

Mental Health Among Rural Secondary School Adolescents

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Abstract— Mental health is the capacity of an individual to form harmonious relations with others and to adjust to his social and physical environment. Mental health of the learner is very important for efficient learning and proper development of personality. For adolescents, school is the most important setting outside the family. Students' perceptions of the school environment are significantly associated with their wellbeing. Well-developed adolescents who were empowered with appropriate life skills have better chances of becoming healthy, responsible, and productive adults. The study was conducted in Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, India among eleven selected secondary schools (5 residential, 5 non- residential schools and one private school) for students of classes 8, 9 and 10(574 students).

Four point Likert scale was used to assess the status of mental health of the school adolescents. It was found that students coming from disadvantaged sections of the society suffered from psychosomatic disorders, inability to cope up with situation and impulsiveness in behavior. Apart from that it was found that students suffered from depression as well, and also the study reveals that type of school management has significant influence on the mental health status of school adolescents because of the rigidity in time table and lack of recreation.

The researchers suggest that mental health interventions such as counseling and moral support are the panacea to this issue.

Keywords— Adolescents, Development of personality Mental Health, Rural Secondary School.

I. INTRODUCTION

MENTAL health of the student is very important for efficient learning and proper development of personality. The child born in a home where remains in the constant company of his mother in the formative years of his infancy, traditionally it is said that a mother is equal to hundred teachers, undoubtedly the role of mother can't be undermined or shifted to any other agency. Further the development of the child shall be taken care of by the school. Due to changes in the societal structure, the family is not in a position to contribute much for the developmental aspect of the child as a result school has become an important agency and assumes great responsibility in developing the personality of a child. School has to play an important role in proper development of physical, mental and spiritual abilities among

the children.

Unfortunately mental health of the people of present era is almost in pitiable condition because every individual has lot of deviations from his realities of life resulting into stress, anxiety, tension, frustration and psycho-neurotic disorders. There is no one in the world that is free from stress. Day by day stress related problems are on increasing. Relationships with parents, teachers and peers and management strategies of the school are some of the factors influencing on the children to get academic stress. Stress is unavoidable consequence of life, without stress there would be no life. However, just as distress cause disease and eustress that offset this, promote wellness.

After certain limits the stress cannot be tolerated. The coping mechanism of the individual against the stress differs from situation to situation. Some times because of stress unable to meet either the deadlines or the expectations, where as on occasion cope or stimulated positively. Stress not only disturbs the mental health of the adults, but also of the school children particularly among the adolescents, the pressure of stress hampers the functioning of body and creates multiple problems like parent's expectation, sibling rivalry, status and financial problems. In the academic life of the adolescents the factors like their school environment, examinations, target oriented achievement and performance, relationships with peers and teachers, management strategies of the school are some of the sources perceive academic stress. Stressed out and negligent parents, high expectations in academic or other performances, abused or deprived childhood, growing up tensions and demand for familial responsibility are the main causes of childhood and teen stress.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Educational Psychologists Have Begun To Realize The Importance Of Mental Health In The Schools. "Feeling Of Insecurity And Feeling Of Inferiority" Are Two Great Enemies Of Mental Health. A Psychological Approach Is Very Essential To Deal With The Issues Of Mental Health In The School. It Is Important To Provide Suitable Emotional, Physical And Intellectual Environments In Which A Child Will Have The "Feeling Of Security, Feeling Of Equality And Feeling Of Acceptance". The Adolescents Studying In The Schools Are Facing Stress From Every Corner Of Student Life; The Reason May Be Severe Competition At All Academic Levels, Uncertainty In Choosing The Right Option,

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Constant Comparison At The Home In The School And Within Peer Group. Lack Of Recreational Activities At School And Home, Heavy Loaded Curriculum, Home Work And Defective Examination System Are Some Of The Factors Causing The Stress In The Students, As A Result The Mental Health Of Adolescent Children Is Greatly Disturbed. By And Large Children Try To Escape From The Academic Stress By Using Different Coping Strategies.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is titled as "Mental health among rural Secondary school Adolescents". The researcher has planned to know effect of stress on the mental health of the rural secondary schools students.

IV. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

4.1 Mental Health

"Mental health implies the capacity of an individual to form harmonious relations with others and to participate constructively to changes in his social and physical environment"

4.2 Secondary School Adolescents

"The students studying the classes 8th, 9th and 10th are considered as Secondary school students". These students are also labeled as Adolescents.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Researcher has framed the following objectives for the present study:

1. To study the effect of Academic stress on mental health of the Rural Secondary school Adolescents.
2. To compare the mental health situation between Residential and Non-residential students studying in 8th, 9th and 10th classes.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bauwens and Hourcade 1992 enlighten that discipline and classroom management procedures are caused the stress more often by boys than by girls and more often by younger students. Kar and Johnson(1991) stated that non school sources of stress are found to be worsening school related stress. Milburn (1990) highlighted that the test anxiety, fear of success or failure associated with the school setting. Burns (1991) compared stressors among the students and reported over all stress in academic aspects. Ragheb and Mc Kinney(1993) stated that, leisure time activities minimize stress in the students.

Shann. M Suldo (2008) reported that, high achieving students adopts specific coping styles that are differentially related to Mental health. Crepeau- Hobson Mary Frances(1996) reported that recently transitioned tenth graders utilizing family interactions in an effort to cope with the stress.

Esters, Irvin Glenn (1995) highlighted the need of extending Psychological services to rural students and suggested to design Mental health education in the school curriculum. Nobels Healthier(1995) felt need of introducing mental health components in cities schools for improving the attendance, academic and behaviour of the students. Holt, Dan .G (1993) felt need of introducing humour in school curriculum to cope with stressful events. Paul C. Burnett (1997) felt the need of "Mental health literacy" to adolescents so as to more familiarize with Mental health issues and to manage them. Babar T. Shaik Arsalan Kahloon & others (2004) found that the review of academic, exam schedule, leisure time activities, advisory services and peer counseling helps in reducing the stress among the students.

K. Dubat & others(2007) stated that the adolescents experienced stress in the categories of family stress, ego threat, bereavement, personal set back, health and other issues. Dr. V. Srikanth Reddy & others (2005) highlighted that adolescent girls experienced less stress when compared to adolescent boys.

Neetha George & Dr. Anitha Ravindran (2005) concluded that, the need of time accuracy and time perception effective coping styles are helpful to low achievers to get rid of from stress. K. Saraladevi & Niranjan Devaraj (2003) indicated that examination stress has negative impact on immune system. Dr. C.B.Asha (2003) concluded that, cognitive excellence is a resource for adapting to stressful conditions and fostering positive mental health.

Srinivas (1999) indicate that in adequate study facilities, fear of failure, teacher pupil relationship, inter personal inadequacy are the reasons for academic stress in the students. Sood. P(1998) concluded that, students low on stress used more direct coping strategies. Girls more often used direct coping and suppression as coping strategies when compared to Boys. Biswas et al (1995) concluded that the disturbed group children experienced more adjustment problems in area of health, school and home with higher number stressful life events. Verma et. al (1995) stated that the college students coped with difficult situation in mature manner. Srinivasan (1986) concluded that the majority of the students reported problem oriented coping behaviours. Caplan (1984) indicated that coping was generally and positively correlated with positive effects such as satisfaction etc. Shejwal (1984 a) reported that, majority of the students reported stress experience related conflicts at home and with friends.

VII. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- 1) The following hypotheses have been formulated:
- 2) Ho: There is no significant influence of Gender of the students on Mental health
- 3) Ho: There is no significant influence of Age of the Students on Mental health.
- 4) Ho: There is no significant influence of Caste of the Students on Mental health.
- 5) Ho: There is no significant influence of Parental Education of the students of mental health.

- 6) Ho: There is no significant influence of Family annual income of the students on mental health.
- 7) Ho: There is no significant influence of Residential and Non-Residential school students on mental health
- 8) Ho: There is no significant effect class of the Students on Mental health
- 9) Ho: There is no significant influence of Academic stress on students' Mental health.

VIII. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample for the study is Secondary schools of Karimnagar District of Telangana State. Total 11 schools were selected following the simple random technique which includes 5 Residential and 6 Non residential secondary schools. From each school out of the total children of (8, 9 and 10th classes). 25 percent of children were selected and included as sample by using 'Circular random sampling method'. The total number of students was: 574 (25% of 2297 children).

IX. VARIABLES

The variables identified for the present study are Mental health of the student and its effect on gender of the student, Age of the student, Father and Mother Educational level of the student, Annual income of the family, Type of the school and Class of the student.

X. DESCRIPTION OF MENTAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

The present study has been conducted by using the Questionnaire on Mental health prepared by the Researcher. It measures the mental health of the students. The Mental health tool is of Likert type and aimed to measure the mental health status of the student from the last one month to till the date of data collection. It consists of 47 statements. Each statement has been given the following four weightages:

- Never happened =1:
- Occasionally happened =2:
- More times happened =3:
- Always happened =4:

The reliability of the scale was calculated by using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient and it is found to be 0.89. The summative ratings of the tool have been used in the data analysis.

XI. DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyze the data.

Descriptive Statistics

To analyse the data descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, comparison of means were used. The data has been represented in pie and bar diagrams. Descriptive statistics helped in checking the item quality.

Inferential Statistics

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in order to compare the means between and within the groups.

Reliability of the tools mental health by using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and Pearson correlation methods were used to establish the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables.

XII. FINDINGS ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS

The descriptive statistics analysis and treatment of the data reveals the following findings of the study.

1. Out of the total sample involved in the study majority of them are girls with 61.8%
2. The age of the sample is ranging between 11-18 years out of which 13-15 years aged students are found more in number.
3. With regard to the caste majority of the students belongs to are Back ward class followed by scheduled castes.
4. The Educational level of the father of the sample indicates that majority of the fathers are illiterates.
5. The Educational level of the mother of the sample indicates that majority of the mothers are illiterates. The literacy rate of mothers is found very less when compared to fathers.
6. Majority of the sample annual income is less than ten thousand rupees.
7. The sample involved in the study indicates that of the majority of the students are from 8th class
8. Majority of the students are from Residential schools.

XIII. RESULTS & ANALYSIS

1. No significant difference is seen between the mental health scores of Boys and Girls. No influence of Gender on Mental health of the student.
2. High score on mental health are reported indicating the high problems in the Mental health of the students, where as above thirteen years are experiencing slight more problems in Mental health than the age group students.
3. Deprived sections of the community like Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste students perceiving significantly more problems in the mental health when compared to others.
4. No influence of Father Education on students' mental health.
5. No influence of students Mother Education on mental health.
6. Annual income of the family has no influence on the mental health of the student.
7. There is a significant influence of Type of the school on mental health of the student. Residential school students perceiving more mental health problems when compared to the Non residential school students.
8. There is no influence of the class on the mental health of the student. Higher class students perceiving more mental health problems when compared to the lower class students.

XIV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Mental health of the student is very important; the students should feel secure and comfortable in the school. The demographic profile of the students reveals that majority of the sample are Girls, their age is ranging between 11-18 years and majority of the students are from Backward Class community. Majority of the parents are illiterates and majority families' annual income is less than ten thousand rupees per annum. Majority of the students are from Residential schools out of which eighth class students are found more. The student should feel homely atmosphere in the school. Findings of the study revealed that there is no influence of Gender, Age, Caste, Parental Education, Family income and Class on the mental health of the student. Further it is concluded that Caste of the student and Type of the school showed significance influence on the mental health of the student. The students of Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities, who perceive their Education by staying in the hostels and residential schools are reported more problems of Mental health. Majority of the students parents are illiterates, and they seemed to be first generation learners. The poor conditions of the family, health problems, problems in understanding the subjects, lack of support from the siblings and parents causing the disturbance in the mental health of the students.

Type of the school has significant influence on the mental health of the student. It clearly shows that the students studying in the residential schools are experiencing more problems of mental health when compared to the Non residential school students. During the time of data collection the researcher interacted with the teachers and students. It is noticed that the students are not happy with daily academic activities and rigid time table followed by teachers and class in charges. The teachers and class in charges are more interested in imposing the syllabus load and insisting the students to score top marks and grades. Unhealthy type of academic competition is being created among the students. In the Residential schools the time allocated for recreational activities, sports and games is very optimum, from morning to evening the teachers engaging the students in academic activities only. Apart from these inadequate infrastructure facilities, strictness and discipline and living away from the parents is causing disturbances in the Mental health of the students.

Similar type of studies conducted on mental health aspect supports the research findings. Fuchs (1975) demonstrated a positive relationship between the level of achievement and degree of mental health. Richmond (1929) and Fischer (1943) found that emotional maladjustment was associated with poor performance. In general educational psychologists are of the opinion that psycho neurotic traits are contributes poor Mental health and hampers academic work. Esters, Irvin Glenn (1995) felt the need for introducing "Mental health Education curriculum" to the rural students. Paul. C. Burnett, John P. Fanshawe (1997) felt the need of "Mental health literacy" to the adolescents to get well acquainted with mental health issues and to make use of effective coping strategies.

Sood .P (1986) stated that Academic stress significantly related to Coping strategies. Thomas, Angela (1993) established positive correlation between perceived coping resources effectiveness and achievement and these studies supports the findings of the present study. Phelps and Jarvis (1994) indicated that adolescent stressors emanate from academic concerns, grades, parental, peer conflicts and extra curricular activities. The present study establishes significant influence of Academic stress on mental health. Subject related issues highly correlated with Mental health. The research finding clearly indicates that Academic stress is directly related to the Coping strategies.

Hence it is concluded that stress free education leads sound mental health and helps the student to cope with negative situations.

XV. SUGGESTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The school plays a major role in the preservation and promotion of positive mental health of the students. The school teacher and parents play an important role in helping their children in the maintenance of proper mental health. In the present study the Academic stress perceived by the students is found more especially in the case of the students studying in the Residential schools. As a result the mental health of the student is also found greatly disturbed. The coping strategies used by the students not that much encouraging to get rid of from stress. Therefore the following measures are suggested.

Counselling and Guidance

The secondary school students so called adolescents experience stress because of the variety of experiences, most of the stresses are managed by them yet in dealing with some situations they require help. At school point provision should be made for the post of Counsellor/ Psychiatrist/ Psychologist or Social worker to help the student, to adjust with the pressure and cope with physiological, emotional, mental and sociological needs and self confidence and self esteem can be enhanced among the students.

Exercises

Walking, physical exercises, participating in sports and games releases stress among the students and makes them mentally, physically, soically and emotionally strong. In all the schools there should be strict provision for these activities.

Recreation

Hussain (1998), Holt, Dan.G in their studies highlighted the importance of humour as a coping mechanism. Therefore in every school Joyful learning atmosphere shall be created and students shall be allowed to participate in recreational activities so as to prevent the student damage effects of stress.

Value Education

The literature related to value education should be discussed before the students. Social and practical values involved in the stories develop rational and practical thinking among the students.

Meditation

Jangid, Vyas and Shukla(1988) indicated that six week practice of transcendental meditation has shown significant

reduction in anxiety and improvement in memory of normal person with continued practice. Hence for the improvement of the concentration levels of the students Meditation acts as stress relief agent.

Yoga

Pranayama and Yoga are become very popular now days. Srivastava(1981) stated that persons coping more effectively with stress have more effectively with stress have more positive orientation of life in general and employ a valuable mix of coping and defense responses. Singh and Udupa (1977) mentioned that Yoga practices produce a series of psychological, physiological, endocrinal and metabolic changes in body. Gupta (1981) described that Yoga facilitates the achievement of psychological integration and well being. Therefore in all the Residential and Non residential schools Yoga is recommended as a part of curriculum.

Tips to Parents and Teachers

- Watch signs of school related stress and provide timely guidance.
- Teach students time management skills.
- Stress relieving homework tips.
- Consider whether your child is over scheduled.
- Encourage sleep, exercise-and family meal times.
- Provision for sports, games and recreational activities at home and in the School.
- Reducing heavy loaded curriculum.
- Adoption of Joyful teaching learning methods by the student.
- Organising Excursions and picnics and field trips.
- Creating democratic atmosphere in the school.
- Allow the students to participate in debates, seminars and Science exhibitions.

Understanding the needs and interests of the students and provide appropriate guidance and counseling for coping the stressful situations

XVI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The presented study is confined to study student Mental health status and its effect of different demographic variables and academic stress of the students.
- The study is confined to only Karimnagar district of Telangana State.
- Majority of the sample is restricted only the Government schools.
- The sample is restricted to eleven schools only.
- The study is restricted to the classes 8th, 9th and 10th only.
- Majority of the sample schools are from Telugu medium.
- Only one private un aided English medium school is included in the sample.

XVII. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The study is restricted to 8th, 9th and 10th classes only; it may be extended to higher classes.

- The study is confined to only Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh, it may be included at least two districts from Andhra, Telangana and Rayalseema regions.
- Majority of the schools from the Government sector run by Government of Andhra Pradesh. It may be extended to Navodaya vidyalayas, Central schools and Private sector schools.

CONCLUSIONS

Residential school students perceived more Academic stress and problems of Mental health when compared to the Non residential school students. Caste of the student is significantly influencing the mental health of the student.

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