



A study of different levels and areas of Stress among Girls with Visual Impairment

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Abstract:

The article is based on research intended to understand the levels and areas of stress among 30 adolescent girls with visual impairment at secondary level studying in residential special schools in Mysore city, Karnataka State. Vision-specific distress is the strongest predictor of depression among students with visual impairment. The investigator collected the data using the Bisht's Battery of Stress Scale, Bisht (1987); which was translated by the investigator and transcribed to Braille script. Results indicated that 57% of students with visual impairment have a very high level of stress and 38% of students have an average level of stress. The participants have a high level of stress in six areas like achievement stress, academic stress, social stress, family, physical stress, and self-concept stress.

Keywords: Levels of stress; Special School; Students with visual impairment

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern life is not free of deadlines, hassles, frustrations, and demands. Stress is so common in many people's lives that it has become a way of life. The adolescence stage is a period of inevitable stress. An adolescent with visual impairment faces the difficulties of her physical impairment. Along with disability, they have the specific difficulties of adolescence period; stress and strain. Many studies reported that individuals with visual impairment experience severe psychological and behavioural problems, particularly during adolescence. During this stage, an individual has to face significant physiological, psychological, and social changes. These experiences have a considerable impact on the psychological state of the adolescent. These psychological and emotional disturbances are present to a greater extent when a person has low vision or blindness. A person experiencing a recent loss of vision impacts on how he feels about himself, and the role that he plays in family and community. The process of adjustment to blindness and the

psychosocial impact of blindness have the following phases- acceptance, denial, and depression/anxiety. Acceptance is undoubtedly the best response. The creation of an enhanced environment can lessen the adversity of disability. A better environment is one, which is stress-free and highly motivating which helps in total adjustment and finally good achievement.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

If we consider the educational definition, the Visually Impaired Children are those students whose visual loss necessitates that they should be given education mainly through Braille, tactile and auditory materials. As per to RPWD ACT 2016, people are considered to be with low vision or blind if they have any of the below conditions:

- The total absence of sight
- A person with impairment of visual functioning but is capable of using vision for the planning or execution of a task with an appropriate assistive device.
- Limitation of the field vision subtending an angle of 20 degrees or worse.
- Visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses

Evans, Fletcher, and Wormald (2007) established that visually impaired children had a higher prevalence of depression compared to the children who do not have difficulty with vision. It is highly possible that visually impaired people were more likely to experience problems with functioning, which leads to depression. Rees, Tee, and at.al (2010) recognized that vision-specific distress is the strongest predictor of depression among students with visual impairment. Unlike sighted adolescents, adolescent girls with visual impairment have a more difficult time due to a lack of independence. They will be dependant more on others to reach where they want to go. An adolescent without a disability does not need any such support. Visually impaired adolescent girls need to have the feeling of being independent like any other adolescent. The feeling of independence provides higher self-esteem and a better sense of identity. Adolescents, who are visually impaired with a strong sense of identity and high self-esteem will easily adapt to their environments compared to those with low self-esteem and a weaker sense of identity. Poor self-esteem and self-concept may develop stress in them.

According to Selye (1956), stress may be any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organism equilibrium. He emphasized that these external events create disequilibrium and individual has to respond to these forces. Stress in adolescents refers to the experience of distress in all spheres of life situations which causes them to feel overwhelmed, their life becomes out of control with too much pressure, fear, panic state, and concern about how terrible they are feeling due to exposure to challenging situations. Clea and Jayne (2010). Adolescent girls find it difficult to adjust to the bodily changes that happen with the onset of puberty. Adjusting to a new bodily change, menstrual cycles, studying for exams and work overload, enormous hopes aspirations enthusiasm, etc that are prevalent in adolescents can be attributed to various stress-inducing factors. The fight against physical disability and the tight

isolation from mainstream leaves deep psychological scars in the minds of adolescents and the consequents are anxiety, depression, fear, inertia, and stress. Pedagogical provisions and education materials on keeping learners need at the centre should be introduced in the curricula. We hold the view that these should be priorities in the way the education system is addressing their situation, which bears significant imprints in the life of students with visual impairment. The very activities of teaching and learning have now become factors of stress: new evaluation methods and uncertainty, scarce equipment to properly follow education courses, lack of digital competences, etc. are all new stress-inducing factors. Studies have shown that directly or indirectly these aspects create stress in this period. Stress can be of various levels and types. It has been observed that the levels of stress and types of stress are a result of several factors like pressure, conflict, and frustration. Rajasekar (2013) reported that students with visual impairment are in a dilemma because, on one hand, they have high and unrealistic aspirations, while on the other hand, the real world is much different. When they realize this it creates further problems and confusion over the assessment and possible solutions.

Visually impaired adolescents also have achievement stress as they fail to cope with achievement pressures and a load of examination. Academic Adjustment is influenced by various factors like curriculum; teaching methods, peer pressure, etc. There is a great possibility that the students face much academic stress which in turn results in poor achievement. When they are in residential school set up, they worry about parents and suffer from loneliness and anxiety. This built-up family stress. Emotionality usually stabilizes by late adolescence, Feldman et al., (2004). But during the early adolescence period, poor self-esteem and self-concept stress are also common. For minimizing this stress, adjustment is needed between the wishes and environmental demands and pressures. A well-adjusted individual is capable of making changes in approach to blend with other people in general and to a group with which they are identified specifically. Well adjusted people have learned such social skills as the ability to deal diplomatically with others –both friends and strangers-so that others' attitudes toward them will be favorable. People who lack social adjustments usually develop unfavorable social attitudes, such as unwillingness to help others develop social stress. Adolescents with visual impairment are not exempted from these types of stresses. These adolescent girls who face various types of stress are the area of the present study.

3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Students who have more psychological and academic stress and less adjustment with situations cannot fit into normal situations. They become a problem for themselves as well as to the parents, home, school, and society. Hence the present study is an attempt to find the areas and levels of stress in adolescent girls with visual impairment studying in residential school. A large percentage of children with multi-disabilities are emotionally very vulnerable, pointed out Sinha. They withdraw from social interaction beyond family members and there is a lack in activities or games to stimulate them. Children may have to face “severe behavioural issues” that may crop up due to “pent up frustration, lack of occupation, and change in routine and above all in case of children with relatively lower cognitive level, the inability to comprehend the reason for this sudden change in their lives. They are further stressed due to their already-

fragile economic status. Mobility is another challenge for the visually impaired, and finding someone to accompany them to the doctor or hospital can be difficult. Many studies are available on stress, causes of stress, and effects of stress on achievement in individuals at the college level and among adults. But a very few studies attempted to investigate levels of stress and the different areas of stress among visually impaired students. It is also noted that studies related to stress among visually impaired girls are comparatively less in the Indian context. An article of this type would be helpful for students to identify factors that cause stress and cope with them and to have a better adjustment level for effective learning and wellbeing.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were collected from 30 adolescent girls with visual impairment studying in residential special school of Mysore city of Karnataka state, using the Bisht's Battery of Stress Scale which is translated to Kannada. Six scales measuring six areas of stress were employed in this study. The tool was also transcribed to Braille script. The data was collected during the period from October 2018 to December 2018 during the research work. The statistical techniques used during analysis are given below:

- a. Percentage of students with different levels of stress
- b. Mean and Standard deviation

The method adopted for the study is the Diagnostic. It is the method of evaluation used to determine the strength and weaknesses of students.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Areas and Levels of Stress in Adolescent Girls with Visual Impairment

Levels of stress in adolescents with Visual Impairment is calculated by finding the percentage of students at each level and reflected in Table – 1.

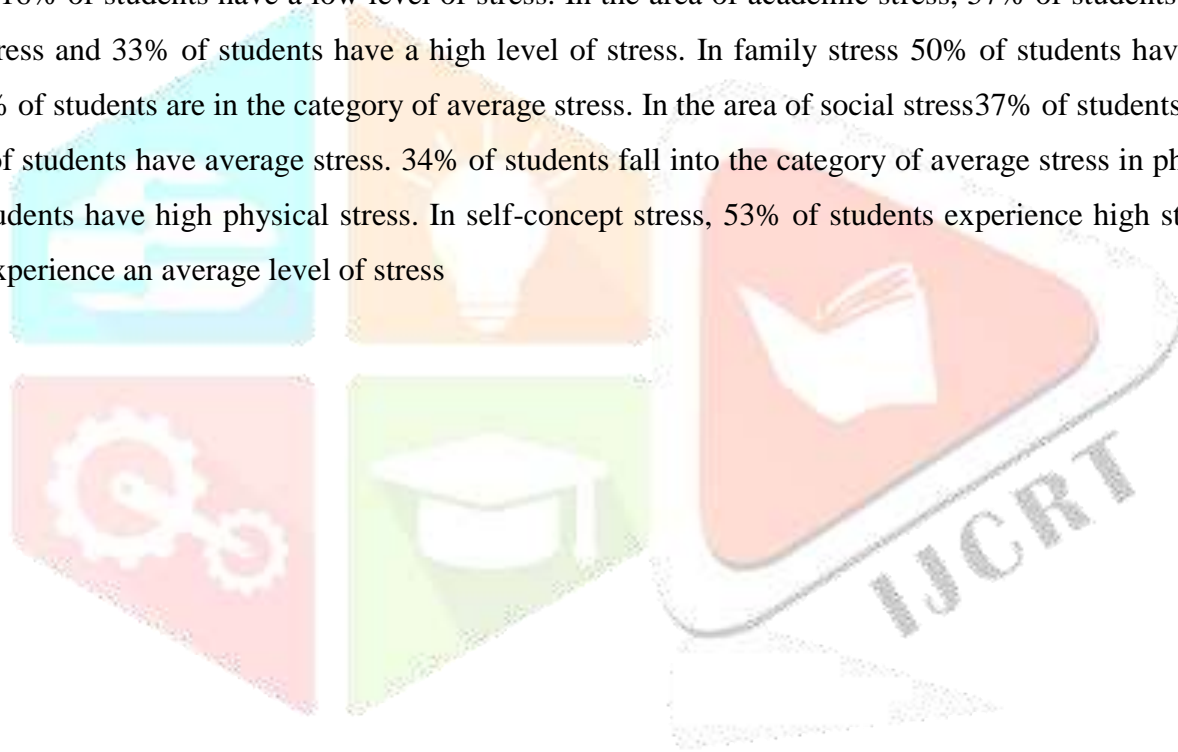
Table – 1: Areas and Levels of Stress in Adolescent Girls with Visual Impairment

Sl. No	Areas of Stress	Level of stress	No of students	Percentage	Mean score
1	Achievement	High	15	50%	76.1
		Average	10	33%	
		Low	5	16%	
2	Academic	High	10	33%	113.4
		Average	17	57%	
		Low	3	10%	
3	Family	High	15	50%	95
		Average	10	34%	
		Low	5	16%	
4	Social	High	11	37%	97
		Average	15	50%	
		Low	5	13%	
5	Physical	High	14	46%	110
		Average	10	34%	
		Low	6	20%	
6	Self-concept	High	16	53%	112
		Average	7	23%	
		Low	7	23%	

When the average score of each scale is calculated it is revealed that the mean score of academic stress is more than achievement stress, social stress, and family stress. The mean score of achievement stress is 76.1; the mean score of academic stress, social stress family stress, and physical stress is 113.4, 97, and 110 respectively. The mean score of Academic stress is found out to be 113.4 and self-concept stress 112 is higher compared to other areas of stress. This reflects that the students have more self-concept stress, Physical, and Academic stress compared to Family, Social, and Achievement Stress. It may be due to their physical disability and academic pressure due to the overburden of syllabus and improper method of teaching. This is supported by a study of Ippolitive (1980) and Ranamanikham and Vasanthal

(2008) Academic stress due to academic situation, such as school, a student reacts in the form of mental distress to an anticipated frustration associated with failure in the annual examination or even to the awareness of the possibility of such failure Gupta & Khan, (1987). Academic stress is an emotional tension of a student that is felt or expressed by him about his failure to cope up with the academic demands. The consequences may be displayed in the form of health issues, both physical and mental. In academic life, stress may act as a negative predictor of academic performance, Endler et al., (1994). One of the important sources of academic stress in school children is the expectation of parents for achieving good marks in their examinations. According to Firman (1992), academic stress is anything that imposes an extra demand on a person's ability to cope, often with something new and different in academics.

The table also indicates that 50% of students have a high level of achievement stress. It is indicated that the majority of students fall into average stress and high-stress levels. In achievement stress 33% of students have an average level of stress and 16% of students have a low level of stress. In the area of academic stress, 57% of students have an average level of stress and 33% of students have a high level of stress. In family stress 50% of students have a high level of stress, 33% of students are in the category of average stress. In the area of social stress 37% of students have high stress and 50% of students have average stress. 34% of students fall into the category of average stress in physical stress and 46% of students have high physical stress. In self-concept stress, 53% of students experience high stress and 23% of students experience an average level of stress



2. Determinants of stress

The determinants of stress are frustration, pressure, anxiety, and conflict as observed from the table.

Table 2: Determinants of Stress

Areas of Stress	Determinants	Mean
Achievement stress	Frustration	27
	Pressure	24
	Anxiety	8
	Conflict	16
Academic Stress	Frustration	37
	Pressure	34
	Anxiety	19
	Conflict	22
Family Stress	Frustration	27
	Pressure	35
	Anxiety	11
Social Stress	Conflict	24
	Frustration	25
	Pressure	30
	Anxiety	15
	Conflict	24
Physical Stress	Frustration	33
	Pressure	39
	Anxiety	12
	Conflict	28

The areas of stress and its determinants were diagnosed by administering the Bisht Battery of stress Scale. The determinants of stress according to the scores obtained from the tool are pressure, frustration, anxiety, and conflict as indicated by the mean scores of achievement frustration, achievement pressure, achievement anxiety, and achievement conflict are 27, 24, 8, and 16 respectively. Adolescents with visual impairment are frustrated because of the wide range of obstacles both physical/social and internal factors. Even their limitation caused due to visual impairment may lead to frustration. This is supported by the study of Supreet and Vandana (2014). Anxiety clubbed with a pessimistic approach to life is another major source of stress.

Academic stress in adolescents is mental distress concerning the anticipated frustration connected to academic failure. Students face many academic demands like examination, assignments and projects, etc. It has been found out that academic stress due to frustration is more i.e. 37.53 is more than academic stress due to anxiety and conflict. When they are in high school especially in class 10 their academic life is a turning point. Students are stressed because of exams, fear of failure, and worries about time management. Parents and schools also put pressure on them. Thus these multiple factors cause academic stress in students with visual impairment. A study by Kausar and Khan (2013) confirms these.

Social stress formed as a result of one's social relations and their social environment. Social stress score shows that mean of social stress due to frustration is 29 higher than social stress due to anxiety, pressure, and conflict which are 25, 24, and 15 respectively. This may be due to one's peer group, academic competition, or struggle in a playground. More levels of social stress specifically in peer relationships tend to increase from preadolescence to adolescence for girls, Brooks- Gunn (1991).

Family Stress is the result of a change in the family's equilibrium. The study by Murray and Allison (2013) reported how financial support from family or arguments and poor communication with the family members due to the physical limitation creates stress in students. In this study also, in the family stress scale score, anxiety is more compared to pressure, frustration, and conflict. The mean score due to anxiety, pressure, frustration, and conflict are 36, 26, 23, and 10 respectively. It might be because of children of residential school staying away from parents.

Physical disability and difficulties aroused as a result lead to physical stress. The mean score of physical stress due to frustration is 33, due to pressure is 39, which is the highest. The mean score of physical stress caused by anxiety is 12 and conflict is 28 respectively.

Stress affects the adjustment of students and even poor adjustment can lead to an increase in stress level in students with visual impairment. Satish (2014) reported how Stress influences the adjustment of students with visual impairment.

6. CONCLUSION

The policymakers, educators, and parents of visually impaired children should be determined to raise the mental health of students with visual impairment, rather than being sympathetic for their impairment and categorizing them as a socially underprivileged group. School management and authorities should envision and plan the infrastructure which is advantageous for visually impaired students to reduce stress and anxiety. Continuous counseling of the visually impaired girls should be planned to overcome the identified challenges. The present study was focused on finding the stress levels of the students with visual impairment about their adjustment which gave a wider perspective in the area to study for future researchers.

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