



EXAMINING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ADOLESCENT STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC STRESS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a time of significant changes and challenges, and the education system can be a major cause of stress and pressure for young people. This stress and pressure can impact their mental health and well-being, leading to a series of negative outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and poor academic performance. Adolescent girls may also face unique stressors related to gender expectations, social norms, and societal pressures. Through the data analysis, this thesis aims to provide insights into the most significant sources of educational stress and pressure for adolescents, and how these factors affect mental health outcomes. The research also looks at how stress and pressure are experienced differently by men and women, and its impact on mental health. This information can help inform the development of interventions and policies that support the mental condition and well-being of adolescents, especially adolescent girls.

Keywords: - Mental, Adolescents, People, Population, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, which is defined as the time between the ages of 10 and 19 years, is the stage of human growth and progress that comes after childhood but before adulthood. About 17% of the world's population resides there. The world's biggest population of adolescents resides in India. Adolescents go through a lot of mental and physical changes at this time, making them more vulnerable to stress. Since their academic performance at this stage is crucial to their future career and higher education, academic-related events are thought to be significant stressors for them, particularly in Asian nations. Following the year 2000, a number of studies revealed that stress was widespread among adolescents in India, with rates ranging anywhere from 13% to 45%. Another research done in Thiruvananthapuram, India, found that 1.9% of school students experienced severe stress whereas 93% to 100% had moderate to mild stress. According to a research by Deb et al. (2015), over two thirds (63.5%) of Indian students reported experiencing

stress related to academic pressure. Therefore, it is worthwhile to carry out additional research that aims to safeguard the expanding adolescent population.

India's population is growing at an exponential rate, which has made the educational system very competitive. Starting in pre-primary years, pupils are subjected to the pressure of yearly tests used to determine their advancement to the next grade level. Due to the competitive nature of getting into top universities, academic pressure is especially intense for high school pupils. In the Indian education system, passing exams with high marks takes precedence above actual knowledge acquisition. As a consequence, students in India often report feeling very stressed out by their schoolwork. Academic stress has a detrimental effect on students' ability to learn and perform, as well as their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Academic stress has been linked to both psychological and behavioral difficulties in the classroom. A number of risky and maladaptive behaviors, such as increased alcohol and drug use, physical inactivity, poor eating and sleeping habits, and unprotected sexual activity, were identified in teenagers with high levels of stress. High levels of stress were associated with increased prevalence of depression in adolescents.

II. Central Concepts

Adolescence

The period of life between the ages of 10 and 19 is known as adolescence, a flexible and culturally sensitive notion (WHO, 2005). Others prefer to use the term "young people" to describe people between the ages of 12 and 24. This thesis focuses on persons between the ages of 16 and 19, which is referred to as "late adolescence," and these people are referred to as "adolescents," "students," and "young people" throughout this thesis.

Mental health

Numerous academic fields, including psychology, psychiatry, sociology, education, and the public health sciences, are involved in the study of adolescent mental health. As a result, Mental health may be defined in a variety of ways, but most professionals in the field would probably agree that it has to do with how a person is feeling emotionally and psychologically, as well as whether or not they have a diagnosable mental disorder. The World Health Organization defines mental health as the "ability to realize one's own potential, to cope with the normal stresses of life, to engage in satisfying work and to make a positive contribution to one's community" (WHO, 2007). The World Health Organization defines mental wellness as more than only the absence of mental illness.

Life circumstances

The term "life circumstances" describes the physical, cultural, and psychological situations in which individuals live. 'Contextual' and 'environmental' influences are other terminology utilized

in this theory. For a more in-depth discussion of the socioeconomic determinants of health, as well as related instances, see the section on the public health approach and the assessment of the study on factors linked with teenage mental health.

Gender

The word "gender" refers to the cultural and social constructions of what it means to be a man/boy or a woman/girl in a given society, as well as how this is manifested in social practice. Cultural norms on gender are the basis for the social activities that are referred to as "gender" and social constructions. In addition to referring to social interactions and social hierarchies, the term "gender" also refers to a basic organizational principle that exists inside society. Throughout the thesis, the topic of gender comes up in a variety of contexts. Adolescents were classified as either male or female based on their responses to the questionnaire, however for the sake of statistical analysis, gender was considered as a binary category (boy or girl). This action was taken to make analysis easier.

Social class/Socioeconomic status

The concepts of where individuals and groups of individuals fit within a social framework are conceptualized by the words social class and socioeconomic status (SES). Unfortunately, not all of the relevant theoretical and empirical work, such as that produced by the Marxist, Weberian, and Bourdieu schools of thought, is included in this thesis. Despite the risk of confounding theoretical understandings and definitions, the terms "social class" and "socioeconomic status" (and occasionally "socioeconomic position") refer to both the material (such as access to resources) and cultural and psychosocial (such as education, values, and "social capital") aspects of social stratification.

III. Adolescent Students' Mental Health and Academic Stress

Academic stress is emotional distress triggered by impending academic challenges, failure, or even simply the knowing that academic failure is a possibility. Throughout the school years, academic pressures may appear in any aspect of the child's environment, including family, school, neighborhood, or friends. The main sources of stress for high school students, according to Kouzma and Kennedy, include situations related to school, such as tests, grades, studying, a self-imposed need to succeed, as well as those brought on by others. Academic stress has a wide range of negative impacts as well; they include poor performance in the areas of exercise, food, drug usage, and self-care. Additionally, stress from academics puts psychopathology at risk. Children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, for example, who are subject to greater academic pressure, are more likely to experience depression. The education system in Indian schools is textbook-based, places a strong emphasis on memorization of lessons, and requires long hours of diligent study each day.

High school students must adhere to demanding study schedules that go from early in the morning until late at night, leaving little time for hanging out with friends and enjoying recreational activities. The Indian government recognizes two primary categories of educational boards that are in charge of overseeing the nation's schooling system. The first set of institutions consists of the All-India Boards, which include the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE), and the National Open School. The State Level Boards, which are allowed to do their business within the states in which they are registered, are included in the second group. Because there aren't enough high-quality institutions to accommodate the growing number of children, The educational environment in India is very competitive. Hence Children must compete for promotion to the next grade in exams at the beginning of pre-primary school and then annually at the conclusion of each year after that. In the classroom, instructors work to cover every topic of a broad curriculum, sometimes oblivious to the pupils' level of understanding.

Measurement of Academic Stress

Teenage academic stress has been measured using a number of self-report techniques. The Academic Stress Scale, the Lakaev Academic Stress Response Scale, and the Student Stress Inventory are some of them, Academic Stress Scale, High School Stressor Scale, Academic Expectation Stress Inventory, and Survey of Academic Stress. Only three of these scales have been used in examines with secondary school students, and the majority of them were created to determine academic stress among college or university students. All were created and validated in western nations, with the exception of the AESI-9.

Anxiety among high school students in India

One of the most prevalent mental health issues among young people nowadays is anxiety. The average incidence is 8.0%, with a range of 4.0% to 25.0%. These numbers may be inflated because children and teenagers tend to internalize their anxiety symptoms.. Children's social, emotional, and intellectual progress are all negatively impacted by anxiety. Poor social and coping abilities often result in avoiding social contacts, loneliness, low self-esteem, feelings of social rejection, and trouble making friends, among other negative outcomes. Additionally noted as effects are school avoidance, a decline in problem-solving skills, and lower academic achievement. Anxiety is regarded to be a universal phenomenon that persists throughout all civilizations, despite the fact that its context and symptoms are influenced by cultural beliefs and practices.

IV. Academic Stress Among Adolescents

High degrees of psychological anguish are prevalent among Indian students as a result of several academic difficulties. Existing research shows a significant link between stress and suicidal conduct. Researchers have shown that the biggest cause of mortality for Indian teenagers, aged 15

to 34, is suicide. High school graduation and college entrance exams are acknowledged by students as contributing factors to psychological distress and suicide conduct for Indian students, according to a student who wrote his last words before ending his life. My parents both work as migrant workers in rural areas, and our household earns 3000 RMB every month. My extracurricular training costs 1000 RMB, of which 200 RMB is spent on English, 200 RMB on math, 200 RMB on Indian culture, and 400 RMB is spent on physics. My academic performance isn't terrible, but my parents want me to enroll in a top-tier institution and get a respectable score on the university admission test. As a result, I am the only member of my family that enjoys eating meat. While they only eat potatoes, my mother always chooses meat for me. Now that I'm an adult. How can I eat all the meat now that I'm an adult and let my parents eat the leftovers? But I have to pretend to be happy every day to appease my parents... However, I am not at all content. I despise all educators. The tragedy of scholastic stress-related suicide conduct is not unheard of in India. The college admission test, which typically takes place on June 6 and 7, is a well-known stressor. According to long-standing Indian cultural beliefs, a high level of performance in this test is often seen as a marker of scholastic excellence, which suggests financial success and an increase in social prestige. Success on the college admission test has also come to have collectivist social connotations, such as family honor, serving as an example for younger siblings and classmates, and improving the prestige of the high schools where one is enrolled. Due to the high academic attainment standards imposed by this philosophy, Indian teenagers may face psychological stress on various levels, including those involving themselves, their families, their schools, and society.

V. CONCLUSION

Most adolescents' students included in this study were found to be experiencing educational stress. The level of educational stress experienced by students was dependent on the personality type, father education, combination of subjects chosen during preuniversity, and number of siblings. Thus, these factors can be considered while identifying stress among adolescent students and develop suitable stress prevention interventions. Teachers, parents, and other primary caregivers should be aware of these stress causing factors. Introduction of stress management programs at school level will be more helpful. and the findings of the study indicated the need for understanding academic stress among school students. Periodical training programmes could be organized for school students and parents to sensitize about academic stress and ways to handle it in an efficient way. Teachers can provide interventions to reduce stress among students. Teachers can break the complex tasks into manageable segment which will be easy to do without stress. Relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga can be provided to students to reduce the stress and being mentally healthy.

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