

Assessment and Management of Anxiety among Adolescents through Relaxation and Counseling

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ABSTRACT :

Adolescence is the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that involves biological, cognitive and socio emotional changes. Anxiety in adolescence has been on the increase. The present study aims to assess anxiety of adolescents and to see the effect of intervention to reduce anxiety. The sample for the study consisted of 80 high school adolescents who were administered Sinha's Anxiety scale. 30 adolescents, among them 15 boys and 15 girls served as the sample for intervention. For this sample counseling and Jacobson's relaxation technique was carried out for a period of 3 months. After intervention post therapy assessment was made. The data were statistically analyzed using t test. Results indicated that counseling and relaxation helped in reducing anxiety both among boys and girls.

Key words: Adolescence, Anxiety, Counseling and Relaxation.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, the transitional stage of development between childhood and adulthood, represents the period of time during which a person experiences a variety of biological changes and encounters a number of emotional issues. The ages which are considered to be part of adolescence vary by culture, and ranges from preteens to early twenties. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence covers the period of life between 10 and 20 years of age. 12 or 13 years may be considered as the normal period for boys and girls in India when Adolescence begins.

STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE:

1. Early Adolescence (10 to 13 years): Early adolescence corresponds roughly to the middle school or junior high school years & includes most pubertal change.
2. Mid Adolescence (14 to 15 years): This stage is distinguished by the development of a separate identity from parents, of new relationships with peer groups and the opposite sex and of experimentation.

3. Late Adolescence (16 to 20 years): Late adolescence refers approximately to the late half of the second decade of life. At this stage, adolescents have fully developed physical characteristics and have formed a distinct identity and have well formed opinions and ideas. Career interests, dating and ideality exploration are after more pronounced in late adolescence than in early adolescence.

ANXIETY:

Anxiety is an emotional state arising in situations of impending danger and manifested in expectation of unfavorable events. Anxiety manifests itself as a feeling of helplessness, uncertainty of oneself, lack of sufficient strength in the face of external factors and exaggeration of their potency and strength.

ANXIETY IN ADOLESCENTS:

Anxiety in adolescence has been on the increase. The cause for anxiety has not been identified unambiguously but there are certain factors that are known to increase the probability of anxiety in adolescents. Experiences in the past that are linked to a major loss or setback can also trigger anxiety in adolescence. Circumstances like the death of a close friend, parent or sibling, rejection from peer group, chronic illness, psychological or sexual abuse and a physical disorder may lead to a higher probability of being afflicted with anxiety.

The physical manifestation of anxiety in adolescents leads to many psychological issues. Concentration levels decrease and sense of hopelessness and being worthless surfaces. A nagging fear of being abandoned by friends, relatives and parents constantly hounds these teens and at times results in panic attacks. The effect of anxiety lead to a lack of interest in hygiene, intermittent and short periods of crying, increased and sudden irritable bouts of aggression, fears and phobias. Some of the more recognizable and commonly known symptoms of anxiety are recurring nightmares, irritability, loss of appetite and at times even terrorism. Psychosomatic symptoms like headaches, dizziness and vomiting also start showing up in extreme cases.

The most common sources of day-to-day stress for adolescents are changes in their body, Academic stress, which includes exam fear, competition, preparing for exam, class work preparation, type of syllabus and overwork, Problems with peers, Unsafe living environment/neighborhood, Family issues or problems with parents, Death of someone close, Their own thoughts, feelings and behaviors, Serious illness of self, relative and friend, Teacher's expectations, Management of time, Pressure

from parents, Change of school, Change of teacher, School environment, Adjustment with teacher, Single parent family etc.

COUNSELING AND RELAXATION:

Counseling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who needs assistance and the counselor who is trained and educated to give this assistance (Preze,1965). Counseling is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client. The goal of counseling is to help individuals overcome many of their future problems. The major objective of all counseling is to help individual's become self- sufficient, self- dependent, self- directed and to adjust themselves efficiently to the demands of a better and meaningful life.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation was found by Edmund Jacobson in the year 1933. The idea is that since stress and anxiety are related to muscle tension, reducing muscle tension can lessen feelings of stress and anxiety. Basically it involves tensing and relaxing muscle groups including arms, face, neck, shoulders, chest, stomach and legs to achieve deeper and deeper levels of relaxation, tensing of the muscles is done for 10 seconds relaxing of the same muscle for 20 seconds.

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess anxiety among adolescent boys and girls.
- To study the effect of intervention in the management of Anxiety
- To study the effect of intervention in relation to gender.

HYPOTHESES:

- There is no difference between Pre therapy and Post therapy assessment on Anxiety.
- There is no difference between Pre therapy and Post therapy assessment on Anxiety among boys.
- There is no difference between Pre therapy and Post therapy assessment on Anxiety among girls.
- There is no gender difference within Post therapy assessment on Anxiety.

REVIEW F LITERATURE

Anshika (1998) examines the relationship between anxiety level and academic achievement. The sample consisted of 100 students of these 50 were in the age group of 15-18 years and the other 50 in the 19-22 years age group. From the previous year's examination records, high and low academic achievers were selected. Sinha's Anxiety Scale was administered to all students. Results indicated significant relationships between anxiety level and academic achievement. Age was not associated significantly with anxiety and academic achievement

La Greca A.M & Lopez (1998) examined the utility of modifying the Social Anxiety Scale for Children—Revised (SASC-R) for use with adolescents, and examined associations between adolescents' social anxiety (SA) and their peer relations, friendships, and social functioning. Boys (n = 101) and girls (n = 149) in the 10th through 12th grades completed the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A) and measures of social support, perceived competence, and number and quality of their best friendships. Factor analysis of the SAS-A confirmed a three-factor structure: Fear of Negative Evaluation, Social Avoidance and Distress in General, and Social Avoidance Specific to New Situations or Unfamiliar Peers. Girls reported more SA than boys, and SA was more strongly linked to girls' social functioning than boys'. Specifically, adolescents with higher levels of SA reported poorer social functioning (less support from classmates, less social acceptance), and girls with higher levels of SA reported fewer friendships, and less intimacy, companionship, and support in their close friendships. These findings extend work on the SASC-R to adolescents, and suggest the importance of SA for understanding the social functioning and close friendships of adolescents, especially girls.

Hussain, Kumar & Hussian (2008) examined the level of academic stress and overall adjustment among Public and Government high school students and also to see relationship between the two variables (academic stress and adjustment). For that purpose 100 students of class IX were selected randomly from two different schools out of which 50 were taken from Public and the remaining 50 were taken from Government school Sinha and Sinha scale for measuring academic stress was used to see the magnitude of stress and Sinha and Singh Adjustment Inventory for school students was used to examine level of adjustment among the students. Results indicated that magnitude of academic stress was significantly higher among

the Public school students where as Government school students were significantly better in terms of their level of adjustment. However, inverse but significant relationships between academic stress and adjustment were found for both the group of students and for each type of school.

Deb, Chatterjee & Walsh (2009) conducted a research and objective of the study was to understand better anxiety among adolescents in Kolkata city, India. Specifically, the study compared anxiety across gender, school type, socio-economic background and mothers' employment status. The study also examined adolescents' perceptions of quality time with their parents. A group of 460 adolescents (220 boys and 240 girls), aged 13-17 years were recruited to participate in the study via a multi-stage sampling technique. The data were collected using a self-report semi-structured questionnaire and a standardized psychological test, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Results show that anxiety was prevalent in the sample with 20.1% of boys and 17.9% of girls found to be suffering from high anxiety. More boys were anxious than girls ($p < 0.01$). Adolescents from Bengali medium schools were more anxious than adolescents from English medium schools ($p < 0.01$). Adolescents belonging to the middle class (middle socio-economic group) suffered more anxiety than those from both high and low socio-economic groups ($p < 0.01$). Adolescents with working mothers were found to be more anxious ($p < 0.01$). Results also show that a substantial proportion of the adolescents perceived they did not receive quality time from fathers (32.1%) and mothers (21.3%). A large number of them also did not feel comfortable to share their personal issues with their parents (60.0% for fathers and 40.0% for mothers).

A critical review of the previous study indicates that there is significant relationship between anxiety level and academic achievement. Girls reported more social anxiety than boys. Magnitude of academic stress was significantly higher among the Public school students. Adolescents belonging to the middle class (middle socio-economic group) suffered more anxiety than those from both high and low socio-economic groups. Adolescents with working mothers were found to be more anxious. Results also show that a large number of them also did not feel comfortable to share their personal issues with their parents. (60 % for fathers and 40% for mothers).

METHOD

SAMPLE:

The sample for the study consisted of 80 high school students, among this sample 30 students having high anxiety were selected for intervention. The treatment group consisted of 15 male & 15 female students.

Table 1 : Socio- demographic characteristics of the sample

	MALE	FEMALE
Number	15	15
Class	8th to 9th Standard	8th to 9th Standard
Age	12 to 14 Years	12 to 14 Years
Domicile	Rural	Rural

TOOL:

Sinha's anxiety scale (Sinha, 1961)

The scale consists of 100 items, all in positive form. Against each statement there is T and F denoting True and False. Subjects are asked to read each statement carefully and if the statement is True or Mostly true underline T. If the statement is False or Mostly false underline F.

Scoring:

All the items, which are indicated T is counted and the total number of T's indicates the extent of anxiety. The raw score is then converted into percentiles. Norms for men and women have been prepared separately.

SCORES		Percentiles	Interpretation
BOYS	GIRLS		
3-17	1-18	1-20	Very low level of anxiety
19-23	21-24	25-30	Low anxiety
26-32	28-37	40-60	Normal range of anxiety
39-41	42-44	70-75	High anxiety
44-74	48-72	80-99	Very high level anxiety

Reliability and Validity:

The test has a high split half reliability of 0.86 and test retest reliability of 0.73. Hundal (1968) conducted a study on 200 male students of Punjab University and found scores on the scale to correlate highly with those on other anxiety measures like with Taylor's scale, the correlation was 0.72, against Dutt's Anxiety questionnaire it was 0.72 and against Cattell's IPAT Anxiety Scale it was 0.70.

PROCEDURE:

The sample for the study consisted of 80 high school adolescents. To select the representative sample the school authorities were approached and then permission was sought by explaining the purpose of the study. Subsequently the sample was administered Sinha's Anxiety scale. 30 Adolescents having high anxiety served as the sample for intervention. For this sample counseling, Jacobson's relaxation and various modules on exam facing skills, memory improvement and study skills were carried out for a period of 3 months. After the intervention programme post- therapy assessment was made. The data collected were organized and subjected to statistical analysis for interpretation.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

The obtained data were classified depending upon the objectives of the study. The data thus organized was statistically tested using t- test of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 : Mean, S.D and't' value of pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

Therapy	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Pre therapy	30	56.933	10.448	6.629	0.00**
Post therapy	30	37.40	18.790		

** p < . 01

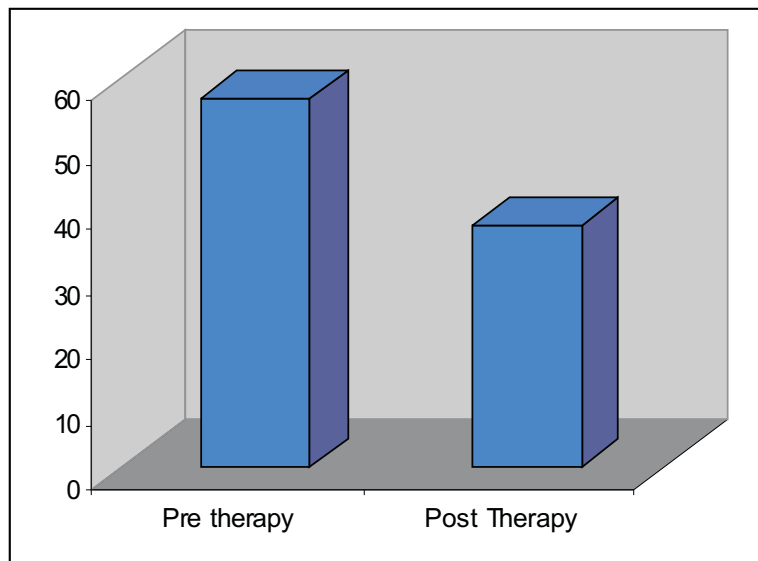


Figure 1 Mean score of pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

The above table reveals that the mean score obtained in Pre therapy and Post therapy is 56.933 and 37.40 with the SD of 10.448 and 18.790 respectively with the t value of 6.629 ($p < .01$), which is significant.

The above result indicates that Jacobson's Relaxation technique and counseling on developing positive attitude, improving Interpersonal relations and modules like memory enhancement, study skills and exam facing skills had a significant influence in reducing academic anxiety in the group.

Table 3 : Mean, SD and 't' value of boys in pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

Therapy	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Pre therapy	15	56.93	11.816	4.54	0.00**
Post therapy	15	38.13	19.921		

** $p < .01$

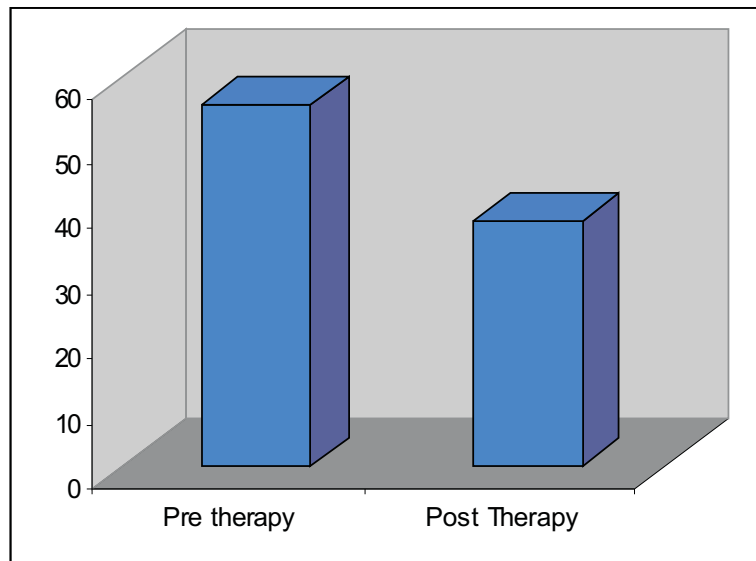


Figure 2 Mean score of boys in pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

The above table reveals that the mean score obtained in Pre therapy and Post therapy among boys is 56.93 and 38.13 with the S. D. of 11.816 and 19.921 respectively with the t value of 4.54 ($p < .01$), which is significant.

The above result indicates that Relaxation, counseling developing positive attitude, reducing anger, stress had a significant influence in reducing anxiety among boys.

Table 4 : Mean, SD and 't' value of girls in pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

Therapy	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Pre therapy	15	56.933	9.300	4.677	0.00**
Post therapy	15	36.67	18.259		

** $p < .01$

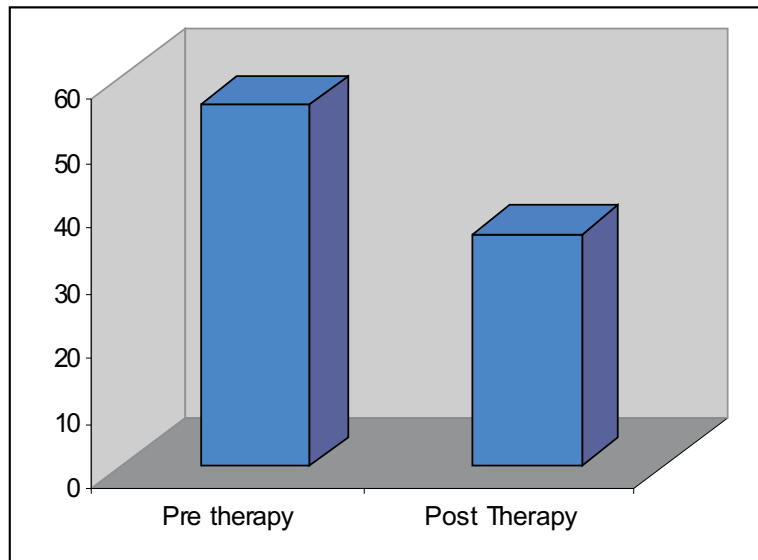


Figure 3 Mean score of girls in pre and post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

The above table reveals that the mean score obtained in Pre therapy and Post therapy is 56.933 and 36.67 with the S. D. of 9.300 and 18.259 respectively with the t value of 4.677 ($p < .01$), which is significant.

The above result indicates that Relaxation, reducing anger, developing positive attitude had a significant influence in reducing anxiety among girls.

Table 5 : Mean SD and 't' value among boys and girls in post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

Therapy	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Boys	15	18.800	16.023	0.245	0.80 NS
Girls	15	20.266	16.782		

NS: Not significant.

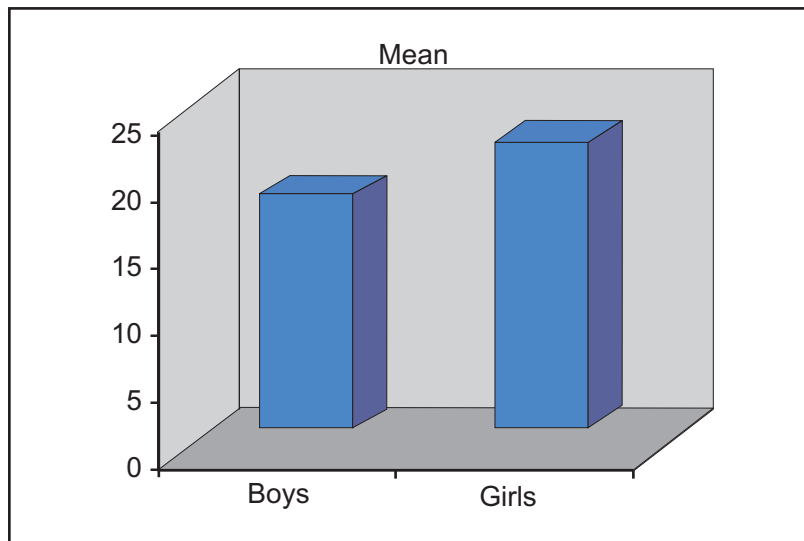


Figure 4 Mean score among boys and girls in post therapy assessment on Sinha's Anxiety scale.

The above table reveals that the mean scores obtained by boys and girls in Post therapy is 18.800 and 20.266 with the SD of 16.023 and 16.782 respectively. The obtained t value is 0.80, which is not significant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The term adolescence means to grow, to mature. It begins at approximately 10 to 13 years of age and ends between the ages of about 18 & 20 years. Adolescents face many problems like family problems, social problems, personal problems and school/ college problems. Many studies have also emphasized on these problems. Based on these previous studies the present study has been undertaken with the following objectives –

- To assess anxiety among adolescent boys and girls.
- To study the effect of intervention in the management of Anxiety
- To study the effect of intervention in relation to gender.

The sample for the study consisted of 80 school going adolescents studying in 8th and 9th standard. To assess anxiety Sinha's Anxiety Scale was administered. The subjects for intervention consisted of 30 adolescents having high anxiety. Counseling and Jacobson's relaxation technique was carried out for a period of 3 months. Post therapy assessment was made by administering the same questionnaire.

The obtained data were categorized based on the objectives of the study and null hypothesis was framed to test the study objectives. The data was statistically analysed by using t test of significance.

CONCLUSION:

Intervention helped in reducing anxiety both among boys and girls.

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