

CHAPTER - 8

PSYCHOLOGY & LIFE

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

1. What do you understand by the term 'environment'? Explain the different perspectives to understand the human-environment relationship.

Ans. Word 'environment' refers to all that is around us. Literally, it means everything that surrounds us including the physical, Social world and cultural environment. In general, it includes all the forces outside the human beings to which they respond in some way. A psychologist named Stokols proposed three approaches to describe human-environment relationship:

(i)The Minimalist Perspective: This view assumes that physical environment has negligible influence on human behaviour. Both run parallel to each other.

(ii)The Instrumental Perspective: According to this approach, environment is simply provider. It is for the comfort of us. Human beings can use the environment as per their needs.

(iii)The Spiritual Perspective: It refers to the view of the environment as something to be respected and valued rather than exploited. Physical environment and human relationship are interdependent. The traditional Indian view about the environment supports spiritual perspective, worshipping Pipal, respect for rivers and mountains. Chipko Aandolan and movement by Bisnoi Community are examples of Indian perspective.

2. "Human beings affect and are affected by the environment." Explain this statement with the help of example.

Ans. Environment significantly influences various physical and psychological aspects of human behaviour. Some are as follows:

(a)Environmental Influence on Perception: According to researches, our perception is influenced by the environment in which we live. For example. Tribal societies of Africa living in Circular huts show less error in a geometric illusion (the Muller Lyer illusion) than people from cities, living in houses with angular walls.

(b)Environmental Influence on Emotions: For example, watching quietly flowing river, a smiling flowers or a tranquil mountain top provides joy and happiness.

•Natural disasters, landslides can provide deep depression and sorrow, lack of control over

their lives.

•Such an influence is traumatic, changes people's lives forever, and can last for a long time after the actual event in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder.

(c)Ecological Influence on Occupation, Living style and Attitudes:

(i)The natural environment of a particular region determines the people living in that region will develop what type of societies—may be agricultural or may be industrial.

(ii)In turn, the occupation determines the life-style and attitudes of the residents of a particular geographical region.

Human behaviour particularly influencing on the environment in negative manner. Following are the environmental stressors which effect human beings, although many are created by human beings themselves.

1.Pollution:

(a)Air-pollution: Emission of toxic gases due to automobile and industrial emissions cause adverse effect on the health.

-Air-pollution reduces visibility and leads to eye irritation, headache, fatigue, occurrence of cancer of respiratory system.

(b)Noise or sound pollution: Any sound which an individual finds unpleasant in a particular situation is considered noise or sound-pollution. Noise (sound pollution) leads to adverse psychological effects. It may leads to high level of stress, narrowing of attention, decrease in concentration, etc.

(c)Water-pollution: Various problems related to digestive system and gastrointestinal issues occur due to water-pollution.

2. Noise

Any unpleasant, irritating or interfering sound is called as Noise.

– Noise is an environmental stressor which may affect adversely depending on (a) Predictability (b) Controllability (c) Intensity

3.Crowding and Density:

•**Crowding** is the subjective feeling of crampedness or being too close to each other. It has negative effects on task performance, personality, interpersonal relationship, general physical and mental health.

•**Density** is an objective geographical term which refers to number of persons living within the available space, or per square meter area.

4.Natural and Man-made Disasters:

Natural disasters are earthquake, volcanic eruption, windstorm, tornado, cyclone, famine etc.

– There are man-made disasters also; like Bhopal gas tragedy and nuclear bomb explosion in Japan, which not only caused extensive damage to property and physical environment but also had long-term effects on the lives of people.

– Man is largely responsible for regarding the quality of environment that surrounds us.

Almost everything humans do has small but cumulative effects on the environment in which we live. e.g., driving a car, using a hair spray, use of refrigerator, etc.

3.What is noise? Discuss the effects of noise on human behaviour.

Ans. Noise is defined as an unwanted sound or sounds that create an effective response.

Some may not be disturbed by even a loud-speaker sound, on the other hand, some might even find whistle, tinkling of wind as noise. Thus, any sound “which an individual finds unwanted is **noise.**”

Noise (sound pollution) leads to adverse psychological effects. How the noise affect the individual depends on:

(a)its intensity (loudness), loud sound is often unpleasant and irritating.

(b)predictability, we can adapt more easily to a regular, predictable sound such as ‘ chirping of birds in the morning.

(c)Perceived Control: The negative effects of noise are reduced when individuals perceive that

they have control over it.

Effects of noise (sound-pollution) on task performance:

(i) When the task being performed is a simple mental task, such as addition of numbers, noise does not affect overall performance whether it is loud or soft.

(ii) If the task being performed is very interesting, then, too, the presence of noise does not affect performance.

(iii) When the noise comes at intervals and in an unpredictable way, it is experienced as more disturbing than the noise being continuously present.

(iv) Difficult task performance requires full concentration, then intense, unpredictable and uncontrollable noise reduces the level of task performance. '

(iv) When switching off the noise is within the control of the person, the numbers of ' errors in task performance decrease.

4. What are the salient features of crowding? Explain the major psychological consequences of crowding.

Ans. Crowding: It is psychological crampedness. It manifests following features:

(a) Feeling of discomfort because of too many people or things around us the experience of physical restriction and sometimes the lack of privacy.

(b) Crowding is the person's reaction to the presence of a large number of persons within a particular area or space.

Features of Crowding; Crowding has the following features:

- Crowding gives feeling of discomfort.
- It gives a feeling that individual privacy is being threatened.
- It gives feeling that individual's personal space is being invaded.
- It gives negative view of a space around the person.
- Crowding develops feelings of loss of control over social interaction.

Crowding is studied by various psychologists in India and abroad.

Crowding is not always experienced in high density setting nor all people experience its negative effects. For example, Mela has high density but still people enjoy it.

Effects of Crowding and High Density:

(a) Crowding and High density may lead to abnormal behaviour and aggression. e.g., an increase in population has sometimes been found to be accompanied by an increase in violent crime.

(b) Crowding leads to **lowered performance on difficult tasks** that involve cognitive processes and has adverse effects on memory and the emotional state.

(c) Children growing up in very crowded households show **lower academic performance**. They also show a weaker tendency to continue working on a task if they are unsuccessful at it, compared to children growing up in non-crowded households. They experience greater conflicts with parents and get less support from their family members.

(d) The nature of social interaction determines the degree to which an individual will react to crowding. For example, in parties, large number of persons may not cause stress rather it may lead to positive emotional reactions.

(e) Individuals differ in the degree to which they show negative effects of crowding and also in the nature of these reactions.

Two kinds of tolerance can be mentioned that may explain these individual differences: (i)

Crowding Tolerance (ii) Competition Tolerance

(i) Crowding Tolerance; It refers to the ability of a person to mentally deal with the high density or crowding environment, e.g., crowded residence.

- It is developed because people can use to manage people around them.
- It is modifying ones perception one holds regarding high density/crowded situations.
- Indians in general have more crowding tolerance.

(ii) Competition Tolerance: It is the ability to put up with a situation in which individuals would

have to compete with many others for even basic resources including physical space. Since there is a greater possibility of competition for resources in a crowded setting, the reaction to that setting would be influenced by the extent of tolerance for competition for resources.

(iii) Cultural Characteristics: It may determine the extent to which a particular environment is judged to be subjectively more crowded or less crowded.

5. Why is the concept of 'personal space' important for human beings? Justify your answer with the help of an example.

Ans. The concept of **personal space** refers to the personal physical distance that we maintain in our social interaction.

It is important for following reasons:

- (i) It explains many of the negative effect of crowding as an environment stressor.
- (ii) It tells us about social relations. For examples, two people sitting or standing close together are seen to be friends.

It gives us idea about how physical space can be modified in order to reduce stress or discomfort in real life situations.

Everyone has desire of personal space. Males generally have a larger personal space than females. Degree of personal space differ from culture to culture.

Personal space can vary between people, between situations and settings and between cultures. Edward Hall, an anthropologist, mentioned four kinds of interpersonal physical distance—intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance.

6. What do you understand by the term 'disaster'? List the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. How can it be remedied?

Ans. Natural disaster is an environmental hazard. It is known as disaster because—

- it is mostly unpredictable.
- it causes enormous loss of life and property.

In general, the intensity of reaction is affected by the following:

- (i) The severity of the disaster, and the loss incurred both in terms of property and life.
- (ii) The individual's general coping ability.
- (iii) Other stressful experiences before the disaster. For e.g., people, who have experienced stress before, may find it more difficult to deal with another difficult and stressful situation.

But, there are ways to be prepared to minimize their devastating consequence in the form of:

1. Warning: when cyclones or high tides are predicted, fishermen are asked not to venture into the sea.

2. Safety Measure: Unfortunately, in the case of some natural disasters such as earthquakes, even if prediction is possible, the events came too suddenly for people to be mentally prepared. Therefore tips are given beforehand about to do when there is an earthquake.

3. Treatment of Psychological Disorder: This includes self-help approach as well as professional treatment. According to some experts who deal with PTSD, one of the key attitude to be developed in the survivors is that of 'self-efficacy'

i.e. that the belief that "I can do it" or "I came out of this phase successfully".

(a) Immediate Reaction: The immediate reaction after a disaster is commonly manifest in the form of **disorientation**. People take some time to understand the full meaning of what the disaster has done to them. They may **deny** to themselves that something terrible has happened.

(b) Physical Reaction:

There is bodily exhaustion even without physical activity such as-

- Sleep disturbances.
- Change in eating pattern.
- Increased heart-beat and blood-pressure.

(c) Emotional Reaction:

- Fear
- Grief
- Irritability
- Anger (why should this happen to me)
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Depression
- Numbness (absolute lack of emotion)
- Guilt feelings for having survived while someone else died
- Lack of interest in routine jobs

(d) Cognitive Reaction:

- Worry • Difficulty in concentration
- Reduced span of attention • Confusion
- Loss of memory • Nightmare of the event

(e) Social Reactions:

- Withdrawal from others
- Getting into conflict with others
- Having frequent arguments with even
- Feeling rejected or left out Very often in the midst of severe emotional reaction to stress, some survivors may develop positive outlook on life with empathy.

7. What is pro-environmental behaviour? How can the environment be protected from pollution? Suggest some strategies.

Ans. Pro-environmental behaviour is the friendly and caring attitude of people who help to prevent environmental degradation and conserve natural resources.

For instance, change in life-style and attitude of the people like conserving energy resources, planting trees, reduction in noise (sound-pollution) and air-pollution.

Some Strategies to Protect Environment are:

- Reducing air-pollution by keeping vehicle in good condition or changing to non-fuel driven vehicle, stopping the practice of smoking.
- Reducing noise (sound pollution) by ensuring that noise levels are low. e.g., discouraging needless honking on the road, or making rule regarding noisy music at certain hours.
- Planting trees and ensuring their care.
- Reducing the non-biodegradable packing of consumer goods.
- Laws related to construction (especially in urban areas) that violate optimal environment design.
- Saying 'no' to plastic use in any form, thus reducing toxic wastes that pollute water, air and the soil.

8. How is 'poverty' related to 'discrimination'? Explain the major psychological effects of poverty and deprivation.

Ans. Poverty is the economic deprivation, associated with low income, hunger, low caste and status.

- Illiteracy, poor housing, over-crowding, lack of public amenities, mal-and under-nutrition, and increased susceptibility to diseases are main features.
- Poverty is an actual shortage of resources so it is objectively defined term.
- Deprivation is subjectively defined. It is more a question of perceiving or thinking that one has got less than what one should have got.
- Poverty is not a necessary condition for experiencing deprivation but a poor person may experience deprivation.
- Social disadvantage is a condition because of which some sections of society are not allowed

the same privileges as the east society e.g. caste system.

Effects of Poverty and Deprivation:

(i) Low aspirations and low achievements, low motivation, and high need for dependence is the major effect of poverty and deprivation. They believe that events in their lives are controlled by factor outside them, rather within them.

(ii) With respect to social behaviour, the poor and deprived sections exhibit an attitude of resentment towards the rest of society.

(iii) With regard to personality:

- The poor and deprived have low self-esteem, high anxiety, introversion, and live only in the immediate present rather than being future-oriented.

- The poor and deprived live with a sense of hopelessness, powerlessness, feelings of injustice and experience a loss of identity.

(iv) Researches have proved that prolonged deprivation significantly impairs the cognitive functioning of the individual.

(v) With regard to mental health, there is an unquestionable relationship between mental disorder and poverty or deprivation.

(vi) The poor are more likely to suffer from specific mental illness compared to the rich, possibly due to constant worries about basic necessities, feeling of insecurity or inability to get medical facilities especially for mental illness.

9. Distinguish between 'instrumental aggression' and 'hostile aggression'. Suggest some strategies to reduce aggression and violence.

Ans. • Aggression: According to psychologists, **aggression** refers to any behaviour by a person that is intended to cause harm to another person or persons to take revenge. For example, aggression can be demonstrated in actual action or through the use of harsh words or criticism or even hostile feelings against others.

- **Violence:** Forceful destructive behaviour towards another person or persons to attain some material gain is violence.

Instrumental Aggression:

The act of aggression is meant to obtain a certain goal or get others' possessions forcefully. For example, a bully slaps a new student in school so that he can snatch the new comer's chocolate. In violence, individual may or may not have the intention to harm others in terms of revenge. It is forceful destructive behaviour, e.g., hitting a person just to loot his money.

Hostile Aggression:

An expression of anger towards the target, with the intention of harming him/her even if the aggressor does not wish to obtain anything from the victim. For example, a criminal may beat up a person in the community for mentioning his name to the police. Aggression can be reduced by creating the appropriate attitude towards the general problem of growing aggression.

(a) Parenting:

- Parents and teacher should be specially careful not to encourage aggression in any form. The use of punishment to bring about discipline also needs to be changed.

(b) Modelling:

- Opportunities to observe and imitate the behaviour of aggressive models should be reduced drastically.

Portraying aggression as heroic behaviour should be particularly avoided because this may set the stage for learning through observation.

(c) Implementing social justice and equality in society:

- It will help in reducing frustration levels and thereby curb aggressive tendencies at least to some extent.

(d) Inculcating positive attitude towards peace at the level of community or society. The father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, gave the world a new view to peace that was not simply the

absence of aggression. This was non-violence. It should be taught to the younger generation.

10. Discuss the psychological impact of television viewing on human behaviour. How can its adverse consequences be reduced? Explain.

Ans. Television is one of the useful products of technological progress. It has both positive and negative effects. It has effects on cognitive processes and social behaviour.

1. **T.V. provides large amount of information** in an attractive form and in visual mode, for which it became a powerful medium of instructions.
2. Excellent programmes emphasise positive interpersonal attitudes and provide useful factual information, teaching children how to design and construct certain objects.
3. T.V. watching may have an adverse effect on children's ability to concentrate on one target. Their creativity and ability to understand each other through social interaction is also significantly impaired.
4. Reduction in habit of reading and writing skills and also their outdoor activities such as playing is also reduced.
5. Watching violence on T.V. has been linked to greater aggressiveness in the viewers. As children are not mature enough to think of consequences, they simply imitate.
 - Some studies pointed out that merely watching violence on the television does not make children more aggressive. Other factors need to be present.
 - Other research findings show that watching violence may actually reduce the natural aggressive tendency of the viewers: what is 'bottled up' gets an outlet, thus cleans the system. This process is called **catharsis**.
6. Due to T.V. watching, consumerist attitude has developed. Numerous products are advertised and it is very natural for the viewer to get carried away.