

Prevalence of anxiety among adolescents in Kashmir Division

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to see the prevalence of anxiety among adolescents in Kashmir Division. The study was conducted on the adolescents of age group 14-19 years studying in the Higher Secondary schools of Kashmir Province. The selected sample was taken from 9th and 10th class. The districts selected for the study were Srinagar, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Budgam and Pulwama . The sample size was 1000. Percentage statistics was used in this study to interpret the data. The tool used for the study was Anxiety scale developed by Kurg, Scheier & R.B Cattell. It was found that the prevalence of anxiety among the Kashmiri adolescents. It was found that 35.8% and 30.5% adolescents have high and borderline level of anxiety respectively. It was concluded that prevalence of anxiety is high among adolescents and has a significant impact on their overall functioning and well being.

Key words: Anxiety, Prevalence and Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is characterized by great physical changes in the body brought on by the onset of puberty. Such changes can influence self-image, a search for sexual and personal identity, and impact personal factors like self esteem, confidence, shyness, and anxiety (Frydenberg, 1997 p.9). Cognitive changes occurring during this time include the development of more abstract and hypothetical thinking and moral reasoning, which influences adolescents' interpretation of life events. Changes in emotions are also heightened during this time either frequent mood changes and disruptions which evidence has suggested are due to the hormonal changes that accompany puberty (Arnett, 1999). Adolescents face the pressures of accepting the new roles and responsibilities of behaving like an adult while at the same time not having all the freedom and privileges of adulthood. Family has a major impact on adolescents' lives since they are still largely dependent on the family unit. As adolescents begin to test the limits of independence, parent-adolescent conflict often arises (Hains, 1992). In addition, family changes such as divorce or separation of parents, remarriage of parents, death of a family member or pet, birth of a sibling, and financial challenges are the causes the stress in adolescents (Schmitz & Hipp, 1995). Anxiety is one of the emotional responses by which teenagers react to these difficulties (Bernard, 2004). Anxiety is the normal human emotion. In moderation, anxiety stimulates an anticipatory and adaptive response to challenging or stressful events. In excess anxiety destabilizes the individual and dysfunctional state results. According to American Psychological Association anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension and worried thoughts. Adolescents in modern society always feel anxious, although events or situations that one person perceives as stressful may not be a concern at all for another. Adolescents do not experience and respond to situations in identical ways, thus they have individual level of anxiety.

Anxiety is now known to be the most common psychiatric disorder among adolescents, with a life time prevalence of approximately 30% and a chronic course in adulthood if not treated. According to Costello et al. (2003) anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders in school children and adolescents in all over the world. People hardly pay attention towards the adverse effect of anxiety among children and adolescents and it is being ignored consciously and unconsciously. Anxiety in adolescents is a worldwide problem and it is estimated that, 1 in every 10 adolescents suffers from anxiety related problems in developed countries such as USA (USA National Mental Health Association 2006). In Italy anxiety symptoms are reported to be relatively common among adolescents in secondary schools with prevalence of 15.9% while in the Asian countries the prevalence of anxiety symptoms among secondary schools students (14-20 years) was reported to be 66.2%. However few studies concerning the matter have been conducted in developing countries among school adolescents reported to be 12% to 22%. Tomb and Hunter (2004) draw the attention of people towards the adverse effect of anxiety and its ignorant attitude of the people due to its inherent nature of its symptoms. Several studies have been incorporated explaining its adverse or negative effect anxiety on children's social, emotional and academic success (Essau et al., 2000). Anxiety also affect learning, cognitive ability and performance to school-aged children and adolescents worldwide (McDonald, 2001). According to Akhtar (2011), parental pressure and high expectations are the major sources of anxiety among the students in India including Kashmir. According to the National Mental survey of India 2015-2016 the anxiety among adolescents in Kashmir is 15.5% which interferes in their growth, development, education and day to day social interactions and their vulnerability is greater due to several factors within and outside home. Common sources of anxiety at school are interpersonal and academic related stressors. All students experience pressures to both conform and change (e.g., as a result of enforcement of rules, norms, and standards by peers, family, school staff). Relationships with peers are always on a student's mind. Concerns arise from such matters as not having enough friends, not having the right friends, not being in the same class as friends, experiencing peer pressure and interpersonal conflicts. And, there is the problem of bullying, which now has gone high tech (e.g., using the internet, cell phones) making the behavior easier, anonymous, and more prevalent. The physical manifestation of anxiety in adolescents leads to many psychological issues. Concentration levels decrease and sense of hopelessness and being worthless surfaces. A nagging fear of being abandoned by friends, relatives and parents constantly hounds these teens and at times results in panic attacks (La Greca, A.M ; & Lopez, N. 1998). This in turn affects their academic performance as the adolescents could not concentrate as their minds are preoccupied with the happening around them. Anxiety not only affects academic performance but also students' personalities which linger throughout their lives.

Expanding on this existing literature by looking specifically at the differences that happen in school, when students are experiencing changes and increasing pressure in academic, personal, and social aspects of their lives, the prevalence of anxiety during this important stage of development becomes important. Anxiety has been a big interference in the mundane work of adolescents especially in educational performance and social relationships. Therefore, adolescents who suffer from anxiety have difficulties in functioning either at school, home or community as it tends to lower their confidence and academic performance. Thus, this study examines the causes and effects of anxiety among secondary school adolescents and its impact on their academic performance.

Relevance of the study

The anxiety among adolescence as compared to childhood has increases with a high pace. There occurs a huge biological, Psychological and social change in adolescence (Holmbeck et al., 2000). An adolescent faces social pressure and new situations. These new situations create difficulties in managing the smoothness in life affecting their normal life. The mental health of school-going students is becoming an issue of great concern throughout the world as these students are more prone to depression, anxiety and stress. Now-a-days adolescents suffer from various types of anxiety such as anxiety related with exam, completion of the course, performance in the class, peer pressure, parent pressure, teacher pressure as well as family problems. Students in the present era are faced with greater choice, more competition and less time to consider their options or seek out the right advice which many a time leads to anxiety (Downey, 2008). This can lead to frustration, anger, and guilt related to their anxiety. Since anxiety influences the adolescents' life, the investigator made an attempt to study the prevalence of anxiety among adolescents.

Statement of the problem

The specific problem proposed by the investigator reads a under:

“Prevalence of Anxiety among Adolescents”

Objectives of the study

1. To identify adolescents with high level of anxiety.
2. To study the cause of anxiety among the high level anxiety adolescents.

Operational definitions of Variables

Anxiety in this study referred to the scores obtained on administering Anxiety Scale developed by Kurg, Scheier & R.B Cattell

Adolescents for the present study were the students of Higher Secondary schools of Kashmir province

Prevalence for the present study was occurrence of anxiety among Higher Secondary schools students of Kashmir province

Methodology

The target population of the study included adolescents 14-17 years old studying in Higher Secondary schools of Kashmir province. The tool used for the study was Anxiety Scale developed by Kurg, Scheier & R.B Cattell and adapted by S.D. Kapoor (1999). The target population included adolescents 14-19 years old studying in Higher Secondary schools of kashmir valley. The representative sample consisted of 1000 adolescent students of 9th and 10th class taken from different schools of the five districts viz Srinagar, Ganderbal, Anantnag, pulwama and Budgam, which included central, south and north districts of Kashmir Division. The sample was obtained through random sampling technique.

The institution wise distribution of the Sample

S.No	Name of the Institution	District	No. of the Students
01	Govt.Girls HSS Khanyar	Srinagar	42
02	Govt.Boys HSS Khanyar	Srinagar	32
03	Govt.Girls HSS Nowhatta	Srinagar	20
04	Govt.Girls HSS Saidakadal	Srinagar	20
05	Govt.Boys HSS Nigeen	Srinagar	27
06	Govt.Girls HSS Soura	Srinagar	59
07	Govt.Boys HSS Ganderbal	Ganderbal	40
08	Govt.Girls HSS Ganderbal	Ganderbal	44
09	Govt.Girls HSS Nuner	Ganderbal	42
10	Govt.Boys HSS Manigam	Ganderbal	50
11	Govt.Girls HSS Iar	Ganderbal	24
12	Govt.Boys HSS Anantnag	Anantnag	32
13	Govt.Boys HSS Bijbehara	Bijbehara	49
14	Govt. Girls HSS Bijbehara	Bijbehara	91
15	Govt.Girls HSS Ranibagh	Ranibagh	40
16	Govt.Girls HSS Budgam	Budgam	77
17	Govt.Boys HSS Itchgam	Budgam	36
18	Govt.Boys HSS KhanSahib	Budgam	42
19	Govt.Boys HSS Wathora	Budgam	45
20	Govt.Boys HSS Lethpora	Pulwama	15
21	Govt.Girls HSS pampore	Pulwama	22
22	Govt.Boys HSS Pampore	Pulwama	28
23	Govt.Boys HSS Kakpora	Pulwama	37
24	Govt. HSS Pinglena	Pulwama	56
25	Govt. HSS Newa	Pulwama	42

Statistical Design

Simple percentage statistics was employed to analyse the data.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to 5 districts of Kashmir province.

Analysis and Interpretation

The task which the present investigator had undertaken is **prevalence of anxiety among adolescents**. For accomplishing this task, the data collected was statistically analysed by simply using percentage statistics

Table 1

S.No	District	No. of students taken	No. of students with high level of anxiety as per score	Percentage of students with high level of anxiety
1.	Srinagar	200	75	37.5%
2.	Ganderbal	200	83	41.5%
3.	Anantnag	200	62	31%
4.	Budgam	200	70	35%
5.	Pulwama	200	68	34%
Total		1000	358	35.8%

This study showed that 35.8% adolescents had high anxiety level out of 1000 respondents (Table1)

Table2

S.No	District	No. of students taken	No. of students with borderline level of anxiety as per score	Percentage of students with borderline level of anxiety
1.	Srinagar	200	62	31%
2.	Ganderbal	200	69	34.5%
3.	Anantnag	200	65	32.5%
4.	Budgam	200	55	27.5%
5.	Pulwama	200	54	27%
Total		1000	305	30.5%

This study showed that 30.5% adolescents had borderline anxiety out of 1000 respondents (Table2)

Table 3

S.no	District	Total No. of students	No. of boys	No. of girls	No. of boys with high anxiety level	Percentage	No. of girls with high anxiety	Percentage
1	Srinagar	200	83	117	28	33.78%	47	40.17% %
2	Ganderbal	200	81	119	36	44.4%	47	39.47%
3	Anantnag	200	85	115	26	30.58%	36	31.30%
4	Budgam	200	96	104	28	29.16%	42	41.58%
5	Pulwama	200	99	101	41	42.70%	27	26.73%
Total		1000	444	556	159	35.81%	119	21.4%

This study shows that there is difference in the prevalence rate among the adolescent male and female students. (Table 3)

Results

Out of total 1000 adolescents 358 were having high anxiety level and 305 were having borderline anxiety level. The overall percentage of high level anxiety adolescents was 35.8% and the adolescents with borderline anxiety level were 30.5%. It was found that district Ganderbal has the most prevalent rate of high anxiety level (41.5%) which was followed by Srinagar (37.5%), Budgam (35%), Pulwama (34%), and Anantnag (31%) as per the score of anxiety scale used. Again in terms of Borderline Anxiety level the Prevalence of Borderline anxiety rate is high in Ganderbal district (34.5%), followed by Anantnag (32.5%), Srinagar(31%), Budgam (27.5%), Pulwama(27%). The results also reveal that overall high anxiety and borderline anxiety among adolescent is 66.3%. This suggests that significant amount of adolescents experience anxiety. Further the results of the study shows that male adolescent students have more anxiety (35.81%) than that of female adolescent students (21.4%)

Conclusion

This study has brought into light the prevalence of anxiety among adolescents and its various contributing factors. It was found that significant amount of adolescents experience anxiety, which could interfere with their overall functioning and well being. Further it was concluded that higher secondary adolescents often suffer from anxiety. It was also clear through this study that boys have more anxiety than that of girls. It is thus concluded that most of today's adolescents have very high levels of anxiety which can have many serious and long lasting consequences on the physical and mental health of children. Parents and teachers in collaboration with school guidance workers should formulate a plan and work together for the better development of children. Timely encouragement, inspiration and motivation are very important and should be efficiently used by both teachers and parents.

Educational Implications

This study may develop an insight to authorities so that they can find the reasons of anxiety among adolescents and measures may be taken to prevent it. The results of the study may provide the ways of solving the problems related to anxiety of adolescents. The findings may be useful in providing the opportunities and exposure for adolescents for developing the healthy competitive feelings. The findings of this research have implications for the teachers and parents in addressing the anxiety of adolescent students. Teachers at schools and family at home must assist students in the management of their anxiety through counseling relaxation and behavioural techniques.

Recommendations

Anxiety is not uncommon, if not addressed can lead to severe effects like social dysfunctioning, tensions, loneliness, which could interfere with their overall functioning. Thus, it is suggested that every school should have counseling services, so that children can discuss their emotional and behavioural problems directly to the counselor. Parents should be watchful to early identify any behavioural change in their child.

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