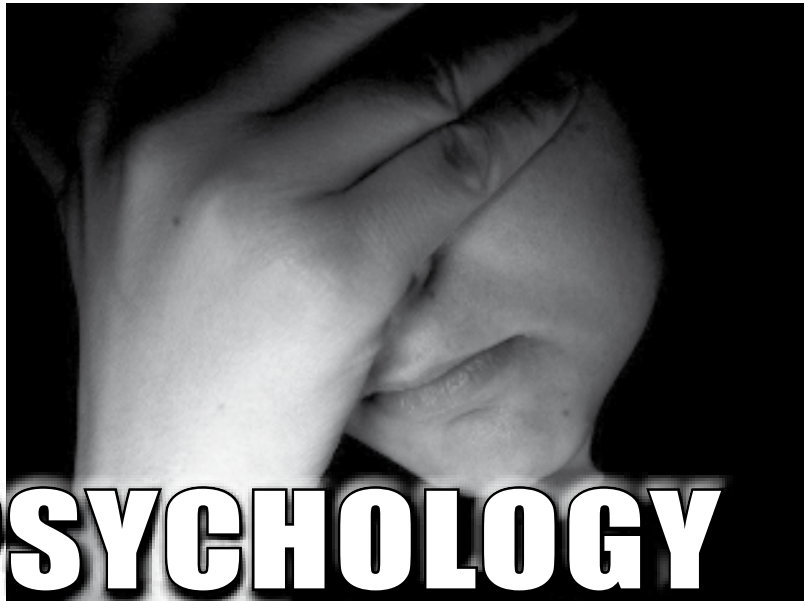


Though a highly developed part of the anatomy, human brain seems to wilt under the minutest of pressure, be it physical or mental

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RESENTMENT



BY PACHU MENON

We are now living in an age of uncertainties, an era that is redefining mankind's evolution. Events unfolding by the day in recent times throw us several eons back in time, into those prehistoric ages, when there was not much to differentiate between human beings and animals.

The resurgence of primitive instincts in man in modern times, and at quite an alarming rate too, gives one the feeling that the 'intelligent quotient' that we are blessed with, and which sets apart us from other living creatures of the universe can, in a moment of unbridled frenzy, be clouded by a sudden loss of this sense of reasoning.

If the spine-chilling news of an innocent two-year-old baby girl brutally battered with head injuries, iron branding marks on face and bite marks all over her frail body in the national Capital could shake a nation out of reverie, smug under the impression that we live in a blemishless society; the shocking incident of a Class IX student of a private school in Chennai stabbing his teacher to death inside a classroom lives no doubts about the depths of depravity we have sunk to.

The atrocities carried out against Baby Falak serve to remind one of the viciousness of a demented mind and the danger such individuals could pose to a civilized society. But in the matter of Uma Maheshwari, the teacher, who succumbed to the nefarious designs of a devious mind at work, it is appalling to note that it was a 15-year-old who was the perpetrator of the evil deed.

If admonishment and complaints to the parents about

the poor academic performance of their ward could stir the youngster to such violent moods, it throws sufficient light on the heights to which the child has been pampered! More than anything else, it is the fussy and overindulgent parents who are responsible for the overbearing attitude of their kids.

Obstinacy and obduracy has characterized the child of today; more so if he is the only issue in the family. Lavishing all their love and affection on him, the parents are known to comply with the smallest of their offspring's wants and wishes. Where a firm admonishment would have been adequate in most of the cases, the parents are known to go out of their way to ensure that the child has no cause to complain. But by giving into their irrational demands the parents are guilty of oversight, which in the long run would prove disastrous for the child. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," it is said.

Moreover, schools are corrective institutions for the budding pupil and the teacher is the right person to guide him in his explorations and discoveries of the self. However, the conceited outlook towards educational centers and its authorities harboured by parents has brought about a very formal relationship between the teacher and the student, resulting in the child holding a rather skewed opinion of the educational establishment on the whole.

Furious parents taking the school management to task over as innocuous a matter as the punishment meted out to their wards by teachers in the classrooms, and demanding an unconditional public apology for their presumably imperious approach; the PTAs at times becoming too 'undemocratic' and getting involved in petty squabbles and politicizing issues governing the schools that in no way has any bearing on the moulding of the child's character – well, it is an endless list of the Dos-and-Don'ts that, if understood in the right perspective, would enable any sensible person to comprehend the exact extent of the liability.

"The Hindu" carried an apt editorial on this subject. "Blaming parenting is easy, but this is no more than a way of absolving the rest of society of all responsibility. Of course parents bear a greater share of the responsibility for the behaviour of their children, but bad parenting cannot explain all deviant behaviour. While several things are wrong with our education system, these cannot be understood as major contributors to the violence in schools."

"Films and other forms of popular culture also have an impact on young minds, but then

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again, it would be simplistic to relate them directly to real-life violence. The fact is children do not occupy an innocent world of their own; they are very much a part of the nasty, adult universe. We need to pursue remedies at the school-level itself, including counselling and other early warning systems that can help children cope with the stress and strain of learning."

school campus, killing, maiming and injuring their teachers and colleagues. This has become such a routine affair in the western countries that one has come to believe in the theory of the 'man-child'. For, a child in its formative years couldn't be expected to hold so much of grudge for the whole world that he thinks nothing of blowing everything around him into smithereens, enjoying every



"Nothing is more shocking than the violence of children. For any society, children are the embodiment of innocence, free from the wiles and lies of the corrupt, adult world they are yet to enter."

Thankfully this country is yet to witness cases of students going on a shooting spree in the

second of the gory and sickening moment.

But what can one say about a deranged Maharashtra State Transport bus driver, who went berserk, mercilessly mowing down people in one of the most horrifying and shocking road rage incidents in the country's history, reported in Pune. The

bus driver, Santosh Mane, crushed many hapless victims under his bus-wheels in an orgy of maniacal driving. Reportedly, the body parts strewn all around and the road literally washed in blood was a scene of amusement for the loony driver. When apprehended, he was laughing aloud 'like a mad man' and 'actually seemed pleased with his action'.

Undoubtedly, areas that bring out the true element of the Homo sapiens when faced with the trials and tribulations of an uneasy mind are the roads and highways. Nowhere else is the variant moods of a man more in evidence than the busy thoroughfares. This fondness for recognizing 'all that he surveys from behind the steering' as his personal domain has been the cause for many an unsavoury scene leading to total pandemonium, a chaos one could well do without.

Though the Wikipedia describes 'Road Rage' as "an aggressive or angry behavior by a driver of an automobile or other motor vehicle, which might include rude gestures, verbal insults, deliberately driving in an unsafe or threatening manner, or making threats," literally it is a term used to refer to the violent incidents caused by stress while driving on high traffic zones on roadways.

Road rage is also called 'intermittent explosive disorder' and manifests itself only when one is behind the steering wheels of a motor vehicle. However, one needs to understand that road rage is an expression of an underlying problem with a driver. "The driver is not able to remain in control of himself and his emotions. It is the inside person who regardless of the setting fails to control his or her temper and simply explodes."



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One has heard of 'fear psychosis' and the conquering of this phobia mainly through meditation and other means that aims at taking control of the senses -- an art that needs years of mastering, and yet remains a daunting task. If an inclination to go for thrills could be attributed to an adventurous streak in human beings, that pumping of adrenalin; well, in the same breath one could also speak of 'hate syndrome' as being the main reason for the violence seen all around us.

These incidents give one an exhaustive insight into the workings of a human brain, a highly developed part of the

human anatomy, but one that seems to wilt under the minutest of pressure, be it physical or mental. Nevertheless, this is that one intricate composition of the human body that has still posed mysteries for scientists, defying all postulations.

Baby Falak, Uma Maheshwari and Santosh Mane may eventually end up as mere statistics in a comprehensive study on the mood-swings of a human brain. But the fact remains that in spite of the progress and erudition associated with mankind in the modern era, it has not been completely possible to eliminate the characteristics that typified him during the Stone Age. 