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MENTAL HEALTH OF ADOLESCENTS GROWING UP WITHOUT PARENTS: ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Baratova Maftuna Fakhriddinovna
Master's student, first year, Psychology specialty,
Asia International University

Abstract: This scientific article analyzes the mental health problems of adolescents growing up without parents or parental care from a socio-psychological perspective. Adolescence is an important stage in the emotional, social, and psychological development of an individual. During this period, the lack of parental love, weak family support, and absence of emotional closeness negatively affect adolescents' mental well-being. The article scientifically examines stress, anxiety, depressive states, aggression, low self-confidence, and social adaptation problems commonly observed among adolescents growing up without parents. Furthermore, the importance of schools, neighborhood communities, psychological services, and social support systems in strengthening adolescents' mental health is analyzed.

Keywords: Adolescence, mental health, children without parental care, emotional state, social adaptation, stress, depression, psychological assistance, family environment.

In our society, the issue of children and adolescents growing up without parents or parental care is considered one of the urgent socio-psychological problems. Due to economic, social, and family changes in society, some children remain deprived of a complete family environment. This significantly affects their psychological development and emotional stability. Adolescence is one of the most complex stages of human life, during which independence, self-awareness, and social adaptation actively develop. At this stage, the lack of parental affection, absence of emotional support, and weak family supervision may lead to various psychological problems. Psychological studies show that adolescents growing up without parents more often experience social anxiety, feelings of loneliness, aggressive behavior, depressive states, and low self-confidence. Therefore, it is important to scientifically study this problem and develop effective psychological support mechanisms.

Several psychological theories serve as important methodological foundations in studying adolescents' mental health. According to psychosocial development theory, the main task during adolescence is the formation of identity. Lack of family support complicates this process. Behaviorist and social learning theories emphasize that a child's behavior is shaped under the influence of the surrounding environment. Weak parental supervision may contribute to the development of negative behavior and emotional instability in adolescents. Modern psychological research scientifically confirms that the lack of parental affection reduces stress tolerance and intensifies depressive conditions and social adaptation difficulties among adolescents.

According to the research findings, the following factors influence the mental health of adolescents growing up without parents:

1. **Emotional Deprivation**

The lack of parental love creates feelings of inner emptiness and loneliness in adolescents. This condition increases emotional instability and psychological distress.

2. **Weak Social Support**

The absence of family support negatively affects adolescents' social adaptation. As a result, adolescents are forced to solve their problems independently.

3. **Increased Levels of Stress and Anxiety**

Constant psychological pressure and feelings of insecurity lead to increased levels of stress and anxiety among adolescents.

4. **Low Self-Esteem**

The lack of parental attention decreases adolescents' self-confidence and contributes to the development of low self-esteem.

5. **Aggressive and Conforming Behavior**

In some cases, adolescents express internal emotional pressure through aggression or become highly susceptible to peer influence.

6. **Influence of Educational and Upbringing Environment**

The psychological environment at school also strongly affects adolescents' mental state. A supportive pedagogical environment strengthens psychological stability.

The mental health of adolescents growing up without parents is one of the pressing socio-psychological issues of modern society. Lack of parental affection, insufficient emotional support, and limited family supervision negatively affect adolescents' psychological development. Research findings indicate that such adolescents are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, depressive conditions, aggressive behavior, and social adaptation problems. In particular, low self-confidence and feelings of emotional loneliness seriously affect their mental health.

To prevent this problem, it is important to:

- strengthen the activities of school psychologists;
- provide social support for children without parental care;
- organize psychological training sessions and counseling;
- develop cooperation between neighborhood communities and educational institutions.

In addition, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive psychological support system by the state and society to preserve adolescents' mental health. By creating a healthy psychological environment, it is possible to positively influence their future social adaptation and personal development.

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