

Abusive Nature of The Teenagers Found in Simon Stephens' Plays and its Impact on Their Mental Health

*R.MOHANA, #DR.K.THIYAGARAJAN

*Research Scholar of English, #HOD- Dept. of English, Sir Theagaraya College, Washermenpet, Chennai, India.

ABSTRACT - Mental health is so under rated. It is time people value mental health as much as they value physical health. Prolonged sustenance of pressure and trauma could easily deteriorate one's mental health. The paper deals with the nature of teens, how they go hard on each other, tending to deteriorate each others' mental health in Simon Stephens' plays. It also gives solution to address the issue of mental health among teens who fall prey to abuses and violence on a regular basis.

Keywords – Teenagers, Mental Health, Simon Stephens.

I. INTRODUCTION

We often associate the word 'hurt' with a human body. Seldom have you seen people relating the word with mental health. Humans are known to value physical health over mental health. This has been the case for a very long time. What is concerning is that the culture continues to grow. Deterioration in mental health can cause much harm as much as physical injuries do. The latter cures, heals. But traumas tend to grow on you, destroying the confidence in you gradually, just like the demons in you, eating your spirits on a slow but regular pace.

It does not destroy you overnight. Traumas haunt you day in day out, make you go wayward from your beliefs and principles, make you show no interest in anything and everything, increasing the need to be alone, thus eventually paving way for suicide or violence. Emotional abuse is the worst among abuses reason being, it makes you weak emotionally and drain the mental energy. It is very hard to identify whether a person is suffering from mental stress as there are no outward signs. However, keen observation in their actions can help one understand the trauma or stress a person is exhibiting. Plays often portray the sufferings and plights of a common man. Simon Stephens in his plays have used violence among teens as the major theme. The teens seen in his plays are pretty vehement and rude in nature. However, they have very little idea on their abusive behaviour and what impact it has on the mental health on their fellow peers.

Proper scrutiny of characters of Simon Stephens' plays was done to understand the reason for such vehement behaviour of the teenagers found in it. In **Punk Rock**, William, a high school teen is found to be at the receiving end of abuse and

mental torture by his fellow peers. He was constantly tormented by his parents' actions, heartbreaks, and violence (mental). At one point, he felt he had had enough. The outcome was that he chose to retaliate back, which resulted in an unfortunate and eventful gun violence. This teaches the readers an important lesson. Our actions choose our enemies. Enemies are created and violence is an emotion that can be instilled within anyone if abused and tormented on a regular basis.

The outcome of prolonged mental torture was disastrous. William chose to shoot his friends, an action that is not right even though he was at the receiving end of abuse and torture, reason being, two wrongs will not make a right. It makes the readers question the motive behind such rude behavior by teens. Simon paints a theme that it may be a coping mechanism for what they experienced as a child, due to lack of affection from parents and hence venting out their emotions in the form of anger and abuse. The characters of Punk Rock have had a rough childhood and it could be based as the reason for such rude behaviour. Lilly, one of the characters from Punk Rock have had a terrible childhood and there were scenes in the play where she was found to hurt herself using a lighter. Imagine the trauma she would have undergone for her to commit such acts!

In Simon's another play **Hérons**, the character Billy, around whom the story revolves is analyzed and the disturbing events he experiences is observed keenly. In this nerve jitting play, Billy is found to be at the receiving end of poor parenting and excessive abuse and violence from his fellow peers. Billy always appeared like a guy who could lose his cool anytime, thanks to his terrible teen years. His trauma got the better of him at one point and he retaliated back at his peers, choosing gun just like William

from Punk Rock did. In both the cases, the common theme is teen violence. But what caused the violence is the important question. Constant nagging, prolonged mental torture, exchanging verbal confrontations on a regular basis, hitting the vulnerable where it hurts by making use of their weaknesses are the major factors which destroys a teenager's confidence slowly but constantly. This leads to anguish and hatred within them, making them violent.

Adolescents today are pretty fragile and their temperament is quite weak as well. This might be one of the reasons that Simon Stephens' characters easily breakdown when they face bullies. It is very important to stand your ground when faced by bullies. Sometimes, teens are termed as spoiled. But proper scrutiny will give you a fairer picture of why young people are suffering. Anxiety and depression in teenagers is constantly on the rise since 2012¹ after several years of stability. It's a phenomenon that is quite common across all demographics--suburban, urban and rural.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the characters of Simon Stephens' plays and the abusers in it.
- To understand the negative effects of abuse and what it did to the mental health of characters of Simon Stephens.
- To give solution to deal with abusers.
- To understand the importance of mental health.

III. REASONS FOR ABUSE AMONG TEENS

At the point when individuals are abused, it can influence each part of their lives, particularly self-esteem. It is truly apparent from the deplorable turn of occurrence found in Simon Stephens' Punk Rock, Herons and Wastwater. In Wastwater, Lisa is found to have an additional conjugal illicit relationship with Mark. This was comprehended after she clarifies her sensational yet agonizing early long stretches of her teen. How much damage is done regularly relies upon the

circumstance and here and there on how serious the abuse is. Now and then an apparently minor thing can trigger a major response. Being contacted improperly by a family part, or being revealed to keep secrets, for instance, can be exceptionally confounding and awful. Each family has contentions. Companions, couples, mentor, and educators can get resentful, baffled, or have an awful day. Disciplines and control — like expelling privileges, establishing, or being sent to your room — are normal.

Hollering and outrage can occur in loads of parent– teen connections as on account of Wastwater and in friendships as on account of Punk Rock and Herons — in spite of the

fact that it can feel entirely awful to have a contention with a parent or companion. Be that as it may, if disciplines, contentions, or shouting go excessively far or keep going too long it can prompt pressure and different significant issues. Teens who are abused (or have been previously) regularly experiencing difficulty resting, eating, and focusing. They may not get along nicely at school since they are irate or scared, or feel like they simply couldn't care less any longer.

Numerous individuals who are abused doubt others. They may feel a great deal of displeasure toward other individuals and themselves, and it tends to be difficult to make companions. Abuse is a noteworthy reason for discouragement in youngsters. A few teens can just feel better by doing things that could hurt them like cutting or mishandling drugs or liquor. They may even endeavour suicide. It's regular for the individuals who have been abused to feel vexed, furious, and befuddled about the end result for them. They may feel remorseful and humiliated and accuse themselves. Be that as it may, abuse is never the blame of the individual who is being abused, regardless of how much the abuser attempts to accuse others.

Abusers may control someone into staying silent by saying stuff like: "This is a secret between you and me," or "On the off chance that you ever tell anyone, I'll hurt you or your mother," or "You will get stuck in an unfortunate situation in the event that you tell. Nobody will trust you and you'll go to jail for lying." This was seen in Herons. Constant blackmailing could also lead to mental trauma. This is the abuser's method for making an individual vibrate like there is no hope so the person in question won't report the abuse. Individuals who are abused may experience difficulty getting help since it implies they'd report on somebody they cherish — somebody who might be magnificent a significant part of the time and dreadful to them just a portion of the time. Individuals may fear the outcomes of announcing abuse, either in light of the fact that they dread the abuser or the family is financially subject to that individual. For reasons like these, abuse frequently goes unreported and numerous kids and teens don't tell anybody what is happening.

IV. WAYS TO OVERCOME ABUSE

People who are being abused frequently feel apprehensive, numb, or desolate. Be it William or Billy, they constantly needed to be separated from others as they felt being distant from everyone else was greatly improved than being with wrong organization or abusers who pulverize their psychological wellness. Getting help and support is an imperative initial move toward feeling much improved. Managing emotional abuse can be hard and monotonous in friendship, love and work particularly amid teenage. Coming to terms to your feelings is a develop activity, yet in a harsh circumstance poop hits the fan. The main thing that you should do when coming to terms with emotional

abuse is to perceive and spot its signs. Frequently we simply skim through an association with emotional strife turning us over and making things hard. In the event that you feel that you are emotionally depleted in any capacity, at that point you should stop and give it a genuine idea. Understand whether you are getting constrained by somebody, and whether you are submitting to this individual weakly.

Abusers are regularly insecure people, the individuals who are managing uneasiness and dejection, the individuals who don't have any respect for your feeling and your being. Rather than becoming the victim of the abuse, endeavour to review your abuser in a new light. Understanding your abuser is imperative without a doubt.

The abuser will frequently back up on the off chance that you have the quality and ability to step forward. It was visible when Bennet and others in Punk Rock were shocked when William struck back and showed signs of boldness and courage. It was additionally the case in Herons when Billy struck back. Consequently, you should step forward and stand your ground. Regardless of what the results are, it is critical to make tracks in an opposite direction from the torment that you are confronting. Make your voice sound and roar in disapproval. Converse with your abuser about the anguish you are experiencing.

It will support you in the event that you can discover better approaches to handle your abuser; on the off chance that you can positively interface with your abuser. This is extremely regular in schools where you are dependably let somewhere around this somebody, and the main sensible arrangement is to have a decent talk. You could likewise utilize silliness to change the circumstance, and dependably stand up when you see another person experiencing a similar issue. It was seen by the characters of Punk rock and Herons, when Chadwick and Tanya constantly figured out how to handle abuse.

On the off chance that you are being abused it implies that you are being disrespected, and this typically implies trespassing your distinction and freedom. You have to define the limits in your relationship which will guarantee that you discover respect and nobility. William is one classic example. He began keeping away from Bennett when he found about his true colours. It is vital to tell your abuser that whatever had occurred in the past requirements to end now, and that the damage that the person in question has done to you is enough. "Enough is enough" is the phrase here.

V. CONCLUSION

Simon Stephens, in his plays, has painted quite a picture about teenagers and their behaviour, the hatred they spew among their fellow peers, the animosity that prevails in the air of the school atmosphere. The plays are great examples of the outcome of abusive nature. Violence and abusive

nature not only stirs the emotions of teens but also instills hatred in them, turning them into someone they never expected they would be. It is very important to perceive or try to understand what your friends are going through. In this terrifying world, all people have each other are the connections they make. Hence it is very important to be considerate about each others' feelings and then base your behavior.

REFERENCES

- [1] Roland, E., & Idsoe, T. (2001). Aggression and bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 446–462.
- [2] Runtz, M. & Briere, J. (1986). Adolescent "acting out" and childhood history of sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1, 326-334.
- [3] Safety Policy. Washington DC: Congressional Research Service.
- [4] Salmivalli, C., & Isaacs, J. (2005). Prospective relations among victimization, rejection, friendlessness, and children's self- and peer-perceptions. *Child Development*, 76, 1161–1171.
- [5] Salmivalli, C., & Isaacs, J. (2005). Prospective relations among victimization, rejection, friendlessness, and children's self- and peer-perceptions. *Child Development*, 76, 1161–1171.
- [6] Salmivalli, C., Huttunen, A., & Lagerspetz, K. (1997). Peer networks and bullying in schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 38, 305–312.

LINKS

- [7] <http://time.com/4547322/american-teens-anxious-depressed-overwhelme>
- [8] <http://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/s9593.pdf>
- [9] <http://time.com/4547322/american-teens-anxious-depressed-overwhelme>
- [10] www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/plays/herons-iid-111722
- [11] www.dramatists.com/previews/5136.pdf