Name of Student

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Day Month Year

Negative body image: puberty, parenting and media

***Introduction***

Today, in a modern age people are living in a world where even seemingly minute things are a matter of great concern. Many issues are trending and one of these is negative body image. Word, body image has become common in media and serves as a hot issue for the youngster, used in both positive and negative ways as body image is the perception that is linked with the physical appearance of a person. Negative body image, a conception linked with how one feels about the perception of his/her physical appearance. A person sees his physical self against the standards set by society. Negative body image is one of the issues that grabs attention from all levels as it has been observed that this issue is becoming more important as being in a good shape has become a matter of great concern but negative body image destroys personality of a person. Various factors are involved in damaging the body image of people and the most effective factors according to the experts are puberty, parenting, and media.

***Discussion***

Following a trend has become an important motive of life for most of the youngsters. The shape of the body is affected because of various reasons and one of most obvious factors that portray the negative image is puberty, as with puberty many changes takes place in the body structure of an individual and these changes are involuntary. One of the central issue of negative body image is puberty which was the time period when issue of negative body image come at its peak. Maintaining a healthy, active and desired body image during adolescence could be difficult as it is the period of major physical as well as emotional changes that cast negative effects on the body image. According to most of the experts, the issue of negative body image is more common in girls and more factors harm a female body during puberty that includes natural weight gain and other major changes that acts as part of puberty period.

According to Dana K Voelker and colleagues, puberty is the main stage in the development of both positive and negative images of the body. Multiple influences exit in the teen years including transition that harms the body shape, appearance, and weight status. Weight status exits between a wide ranges of the spectrum of being obsessed with being an underweight adult. In their research, they also claim that factors that contribute to negative body image include media that targets the youngsters. The pressure to conform to the socially prescribed body ideals helps in explaining associations between body image and weight status. Being bullied and the concepts of fat talk during the adolescence greatly contribute upon focusing on the appearance and body weight and sometimes despite bringing positive changes, youngsters start practices that negatively impact their body shapes. Different media resources and channels when read and been through cast an impact of individuals and forces them to follow the media trends or the advertisement are so important that it could not let you live happily without all the luxurious.

According to the work of Myrna L. Frank, this fact cannot be denied that puberty, parenting, and social media are the main factors that worsen the issue of negative body image but raising daughters and encouraging them to resist against the negative cultural myths and messages about a negative body image must be promoted for giving confidence to the girls that it is perfectly fine to be out of shape or underweight. In this article, Myrna also claims that this issue of negative body image could be resolved by inculcating resistance in girls against the culturally-induced standards in the social environment. It depends on the parents what sort of role they would play whether constructive or destructive (Spinner et al, pp. 151-163) Not only there is a need to offer ways to cultivate culture-wise consciousness in girls during puberty but also in their parents as well. There is a need to give confidence to the girls by paying no attention to the issues like negative body image as it becomes the main cause of chaos and restlessness.

Experts and researchers claim that the media is damaging the teen’s body. According to Amy Morin media is damaging the human body of youngsters and converting their thought towards negative body image. Media could be stopped from damaging the body image. Research conducted by Amy claims that the average teenager spends around nine hours per day using social media for killing their time and indulging them in pleasurable activities. As per the report presented by "Common Sense Media," the same youngsters would spend hardly ten minutes talking to their parents. During the nine hours when a teenager uses the media he/she is bombarded with thousands of messages regarding the ideal body that entraps him/her. These unattainable and unrealistic ideas and portrayal of perfect body and beauty negatively impact a teen’s body image and could cast lasting effects on the physical appearance and body image of the teens.

Media and related websites portray people with beautiful bodies and represents them as ideals. Media is one factor or cause that promotes underweight models and photo shopped images for showing a perfect body image that distracts people and forces them to see themselves as someone who is with negative body image that needs to be put in proper shape. Beauty items and the diet products advertise over media are the main things that bring negative body image of an individual. Media focuses more on the physical appearance and perfect body image that gives people the impression that only an attractive and beautiful body is the key to success and happiness (Reel et al, pp. 149). The consequence of thinking of having negative body image is drastic and lasting which makes teenagers victims of many threatening situations.

Parenting could be looked upon from two different angels as far as a negative image of the body is concerned. First aspect is that being a parent could it could be develop threats regarding the negative body image and secondly aspect is that parents could help in facing the reality of negative body image. According to Stephanie Damiano, parenting interventions are of great importance in assisting the children especially during puberty for mitigating the effects of having a negative body image or for developing healthy body image and dietary patterns. Shannon L. Michael claims in her research that most youngsters are dissatisfied with their body image because of a discrepancy between the type of body image they wanted to have and their actual body image (Damiano). For attaining the desired body image, lots of efforts are being made that include weight cycling, eating disorders, obesity, and depression that instead of having a positive and healthy body image leads towards the development of negative body image. Shannon in this study claims that parental and peer factors help in developing in adults a constructive notion regarding the body image and reveals the fact to the adults that puberty is the stage during which many emotional and physical changes take place that may negatively influence body image but that with adopting healthy life activities and care this negative body image could be improved (Shannon et al, pp. 15-29).

Natalia Séjourné also investigates in her study relative contribution of standards set for ideal body mass index, dietary habits behaviors and parenting aspects for satisfying nonclinical sample college students (Séjourné). Global self-esteem and perceived parental care were examined about BMI and dietary habits that spotted a light on the parenting aspects including care and control for satisfaction regarding body image for each of the genders as males and females have different body image likewise parenting care and control would be different too.

Negative body image is not only caused by media parenting flaws. Though being a parent may also cast negative effects on the body image but also if a parent is not going to have a system of check and balance over the children they would be threatened effects on the body image. According to Jocelyne Thériault and colleagues puberty is closely linked with concerns and social interactions as in the early puberty adults especially young women went through psychological distress that negatively impacts their body image (Thériault et al, pp. 606-615). This study claims that women during 18-25 women through distress that changes their body shape and inculcates in them concerned regarding a complex of having negative body image.

***Conclusion***

Taking a look at the work and research done by different experts, it has been observed that negative body image has become an issue for most of the adults whether a male or female both are equally concerned about their body and appearance. Negative body image could be because of various factors such as puberty, parenting, and media. One of the most threatening of all is the media as nowadays at media advertisement roam about fitness and healthy body, but in fact media rather than showing real picture of the portrayed positive body image, drags the youngsters in depression and makes them feel inferior by making them realized that they are not in shape that is desired by all. Also, there could be seen another factor that is closely linked with negative body image and this factor is puberty. During this period adults pass through a series of emotional and physical changes that sometimes put them out of shape and they start believing that they have a negative body image that needs to be reformed. In an attempt to overcome the issue of negative body image, mostly youngsters took the wrong steps and worsen the situation. A third major factor is the parenting that could be looked upon in different ways. Maybe it is the stage of being a parent when an adult realizes that one may be having a negative body image. The other side which is more linked with the topic of negative body image is that it is the parenting factors that may lead a person towards depression of having negative body image or maybe it is their courage that would enable one to fight the negative body image. So as a whole, it could be promulgated that puberty, parenting, and media may serve as the root cause of negative body image.

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