



IMPLICATION OF ACADEMIC STRESS IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract:

Adolescence is a transactional period with many physical changes and problems. During this period, it is difficult to consider them either as a child or as an adult. Observations and experience with individuals during the "teen" period reveal that there is a fairly distinct time during which the individual cannot be classed as an adult. This transition from childhood to adulthood, the subject is referred to as an adolescent. This period is of change and the rate of change in attitudes and behavior during adolescence parallels the rate of physical change. During early adolescence, when physical changes are rapid, changes in attitudes and behavior are also rapid. And during this period, they search for identity. Throughout the gang age of late childhood, conformity to group standards is far more important to older children than individuality. Adolescents face lot of academic pressures and physical, psychological problems. In India academic stress in adolescents leads lots problems include physical and mental strain. Academic stress leads to low performance, hindered interpersonal relationship and lots of other problems in school faced by adolescents. The study covers the adolescent problems and academic stress faced in school. It gives importance to the physical, psychological, and emotional problems faced by adolescents in academics level. The main aim of the present study is to know the implication of academic stress in adolescents and the objectives are to find the causes and consequences of stress; and to know psycho- social problems of adolescents and their coping mechanisms to overcome academic stress. The study covers both the boys and girls in school and scope is restricted to 50 respondents only.

Index Terms: Academic Stress, Adolescent, Psychology & Coping Mechanisms

1. Introduction:

All periods in the life span are important, some are more important than others because of their immediate effects on attitudes and behavior are, whereas others are significant because of their long term effects. Some periods are important for their physical and some period are important for their psychological effects. Adolescence is important for both. Adolescents have a tendency to look at life through different dimensions. They see themselves and others as they would like them to be rather than as they are. They are in the way of adulthood. As adolescents act like they have reached the legal maturity and they create an impression that they are near adults. Dressing and acting like adults. So they begin to concentrate on behavior that is associated with adult status for example; smoking drinking using drugs etc and think that they have created the image of an adult.

2. Problems of Adolescence:

As adolescence are facing various problems and few of them are noted below;

Physical Problems:

Adolescents are generally in good health, but they often discover they can avoid unpleasant situations by 'not feeling well'. Attempts at suicide are increasingly common among today's adolescents. They give more importance to their outer look. They want to look like models and film actors. And imitating them maximum to look like them through dress and going for the cosmetics. And those who have low self esteem about

their outer look like dark complexion, stunt growth, crooked teeth, poor eyesight, or hearing loss, rarely prevent adolescents from doing what their peers do. They consider the physical attractiveness is an asset, there is evidence that adolescents who are too attractive have a physical hazard because their peers.

Psychological Problems:

The major psychological hazards of adolescence center around the failure to make the psychological transitions to maturity that constitute the important developmental tasks of adolescence. Late maturity has less time in which to master of the developmental tasks of adolescence than early matures or those who mature at the age average age. This leads to psychological problem. In the area of social behavior, immaturity is shown in a preference for childish patterns of social groupings and social activities with peers of the same sex and a lack of acceptance by peers groups, which in turn deprives the adolescent of the opportunity to learn more mature patterns of social behavior. Immaturity is especially apparent in the area of sexual behavior. The reason for this is that adjustment from antagonism toward members of the opposite sex, characteristics of late childhood and puberty, to an interest in and the development of feelings of affection for them is a radical one. Because of immaturity may develop inferiority complexes. If their gap is small adolescence will experience some self-dissatisfaction but, if it is wide they are likely to consider themselves worthless and contemplate or even attempt suicide. The areas in which immaturity due to failure to make the transition to more mature behavior, are especially common are social, sexual and moral behavior and immaturity in family relationships when immature is pronounced. It leads to self rejection with its damaging effects on personal and social adjustments.

Emotional Problems:

Traditionally, adolescence has been thought of as a period of “storm and stress” – a time of heightened emotional tension resulting from the physical and glandular changes that are taking place. While it is true that growth continues through the early years of adolescence. It does so at progressively slower rate. Boys and girls are said to have achieved emotional maturity if the end of the adolescence. Adolescent emotionality can be attributed mainly to the fact that boys and girls come under social pressures. For example problems related to romance are very real at this time. While the romance is moving along smoothly, adolescence is happy, but they become respondent when things begin to go wrong. Similarly with the end of their schooling in sight, adolescents begin to worry about their future.

3. Stress:

Stress is common in every individual. The college students may experience job, business man may suffer stress to reach office in time and to complete the projects on time and even the house hold ladies may experience stress in managing the home affairs and to look for the maid servant. The reasons for the stress differ from person to person. The stress people experience should not be necessarily treated as harmful. Stress is an unavoidable aspect of everyday life. Every person suffers from one form of stress or another at some point in their lives. Stress can make one more productive or it can cause sleeplessness, irritability and anxiety.

Stress is our reaction to external events and it can be positive or negative depending upon how we react. The term refers to negative emotional experiences with associated behavioral, biochemical and physiological changes that are related to perceived acute or chronic challenges stress are the events that stimulate these changes. However, a stress arousing situation for one person might be a neutral event for

another whether a certain situation is stressful forces or not depends on how we appraise a life event and how we rate our ability to deal with it. The term stress means pressure and in human life it represents an uneasy experience. It is an unpleasant psychological and physiological state caused due to some internal and or external demands that go beyond our capacity.

4. Academic Stress:

Ambitious parents, who want their children to be the best, pack too many things into their lives tutorials, art class, karate, piano, lessons, drums, swimming. The list is endless! Once back home there is barely enough time for homework a quick dinner and sleep. Soon all work. The scenario is worse when he doesn't want to do any of these activities but just wants to read and wander about on his own. The child becomes depressed. It is attempted to touch upon every important aspect pertaining to the topic of academic stress. Apart from describing the general causes, consequence, symptoms and methods of coping, we have also dealt with how academic pressure serves to increase the rate of suicide among children. Academic stress normally occurs at certain developmental periods in education. When the expectations for academic performance increase, children feel stressed.

5. Stress in Adolescence:

Student life coincides with adolescence and stress can manifest in children as a reaction to the changes in life, in addition to academic pressures. Pressures to achieve academic excellence mount up in the 9th and the 10th standards, the latter being the class at which the high school students undergo the secondary school leaving certificate examination. This happens to be the entry point into the adult world of competitors, achievement and failures. Due to all of the above reasons, the academic pressure mounts up during the period of adolescence.

There are a number of reasons of for an adolescent to feel stressed. These include problems with peers. Family issues or problems with parents, schools related problems or pressure, child abuse, family or community violence, child sexual abuse etc. School going children suffer from stress especially when they are forced by teachers and anxious parents to meet goals, which are too high for them. The stress factor in their lives results in poor concentration, fatigue, inability to recollect learned materials and a sense of failure. The highest sources of this stress were examinations and outcomes, too much to do, worry over future, making choices about careers, studying for exams, amount to learn, need to do well impose by others as well to the self-imposed need to do well.

6. Reactions to Stress:

Reactions to stress vary with the adolescent ability to cope, how long the stress continues and the intensity of the stress. There are individual differences in how people react to stress. Signs of stress in adolescents may include withdrawal, anti-social behaviors such as stealing, aggressiveness and acting-out rebellion at home, as well as physical complaints such as headaches and stomachaches. Missed school or poor academic performance, changes in eating and sleeping habits, difficulty in concentrating and thoughts of death and suicide are other common signs. Academic stress can cause various changes in the human body. These hormones in turn produce a noticeable change in the heart rate, blood pressure levels, metabolism and physical activity. Anti-social behaviors may be the factor for understanding adolescents. Different types of stressors, such as daily hassles, and developmental transitions were related to delinquency. In a study conducted of mostly while adolescents. Other Important studies were conducted to study the relation between stress and academic in adolescents. If

found trial life events predicted lower grade point averages, while positive daily events predicted higher grade point averages in their sample of while high school students.

7. Causes of Academic Stress:

One of the greatest contributors to stress in children's is hurry to get ready, to go from one place to another, to do well in school and to become an all-round achiever. Stress also occurs in response to pressures such as homework, tests, over-load of non school activities, conflict with friends and family and the physical and emotional changes that come with growing up. If children are involved in too many activities and don't have time to 'just be kids', it can be extremely stressful. Stress is created in students when there is parental pressure to perform and to stand not among other children. When they cannot rise up to these expectations, or during the process of achieving it, children may suffer from frustration physical stress, aggression, undesirable complexes and depression. School systems are also to blame, as it crams students with tremendous amount of school work, which students are expected to complete sacrificing their leisure hours or vacations. Unable to find enough time for them, students lose interest in studies and under perform. Besides this, teenage depression or growing up tensions adds to the academic pressure. If children are unable to adapt to the transition or change, it may result in enormous amounts of anxiety, negative personal traits and can even to massive attention problems.

The important causal factor in academic stress is parental pressure. The parental pressurization includes parental beliefs expectations, dispositions and behaviors causing both psychological and physical strain to the child. Parents pressurize their children by being over anxious and ambitious, controlling and rigid and forcing the child to achieve beyond his actual capabilities. If parental expectations are too high, children feel frustrated, which in turn can cause a dislike for studies. When parents concentrate on grades alone, they become more like a dictator. The child thus, comes to believe that the only means of gaining the love and approval of his or her parents is through academic success. As a result, the child strives to excel in his academics, failure of which, leads to extreme anxiety, depression and a sense of failure.

Another aspect is stress at school. The relationship between students and teachers are relatively short-term. The stressful situation in schools may be related to a number of factors, such as, the emotional climate of the school, teachers student's relationship, inadequate facilities, overcrowding in the class-room, examinations etc. The stressful situations at school may also be related to the teaching strategies, learning styles, interpersonal relationships etc. It has observed that instead of encouraging independence, creativity, responsibility and self-reliance, schools often over-emphasize obedience, discipline and conformity, thereby creating a very stressful environment. The school emotional climate is significantly related to the scholastic achievement of its students. Better the communication skills of the teacher and the emotional climates of the class, lesser the stress observed among students and better the academic achievement. We cannot deny the problem of overcrowded classroom. The result shows that a classroom size, ranging from 20 to 40 students was not generally stressful, nor did it influence the student's scholastic achievement negatively.

The relationship between teacher-student and student within themselves also has a chance of having stress. Most of the students are prefer non-authoritarian teachers than the strict authoritative. Classes that are too task oriented and that which emphasize teacher control, tend to make students feel anxious, interested, unhappy and bored. Yet another important determinant of academic; stress is the classroom atmosphere. When relationships with peers are good and friendly, with no friction in

the classroom, then children are found to be happier, which in turn helps them to achieve academic excellence.

Teaching strategies has been shown to be an important factor in academic achievement. Research studies have concluded that extroverted students find informal, unstructured, teaching methods less stressful and more beneficial, while introverted students found the formal, structured learning environment with the traditional teaching approach less stressful and more beneficial. Therefore, the reported academic superiority of introverts may be due to the fact that the present educational system is highly structured, formal and geared to the needs of introverts than extroverts, who require a different teaching strategy one which stresses more on individuality, personal lion, legibility and spontaneity in teaching.

8. Symptoms of Academic Stress:

It is not always easy to recognize the fact that children are stressed out. Short term behavioral changes such as mood giving, acting out and changes in sleep pattern or bedwetting can be indicators of stress. Some children manifest physical symptoms like stomachaches, headaches, fever etc. Still others have trouble concentrating or completing schoolwork and withdraw from others and their peer group and prefer to spend a lot of time on their own. Some of the important signs and symptoms that indicate a child might be under stress include: Psychosomatic complaints like headache, migraines, ulcers etc. Other related symptoms are weight loss or gain, decreased or increased appetite. Feeling of sadness, panic, anger, restlessness, inability to concentrate etc can be seen. Nervous habits like nail biting and thumb sucking can be identified. Lack of self-esteem, difficulties in school, usually marked by a drop in performance can be noticed.

9. Consequences of Academic Stress:

The quality of work produced by the child in the course of his studentship can be severely affected by poor coping strategies. First, stress may produce a focus on short-term completion to long term learning. Secondly, many pressured students attempt to other interests and limit their efforts to what is required solely within their field of study. This causes an unhealthy isolation. The academic goals, students often neglect their interpersonal relationships. The hindrance of time, commitments, lack of social involvement and hesitancy towards self-disclosure, prevents the natural development of rewarding support networks. Students do not benefit from the close community relationships that will help them cope with the pressures of academic life. In addition, emotional exhaustion may disengage the student from family relationship. In today's world the practice spending quality time with one's family is fast disappearing, as a result of which, family members fail to meet each other's emotional needs. Students who had to face extreme pressures in their student life are more likely to carry over this stress into their workplace, as a result of which they are unable to maintain a healthy professional life. Such individuals are thus forced to give up their jobs, at least temporarily until they are able to cope with the in a more effective manner.

10. Coping with Academic Stress:

The Adolescence Should Be Taken Seriously as it can lead to depression, drug abuse, and alcoholism, but most importantly, suicide. It is thus, essential to develop coping skills, to deal with the academic pressures one faces, to succeed in a health. It is important to realize one's priorities and accordingly set a schedule for the different activities throughout the day. When setting schedules, it is also important to include time for leisure activities to get away from the monotony of studies and refresh one. A well- balanced diet, appropriate sleep and adequate exercise are also essential. The

support of friends and family enables an individual to cope better with the pressures of school and college. It is thus essential to develop an interaction network, by spending time with close friends and people who share the same hobbies. In some cases the professional help such as counselors, psychologists etc can be taken to handle the situation better.

Helping adolescents realize that they are important members of society can ease a great deal of their stress. Adults can help adolescents cope with their stress by encouraging them to talk openly about their emotions and feeling, reassuring them and by offering their support. The first important step for parents is to be aware of the possible stressors and to recognize different signs of stress in their children. Parents should be realistic about their child's abilities and should take care so as not to burden them with unreasonable expectations in academic as well as extra-curricular fields. Parents should keep track of their child's academic performance and watch for any sudden declines in his/her academic performance, be in constant touch with the teachers to be able to identify a problem the child may be experiencing in school and most importantly reassure the child of parental love and support. Parents can help their children cope with their academic pressures by discussing their expectations with their children and to lower these expectations if they seem to be unattainable by the child. Parents should take an interest in and be available, when the child needs help with his school work. They should help the child develop an academic routine, at home. Parents should encourage children to take up hobbies, participate in extra-curricular activities and exercise regularly, all of which are effective stress relievers. Lastly, it is essential for parents to review, evaluate and change their parenting styles if they prove to be ineffective.

Interaction with teachers and peers is instrumental in shaping the child's personality. The role of school, therefore, should be to provide a more psychologically oriented, scientific approach to preparations for exams, concentrating not only on the particular subject but also on how to learn and study. Teachers should have a supportive attitude and also identify vulnerable students and give them special attention from the very beginning.

Thus, by recognizing the role of the academic environment and its oppressive nature, by understanding the personal traits such as perfectionism and the tendency to overachieve, and by identifying physiological and cognitive symptoms that indicate emotional exhaustion, the student can learn effective coping strategies to stop

11. Findings:

The findings of the study can be identified as: Seventy percent of the respondents belong to fourteen to sixteen years of age group. Forty percent of the students are studied up to 10th standard are highly experienced more stress, when compared to students from other classes. Majority ninety percent of the respondents feel that parental pressure is a cause for academic stress. Almost all the parents are over ambitious. And the students wanted to go to school. Ninety percent of students like the exams. 82 percent of the respondents feel uncomfortable in class. 86 percent agree that adequate facilities provided by the students in school. 60 percent are freely communicated with the teacher. 82 percent are experiencing stress during exams.

All respondents say that, teachers are expecting more from them because teachers are always concerned with the performance of students and standard of results of the school. 64 percent feel that academic curriculum is overburdened by the students. 90 % of students feel that teaching strategies adopted by the teachers is not benefiting the adolescence. All the respondents agreed that because of stress, quality of work is affected. 48 % of the respondents feel that stress has a major influence

on family relationship. Most of the respondents have not got the idea of discontinuing their education.

Most of the respondents that is 60 percent said that they cannot overcome from stress and they have not taken any measures to overcome it. This may be due to lack of knowledge regarding the coping mechanisms to overcome academic stress and also due to the psychological immaturity to handle the academic stress. The study reveals that most of the respondents 58 percent feels that managing time productively will reduce the academic stress.

Appropriate suggestions and advice from the parents will help the teenagers to reduce the burden and take proper decision it will lead to reduced stress. 34 percent used listening music as a technique may indicate that youth (teenagers) enjoys music. Student interested actively participated in social and cultural activities, it helps to overcome the stress these techniques to be used by students. 82 percent they seek help from professionals like teachers and it shows that they are comfortable with the teacher.

12. Suggestions:

The researcher likes to suggest few aspects for handling the academic stress; Students should be provided comfortable atmosphere in the school. School counselors can be appointed in the school. It is necessary to bring about modification in teaching style by handling with friendly way. Parents meetings will help to them to make improvement in their academic activities. Life skill education should be the part of their academic curriculum. Too much restriction from the parents is frustrating it will affect to children's studies. Parents need to promote a friendly atmosphere and treating them according to their abilities in their academic activities. Activities like meditations, yoga, recreational activities can be encouraged. Effective time management can be taught for the students. There should be an equal importance for extracurricular activities and academic studies.

13. Conclusion:

Adolescence is the fascinating as well as the most critical period in the life of an individual. Stress in adolescents is necessary to improve the quality of life. Education is a part and parcel of the lives of a large number of people, the importance of which is growing by leaps and bounds with each new day. In spite of this, recent years have seen a growth in stress related disorders among students, most of which are a consequence of the academic pressures, faced by them. These may include unreasonable expectations of parents, setting of high standards that one is unable to achieve or problems with peers and teachers. Academic pressures, if left unattended to, leads to dire consequences in every aspect of the student's life- physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and social. However the most important consequence of academic stress is its increased risk to suicide. People must know now to live in good terms with himself how to manage and control & sometimes improve himself. Most of the stress occurs when people try to be pleasers and perfectionists & this placed extra demands on one self without knowing his capabilities. So having an insight about oneself is one important factor for coping with stress. This particular study brought about the stress faced by the adolescents and how it will affect the academic success and this can be tackled only in a friendly atmosphere.

14. References

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