

Tamil Tradition on Mental Health

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Health is defined by the WHO as follows: "state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". The mind can be considered as the key for the body. Any malfunction of the body can be exposed as a mental problem and vice versa. The Tamil community has had a very bad experience of thirty years of war. It affected the social capital in various ways. The social capital is the key element in maintaining mental health. The main driving force behind the social capital is the culture and the tradition. Any defect in the social capital leads to mental trauma. The mental trauma is surfaced in various ways like lack of community cohesion, lack of leadership, lack of creativity and various health-related problems like depression, drug and alcoholic addiction, etc. So it is obvious that mental trauma not only affects the health but the economic, social, and cultural norms. This in turn ended up in a low-productive community which always depends on external support.

It is proud to say that our tradition is more than 3000 years ancient. It mainly teaches us the spiritual health. The spiritual health was considered as the supreme of the whole. The spiritual health cannot be achieved with in an overnight. It can only be possible by continuous practice of some rituals and norms. The accumulation of those rituals and norms can be considered as tradition or culture.

There is no debate about the social benefits of Tamil tradition and the culture. But unfortunately the active Tamil public involvement on it is a query. It can be rationalized by the influencing of western culture and the other issues related to globalization. The public has to be cleared about which side of the globalization is good and how much it should be involved to the tradition. The Tamil tradition is practiced by years and years among the Tamil concentrated area. But it is true that traditional cultural trends should be tally with the current rapidly evolving world. The Jaffna university community should take the guidance role in this regard. The university community consists the experts from a broad spectrum of principles at the same time the JSA include most of the principles related to the science stream.

It was realized the brain storming may be necessary to

initiate the above activity. The JSA annual scientific meeting is the best place for the brain storming discussion.

During the 45 minutes discussion it was briefed about the Tamil tradition through a literature review. Then the current health problems were expressed with clear evidence. Finally the Tamil tradition was showed as the solution for the current health burden mainly the mental health related health issues. A question was posted to the audience to think about how the revitalization of Tamil tradition is possible. The thought of Prof Nandi and Prof Daya Somasundaram were also shared. At the same time the obstacles of revitalization of the tradition were also analyzed in details and details. It was emphasized that importance of the research in this regard. The research should be multisectorial. The results from the research not only published among academic but to the public in laymen language.

The oration by the Prof Daya Somasundaram was coated in various places. Athesudi and the Therukural were also highly appreciated in the presentation. It was advised to take those two ancient Tamil Novels as the guide. Some local researches by the Department of Community and the Family medicine were also table as evidence in the view of influence of Tamil tradition in mental health.

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