

# Investigation of Stress Level in Adolescents at Home and School Environment in District Anantnag

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**Abstract**—Adolescent is a developmental period characterized by multiple changes in virtually every aspect of an individual's life, calling for new psychology adaptations. Exposure to different stressors caused by these changes represents a central and normal part of the process of growth and development during adolescence. However, experience of cumulative and simultaneous negative stressors remains central as a potential threat to the well-being and healthy development during adolescence. Meanwhile, when faced with identical stressors, the stress process and the health outcomes of stress vary individually; the outcome depends on the role of different vulnerabilities and protective factors, in the individual as well as in the environment. Stress has become a common situation in our modern society. Nowadays, with constant development of many aspects, a day with just 24 hours seems not to be sufficient for an active person. As a result, people always have to face stress, which is adversely uncomfortable. To be more specific, the main causes of stress are career, relationship and health-related problems etc.

**Key Notes:** Adolescence, Stress, Stressor, School, Family, Psychological distress, Aggression.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescent is a developmental period characterized by multiple changes in virtually every aspect of an individual's life, calling for new psychology adaptations. Exposure to different stressors caused by these changes represents a central and normal part of the process of growth and development during adolescence. However, experience of cumulative and simultaneous negative stressors remains central as a potential threat to the well-being and healthy development during adolescence. Meanwhile, when faced with identical stressors, the stress process and the health outcomes of stress vary individually; the outcome depends on the role of different vulnerabilities and protective factors, in the individual as well as in the environment. Stress has become a common situation in our modern society. Nowadays, with constant development of many aspects, a day with just 24 hours seems not to be sufficient for an active person. As a result, people always have to face stress, which is adversely uncomfortable. To be more

specific, the main causes of stress are career, relationship and health-related problems etc.

First of all, work and study play an important part in our life, but they turn out to be the main reasons for the stress. With the development of industrial era, the more competitiveness among companies leads to a significant increase in the employer's workload. They have to choose between being unemployed or standing high pressure. Unfortunately! Both results in negative feeling which is often called "stress". Moreover, not many people have a good time-management skill, so they must deal with the difficulty of balancing work, study and relaxation. In brief, someone who pays too much attention on career may be the victim of stress.

Secondly, while it may be agreed that having a relationship benefits a human being, but the truth is that, failure in the relationships is also a cause of stress. The relation could be among family members, friends or colleagues etc. for instance, parents do not have enough time to spend with their children, colleagues feel jealous with each other because of their career prospect etc. As a consequence, many people have pressure at work but even also the working environment, they cannot feel more relaxed and comfortable due to the complicate relationships.

Last but not least, people may experience stress because of bad health. While physical exercises are really beneficial for reducing tiredness, people often neglect them and continue to comfort stress consequently. On the other hand, a minority suffers some kind of perplexing disease, taking sleep deprivation as an example; they always fell sleepy even in daytime. According to the scientific research, these people cannot evade from stress which is the symptom unless they recover from these unique diseases.

In short, there have been more causes of stress besides career, social relations or health. However, they are unavoidable parts of our life. So the only thing we can do is to accept the existing situation and find efficient ways or solutions to them in order to reduce stress as much as possible. Instead of

feeling nervous, we should enjoy our life and always think positively.

Adolescence is conceptualized as a transitional period, which begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the acceptance of adult roles and responsibilities. Of all life stages, except childhood, adolescence is one most marked by rapid and potentially tumultuous transition (Williams, Holmbeck & Greenly, 2002). This is to be seen in the domain of biological development where the changes are physically externally manifest as well as in the progression of both cognitive and psychological maturity from that of childhood to that of fully functioning adult (Byrne, Davenport & Mazanov, 2007). While the transition through adolescence is inevitable the speed and magnitude of these changes overtax the capacity of many young people to cope and the resulting phenomenon of adolescent stress is now well organized (Byrne, et al., 2007)

### **PURPOSE OF STUDY/OBJECTIVES:**

This study intends to assess the stress level in adolescents, especially in higher grade students in district Anantnag. The overarching goals of study are as:

- To study the prevalence of stress level among higher secondary school students.
- To investigate the stress among adolescents at home life.
- To assess the stress through school conflict and school performance.
- To study how pressure peer stimulates the stress level.
- To study how teacher interaction influences stress level.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Williams, Holmbeck & Greenly (2002) stated that adolescence is conceptualized as a transitional period, which begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the acceptance of adult roles and responsibilities. Of all life-stages, except childhood, adolescence is one of the most marked by rapid and potentially tumultuous transition.

Williams et. Al. (2002) stressed Adolescence has historically been a developmental period of relative neglect with respect to research on both mental and physical health intervention and outcome although research on growth and development during adolescence has expanded during the past years.

Grant et. Al. (2003) were of the opinion that health habits and behaviors are consolidated, and important health risk behaviors are first evident during this life stage. These patterns affect not only the immediate health of adolescents, but lay the foundation for health throughout the life span.

Grant et. Al. (2004) viewed those common characteristics of all definitions of stress are that they focus on environmental circumstances or conditions that threaten, challenge, exceed or

harm the psychological or biological capacities of the individual.

Grant et. al. (2006) suggested that understanding the role and nature of stressors in the lives of adolescents, how experience of stress is associated with different health outcomes, as well as identifying potential protective factors in this context is crucial for helping adolescents capitalize on the many changes taking place in their lives, and equip them with the tools to make their journey through adolescence a positive growth-oriented experience.

Byrne, Davenport & Mazanov (2007) opined that adolescence is to be seen in the domain of biological development where the changes are physically externally manifest as well as in the progression of both cognitive and psychological maturity from that of childhood to that of the fully functioning adult.

Compass & Reeslund (2009) viewed the adolescence also marks the increase in the incidence of a number of mental health problems and threats to physical health. They further opined that exposure to stressful events (stressors) represents significant sources of risk to the healthy development of adolescents, and stressors are experienced in different intensities and durations of arousal in adolescence. However, when faced with the same stressor(s), the stress process and the impact from the stress vary individually and lead to different health outcomes; this depends on individual and environmental vulnerabilities and resources, as well as the ability to cope effectively with the stressors.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

#### **Study Area:**

S. No.	Name of School	Address
1.	Oxford Presentation School	K P Road Islamabad
2.	Public Model School	Naibasti Khanabal

#### **Participants:**

The analysis was carried out on two high schools. A total of 40 students were asked to participate in the study. A total of 40 completed questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 0%. Missing responses were mainly due to non cooperation of classes or students being absent when the questionnaire was administered.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

In all stages of the data collection it was emphasized that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that all information was confidential. Researchers on the project were present during the data collection to inform students about the survey and to administer the questionnaires. The sampling design was initially of purposive random sampling and then simple random sampling technique was used to collect data from subjects.

## MEASURES

Adolescent stress was assessed using the adolescent stress questionnaire (Byrne & Mazanov, 2002; Byrne et. al. 2007). The ASQ is an inventory made up of items originally designed to measure common stressors that adolescents may experience in their daily life. The scale was developed with the intention to ensure that the list of stressors was based on adolescents' individual experience and broadly salient to the contemporary issues facing young people at that time. The scale has been developed since the 1990's based on focus groups with adolescents, their teachers and their parents (Byrne & Mazanov, 2002). The first version of the original questionnaire consisted of 31 items reflecting seven dimensions of adolescent stressors. We modified it and made it according the demand of present study.

## RESULTS

### Overall stress level in adolescents:

Overall, 30.4% of subjects showed they were engulfed sometimes with stress at different environments i.e. at home life, school conflict, school performance, and peer pressure and teacher interaction. 14.64% of adolescents were always engulfed with stress, while 12.71% rarely show stress at different environments. The scale level of stress in adolescents was different in school conflict and school performance where 40% and 36.38% sometimes showed stress level.

The results show that there was no disagreement between subjects and their father, while 25% rarely showed disagreement. There was, however, hardly any disagreement in 57.5% of subjects. The result depict that 37% of subjects sometimes were not taken seriously by their parents, while as 47.5% had to abide patty rules at home. There were disagreement between subjects and their parents. Our data show that 65% of adolescent students agreed that their parents expected too much from them. However, there was no lack of trust between parents and their wards. 52.5% of subjects also agreed that their parents hassle them about the way they look.

Overall 44% of adolescents never agreed on stress questions, while as 28% sometimes agreed on these questions. Only 10% always agreed on the stress related questions at home life, while 18% of subjects rarely agreed upon these.

### Relationship between stress of adolescents and school conflicts:

Results depict that 40% of adolescents show that school conflict is responsible for stress among teens. During the survey, 45% of subjects never complained that they have not enough time for fun, while as 37.5% sometimes reported that they have not enough time for fun. It was further found that 50% were of the opinion that they never found such circumstances where they were not getting enough time for

work at school, while as 35% opined that they sometimes have not enough time for activities outside of school hours.

### Relationship between stress of adolescents and school performance:

The result show that 37.14% of adolescents sometimes had stress related problems during their school performance. It was found that 65% of subjects had never to study things you do not understand. 70% of subjects argued that their teachers never expected too much from them. It was found that 42.5% of adolescents sometimes keep up with school work. The 52.5% subjects had sometimes difficulty with some subjects. In addition, 40% and 45% of adolescents have sometimes concentrated too long during school hours and also have study things you are not interested in.

### Statistical analysis (One Way ANOVA) for adolescents stress at different sub-scales:

The stress level in adolescents was significantly ( $F = 9.38$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ) influenced by home life, which is evident from the empirical data. The school also significantly ( $F = 5.58$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) influenced the stress level among adolescents. School performance ( $F = 2.9$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ) and teacher interaction ( $F = 5.58$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ) also significantly influenced the stress among adolescents. However, peer pressure was significantly ( $F = 2.67$ ,  $p = 0.075$ ) responsible for stress related issues among adolescents.

## Discussion

Stress is seen as modern society's illness by professionals from different sectors. Stress has effects on people's behaviors, communications and efficiency. Stress is not only a factor in working places; it is also common factor in educational environments experienced by students.

Stress is generally discussed in negative but it also has positive value (Robins, 1996). This issue should be taken into consideration that adaptive stress level is necessary for a human being to have action. Positive stress and resistance to stress are healthy individual characteristics. According to Maddi, psychology wellness is important in human's resistance to stress (Sahin, 1998).

Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress every day and can benefit from learning stress management skills. Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult or painful and they do not have the resources to cope. Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- School demands and frustrations.
- Negative thoughts and feelings about themselves.
- Changes in their bodies.
- Problems with friends and/or peers at school.

- Unsafe living environments/neighbourhood.
- Separation or divorce of parents.
- Chronic illness or severe problems in the family.
- Death of a loved one.
- Moving on too many activities or having too high expectations.
- Family financial problems.

Some teens become overloaded with stress. When it happens, inadequately managed stress can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, or poor coping skills such as drug and/or alcohol use.

When we perceive a situation as difficult or painful, changes occur in our mind and bodies to prepare us to respond to danger. This a fight, flight or freeze at response includes faster heart and breathing rate, increased blood to muscles of arms and legs, cold or clammy hands and feet, upset stomach and/or a sense of dread.

The same mechanism that turns on the stress response can turn it off. As soon as we decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, changes can occur in our minds and bodies to help us relax and calm down. This relaxation response includes decreased heart and breathing rate and a sense of well being. Teens that develop a relaxation response and other stress management skills feel less helpless and have more choices when responding to stress.

Adolescents stress is a topic of concern for our community. Our teenagers are overbooked, lack of time management skills, are driven to succeed and are overwhelmed. While many adults remember their teen years with fond memories of friends and fun, our teens are dealing with conflicting demands from teachers, parents and peers.

The primary sources of tension in adolescence today include academic pressure to succeed. During the teen years, today's youth have many adult responsibilities, but without the freedom and independence of adulthood.

Often teens have not yet developed the coping skills required to deal with stress, and therefore their responses to stress tend to be less healthy. These unhealthy responses may include anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, drug and alcohol use and depression. Although stress is uncomfortable, it is not unmanageable. There are ways that teens can work to deal with the stress they experience before it becomes overwhelming. For example, teens can learn to manage their time. Not unlike many adults, young people tend to have difficulty organizing their time and as a result become overbooked and overwhelmed. Developing the skills to prioritize and schedule can be important in relieving some stress. Maintaining friendships and taking time to enjoy life is also very important in stress management and reduction.

Finally, maintaining some physical activity or regular exercise is extremely beneficial in this area.

### Conclusion

- Overall, 42.22% of adolescents reported that they had never any sort of stress related issue at five different sub-levels/environments (Home life, School conflict, School performance, Peer pressure and Teacher interaction); whereas, 30.4% of subjects opined that they had sometimes stress related issue at five different sub-levels/environments.
- The stress level in adolescents was significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) influenced by home life, which is evident from the empirical data.
- The school conflict also significantly influenced the stress level in adolescents.
- School performance and teacher interaction also significantly influenced the stress among adolescents. However, peer pressure was insignificantly responsible for stress related issues among adolescents.

In sum, adolescents are faced by different types of stresses at home as well as school; however, level of stress differs due to many factors. Ambiguous nature of adolescent stress calls for further investigation in future.

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