



IMPACT OF PUBERTY OF GIRLS IN THE CLASSROOM LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The period of adolescence denotes to the period of development pertaining to both physiological and psychological. This period is the go between of childhood and adult. The period of puberty is the related to the period of adolescence. The puberty is followed by the varying levels of hormone levels which in turn affects the physical life. The puberty onset is connected with the modifications in thoughts and outlook followed by the psychological and social life. The cognition process is also affected in the period of puberty. The hormonal changes affect the memory and processing functions of the brain. The girls, some of them who fared well in certain subjects in their elementary school levels, will soon withdraw from that excellence due to the fear of being exposed and also for not being popular. Besides there are social, economic and religious aspects which make them withdraw from studies. The primary language is acquired easily but the second language acquisition is a slow process. This is so because all of a sudden a child will be transformed into an adult. There can be seen many drop outs from schools because of early puberty. The physical changes as a result of puberty give a lot of pressure on the child and there can be seen social and emotional changes. The puberty affects the body and brain which in turn affects the body mind complex of the child.

Keywords- Puberty, Psychological, Physiological, Social, Religious, Economic, Adolescence, Cognition, Acquisition of Second Language.

INTRODUCTION

The puberty in girls leads much development especially in the realm of physiological and psychological aspects. The girls when they reach the puberty are to imitate that they are adults though they have not yet free from their childhood stage. They start to form their own groups and overlook the parents and other family activities. The girls become more self-conscious and they feel embarrassed. The menstrual hygiene is of importance when they attend the school. There a still many girls who are not exposed to this hygiene and are always worried during this time and this naturally hinders their learning process. It is the school which opens up the realm of operational thought. The puberty and its impacts hinder the girls from thinking in a deductive, operational as well hypothetical manner which in turn affects their learning process. The girls stress more importance in coping up with the pubertal changes along with the transition of middle-level schooling to an much more greater environmental space burdens their mind and naturally they slow down in acquiring knowledge especially a second language acquisition. In the pre-pubertal period the language process is carried on without much embarrassment but during the pubertal stage there is some embarrassment which makes the learning process difficult. The acquisition of language learning is quite difficult on the onset of puberty.

The girls who are in the rural areas find it difficult to learn a second language because instead of language they consider it as a subject. To them it is a hard nut to crack. The acquiring of the second language needs conscious and systematic efforts to study it. The girls feel very sensitive and are always conscious about them. This makes them feel uncomfortable which in turn makes them short-tempered and push them into the depth of depression. The girls goes in search of an identity suited to them as they are now not a child nor an adult. They have mood swings and they are frightened to share their feelings with their parents and end up in confiding with their friends, this may lead them to a wrong path. The religious and economic situations also pose a hindrance to learning. Thus the learning process as well as the second language process is affected to a great extent.

The phase of growth from childhood to first menstruation period creates a lot of problems related to anxiety and depression. The varying hormonal levels may create various psychological problems to the girls at puberty. The girls look upon themselves with low esteem when they are restricted and isolated in the society after puberty. This builds in their mind a sense of helplessness and they start hating themselves for it. the puberty is considered as a sign of adulthood and psychological and verbal abuse are showered at girls belonging to low-income families and marginalized communities. The behavior of the teachers towards the girls who have reached puberty is also a major concern for poor academic performance.

The learning process of a language as a second language has to pass through five different stages. They are the pre-production, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency and advanced fluency. All these process has to be carried out by a teacher. If the students miss any of this process they are sure to face difficulty in acquiring the language. Most of the students are not exposed to listening or speaking the foreign language. These two are most important to acquire a languages.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The claims laid down by Engin-Demir (2009) are that the learning process of a girl is based on the families, communities and peer groups. There are factors related to social, economical and cultural aspects which also affects the learning process and their by their achievement. The education of the girls or rather the female is affected by the unfavorable conditions related to social beliefs, unfriendly school environment and cultural aspects say Odaga and Heneveld (1995). Welch (1992; 118) says that females are exposed to structural injustices which affects their education process. The religious and traditional curtail the domain of girls as mothers and homemakers hinders the learning process is the opinion of Seyoum (1986:16). The helplessness of girls is greater when they become adolescent and are in the secondary level. The main cause of worry of the parents is the sexual maturity of the girls and the high risk of health issues make them stop the girls' education. The poor hygiene facilities at school also pose threat to female education, claims Gibson (2004:8). The girls after reaching puberty are shy and the study shows that the academic activity given to them shows the low level of self concept. (Tefaye, 2003). The pubertal status in girls was thickly bonded with depression is the finding of the Angold et.al (1998). Hayward et.al (1999) says that the puberty is the indicator of the symptoms of depression. The girl who undergoes menarche is kept at home away from all for seven days and

they are not allowed to do anything even studying or reading. (Das, 2015). The puberty forces girls to drop out from school and it is very important to keep them at school. It is to explore how to facilitate to keep girls in the school. (Hunt F, 2008). The attitude also plays a role in learning second language. The language can be learned only if the learner has a clear view of learning environment, learning situation and their opinion of target language. (Narayanan et al., 2008). The girls who depict the physical changes and which is very obvious, such girls will be deserted by peer groups who might not have undergone puberty. (Petersen et al., 1991). The hormonal variations will have its impact on the girls' behavior in such a way that it might be evident in the interactions with other sex, parent's peers and so. This poses a perplexing result in the social and psychological aspects of life. (Jane Mendle et al, 2006). Menstruation is considered shameful and women have been taught to feel shame about their periods (Singh N and Chadha D, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

PRE-TRANSITION	TRANSITION
Physical	Physical
Pubertal Development	Pubertal Development
Body Image Concerns	Body Image Concerns
Social	Social
School Behaviour	School Behaviour
School Adaptation	School Adaptation
Mental	Mental
Cognition	Cognition
Anxiety	Anxiety
Depression	Depression

The method followed is descriptive and analytical. The aim is to find out the impact of puberty affecting the learning process stressing on the acquisition of second language learning. The tools used for this purpose is a questionnaire. A sample of 20 students were collected from nearby school and analyzed. The students were selected on a random basis. The study is divided into two stages and the data will be analyzed on the basis of this. This first stage is the Pre-Transition Period, and the second one is the Transition Period. The topics collected here will be the social, mental, and cognitive contexts.

The questionnaire consists of questions regarding the age, the time of menarche, the problems they faced when it had. There will be questions related to their academic progress, the subjects they like to learn, the hate to learn and their problems of acquiring second language. The questions related to social realm is whether they had to face gender inequality, partiality and restrictions in the society. The health issues related to anxiety, depression and loneliness are included. The next analysis is the family and school environment which affect the girls after puberty is also studied.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name
 Age and Date of Birth
 Class
 When did you reach puberty?
 Did you know about it earlier?
 If so who had told you about it?
 What were the symptoms you underwent during that period?
 What was the reaction of your friends when they knew about it?
 Did they avoid you?
 Do you use proper sanitation during that period?
 Is your school a girl-friendly one?
 Did you ever feel self-conscious?
 Has the development of your body ever bothered you?
 Do you feel you are stared at by others?
 Is there any restrictions imposed on you by society due to this?
 Have you experienced over anxiety after puberty?
 Have you experienced depression after puberty?
 Has loneliness affected you after puberty?
 Has puberty affected your studies?
 If so what subject /language?
 What other difficulties have you experienced because of puberty?

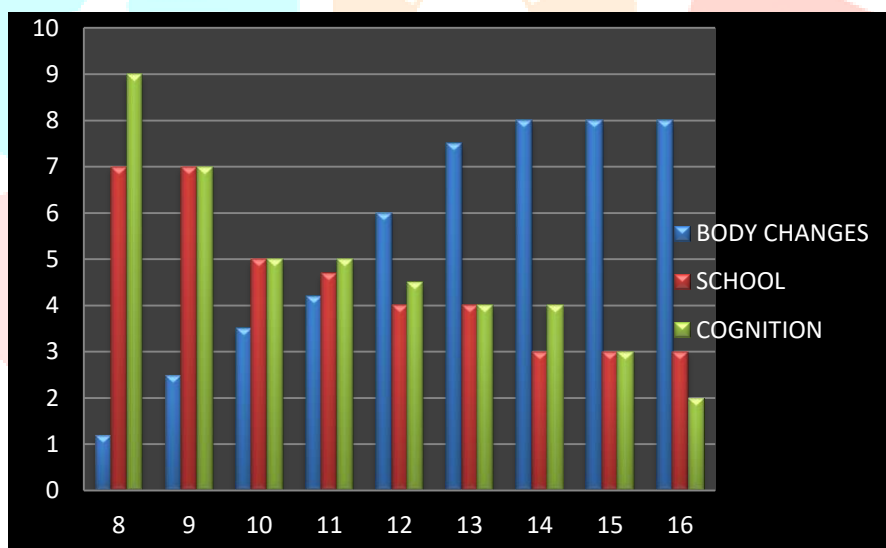
Another method adopted was to find out the reason why students, especially girl’s academic performance lagged behind by interviewing them personally. The area selected was a marginalized colony. The people of this particular area were illiterate and those who were literate were unable to go through the questionnaire. The questions asked were based on the economic, household factors, school level factors and cultural factors.

Economic factor	School factor
The cost of school education.	The gender of teacher.
Parents interest in educating girls.	The facilities in the school for girls especially washrooms.
Household factor	The attitude of teachers towards girls.
Whether the girls were entrusted with household chores and looking after the siblings?	The distance of school from home.
Whether boys were given the same duties?	Means of conveyance used to reach school.
Does the girl have time to study?	Cultural factors
Was a girl isolated during her monthly periods?	Cultural beliefs
	Traditions followed

RESULTS

The results show that there are many students who are undergoing the impact of puberty on all realms. The data from the table show that about 50% of the students show a glaring difference in the academic performance from their Pre-Transition Period to the Transition Period. In the Pre-Transition period the girls were not bothered about their image concerns nor did they have any botheration or knowledge of puberty. In the Transition Period the concern of the girls was about the changes in their body. The onset of puberty also bothered them. They gradually started becoming self-conscious. In the Pre-Transition Period the girls fared well in all subjects especially in the language learning process. Once they reached the Transition Period they gradually started to fail in the academic progress. The reason for this was the physical changes in them made them self conscious and they were not able to concentrate on their studies. The school atmosphere was not friendly to these students during their Transition Period. Most of the schools were not girl-friendly ones. The hygiene that has to be maintained during the menstrual period could not be done so as there were lack of bath rooms and proper sanitation methods. The girls during the menstrual period were always concerned about the stains in their dress and what the other children would say. The approach of the peer groups created a great impact on the girls. They were not added to their groups as to them these girls were matured and grown old.

PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND MENTAL ASPECTS IN PRE-TRANSITION AND TRANSITION PERIOD



The mental health too fell deep down as there was traces of anxiety and depression. The hormonal changes during the stage of puberty burdened the girls with stress; they were neither too young nor too old. The adults never able to give them proper support as they were striving hard to meet both ends together. The cognitive powers started diminishing in some of them as they were to do jobs at home and never allowed to study. In the rural and marginalized areas the girls who reached puberty were not allowed to go to school as they thought it was a waste of time. To most of the poor families the matured girl was a commodity to be sold off in marriage. Most of them liked to be alone with no friends and family. Besides this the transition period made them think more and soon they started neglecting the difficult subject which naturally affected their academic progress.

The data collected from the questionnaire was not different. The data collected at random from a nearby rural school states that most of the students were very self-conscious. They were avoided by their friends because they thought the friend of theirs had become an adult. Many of them never used proper sanitation. Some of the students had to stop their learning process as the parents did not want them to study. They were entrusted with household duties. Some were to follow the restriction laid down by the society.

Many students opined that their studies were affected because of monthly pains and they were unable to concentrate on their studies. Majority of them said that they found it difficult to learn the language because irregular attendance at school. Some parents were eager to marry off their girls when they reached marriageable age as they considered these girls as a burden. This too affected their academic performance. There were many students who had mentioned the social and religious hindrances after puberty to continue their studies. The learning of second language posed a great problem to them especially to those who were from conservative background and also marginalized sections.

The answers received from the marginalized area were that about 80% of the parents were not interested to send their daughters to school once they reached puberty. The school fee was not a problem as the Government provided free schooling. The parents wanted the girls not to be academically empowered but to follow the traditions of their clan. The household factors when asked was given the reply that girls were born to look after the family and not to be academically empowered. They said that it was the boys who had to study find a job and look after the family. Once the girls reached puberty she was trained in looking after children and cooking. A girl who reached puberty was not allowed to go outside her home alone but along with family members. She was given a separate room to use when she had periods. She was restricted from doing work, reading and to be away from all duties, that is for four days. It was just like a prison life for her. She absented herself from school on such days, which affected her studies. the school if lacked female teachers, then the girls were not sent to school. As said earlier most of the schools in the rural areas lacked the girl friendly washrooms. The notable thing was that even teachers kept aloof from students who had periods. The shocking thing was that even if the girl reached school during her periods, she was made to sit separately from others. Most of the schools were situated far from this area and so the distance was also a reason for drop outs. Besides all these the cultural factors also added to the poor academic performance and drop-outs in school. The headman of the tribe was the last word of this area and he has laid down a rule that if a girl reaches puberty, words and letters are not for her. She should be equipped with household chores and be ready to deliver as many kids as possible. The fear of these people is that puberty is the period of sexual instincts and if a girl goes out either to school or something else she will be a victim to this instinct and chose a wrong path. Thus it can be seen that many of the girls who are brilliant and intelligent are stopped from continuing education.

The students are not exposed to foreign language which they study as second language. The main reason is that the language is taught not as a language but a subject. Moreover the listening and speaking of the language is important to learn the language better. The foreign language is taught through the medium of mother tongue. This makes the student to know their mother tongue better but neglect the foreign or second language. The learning of a language is continuous process and absenting from it leads to the negative effects. There is a belief among some clans that if a girl who has reached puberty learns a new language she is a sure to bring sham to the family.

DISCUSSIONS

The results show that girls are under great mental stress and they are in need of support. The changes that occur in them are not completely to them. The physical changes in the girls made them self-conscious as well as their sexual interest boosted up. The girls are filled with all sorts of superstitions and beliefs. They are not made aware of the physical and psychological condition they have to face in the period of menarche. The existing gender inequality and the need for educating a girl child should be made aware in the rural as well as the marginalized areas. The parents should be made aware of educating the girls and helping them to empower themselves. The puberty education should be given before the menarche period so that they will be able to cope up with it. The pains and irregularities at school affected their academic performances. They are unable to cope with the stress and strain at the academic levels and social norms taxed on them

The teachers should motivate the children and make them participate in the process of learning. The focus of the teachers should be on those girls who are going back in their studies and help and guide them to come forward in learning process. The family support should also be there and they should prepare their offspring before the onset of puberty. There is always a mismatch of the cognitive physical, social and emotional levels of development in these girls. They find it hard to adjust to difficulties as they are too

immature to handle them. This makes space for stress, depression and anxiety which greatly harms their learning process. There should be training process in the school for educating the girls on the pubertal issues.

RESEARCH GAP

The review of many papers has led to the conclusion that the impact of puberty on girls in the language learning process in the classroom has been studied by many. The study has been carried on various aspects on the cognitive, psychological, social, emotional, economic and religious realm. It can be seen that the study has been carried on the scientific basis also. Many studies have been conducted on the behavioural as well as the academic aspects of girls on the onset and on the menstruating period. The study has also been carried on the physical changes of girls during the puberty. Many social workers have extended their study on educating the parents as well as the girls about puberty and its effects.

The development of the cognitive and psychological variables is also studied. In the medical field also the study of the effect of puberty has been taken up for study. Some of the researchers have focussed their study only to a single aspect of the impact of puberty. Some have taken up only the social issues, yet others the psychological, others have focussed only on the physical changes, some others have focussed on the religious aspects and some have only focussed on the academic aspects. There are also studies conducted only to a specific geographical space in a state, country or nation. The study on the cognitive and psychosocial development of adolescents as variable has been conducted. Asynchrony among physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development may limit the adolescents' ability to perceive is also a topic taken for studies by many.

It can be seen that very rarely any study has been conducted on the impact of puberty based on the social, cognitive, academic especially language learning, psychological, social, emotional, economic and religious realm. The study is based on both rural as well as urban areas. The students belong to all sects of religion, caste and income. This is the research gap. The proposed research work will aimed to study this issue of impact of puberty on girls in the realm of social, cognitive, academic especially language learning, psychological, social, emotional, economic and religious realm.

IDEAL SOLUTION & PRESENT STATUS

Recommendations of the study stress on the means to be adopted to improve the academic especially the language learning process in the classroom atmosphere.

- Educating the parents especially mothers to teach their daughters about puberty and measures to be taken.
- Counselling should be given at schools for preparing the girls for puberty
- The school should be girl friendly one.
- There should be ample supply of water in the school,
- Girls should be instructed properly about the hygiene to be followed during the menstrual period.
- There should be more female teachers in the school.
- The after effects of puberty should be made aware to girls.
- The self-confidence of the girls to be boosted up.

The parents and school should be very supportive towards the girls. They should not be made to think they are dirty unwanted and so on. The teachers and the atmosphere of the school should be very friendly and co-operative to accommodate the emotional feelings of the girls who have reached puberty. Timely counselling should be given to girls and make them aware of the importance of education and the empowerment of women.

RESEARCH AGENDA

- This study presents a scoping review of evidence relating to knowledge and experiences of puberty and menstruation among females aged 10–14 years in low- and middle-income groups.
- Adolescence is the period of development that begins at puberty and ends at emerging adulthood; the typical age range is from 12 to 18 years, and this stage of development has some predictable physical milestones.
- Puberty involves distinctive physiological changes in a girl.
- During puberty, the adolescent develops secondary sex characteristics as their hormonal balance shifts strongly towards an adult state.
- Cognitive development happens differently from ages 6 to 12, and from ages 12 to 18.
- Understand the stages of cognitive and psychosocial adolescent development.
- Understand the role of the imaginary audience and the personal fable in adolescent development.
- Recognize the implications of early pubertal timing.
- Adolescence is the period of life known for the formation of personal and social identity.
- Adolescents must explore, test limits, become autonomous, and commit to an identity, or sense of self.
- Erik Erikson referred to the task of the adolescent as one of identity versus role confusion. Thus, in Erikson's view, an adolescent's main questions are "Who am I?" and "Who do I want to be?"
- Early in adolescence, cognitive developments result in greater self-awareness, the ability to think about abstract, future possibilities, and the ability to consider multiple possibilities and identities at once.
- Changes in the levels of certain neurotransmitters influence the way in which adolescents experience emotions, typically making them more emotional and more sensitive to stress.
- When adolescents have advanced cognitive development and maturity, they tend to resolve identity issues more easily than peers who are less cognitively developed.
- As adolescents work to form their identities, they pull away from their parents, and the peer group becomes very important; despite this, relationships with parents still play a significant role in identity form.

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPLEMENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES TO PROPOSAL

- Describe changes in self-concept and identity development during adolescence
- Examine changes in family relationships during adolescence
- Describe adolescent learning process stressing on language learning process
- Explain the role that aggression, anxiety, and depression play in adolescent development
- The factors that challenge the girls 'academic performance in the high school.
- The evaluation of the main problems faced in the school by the girls'.
- The trend of enrolment and dropouts of girls in the high school level.
- Remedies to be taken to improve the language learning process of girls.

CONCLUSIONS

The study points out the fact that the mental problems are exists in the girls who have reached puberty. From the analysis of the questionnaire and the table one can conclude that almost every girl had either anxiety or traces of depression. The girls had physical ailments as stomach pain, headache fever etc. on the onset of puberty this affected their concentration in the academic realm. The study points out to the fact the girls who reached puberty were in need of moral support and support. Counseling was the most important remedy that could be meted out to the students to overcome their problems. The study found out that most of the girls were unaware of menstruation. In some places girls were isolated from the family during the days of menstruation for four days. She was not allowed to do anything even studying or reading. This injected the feeling in the girl that she was unclean, untouchable and dirty. This sucks her confidence. The girls stop studying and become drop-outs because of the lack of female teacher. Most of the school are

not girl-friendly and mostly without wash-rooms or facility to change the sanitary pads. In certain areas the girls are forced to walk with downward gaze. It can be thus concluded that the poor academic performance of girls after reaching puberty is related to the social, economical, educational and cultural aspects.

LIMITATIONS

The result of the study emphasizes on the impact of puberty on girls in the language learning process. The learning process is affected by many problems and only some are cited here. The limitation of the study is that only a section of it could be dealt with. The data collected are on the basis of 'on the spot' manner. This study requires a long period of time and effort to study the student's attitude to learning language and their classroom activities. The tools used for the study are mainly inefficient to reach a conclusion. The emotional aspect, the learning aspect and the behavioral approach cannot be studied in a day or in a week. There should be at least six months time to make a clear assessment of the students.

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