to the delicate behavior. Next is the behavior modification programs. So, these programs have their strategy which involves rewarding a positive behavior and providing consequences whenever there is a negative behavior and these aim to redirect or re-channelize the young people towards a positive choices and healthy behaviors. There could be family therapy as well because many a times as I have discussed earlier the root cause can be the family conflicts. So delicate behavior they can be linked to family conflicts family issues. So, family therapy may be required to help improve the communication to strengthen the relationships with the family and resolve the conflicts as well.

Now there can be rehabilitation programs as well for the delinquents. So, there can be art-based programs where the creativity is improved or they are trying to impart creativity in the adolescence program that encourage these people to express themselves creatively and building a self-esteem promoting relaxation and improving their social skills as well. There could be physical fitness programs for these adolescents where they can participate in sports yoga and meditation programs and this can eventually help these people manage

their stress, improve their overall mental health and well-being and build a sense of self-discipline among them. Now there could be educational programs important for these individuals and vocational training as well provided for these adolescents with the skills they actually need to obtain employment and to build their own brighter future. Now it is important to create a support network for these delicate individuals for the rehabilitation back into the mainstream society. So for this it is important to have a good support of families and friends that can help the young people stay focus on their goals and avoid any risky behavior and these family and friends they can provide the much needed love, guidance and a positive influence as far as their career as far as their life is considered. There can be mentors and role models for these individuals who could encourage a positive behavior among these adolescents and provide proper guidance and their important influence for these adolescents. The communities support again is an important factor here. The communities they can support these adolescents by providing the resources, programs and much needed opportunities and that helps encourage the adolescents for a positive behavior to have a proper education and employment in the future. So that was about delinquency next moving on to child abuse.

Now child abuse is serious issue that affects children probably of all ages probably of all backgrounds and genders. This child abuse can have lasting effects on the child's physical wellbeing, mental and emotional wellbeing as well and can even be fatal. Now what are the various types of sexual abuse? So, the types of child abuse, this can be physical abuse that can be non-accidental injury to a child resulting in bruises, burns, broken bones or other injuries. This can be in the form of sexual abuse which is any sexual activity between a child and an adult or an older child which could include touching, fondling and intercourse as well. This sexual abuse can be penetrative sexual assault or it can be non-penetrative sexual assault or sexual harassment or pornography as well. Now this can be in the form of the child abuse, can be in the form of emotional abuse and neglect as well. Now emotional abuse is any form of psychological harm this could be belittling the individuals, shaming them or withholding the love or support for them. There can be neglect as well which can be the failure to provide basic needs to these adolescents' basic needs could be food, shelter, clothing, supervision and health care. Now what are the causes of child abuse? Now there could be societal or community related factors such as poverty and unemployment. The factors could be related to the parents and the family such as stressful situations. such as financial problems or serious illnesses in the family. So, parents themselves are teenage parents or there is a single parent and the parents have a low self-esteem. Domestic violence so children who are exposed to violence in the home, they are more likely to be abused themselves. So, the other factors are substance abuse, drug and alcohol abuse among the parents they can impair the judgment among them and this can cause child abuse. Again, mental health problems among the parents can lead to an abusive behaviour towards their children. Now what are the effects of child abuse on the children and families? Physical effects the children who are experiencing a physical abuse may suffer from injuries, chronic pain and also physical health problems during their later lives. There could be sexual and reproductive effects as well. There could be sexual dysfunction, various sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy as well. Now there could be

psychological effects among the adolescents due to child abuse as well. So, children who experience abuse they may suffer from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and various other mental health issues. There could be social effects so children who experience abuse they may have difficulty in forming relationships later on in their lives, there could be trust issues, there could be issues in making friends and various other social issues as well.

What are the various prevention and intervention strategies as far as child abuse is concerned? There has to be education and awareness. It is important to teach the children, parents and teachers how to recognize and prevent abuse and this can be effective in actually reducing the incidence of abuse. There could be family-based interventions as well. So, it is important to work with the families to have a supportive nurturing relationship that can help to reduce the risk of abuse. There can be child protection services as well. Child protection services these can actually investigate the reports of abuse and provide the much-needed support and resources to the families that are in need. Now how to report a child abuse or who to report it to? So, report of child abuse can be made to the nearest police station or calling the child line on 1098. The reports of child abuse can also be made to child protection authorities, law enforcement and the school officials. So how to report it? Basically, this can be made anonymously and confidentially and should include as much information as possible about the abuse. So that was about child abuse.

Next coming to sexual harassment. This sexual harassment can be verbal, non-verbal harassment or visual as well. Now the verbal sexual harassment includes any sexual comments or gestures or jokes that are unwanted or offensive for the individual that is targeted to. This can be non-verbal sexual harassment which includes unwanted touching, leering or any other physical action that makes someone very uncomfortable or unsafe. This could be visual sexual harassment when it includes showing someone sexual images, videos or staring at someone in a very sexual way. Similarly, nearly 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 13 boys have been sexually abused or exploited before reaching the tender age of 18. Nearly 9 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced a forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts in 2016. 65% of adolescents experience sexual harassment in their lifetime while 96% of sexual harassment among adolescents nearly goes unreported. Now what are the various types of sexual harassment which is experienced by adolescents? Now this can be groping and unwanted touching. This is a non-consensual touching form of a sexual abuse and this type is very common among the adolescents, often this also goes unnoticed. There can be bullying and threats. So sexual harassment many times can take a non-physical form and this could be bullying or may be calling someone by certain names or intimidating them. There could be sexting. So, in this world of social media that we are living in right now there could be sending unsolicited sexual messages or images through various social media platforms, through messaging platforms, Whatsapp, Facebook or so many other media are there or sharing personal images without consent. Again this amounts to sexual harassment.

Now what impact this sexual harassment has on the adolescents? There could be psychological effects. The sexual harassment can actually cause anxiety, this could cause depression, this can cause a low self-esteem among the adolescents. These are ultimately leading to a poor academic and personal performance among them. There could be physical symptoms. So, the adolescents who experience sexual harassment can suffer from various physical symptoms like headaches, sleep disturbances and various other symptoms. There could be social and various interpersonal consequences. So, the sexual harassment can lead to a poor relationship with their peers. This can lead them to isolation and an inability to form trustworthy relationships. Now what can be the various prevention strategies for schools and communities as far as sexual harassment is considered? So, communities and schools this can provide a proper comprehensive sex education and teach about healthy relationships and what the boundaries are. Empowering the adolescents by allowing them to participate in creating and implementing the prevention strategies that actually work within their own communities and schools. The other strategies could be establishing effective policies. So, establishing proper policies and procedures that create a safe and respectful learning environment for all the students and providing support. So, providing support services, these could be counseling, this could be parent-teacher meetings, mentorship programs, life skills training and anonymous reporting options as well. So that was about sexual harassment in the adolescents.

Next coming to adolescent suicide. What are the various forms of suicidal behavior? This could be suicide ideation as the name suggests is the idea or thought regarding committing suicide. Next is suicide planning which is again preparing a plan for committing a suicide. Next is suicide attempt which is carrying out self-injurious act with an intention to end one's life, but which is non-fatal. Now let us have a look at the top 10 causes of death for adolescent boys and girls aged 15 to 19. In boys aged 15 to 19, suicide is the fourth leading cause of death after road injury, interpersonal violence and tuberculosis. While in girls aged 15 to 19, suicide is the third leading cause of death after tuberculosis and maternal conditions. Now what is the risk factor or what are the risk factors for adolescent suicide? Mental health issues. Depression, anxiety and other mental health issues like bipolar disorder, these are important risk factors as far as adolescent suicide is considered. Tobacco, alcohol, other substance abuse such as drug use, these can significantly increase the risk of adolescent suicide. Various socioeconomic conditions and the environmental factors that the adolescents are living in. So young adolescents, they are at increased risk of suicide when they are exposed to violence, when they are exposed to abuse or suicidal behavior amongst others. Other risk factors could be dealing with various stressful situations among the adolescents. This could be failure in examinations, loss of their job, loss of a loved one, entrance examinations dealing with them or dealing with people, relationships and emotions as well. Now what impact an adolescent suicide has? So as far as family and friends are considered, this has an immeasurable impact on the loved ones that are actually left behind. This can cause shock, anger and depression among them. As far as the community is considered, this suicide can impact the wider community creating fear, confusion and disbelief among them. It is important to talk about it. So openly discussing suicide and its impact on people can actually break their silence and provide

relief to the people who are struggling. So, what are the various methods for prevention and intervention as far as adolescent suicide is considered? Early intervention is important. Addressing a mental health problem and the substance abuse early on this can reduce the risk of adolescent suicide. There can be suicide prevention programs which provide universal access for the adolescents and provide them necessary resources. This can create lifesaving support for the vulnerable adolescents. Talking to teens, this is very important. Having open conversation with the teenagers, this can help to identify various warning signs and provide them much needed support.

Coming to the take home message from today's lecture. We dealt with various special situation among adolescents like child marriage, delinquency, child abuse, sexual harassment and suicide. There are legislations in place for these special situations. These we will be discussing in the upcoming lectures. It is important that the parents and teachers are educated regarding these special situations so that they deal with adolescents whenever there are warning signs. Important to early intervene in case of such situations. The family support becomes very important in dealing with any issues that the adolescents are dealing with. Promotion of mental health and well being is the foremost thing as far as these situations are considered and creation of a healthy habit and recreation, proper recreation facilities being provided to adolescents will take them away as far as possible from these situations.

These are few of my references. So that is all from my end for this lecture.

Thank you.