

Importance of Studying Aboriginal People



EssayCorp 5 years
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Introduction:

Health promotion refers to the process of increasing capability of the people to control health related factors and improve health. However, I think that studying aboriginal people can be useful in achieving greater degree of health promotion. The current study is concerned with the evaluation of aboriginal people along with their key traits & characteristics. The study further discusses the need or importance of studying aboriginal people in respect of a profession in the health promotion field in future.

Discussion on studying aboriginal people:

The original natives of North America and the decedents of these original people are known as Aboriginal people. Métis, North American Indian or First nations and Inuit or Inuk are the three segments of Aboriginals that are commonly recognized. The existence of the aboriginal people is distributed in the various regions from Arctic to the Southern Pacific area. The aboriginals are the original dwellers of any geographic location which later got segregated into countries. These groups dwelled even before people from different socio economic culture invaded the area and dominated the natives by the means of settlement, occupation and conquest over different means.

As per recent estimation by Gwynne et al (2016) more than 370 million indigenous people live across the world. The popular groups of aboriginals that stay in different countries even in recent days are Aymaras who stay in Bolivia, Mayas at Guatemala, Lakota in USA, the Saami group in northern Europe, Aleutians and Inuit in the circumpolar area, Torres Strait Islanders and Aborigines in Australia and the Maori group at New Zealand. Several studies related to the socio cultural diversity of the indigenous people are still being done across the globe.

Identification can be a better approach than definition to understand the aboriginals according to the United Nations. The indigenous people are called by variety of names in the different countries or geographic locations since long. Adivasi, Tribal people, ethnic troops, Janajati, natives, first nations and others are such names. The groups are also segmented as per the selected occupation and geographical existences like nomads, hunters, people of the hills, peasants and alike.

Social Structure of the aboriginal people:

The social structure of the indigenous people can be broadly segmented in three types as below:

Structure based on geographical location:

The tribes of more than five hundred natives sharing common language is segregated in several groups comprising about 10 to 20 people called horde. The hordes hunt together and gather food together in some specific geographical location. Each horde has few families who again stay together till the whole tribe travels to another location.

Totemic or religious Structuring:

The Aboriginals are segmented into two moieties based on concept of ancestral beings from the time the groups were created. Each of the moieties have different selected natural phenomenon that includes trees, animals, celestial bodies as auspicious. The people as well as the moiety are related to these auspicious items called totems.

Structure based on Kinship:

The complete tribe is interconnected by kinship. In this context, Brimblecombe et al (2013) stated that every aboriginal is related to each other by some or the other relationship. The structure moves on the strength and responsibilities of the relationships. This mesh helps to define who can be responsible for protecting the children in absence of parents, who will be taking care of old people, who can marry whom and even defines obligations for misdeeds or debts of one person on another. Even when a non-aboriginal person is included in the aboriginal tribe, the person has to be first related to some aboriginal person before being accepted in the group to maintain the kinship structure of the tribal society.

Lifestyle of the aboriginal people:

Aboriginal people are more accustomed to nomadic life. The nomads travel from one geographical location to another and depend solely on the natural resources for existence. The tribal people understand nature and environment the best and can understand the simple way to lead life with balanced diets. This capability assists the tribes to exist in harsh environmental conditions with ease. The nomadic groups do not gather possessions. The change of season can be understood and these groups either travel to another suitable place or some hordes of tribes also settle in some areas and make appropriate arrangement for food, clothes and shelter.

Shelter:

Every human being needs to get shelter to protect themselves from the scorching heat of the sun, harsh weather, heavy downpour or chilling cold. The aborigines also need protection from the wild animals and poisonous insects as they dwell in the forest majority areas. Temporary structures are made by the indigenous people for shelter as the tribes travel from one place to other and need to reconstruct shelters according to the requirement of the new geographic location.

In this context, Baum and Fisher (2014) studied that the dwelling shelters of the indigenous people may be some tree with hollow, tree huts, bark huts, rounded huts, windbreaker or some simple sleeping platform. The huge trunks of trees with hollows are used by the aboriginals to protect themselves from harsh weather conditions. Simple raised platforms on four post-like stout trunk of tree with thatched platform made of twigs, hay can be a comfortable escape from wild animals and insects infested forest bed. Such thatches on trees are also made to form tree huts. The tribal people also make tent like structures with strong bark of trees and the roof top of such tents are covered with hay, twigs, coconut leaves to protect from rain and extreme weather conditions. Wind breakers are made in front of the huts so that fire can be lit up throughout the night without getting blown off by the wind. Dome shaped huts of clays also act as shelter for these people.

Clothing pattern:

Native people do not use clothes for covering their bodies. Instead natural items like bunches of leaves meshed together, tree skins or animal skin are commonly seen among the tribes. Women are seen to wear apron type natural covers (Race et al, 2016). During winter the fur side is worn inside to protect from cold. The emphasis is more on body decoration with natural things like flowers, earthen items in the form of bracelets, necklace and waist band with lots of color. These are widely used during ceremonies.

Food:

Vegetables are mainly eaten raw while fish, meat or insects are mostly cooked by roasting or steaming. The naturally available fruits, nuts, vegetables, seeds, roots, leaves, honey, insects, crabs and all such edibles are consumed by the tribal people. However, Baum et al (2014) observed that the male members spend a lot of time on preparing hunting tools for gathering meat and fish for

the tribe. Indigenous people travel to different places in search for food. The tribes dwelling at the coastal area can exploit the opulence of food but the tribes in the arid area suffer from scarcity.

Tools:

Tools are used by the tribal people more commonly for protection, hunting and sometimes for farming. Stones, bones and wooden structures are used to make tools. The widely used tools can be identified as boomerangs for hunting birds, spears, clubs, spearheads, knives, shield and others for hunting, self protection and even colorful display in ceremonies.

Transport:

The aboriginals mainly walk from one area to the other. Sometimes canoes or hollow tree trunks are used from sailing in water and also fishing. The domesticated animals are sometimes used to pull wooden carts for transport purpose.

Awareness on environmental issues and sustainability of nature is the most important in recent times. Exquisite knowledge of natural environment comprises of a lot more than what can be specified as science. The civilizations developed across the world in different phases of time have inculcated priceless knowledge, practical experience and information about the nature which may be otherwise secret to the rest of the world. The rich cultural, environmental and nature related theories can be explored only by studying and realizing the lifestyle and history of the aboriginal people. In the view of Davis et al (2015), appropriate understanding and capability to interpret the information can help the modern human society get idea how to adapt themselves with nature without exploiting the same by technological robots. The skill required for hunting, agriculture, raising animal husbandry, fighting against natural calamities and even diseases with the help of nature can be understood.

The culture, sociology and ecology of the locality can be understood from the study of aboriginals. Tapping the traditionally used wisdom, knowledge and experience that has been transmitted generation wise through rituals, epics, colloquial songs and similar verbal communications need to be done for the benefit of society. Tribal people use the traditional knowledge to lead the life. The study of aboriginal people can help the long lost traditional wisdom get remembered and embraced once more in the society.

Indigenous knowledge can be incorporated along with the modern education system for sustainability of the culture and environment also.

Studying about aboriginal people can help the students to think indigenously and understand situations of critical importance. In this context, Treloar et al (2014) stated that the history of aboriginals leads to historical incidents which may not be prestigious for the countries where these groups are located. Incidents of colonization and evading the natives can be disclosed, but that is the actual fact and helps to understand the aboriginals from true sense. Only the study of aboriginal people can reveal these facts which can help people to better communicate with these tribal people, spread social and mainly health related awareness among them with an aroused tinge of kinship feeling. The deep understanding related to the culture, social structure and basic simple requirements of the aboriginal tribes have helped the organizing different workshop with effective participation from the indigenous people. Lectures, screening videos, student orientation programs and education programs for elders can be gradually held in the tribal areas in their way of understanding which can be used as tools for spreading awareness and dealing with tribal and their families.

I think that it is important to understand the aspirations of people for reaching a complete state of mental, physical and social well-being for satisfying change. In this context, Davis et al (2015) mentioned that health promotion can be better achieved through combining environmental and educational supports in respect of conditions & actions of living in context to health. Thus, health promotion includes political, social and environmental processes that encourage groups or individuals and populations to improve control over health and related factors. Some of the major disciplines associated with health promotion are political science, anthropology, sociology, epidemiology, health, education and psychology. Thus, I feel that the current study conducted on the aboriginal people is highly essential for health promotion as it provides a better understanding of the population.

I believe that studying aboriginal people has changed my understanding about these people and that now I feel that studying aboriginal people has increased my visibility about this group of people. I think that this understanding would help me in delivering better services as professional in the health promotion field. I feel that studies on aboriginal people offers a space for reflecting on the past including both our own traditions along with the history of colonization. This is

essential for finding a stronger and better future for the nations. It is not possible to achieve complete health promotion of a country without considering the problems, likes and dislikes of the aboriginal people.

Conclusion:

Colonization is considered to have increased the trauma and grief among the aboriginal people resulting from relocation, continuing socioeconomic disadvantage, ongoing racism and removal of children. Social and emotional well-being of the aboriginal people have been effected due to colonization. In addition, the impact of trans-generalization cannot be ignored as well. Thus, studying about the aboriginal people can help me in developing more effective and realistic health promotional plans in future which can further improve the health of the people of a nation.



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