

Introduction to Psychological Counselling

The Feature of Counselling in Ethiopia

Session Week 12

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Introduction

- The aim of this particular session is to show briefly the feature of counselling in Ethiopia.
- It highlights the background of the country with its provision of guidance counselling services in diverse way.
- **People**
 - In Ethiopia there are more than 90 ethnic groups who speak more than 80 languages that belong to four major language families (Semantic, Cuschitic, Omotic, and Nilo-Saharan).
 - Compared with most other countries, Ethiopia is in this respect a true conglomerate and true multiethnic society that really challenges education at all levels
- **Culture**
 - The most significant area of Ethiopian culture is in the field of literature, represented
 - predominantly by translations from Greek, Arabic, and other languages into ancient Geez and modern Amharic. Most of the works are theological or mythological in nature. Secular literature is largely confined to history.
 - Ecclesiastical architecture is relatively rich because of the early advent of Christianity in the country. Ethiopia's skilful and imaginative silversmith is also notable.
- **Religion**
 - The Ethiopians are deeply religious people and especially the Orthodox Tewahedo Church (about 55%) headed by a patriarch and closely related to the Coptic Church of Egypt has a great impact on people's daily life. Most people attend church once or twice each day. Rituals and fasting periods are severely respected and the priest is a factor of power in communities.
 - Other religions are about 33% Muslims, 10 % protestants and 2% others.
 - Religion has a great impact on people's attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

The Feature of Counselling in Ethiopia (1)

- Traditionally, in Ethiopia, youngsters get guidance and other advices, on their educational or social problems, from older people.
- Even though it is no formal, friends, brothers, sisters and other older members of a family have a significant role in providing advice and guidance depending on the individual's problem.
- If the problem is more personal, it is common for most people to share their problems to friends than members of the family.
- Influential persons in religious institutions such as churches and mosques are also responsible in offering guidance services for followers of the religion.
- Compared to the long history of Ethiopian Education, the service of guidance counselling in Ethiopian schools is as its early stage.
- The service is offered mainly in secondary schools and higher institutions.
- Most of guidance counsellors working in the schools and higher institutions have at least a first degree in psychology.

The Feature of Counselling in Ethiopia (2)

- Influential people in religious institutions such as clergy are also responsible in giving counseling services for members of the Church.
- Compared to the long history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church's counseling, the service of counseling in the Church as well as in the country is as its early stage. The service is delivered at the early stage of Christian life.
- Until 1974 the EOTC were visibly involved in many parts of the country secular sectors:
 - Clergy worked in military sectors - as chaplains to provide spiritual, pastoral and emotional support for service personnel and their families.
 - They also offered their pastoral service - the country secular education sectors – they taught moral and ethical education.
 - Chaplaincy services - in prisons and health sectors. Prisoners can easily be overwhelmed by feeling of isolation and serious psychological problems that threaten to shatter their hopes and aspirations for the future.

Kinds of Counselling – Ethiopia

- Traditional
 - Old people
- Religious/ Spiritual
 - Pastoral
 - Biblical
 - Spiritual
- Professional
 - Occupational
 - Education Sectors
 - Health Sectors

The Role of Older People in Counselling

- Older people in Ethiopia play a valuable role in their societies.
- Their role is to advise, lead and guide the societies in those practices, ceremonies and rituals that ensure their important role in the societies.
- They are the useful sources of counseling and guidance for whole societies.
- For example, they are constantly involved in marital counseling to reconcile the couples. They frequently resolve social and individual conflicts.
- Traditionally, their advice and guidance are offered in diverse ways, the most common of which are “sharing wisdom” and “giving advice and guidance”.

Biblical Counselling

- The Holy Bible gives a unique perspective of counseling and plays an important role in the faithful life. It teaches that human attitudes, thoughts, actions and motives flow from the immorality.
- In many aspects the father confessor gives Biblical counseling for his spiritual children in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC). But clergy including Biblical scholars act as Biblical counselors. Their roles completely differ from secular counselors or psychologists. Their advice starts from the Word of God as it deals with human concern and need because the Holy Bible sufficiently addresses human problem.
- In EOTC the process of Biblical counseling is visibly integrated with spiritual advice and pastoral counseling.

Pastoral Counselling

- Pastoral counseling is seen as a section of individual pastoral care. – Sacramental Services – Confession
- In EOTC pastoral services are divided into three main areas:
 - Teaching or preaching
 - Pastoral care and
 - Administration or Leadership
- Pastoral counseling includes a faithful meeting with counselors to recovery, for help during a crisis, to clarify the idea of recovery or to take ethical and spiritual directions in Christian context that offer meaning and can change substance abuse behaviors.

Spiritual Counselling

- Spiritual counseling refers to a kind of counseling that focuses on an individual's spiritual progress.
- In the EOTC perspective, this counseling can play a crucial role in the faithful religious life.
- It also addresses many of the same matters other types of counseling deal with, such as personal difficulties with mental health, depression, serious addiction and so on; it just uses spiritual methods to handle them, including fasting, prayer and almsgivings. This counseling generally refers to a spiritual service where spiritual directors provide guidance or advice to the faithful.
- It is provided and is based on spiritual principles. In other words, spiritual counseling is spiritual direction in the EOTC.
- Basically, it is connecting the benefits of spirituality with the progresses that the faithful want to see in their lives.
- This spiritual ministry leads to the true spiritual therapy. It is also that the internal healing or fullness of a person eventually has to do with a healing relationship with God.

Learning Journal

Reflective Journal

- Complete your Learning Journal entry from today's class.

Next – Week 13 Session

- Writing up Verbatim

References

- Biswalo, Paul M. (1996) *An Introduction to Guidance and Counselling in Diverse African Contexts* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press)