



Factors Contributing Stress among Adolescent Students in Pudukkottai District Tamil Nadu – A Study

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Abstract

Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by multiple changes in virtually every aspect of an individual's life, calling for new psychological adaptations. Exposure to different stressors caused by these changes represents a central and normal part of the process of growth and development during adolescence. However, experience of cumulative and simultaneous negative stressors remains central as a potential threat to the well-being and healthy development during adolescence. Meanwhile, when faced with identical stressors, the stress process and the health outcomes of stress vary individually; the outcome depends on the role of different vulnerabilities and protective factors, in the individual as well as in the environment. The present study is an investigation of the stress among adolescent students in Pudukkottai district and the significant difference in stress with regard to gender, locality, family type, socio-economic status and type of school.

Keywords: Stress, Adolescents, Behaviour Problems.

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Introduction

Life of human being is full of mixed emotions. Emotions are both positive and negatives which are not permanent. Managing the emotions at given point of time needs experience and skills. Men and women with their age and exposures cope up with the stress. But the children and adult face innumerable problems due to their inability to manage the stress. Stress is not identical to all the adults. The capacity to overcome the problems related to stress also varies according to the age and social environment and socialisation. The impact of unmanaged stress is so adverse that it will affect not only the individual experiencing stress but the family and the society as well. Sometimes it may lead even to commit suicide. It needs to be curbed at the bud. The severity and the impact of stress to the adolescent need to be understood by the parents, teachers and peer groups so that the adolescent can be saved from indulging into anti-social and aggressive behaviour which may ruin the adulthood itself. As a educationist, the researcher was tempted to study the factors contributing stress among the adolescent students in the school.

What is Stress

The researcher defines stress as a physical mental or emotional response to events that causes

bodily or mental tension. Simply, put stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on one body or mind. "Stress is a physical mental or emotional factors that causes bodily or mental tension". It is a psychological disorder that will affect not only physical but mental and social as well. Dr. Hans Selye one of the authorities on the concept of stress describes stress as the rate of all wear and tear caused by life.

Causes of Stress among Adolescents

The adolescent years are some of the most trying, difficult times in most peoples' lives. Teens face a host of novel problems, challenges and situations that can cause or exacerbate symptoms of stress. While some level of stress can help teens take action or feel motivated, high or poorly managed levels of stress can create potentially serious problems, such as anxiety, withdrawal, aggression or chronic worry, according to Lifespan, an affiliate of the Brown Alpert Medical School. Learning about the common causes of stress might enable parents to help their teens reduce stress and develop better coping strategies.

Physical

Adolescents experience many significant physical changes. Their bodies grow and develop rapidly, and teens deal with hormonal fluctuations. Many adolescents are preoccupied with their appearance, understandably so. According to the University of Missouri Extension, rapid and sudden growth can lead to problems with coordination, or this rapid growth can

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lead to nutritional deficiencies. Hormonal changes can lead to mood fluctuations, feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. For many adolescents, dealing with bodily changes and mood swings can be a tremendous source of stress, not only for physical reasons, but also because teens must adapt their self-image on an ongoing basis, as they develop physical and emotionally.

Social

Another common cause of adolescent stress is social pressure. Most adolescents want to fit in with their peer group often, desperately so and try their hardest to win the approval of their friends and classmates. Adolescents experience social stress not only from peer pressure but also because they are beginning to date, according to Thomas W. McCormack, M.D., in an article for the Athens Regional Medical Center. Increased social pressure to engage in early sexual behaviors, experiment with smoking, drugs or alcohol, or to participate in other activities so as to get social acceptance into a particular peer group also responsible for stress among adult students .

Academic

Most adolescents feel that school and academic concerns are at the top of their list of stressors. According to a survey by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Worries about the future, being accepted to college, attaining good grades, completing homework and preparing for examinations could cause teens to experience inordinate amount of stress. Adolescents can become stressed because they place too much pressure on themselves to achieve and expectations of parents or teachers.

Family

Family is the basis of start of stress. For many adolescents, the family can be another source of stress. Family problems such as parents separating or divorcing, death or illness in the family, parents who argue, emotional or physical abuse and fighting with siblings can contribute to increased stress levels. In addition, the family might need to move and teens might need to change schools; parents' job transfers or relocation can also be the most stressful events in a adolescent's life, according to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Need and Significance of the Study

As adolescent start growing the stress-related problems are increasing among adolescents. The aim of this study is to survey the stress among adolescents in Pudukkottai district and to find out the significant differences if any with respect to gender, locality, family type, socio-economic status and type of school. This study may contribute to stress relief works in schools.

The study is questionnaire based, and the sample included 200 adolescent students in schools.

Objectives of the Study

- 1 To find out the stress of the adolescent students of Pudukkottai District.
- 2 To find out the differences in stress with reference to i. gender, ii. locality, iii. family type, iv. Socio-economic status and v. type of school.

Hypothesis of the Study

- 1 There is no significant difference in the stress of the adolescent students of Pudukkottai district with reference to i. gender, ii. Locality, iii. Family type, iv. Socio-economic status and v. Type of school.

Limitations of the Study

The present study has the following limitations:

- 1 The study was restricted only to Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu state.
- 2 The study had focussed only on the school going boys and girls of XI and XII class only.
- 3 The study had also limited to its sample of 300 students only.

Sampling

In the present study 300 students studying XI and XII class (170 boys and 130 girls) studying in different govt. and private schools in Pudukkottai were taken as the sample. The subjects were drawn from the schools located in Pudukkottai district only. The random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of respondents.

Methodology

The adolescent students were distributed a questionnaire prepared by the researchers. The questionnaire consists 20 Likert Scale type items. Every item has choices, viz., Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Each choice was given points ranging from 5 to 1. The sum total of the scores obtained by a student is taken as his/her stress score. It was taken for further analysis. The questionnaire was consulted with the subject experts, teachers and counsellors. Slight modification was made and modified according to their opinions followed by a pilot was conducted with 30 students and its reliability was calculated by finding the Chronbach's Alpha. The Chronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.8175 which indicates the questionnaire is highly reliable. Having satisfied with the questionnaire the sample was administered the questionnaire and responses reckoned. Then the scores were calculated and statistical analysis was conducted.

Table I. List of Schools

S.No	Type of School	Number of Schools	Number of Students
1	Private	3	200
2	Govt	3	100
		Total	300

Table II. Description of the Sample - Students

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	170	56.67
	Female	130	43.33
Locality	Rural	178	59.33
	Urban	122	40.67
Family Type	Nuclear	150	50.00
	Joint	150	50.00
Socio-Economic Status	Low	182	60.67
	High	118	39.33
Type of School	Private	200	66.67
	Government	100	33.33

Table IV. Mean and Standard Deviation of Stress Scores of Adolescent Students

Variable	Category	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	68.29	11.65
	Female	59.53	12.17
Locality	Rural	61.70	11.41
	Urban	66.12	12.78
Family Type	Nuclear	65.61	12.12
	Joint	62.21	11.45
Socio-Economic Status	Low	59.25	12.41
	High	68.57	13.65
Type of School	Private	64.59	12.90
	Government	63.23	11.08

Hypotheses Testing**Null Hypothesis: 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean

scores of stress Rating Scale of adolescent students with respect to their i. gender, ii. Locality, iii. Family type, iv. Socio-economic status and v. Type of school.

Table IV. Difference in the Stress Scores of Adolescent Students with regard to Gender

Group	Sample	Mean	SD	Df	t	Level of Significance
Male	170	68.29	11.65	298	6.293	Sig.
Female	130	59.53	12.17			

As the 't' Value is greater than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis rejected and there is significant difference between the mean stress scores of male and female adolescent students. The male students scored

much higher in their stress scores than the females. This shows that the girls students have a high degree of stress control.

Table V. Difference in the Stress Scores of Adolescent Students with regard to Locality

Group	Sample	Mean	SD	Df	t	Level of Significance
Rural	178	61.70	11.41	298	3.072	Sig.
Urban	122	66.12	12.78			

As the 't' Value is greater than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis rejected and there is significant difference between the mean stress scores of rural and urban adolescent students. The rural students have scored

less than their urban counterparts. This result is in coincidence with many studies which indicate that the stress levels in rural areas are much less than in urban areas.

Table VI. Difference in the Stress Scores of Adolescent Students with regard to Family Type

Group	Sample	Mean	SD	Df	t	Level of Significance
Nuclear	150	65.61	12.12	298	2.497	Sig
Joint	150	62.21	11.45			

Significant at 5 % level

As the 't' Value is greater than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis rejected and there is significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from nuclear families than from joint families.

The students from joint families scores slightly less than those from nuclear families. It is also obvious that there are many stress relieving mechanisms available in joint families which are not available in nuclear families.

Table VII. Difference in the Stress Scores of Adolescent Students with regard to Socio-Economic Status

Group	Sample	Mean	SD	Df	t	Level of Significance
Low	182	59.25	12.41	298	5.985	Sig.
High	118	68.57	13.65			

As the 't' Value is greater than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis rejected and there is significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from lower socio-economic strata than those from upper socio-economic strata. The students from higher SES have scored much higher than those from lower SES.

Table VIII. Difference in the Stress Scores of Adolescent Students with regard to Type of School

Group	Sample	Mean	SD	Df	t	Level of Significance
Private	200	64.59	12.90	298	0.948	N.S.
Government	100	63.23	11.08			

As the 't' Value is less than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis accepted and there is no significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from private schools than those from government schools. Both are similar in their stress levels.

Discussion of the Findings

The main aim of the study is to find out the significant differences in the stress scores of the adolescent students with regard to gender, locality, type of family, socio-economic status, and type of school. The major findings of the study are given here.

Summary of Major Findings

1. There is significant difference between the mean stress scores of male and female adolescent students. The male students scored much higher in their stress scores than the females.
2. There is significant difference between the mean stress scores of rural and urban adolescent students. The rural students have scored less than their urban counterparts.
3. There is significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from nuclear families than from joint families. The students from joint families score slightly less than those from nuclear families.

4. There is significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from lower socio-economic strata than those from upper socio-economic strata.
5. There is no significant difference between the mean stress scores of adolescent students from private schools than those from government schools. Both are similar in their stress levels.

Educational Implications

Stress of adolescent students is one of the major factors in deciding the future health of them. Stress and mental health are correlated with each other. Parents and teachers should give due attention towards the adolescents. They have a major role to play in this regard. This study is very significant. Family factors and socio-cultural factors are the major causes for adolescent stress. The academic failure, peer pressure, the very high expectations from the teachers and parents leading to stress. It needs serious intervention on the part of those who deal with the students. The adolescent students should be trained in how to cope up stress. This will lead to a stress less student community.

Conclusion

From this study, the investigator has identified that there are significant differences among adolescent students' stress with regard to gender, locality and type of family, and socio-economic status. It is also found that there is no significant difference among adolescent students with regard to type of school. For better academic achievement and mental health it is very important that one should cope up with stress. Otherwise, stress will inhibit progress in the person. In this regard, the parents, teachers and the society at large should give due importance to stress and strive to create a healthy society.

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