



A STUDY ON THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL ANXIETY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WELL-BEING OF YOUTH IN CHENNAI.

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ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the high level of social anxiety and the way it impacts young individuals in Chennai. Social interactions and peer relationships play an important role in the development of social anxiety, which is a significant mental health concern during teenage years. This study uses a quantitative methodology to collect data from youth aged 15 to 24 using a SAQ-30 questionnaire. The main objective of this study is to assess young people's level of social anxiety. The findings show that among Chennai's youth population, social anxiety symptoms impact women more than men. The study also examines how social anxiety affects the emotional, social, and psychological spheres of analysis and well-being. To promote holistic well-being and healthy social connections among young people affected by social anxiety in Chennai and beyond, the research emphasizes the need to improve their overall well-being and quality of life.

Keywords:

Social anxiety, peer relationships, social interactions, mental health

INTRODUCTION

Social anxiety among youth is the highest prevalent mental health issue in recent days, social anxiety mostly affects young individuals and there are major factors that affect the youth in many aspects such as psychological, emotional, and social consequences which assess the impact of young individual's social anxiety and there are various other factors which contribute to the prevalence of social anxiety among youth in Chennai, in which societal expectations and cultural norms place a strong role on interpersonal relationships and social interactions. Social withdrawal and isolation are some of the most common coping mechanisms, which are used by young individuals that affect the youngsters to move freely in society and hinder the development of meaningful relationships and support groups, if we leave these areas of Untreated social anxiety it leads to various impacts and some of them namely are leading to risk of depression, drug abuse, and other mental health conditions.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Social anxiety has been the most prevalent mental health issue among youth nowadays. In which Young people suffering from social anxiety frequently results in avoidance behaviors and social withdrawal among their peers, which affects their personal development. To protect young people's mental health, we all must encourage healthy social relationships, and enhance their overall quality of life, in which social anxiety must be discussed and analyze the impacts among young individuals. Youth with social anxiety admit a serious mental health problem that impacts their academic, emotional, and social well-being, considering its widespread prevalence and implications, there remains an important understanding of the specific factors that lead to the development and the continuation of social anxiety in adolescents. This study aims to find out the various dimensions of factors that affect the youth emotionally, psychologically, and socially and various coping mechanisms employed by youth in handling social anxiety.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researchers **Christine Purdon, Martin Antony, Sandra Monteiro, and Richard P. Swinson in the year 2001** wrote an article titled **“Social anxiety in college students under anxiety treatment and research center Canada** stated that the main aim objective of this study is to provide normative data on the frequency with which individuals in a non-clinical sample experience particular symptoms of social anxiety and also to examine how the perception of anxiety in others influences and investigate the relationship between social anxiety & perceptions on 81 students in which the methodology used in the study was a questionnaire with a sample consisted of 60 women and 21 men. The results of the study state that the majority of students experience symptoms of anxiety in social situations from time to time.

The Researchers **John Elizabeth, Thomas H. Ollendick, Eleonora Gullone, and Shaun Watson in the year 2006** studied an article titled **“Social Anxiety Disorder in Children and Youth”** states that the objective of the study on the etiology and also to examine the findings in key areas of investigation like genetic factors, behavioral inhibition, and parenting styles. The findings highlighted that other influences such as peer relationships, social skills, and traumatic experiences play a major role in social anxiety disorder. The conclusion of the study says that understanding the pathways should facilitate effective early screening and intervention of children at risk for severe social anxiety.

According to author **Ciarn Gill in the year 2018** wrote an article titled **“Study of social anxiety and Self-compassion in Adolescents”** the study aims to illustrate the relationships between self-compassion in adolescents. The methodology used in the study was a questionnaire that took place among 316 students of ages 14- 18 years from secondary schools in Scotland, UK, through the responses of the study, the result of the study states that various other factors mediate the youth such as fear of negative evaluation, self-focused attention, and cognitive avoidance. Hence the findings highlighted that self-compassion could be an important factor in the development of social anxiety and there is a need for therapeutic techniques in the future.

Researcher **Heta Yli-Lantta in the year 2020** wrote an article titled **“Young People’s Experiences of Social Fears** stated that in examining young people's experiences of social fears. The methodology used in the study was a qualitative questionnaire from the Ages 15-25 years with the respondents of 130 those who are facing social fears, through the various responses they found out that various factors affect the youth such as fear of groups, fear of public places, fear of dyadic relationships and close people and generalized fears. The findings highlighted that young people experience social fears in relation to social situations. The findings state that the level of impact among youth varies from different fears by exploring individual experiences and situational meanings.

The authors of Shabana Noureen and Lubna Munawar Syed in the year 2022 wrote an article titled “Social Anxiety, social functioning and psychological well-being in young adults” stated that the main goal of the study is to investigate the influence of social anxiety on the social functioning and psychological well-being of young adults. In which 385 students 49% of women were taken through a cross-sectional design. The data collected through various universities from Islamabad, each aspect was measured using their scale of assessing the level of social anxiety, social functioning, and psychological well-being and the results show that social anxiety is the negative predictor of social functioning and psychological well-being and it also concludes that social anxiety is related to stress, obsession and irritation and the study suggest of future research can investigate the coping mechanisms to treat anxiety problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

FIELD OF THE STUDY:

The universe of the study focuses on the age category of 15-24 years in Chennai.

Objective of the study:

To understand the level of social anxiety and its impact on the well-being of youth in Chennai.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

The researcher used a Descriptive research design to describe the level of anxiety, impact of social anxiety in psychological, emotional and social well-being and coping mechanisms employed by youth.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

In this study, the Convenience sampling technique was used by the researcher, in which the sample was collected based on the convenience of the researcher. Convenience sampling is also a type of Non-probability sampling technique.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION:

The researcher used a questionnaire as a tool to collect the primary data from the respondents

Section 1 – Socio-demographic details

Section 2 – Social anxiety assessment (Using Social Anxiety Questionnaire for adults SAQ -30) by Caballo V.E in the year 2012

Section 3 – Impact of Psychological, emotional, and social Consequences of the respondents

Section 4 – Coping Mechanisms

DATA COLLECTION:

The data was collected through a questionnaire from a total of 66 respondents of the youth population in the age category of 15-24 years in Chennai.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**TABLE 1 – SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS****Age of the Respondents**

S.No	Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	15 - 20	37	56.1
2	21- 24	29	43.9
3	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that more than half (56.1%) of the respondents were between the agegroup of 15-20 and 43.9% of the respondents were between the age group of 21-24.

TABLE 2**Gender of the Respondents**

S.No	Gender	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	Female	39	59.1
2	Male	27	40.9
3	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that more than half (59.1%) of the respondents were female and 40.9% of the respondents were male.

TABLE 3**Educational status of the Respondents**

S.No	Educational Status of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	HSC (12th Std)	4	6.1
2	Post Graduate	19	28.8
3	SSLC (10th Std)	3	4.5
4	Under Graduate	37	56.1
5	others	3	3
6	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 4.5% of the respondents had completed SSLC, 6.1% of the respondents had completed HSC, more than half (56.1%) of the respondents hold a degree at the undergraduate level, 28.8% of the respondents hold a degree at the postgraduate level, 4.5% of the respondents were others from 11std and working professional.

TABLE 4**Distribution based on the Area of Residing of the Respondents**

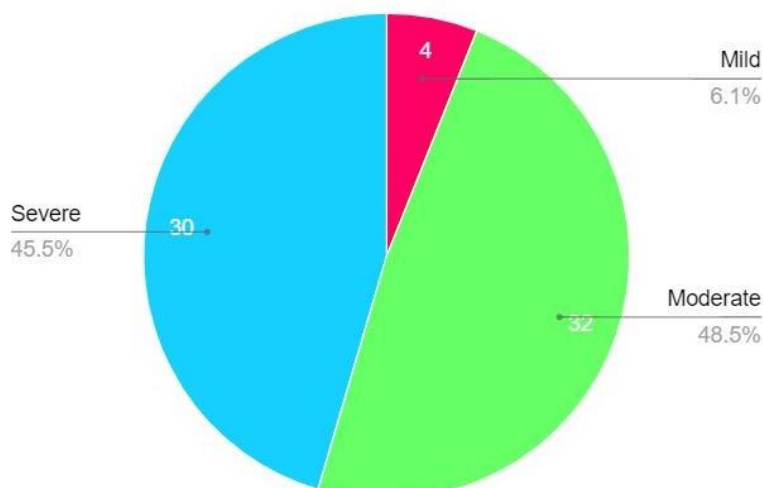
S.No	Area of Residing	Frequency	Percent (%)
1	Rural	12	18.2
2	Semi-Urban	8	12.1
3	Urban	46	69.7
4	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 18.2% of the respondents are from rural, more than half (69.7%) of the respondents are from urban and 12.1% of the respondents are from semi-urban.

TABLE 5**Distribution based on of Total No. of Friends of the Respondents**

S.No	Total Number of Friends by the respondents	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	1	3	4.5
2	3	13	19.7
3	4	5	7.6
4	5	43	65.2
5	1	2	3.0
6	Total	66	100.0

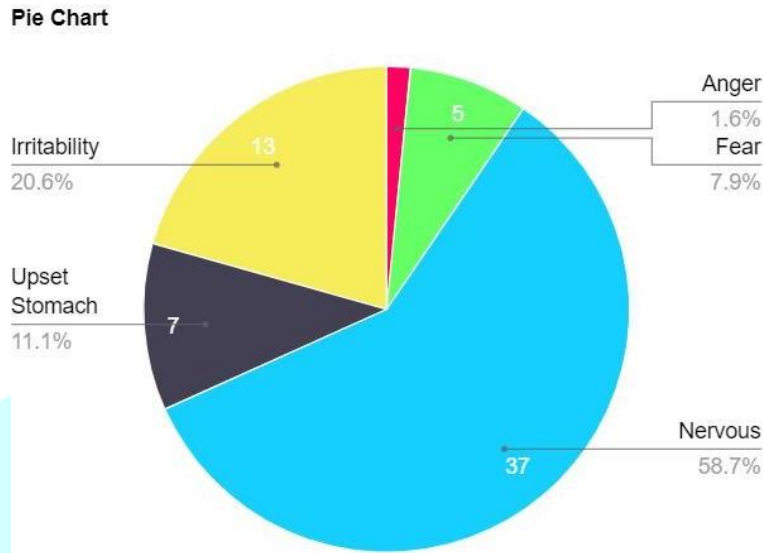
The above table shows that 4.5% of the respondents have 1 friend, 19.7% of the respondents belong to a group of 3 friends, 7.6% of the respondents belong to a group of 5 friends and more than half (65.2%) of the respondents belong to more than 5 friends group.

Figure 1**Distribution of Social Anxiety Assessment****Pie Chart**

The above diagram shows that 6.1% of the respondents suffer from mild levels of social anxiety, 48.5% of the respondents suffer from moderate levels of social anxiety and 45.5% of the respondents suffer from severe levels of social anxiety.

Figure 2

Distribution of emotion expressed by the respondents



The above Figure shows the kind of emotion expressed when asked to do a sudden presentation, in that 1.6% of the respondents expressed anger, 7.9% of the respondents expressed fear, 58.7% of the respondents expressed nervous, 11.1% of the respondents expressed upset stomach, 20.6% of the respondents expressed irritability.

TABLE 6

Distribution based on Respondents' Academic Performance Changes Due to Social Anxiety

S.No	Respondent's perception of academic performance changes	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	Maybe	17	25.8
2	No	28	42.4
3	Not sure	7	10.6
4	Yes	14	21.2
5	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 25.8% of the respondents experience maybe as a change in academic performance due to social anxiety, 42.4% of the respondents experience no academic changes due to social anxiety, 10.6% of the respondents experience not sure, and 21.2% of the respondents experience changes in academic performance due to social anxiety.

TABLE 7

Distribution based on Respondents Seeking Support from Friends/Family in Managing Social Anxiety

S.No	Support seeked from friends/ family in managing social anxiety	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	Maybe	18	27.3
2	No	29	43.9
3	Not sure	3	4.5
4	Yes	16	24.2
5	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 27.3% of the respondents responded Maybe in seeking help from friends/family in managing social anxiety, 43.9% of the respondents responded No in seeking help from friends/family in managing social anxiety, 4.5% of the respondents responded Not Sure in seeking help from friends/family in managing social anxiety, and 24.2% of the respondents responded Yes in seeking help from friends/family in managing social anxiety.

TABLE 8

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' SOCIAL ANXIETY LEVEL AND AGE

Sl.No.	AGE	Level of social anxiety		
		Mild level of social Anxiety	Moderate level of social anxiety	Severe level of social anxiety
1	15- 20	4.5%	24.2%	27.3%
2	21-24	1.5%	24.2%	18.2%

The above table shows that 27.3% of the respondents face severe levels of social anxiety from the age category of 15- 20 when compared to the age category of 21-24 24.2% of respondents face moderate levels of social anxiety.

TABLE 9

Distribution based on emotions expressed during sudden presentations and gender

S.no	gender	kind of emotions				
		Anger	Fear	Nervous	Upset stomach	Irritability
1	Female	1.5%	4.5%	34.8%	3.0%	13.6%
2	Male	0.0%	3.0%	21.2%	7.6%	6.1%

The above table shows that 34.8% of the female respondents expressed nervousness as a kind of emotion expressed during sudden presentations when compared to male respondents of 21.2% also expressed nervousness as a kind of emotion during sudden presentations.

TABLE 10**Distribution based on respondents' feelings of isolation due to social anxiety and gender**

s.no	Gender	feelings of isolation due to social anxiety			
		Never	Rarely	Always	Occasionally
1	Female	27.3%	59.1%	12.1%	12.1%
2	Male	16.7%	40.1%	13.6%	7.6%

The above table shows that 59.1% of the female respondents reported Rarely as a response in feelings of isolation due to social anxiety when compared to 40.9% of the respondents reported also rarely as a response in feelings of isolation due to social anxiety.

TABLE 11**Distribution based on respondent's use of medications as a coping mechanism for social anxiety**

S.No	Use of Medications as a coping mechanism for social anxiety	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	No	52	78.8
2	Yes	14	21.2
3	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 78.8% of the respondents reported no in using medications as a coping mechanism for social anxiety and 21.2% of the respondents reported yes in using medications as a coping mechanism for social anxiety

TABLE 12**Distribution based on Respondents' Experiences of Feeling Judged or Criticized During Social Interactions**

S.No	Experiences of feeling judged or criticized during social interactions	Frequency	Percent(%)
1	Maybe	24	36.4
2	No	9	13.6
3	Not sure	14	21.2
4	Yes	19	28.8
	Total	66	100.0

The above table shows that 36.4% of the respondents experience Maybe as feeling of judged or criticized during social interactions, 13.6% of the respondents experience No feeling of judged or criticized during social interactions, 21.2% of the respondents experience Not Sure of feeling judged or criticized during social interactions, and 28.8% of the respondents experience feeling of judged or criticized during social interaction.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Most of the respondents (56.1%) are from the age group of 15-20 years.
- The majority of the respondents (59.1%) were female.
- The majority of the respondents (56.1%) are undergraduate students.
- Majority of the respondents (69.7%) are from urban areas.

- Most of the respondents (65.2%) have more than 5 friends.
- 42.4% of the respondents reported no changes in academic performance.
- The majority (78.8%) of respondents reported not seeking help from friends/family.
- The Majority (78.8%) of the respondents reported No in using medications as a coping mechanism for social anxiety.
- Majority of the respondents (36.4%) reported Maybe as a response in feeling judged or criticized during social interactions.
- Most of the respondents reported (7.3%) face severe levels of social anxiety from the age category of (15-20) when compared to the age category of 21-24years, (24.2%) respondents face moderate levels of social anxiety.
- 34.8% of the female respondents expressed nervousness as a kind of emotion expressed during sudden presentations when compared to male respondents of 21.2% also expressed nervousness as a kind of emotion during sudden presentations.
- More than half (59.1%) of the female respondents reported Rarely as a response in feelings of isolation due to social anxiety when compared to 40.9% of the respondents reported also rarely as a response in feelings of isolation due to social anxiety.

CONCLUSION

This Study states about the level of social anxiety and its impact on the well-being of youth in Chennai gives an understanding about how social anxiety is affected in various factors among youth. Through quantitative survey, we identified a high prevalence of social anxiety among youth in Chennai. In which we studied the Impact of social anxiety in such as psychological, social and emotional consequences and various coping strategies employed by youth in managing social anxiety. The study states that female students mostly suffer from more social anxiety when compared to male students in the age category of 15-20 years. The study also states about the symptoms of the individuals facing social anxiety in which racing heart has the highest faced symptom among youth in Chennai. Most of the Youth believes that social anxiety can affect the connections with peers. In which the study also states that the most used coping mechanism among youth was self-talk. Thus the importance for the concept of social anxiety need to be addressed in a wide range of areas as well as the intervention for the people need to be provided for the effective building of individuals so that they can perform their activity roles and responsibilities. Thus the study can be concluded stating that 45.5% are affected with severe levels of social anxiety and also there are various causing factors which needs to be addressed and we should work towards on improving the overall well-being and quality of life for youth affected by social anxiety in Chennai and beyond.

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