Social change within developmental psychology

Psychology

Social Change within Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology is the study of psychological emotions, perceptions and cognitive changes that occur in human beings. It encompasses changes within psycho-motor skills, psycho-physiological processes and cognitive development in areas related to problem solving, conceptual understanding, language acquisition, emotional development, personality, social and moral understanding. Basically, there are eight stages or ages of social possibility. Social changes are spontaneous in human beings; therefore, successful social changes will follow these eight stages in order to overcome possible failures where a person feels powerless and always destined to losing. Each stage comes with different responsibilities and some sense of self-knowledge or empowerment. The stages are grouped into five phases which include: hidden problems, increasing tensions, takeoff, waging the movement and, finally, success (Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2004, p. 297).

According to psychologists, social change within developmental psychology begins with hidden problems. The hidden problems trigger people or events into action. It is the foundation for the remaining four phases of social change. It begins with normal time where a critical social problem exists yet the public is unaware of such a problem. At this stage only a few people are aware of the social problem but no one shows concern for solving the problem. As people begin to find out what social challenges are facing them, they may try using official channels in an attempt to keep the issue from creating social or political tension (Greenfield, 2009, p. 413). The leaders themselves are aware of the problem but they try to play it cool for the sake

of integrity.

When the first phase is complete, the social problems move to the second phase, which is increasing tension. Government attempts to solve social problems fail and opposition groups begin to emerge. These groups conduct research and educate the civilians on the social problems, which they have to face, this step, in turn, triggers new waves of oppositions at the grass root level. The government steps in and sets up official mechanisms of solving the problem, for instance, hearings by the courts. In case the mechanisms work the social change is considered to have been achieved at this stage. Official approaches to implementation of social changes often succeed because the people in power are overprotective of their interests.

In addition, leaders always want bureaucracy to prevail in dealing with social problems, which creates more rifts in their line of thinking with civilians. The conditions begin changing at stage two when public starts recognizing the problem at hand due to mass education conducted by the opposition groups. Other non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, churches, peace and justice organizations come in to express their concerns over the need for social change. Tensions build at the grass roots level and people start expressing their discontent with the government and public institutions. This stage is marked with widespread upset from people who even personify the problem making the second stage one of the most violent stages of all. It then triggers a takeoff where the social problem is widespread and, thus, it is declared as societal agenda.

As a developmental psychologist, I would steer social changes by involving citizens and institutions in addressing problems related to social change. This is because the second stage is vital in informing the people on the social

rights that are being violated by those in power, therefore, mobilizing them into coming together will be helpful (Miao & Wang, 2003, p. 264). The people will have the opportunity to air their points of view on a given social challenge. It is from this point that a psychologist can spring into action and be an agent of social change. In reality people are adamant to change but if they are made to be a part of decision-making, then there is a high probability of achieving social changes.

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