

Topic: Mental health: The silent pandemic of the 21st century.

Outline:

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: Mental health issues have become silent pandemic of the 21st century, affecting millions worldwide. Social stigma, isolation and societal pressure have intensified the crisis, causing anxiety, depression and suicides. Comprehensive investment in awareness, care and policy reforms is essential to address this growing challenge.

2. Why mental health has become the silent pandemic of the 21st century?

3. Causes of the mental health pandemic in the 21st century:

Why is it called as silent pandemic

- a. The economic crisis encountered by the generation
- b. Family stress - conflicts, high expectations and lack of emotional support
- c. Constant peer and societal competition leading to diminished self-worth
- d. The fake world - portrayal of fake life on social media, fostering dissatisfaction
- e. Stigma attached to mental health treatment
- f. Harassment and bullying impacting mental health.
- g. Excessive self pressure and lack of emotional rest leading to burnout.

4. Consequences of mental health as a silent pandemic

- Increase in number of suicide rates with each passing year
- Increase in depression and anxiety among masses.
- Psychological trauma for individuals for the entire life.
- Effect on family relationships of individuals.
- Loss of productivity in individuals
- Silent struggle of individuals striving to meet social expectations while battling inner turmoil.

5 Ways to encounter mental health issue in the 21st century.

- Investment in health care projects
- Formulating national mental health policies and integrating them into public health agendas
- Integrating mental health education into school and university curricula
- Eliminating the stigma surrounding mental healthcare by promoting awareness.

6 Conclusion.

Essay :

"I know what hell feels like, but even now I can't find words to describe it. Every word that

comes to mind is so utterly inadequate to describe how terrible hell is." (Marsha, Building a life worth living, 2020). Marsha described her feeling of mental health illness in these words in her memoir, but, Marsha is not alone. There are millions of individuals around the world suffering from the mental illnesses and have no one to talk to. Mental health illness have become a silent pandemic of the 21st century. There are several causes of the mental health illness in this century. The economic crisis encountered by this generation have majorly impacted the mental health of individuals. Moreover, family issues, societal pressure, harrassment and bullying are also the causes to it. In addition to it, the portrayal of fake life on social media also add fuel to the fire and highly affect the mental health of individuals. The mental health crisis have several consequences in this century such as increase in the suicide rates, anxiety, depression and psychological trauma. Moreover, it also affects the daily life productivity of individuals. Hence, the individuals silently struggle to meet social expectations, while battling their inner turmoil. There are several ways through which this silent battle can be fought and eradicated from the society such as investing in mental healthcare projects and formulating mental health policies. Moreover,

society must work together to eradicate the stigma attached to the mental health treatment by promoting awareness regarding the issue. To sum up, one may say that mental health issue has become a silent pandemic of the 21st century, affecting millions worldwide. Social stigma, isolation and societal pressure have intensified this crisis, causing anxiety, depression and suicides. Comprehensive investment in awareness, care and policy reforms is essential to address this growing challenge.

Mental health issues became the silent pandemic of the 21st century because the issue has affected millions but is lesser talked and discussed. People around the world consider it a taboo to discuss the issue and hence the survivors survive alone without getting the help they require. Even in 21st century there are lesser steps taken to control the pandemic and millions lose their lives due to this issue. Each country contributes millions yearly for education, medical and other services for their citizens but very less share is given for the mental health care support. Nearly 1 in 7 people in the world live with a mental disorder (World Health Organization, Mental disorder, 2025). Therefore the mental health illness is called as a silent pandemic of the 21st century.

There are several causes of the mental health disorders pandemic in the 21st century. The economic condition of the generation living in the 21st century play a major role in the mental health of the individuals. The inflation rates and lesser pays of job cause the individuals to stress regarding their daily expenses which ultimately leads to illness. Individuals more often compare their economic condition with their fellows and even with their seniors which causes them to take stress and struggle with self pity. Moreover, the unemployment rate increasing with each passing year also contribute to the increase in the mental health illness in 21st century. This is supported by a research stating, "Rising inflation and unemployment are closely associated with higher suicide rates, reflecting deep emotional and psychological strain from economic instability in Pakistan." (Shakir et al, Economic distress and mental health : suicide rate in Pakistan , 2024) Therefore the economic condition of individuals in the 21st century is a major cause of the mental health pandemic among individuals.

In addition to the economic condition of individuals, the family stress of an individuals life also leads to mental health issues among individuals. The conflicts among the family members highly affects the peace of mind of

individuals. Moreover, the increased family expectation of family members towards their children also causes the increase of stress among youth leading to the mental health illness.

For instance, the children from the families where there is lesser peace and constant conflicts, are usually seen stress and some even are affected by the mental health disorders from a very young age. Therefore, the family conflicts and expectations highly impact the mental health of the individuals.

Besides the family stress, the constant peer pressure and societal expectations also impact the mental health of individuals. Several individuals suffer from the societal expectation, to act a certain way as the society wants them to be and hence their mental health suffers in extreme ways. As the individuals try to become what the society wants them to be, they lose their individuality and their self worth and live their whole life to meet the expectations of the society.

As a research done in Pakistan says, "For every 5-unit increase in perceived social pressure, the odds of moderate to severe depression increased by 67% for medical students and 42% for engineering students" (Riaz Ali, Association of mental health with societal pressure, 2024). Hence, the unmet societal expectation

lead to the mental health pandemic in the 21st century.

Other than societal expectations, the social media use also impacts the mental health of many individuals. The 21st century is the century of the social media and connectedness. However, the fake portrayal of lavish lives by individuals cause competition among individuals which leads to stress and depression. Young generation compare their ordinary daily lives with the individuals portraying their fake wealthy lives which causes the loss of self-worth and hence causes self-pity. According to a study done in Saudi Arabia, 69% participants reported anxiety as an effect of the social media use. (Bdour et al, The impact of social media use on mental health, 2024). Therefore, the unrealistic standards and constant comparison fostered by social media significantly contribute to the growing mental health challenges faced by today's generation.

Alongside the fake portrayal of lavish lives on social media, the stigma attached to the mental health treatment also contribute to the silent mental health pandemic. The treatment of mental health issue is still a stigma in the 21st century. The individuals fear to reach out to the healthcare professionals with the fear that what the society will think of them and

hence since ages the mental health survivors are suffering in silence and often move towards suicides and depression. In a study university students in Karachi, 59.8% reported social stigma as a major barrier to seek professional help for mental health issues. (Muashir et al, Attitude towards seeking professional help for mental health, 2024). The pressure caused due to the stigma attached to the mental health treatment is a major cause of the rise in the number of mental health issues in the 21st century.

In addition to the stigma attached to the mental health treatment, the harassment and bullying faced by many individuals also cause severe impact on the mental health of the individuals. Many youngsters since their early ages face bullying due to their physical appearances or economic conditions. Moreover, many individuals face harassment in many ways in their lives. These factors highly impact the mental health of these individuals. as the constant accumulation of aggression in them which leads to depression, anxiety and even sometimes suicides. For instance, the bullying culture in schools causes the students to lose their confidence and their self worth which highly impacts their mental health. Therefore bullying and harassment play a major role in the negative impact on the

mental health of individuals in the 21st century

Alongside harassment and bullying, the overburdening nature of individuals also impact their mental health. In this century where the economic conditions of individuals is not stable, many of them overburdenize themselves with work and take lesser rest. This overburdening gives them lesser time to take emotional rest which causes the emotions to accumulate in the body leading to burnouts and often depression. For instance, individuals try to do more than one job at a time along with their studies which gives them no time to rest and often causes anxiety and depression in these individuals. Therefore overburdening also causes the mental health issues in this century.

All these factors lead to several consequences of mental health issues in the 21st century. There is an increase in the suicide rates with each passing year. When the mental illness patients do not get the treatment to solve their issues, this often lead to the accumulation of emotions causing anxiety and depression in them. The anxiety and depression when untreated often lead to suicide causing the loss of precious lives in this century. This rate is increasing each passing year, making this silent pandemic louder than ever before. Data

shows that there were 7.3 suicides per 100,000 in 2019, which rose to 8.9 in 2020 and 9.8 in 2022 in Pakistan. (Suicide data, World Health Organization, 2025). This shows that with each passing year the silent pandemic, mental health, has been taking millions of lives around the world.

Besides the increase in the suicide rates, the silent pandemic of mental health also causes severe depression and anxiety among the masses. The depression and anxiety among individuals impact the daily life of these individuals. Moreover, it also impacts their self-worth and also negatively impact the coming young generations. For instance, a society where there are more individuals suffering from depression and anxiety, a negative environment is created which also impacts the healthy individuals often stressing them also and impacting their mental health also. Therefore, the mental health illness causing depression and anxiety is a major consequence of mental health issues impacting hundreds of individuals.

In addition to the increase in depression and anxiety among masses, the mental health illness also causes psychological trauma for individuals for their entire life. The individuals who survived from the

mental health illnesses, even after treatment, suffer from psychological trauma throughout their lives. This trauma takes the shape of fear and sometimes aggression against some triggers causing the mental health illness. For instance the mental health illness caused due to the harrassment often remain with the individuals as a psychological trauma throughout their lives. Therefore, mental health illness causes several consequences such as psychological trauma in todays world.

Mental health greatly influences the family relationships of individuals. When one member struggles, stress and emotional strain often affect everyone. The communication often affect everyone. The issue increases when the mental health stigma in families prevents them to seek mental healthcare support. Daily routines are disrupted and the children of the family also get affected due to the mental illness of one family member. According to a US longitudinal study, having mental disorders increased the risk of divorce and preventing them could lead to 6.7 million fewer divorces over 11 years. (Long term effects of mental disorders on marital out. comes, 2017) Therefore the mental health illness highly impacts the family life and relationships of individuals.

Besides the impact on family relationships

mental health illnesses also lead to significant loss of productivity in individuals. Conditions such as depression, anxiety and chronic stress can weaken concentration, slow decision making and reduce motivation, making routine tasks difficult to complete. Many individuals experience fatigue, low energy or emotional exhaustion which lowers work quality and overall efficiency. Hence, globally, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year due to depression and anxiety at a cost of US \$1 trillion per year in lost productivity. (Mental health at work, World Health Organization, 2024) Hence, the silent pandemic of mental illness has been negatively impacting the productivity of individuals in the 21st century.

In addition to the loss of productivity of individuals, the individuals also struggle with the silent battles in their mind and heart. The individuals while trying to meet the societal expectations often silently battle in mind and hence does not remain in peace in their whole life. Therefore the mental illness cause the individuals to silently suffer their whole life. For instance, when an individual survive the mental health illness silently, they usually try to meet all the expectations and never discuss what they go through and therefore it increases the depression and anxiety in

them. Therefore the silent pandemic of mental illness cause the individuals to silently suffer throughout their life while trying to meet the societal expectations.

There are several ways through which the silent pandemic of mental illness can be controlled in the 21st century. The government and different healthcare organizations must collectively work in the mental healthcare projects. Through these projects the accessibility can be assured of the mental health teams to each city and state. The funding of mental healthcare projects will improve both the capacity and quality of mental health systems. For instance, Australia's National Children's mental health and well being strategy promoted the subsidized mental healthcare services for children in Australia of ages 0-11 years. This strategy reflected the increased availability of care for the next generation. In this way more countries can promote the mental health well being of their citizens.

Formulating national mental health policies and integrating them into public health agendas other than investing in mental health care projects is also necessary for strengthening a country's response to mental health illnesses. Such policies ensure coordinated planning, standardized services and long term investment. For instance, Nepal's National Mental Health Strategy (2022) integrated mental health services into public

health structures which helped the expansion of mental health services from 35 districts to 77 districts. This demonstrates how policy driven integration can significantly improve nationwide access to care.

In addition to formulating government mental health care policies, there is also a need of integration of mental health education in school and university curriculum. Most of the countries possess stigma related to the mental health care due to which many individuals fear to take the mental health care for their illness. The integration of mental healthcare education will help to eradicate this stigma from the society and will also help to educate young individuals early regarding this issue. Therefore mental health education must be included into the curriculum of university and schools.

Beside the inclusion of mental healthcare education in universities and schools, there is also a need to promote awareness regarding the stigma through the awareness seminars and campaigns. In this regard the educational institutions and the world health organizations can collectively work to eliminate the stigma from different countries. For instance, Canada's "Bell Lets talk" campaign has generated over 1.5 billion interactions and funded 1400 community mental health programs.

demonstrating its powerful role in normalizing mental health conversations. Therefore, the awareness programs and seminars are necessary to eradicate the stigma attached to the silent pandemic, mental health illness, of the 21st century.

In conclusion, mental health illnesses have been a silent pandemic that has been affecting hundreds of individuals in a year. The ratio of this illness is increasing each year. There are several causes of it, such as economic and family issues and social pressure. Moreover, the stigma attached to the mental health treatment is also a major cause of the pandemic in the 21st century. The illness has many consequences, including impacts on personal and family life and on individuals' productivity levels. Hence, the mental health illness causes the individuals to silently struggle to meet societal pressure while battling inner turmoil, which sometimes also leads to suicide. The pandemic of mental health illness can be controlled through investing in mental health care projects and formulating mental health policies. Moreover, to eradicate the stigma attached to mental health treatment, the subject should be included in the curriculum of schools and universities, and awareness seminars should be held regarding the issue. If the world collectively works to

address mental health issues and provide timely treatment, it can become a better place for all, free from the growing burden of this global mental health pandemic.

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