

A Study of Anxiety, Depression and Stress among Higher Secondary School Students

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Received: 29.06.2021

Accepted: 12.07.2021

Abstract

In today's highly competitive world, students face various academic problems including exam stress, disinterest in attending classes and inability to understand the subject. At school there is an array of academic pressure derived from a need for perfection, worry over grades, parental pressure, competition, sports and class load. Higher secondary students are vulnerable towards the social environment, including the interactions, social support, social crisis, economic, social mobilization, community approach, the virtual environments such as using the internet and other social media. The pressure faced by the students results in many stressful situations leading to anxiety and depression. This paper aims to study anxiety, depression and stress among higher secondary school students. The objective of the study was to know the level of anxiety, depression and stress among students of higher secondary students. The study also aims to study anxiety, depression and stress among students of higher secondary school with respect to gender. The sample of the study were 50 students of class XI and XII of Bhopal city. The data was analyzed using percentage, mean, SD and t-test. The findings of the study reveal that there are very few students from the selected sample who were suffering from severe anxiety, depression and stress. The effect of gender was not significant in terms of anxiety and depression whereas significant difference was found in terms of stress among male and female students of higher secondary school.

Key Words:- Anxiety, Depression, Stress among Higher Secondary School

Introduction

The modern world is said to be world of achievement. We have school, work, family and many more things that contribute to our daily hassles. Life these days is full of stress, anxiety and even many peoples are suffering from depression too. As the education proceed to the higher level the students face more challenges like tough syllabus, challenging work assignments and projects, residing in hostels etc. such challenges need to be handled affectively. If students are unable to cope effectively with these situations in life it leads to various psychological anomalies like anxiety, stress and depression. It is seen many times that students struggle with these situations where they are unable to resolve such situations and they become restless. Therefore, it

is the duty of the teachers, parents and counsellor if needed to help their students adjust from such situations which allow them to have a stable mental health. Anxiety and depression in youth result in functional impairment, increased difficulties with school work, peer and family relationships.

Stress is individuals body response to anything that requires attention or action. Excessive stress could lead to psychological problems like depression and anxiety. Stress is not a disease that cannot be cured but needs to be identified in time and it can be easily cured by making a slight change in the lifestyle to find preventive measures and with proper treatment. Strategies like ABC (Awareness, Balance and Coping) is used for effective stress management. Stress as an interaction between environmental conditions that build stress and reactions for that condition (Lee & Larson, 2000).Kadapatti, Manjula &Vijayalaxmi, (2012) identified stress as career stopper. However, Kaplan and Saddock (2000) found that optimal level of stress helps in enhancement of learning ability.

Anxiety is a psychological stress response often caused by prolonged thought processes which perpetuate it and if ignored anxiety may eventually cause fear, specific phobias and panic attacks.

Depression is a disease that can cause many problems. It never happens for any one reason, but it happens due to many reasons like chemical, physical and mental. A person's inferiority complex, growing frustration, undermining oneself, taking stress are all symptoms of depression.

Students' academic stress leads to anxiety and depression (Deb, Strodl& Sun, 2015; Verma, Sharma & Larson, 2002).Kessler(2005) found that anxiety and depressive disorders are twice dominant in women, compared to men during women's reproductive years.

Prabhu (2015)found that the higher secondary students are having moderate level of academic stress. The male student's academic stress is higher than female students.

Matud (2004) conducted a study on gender differences in stress and coping styles and found that the women scored significantly higher than the men on the emotional and avoidance coping styles and lower on rational and detachment coping. The men were found to have more emotional inhibition than the women. Although the effect sizes are low, the results of this study suggest that women suffer more stress than men and their coping style is more emotion-focused than that of men.

Busari (2014). studied academic stress among undergraduate students and also measured the effect of stress inoculation technique on academic stress. It was found that male students differ significantly in their level of adjustment to academic stress than the females. Further,Stress Inoculation Techniques was effective in fostering adjustment to academic stress among undergraduate students. The technique was also effective on students that attended public secondary schools than those that attended private secondary schools.

Parker & Brotchie (2004)found that sex differences in the development of internalizing and externalizing disorders like depression may be partly due to differences in socialization processes that are strengthened during adolescence and stimulate notions of masculinity and femininity.

Anxiety disorder commonly begins during preadolescence and early adolescence and major depression tends to emerge during adolescence and early to mid-adulthood (Beesdo, Knappe, 2009; Kessler, Wang, 2008; Ohayon & Schatzberg, 2010).

The same situation is not always stressful for all students and all students do not undergo the same feelings or off-putting thoughts when stimulus leads to stress or anxiety or depression. The sources of stress vary despite identical stress responses elicited by the body, understanding the former will help to develop interventions targeted to reduce stress levels of students, which will in turn contribute towards holistic well-being of the individual. Students were considered to be the future pillars who take the responsibilities in better and positive way. Therefore, the investigator decided to analysis the anxiety, depression and stress among higher secondary students. So that the problems among the students can be resolved at initial level.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the anxiety among higher secondary school students.
2. To study the depression among higher secondary school students.
3. To study the stress among higher secondary school students.
4. To study the difference in mean score of anxiety between male and female students of higher secondary schools.
5. To study the difference in mean score of depression between male and female students of higher secondary schools.
6. To study the difference in mean score of stress between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

Hypothesis of the study

1. There is no significant difference in mean score of anxiety between male and female students of higher secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in mean score of depression between male and female students of higher secondary schools.
3. There is no significant difference in mean score of stress between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

2. Methodology of the study

For the present study survey type descriptive research method was adopted.

Sample: The sample for the study was chosen randomly as the data was collected using google form which contributed to the randomization of the sample. The sample for the study was higher secondary school students (Class XI & XII) of Bhopal city. Total no. of samples was 50.

Tool used for the study: To collect the data related to anxiety, depression and stress standardized tool i.e. Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS) developed by Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Bhatnagar was used. This tool was developed for the individual of the age group from 14 to 70 years.

Data collection for the study: The data collection was done using the tool. The tool was converted into Google form. Instruction for filling the tool was mentioned in the google form itself. Link for the google form was shared to students of higher secondary school through WhatsApp group and thus the data was collected.

Statistical Techniques used in the study

The data was analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ test for analysis of data.

Result and Data presentation

Objective:1. To study the anxiety among higher secondary school students.

The first objective was to study was to find out the anxiety among higher secondary students. To fulfill the first objective of the study range of scores, frequency and percentage were calculated on the basis of which level of anxiety among higher secondary students was classified.

Table.3: Range of Scores, frequency and percentage of students having different level of Anxiety

Level of Anxiety	Range of Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	0-3	18	36
Mild	3-5	18	36
Moderate	5-9	10	20
Severe	Above 9	4	08
Total		50	200

From table no. 3 it is found that majority of students’ i.e., 36% of students have normal level of anxiety. 36% of students have mild level of anxiety. Around 20 % of higher secondary school students were found to have moderate level of anxiety. There are very few students i.e. 08% of students having severe level of anxiety.

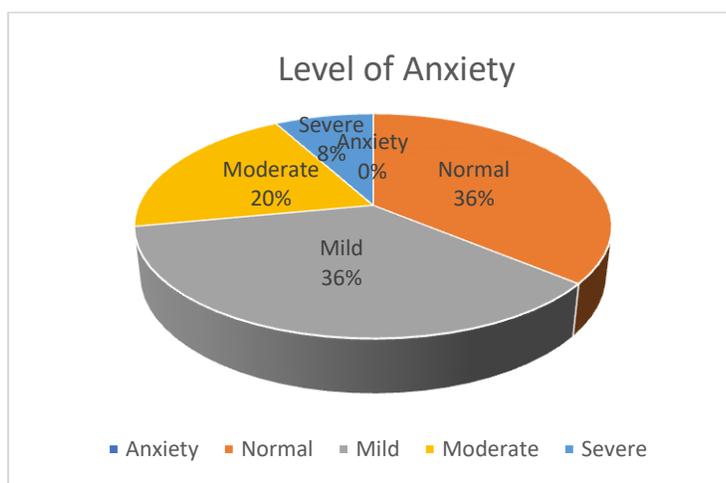


Fig.1:Level of Anxiety among higher secondary school students

Objective:2. To study the depression among higher secondary school students.

The second objective was to study was to find out the depression among higher secondary students. To fulfill the second objective of the study range of scores, frequency and percentage were calculated on the basis of which level of depression among higher secondary students was classified.

Table.4: Range of Scores, frequency and percentage of students having different level of Depression

Level of Depression	Range of Scores	Frequency	Percentage
Normal	0-2	28	56
Mild	2-4	10	20
Moderate	4-9	10	20
Severe	Above 9	02	04
Total		50	100

From table no. 4 it is found that majority of students' i.e., 56% of students have normal level of depression i.e. they are not suffering from depression. 20% of students have mild level of depression. Around 20 % of higher secondary school students were found to have moderate level of depression. There are only two students (04%) out of the sampled student having severe level of depression.

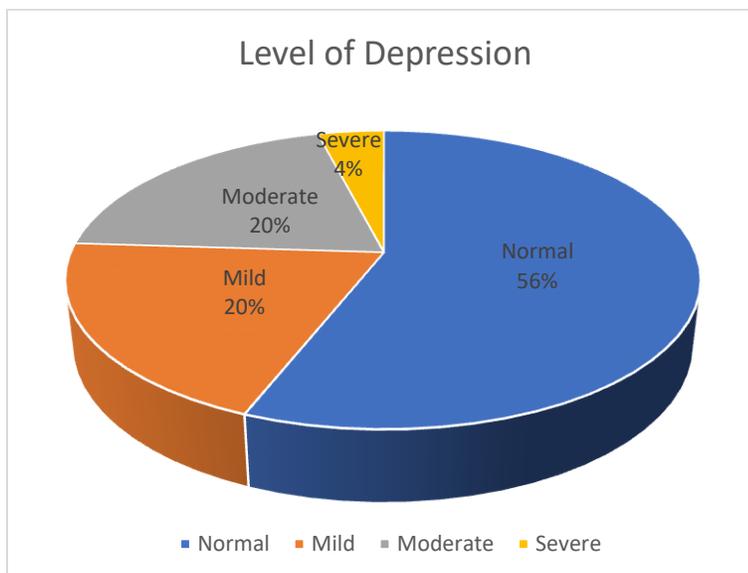


Fig.2:Level of Depression among higher secondary school students

Objective:3. To study the stress among higher secondary school students.

The third objective was to study was to find out the depression among higher secondary students. To fulfill the third objective of the study range of scores, frequency and percentage were calculated on the basis of which level of stress among higher secondary students was classified.

Table.5: Range of Scores, frequency and percentage of students having different level of Stress

Level of Stress	Range of Scores	Number of students	Percentage
Normal	0-4	24	48
Mild	4-6	12	24
Moderate	6-9	10	20
Severe	Above 9	04	08
Total		50	100

From table no. 5 it is found that majority of students' i.e., 48% of students have normal level of stress. 24% of students have mild level of stress. Around 20 % of higher secondary school students were found to have moderate level of stress. There are very few students i.e. 08% of students having severe level of stress.

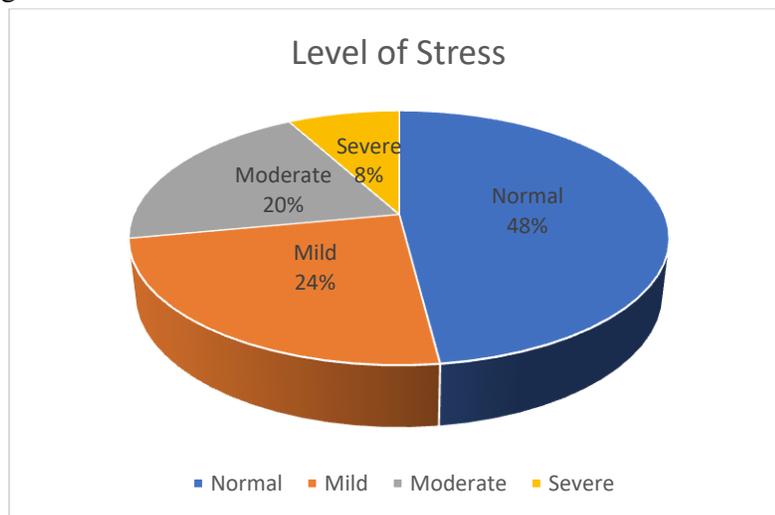


Fig.3:Level of Stress among higher secondary school students

Gender and Anxiety

Objective.4: To study the difference in mean score of anxiety between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

H₀1: There is no significant difference in in mean score of anxiety between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between mean score of male and female students in respect of anxiety. This hypothesis is verified and shown in table. No. 6.

Table No. 6:Significance of 't' between male and female students with respect of Anxiety

Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	't'	Sig
Male	30	4.27	1.91	48	1.079	Not Sig.
Female	20	5.10	3.53			

Table value 2.00 at 0.05 level of significant

Calculated 't' value is found to be smaller than the table value at 48 df, therefore the value of 't' is found not to be significant and the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female students in respect of anxiety. This shows that, no effect of gender difference is found in anxiety of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of anxiety among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of anxiety than the males.

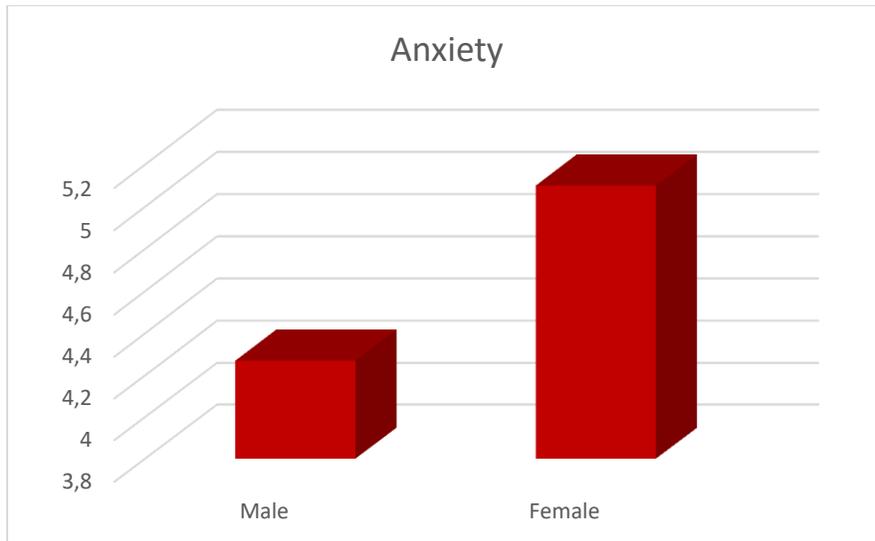


Fig.4: Means scores of male and female with respect to anxiety

Gender and Depression

Objective.5: To study the difference in mean score of depression between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in mean score of depression between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between mean score of male and female students in respect of depression. This hypothesis is verified and shown in table. No. 7.

Table No. 7. Significance of 't' between male and female students with respect of Depression

Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	't'	Sig
Male	30	2.47	2.73	48	1.187	Not Sig.
Female	20	3.40	2.72			

Table value 2.00 at 0.05 level of significant

Calculated 't' value is found to be smaller than the table value at 48 df, therefore the value of 't' is found not to be significant and the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female students in respect of depression. This shows that, no effect of gender difference is found in depression of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of depression among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of depression than the males.

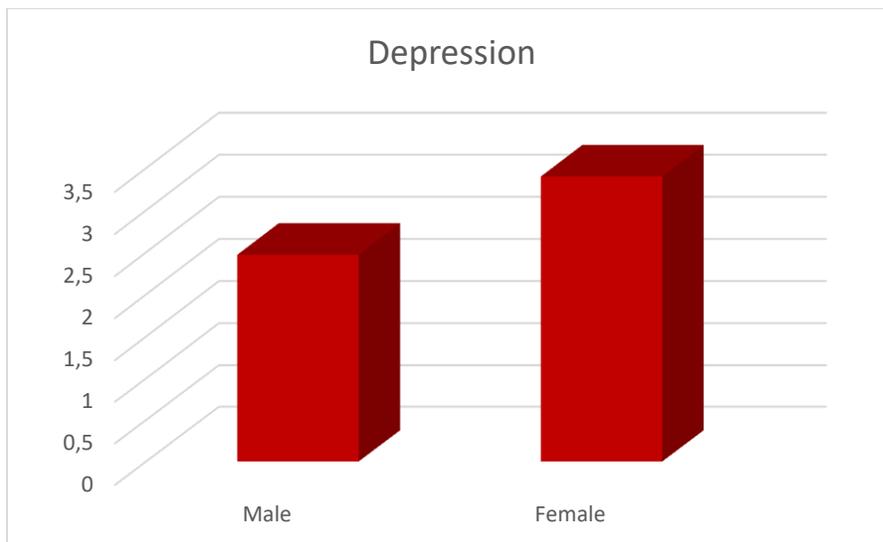


Fig.5: Means scores of male and female with to respect to depression

Gender and Stress

Objective.6: To study the difference in mean score of stress between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in mean score of stress between male and female students of higher secondary schools.

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between mean score of male and female students in respect of stress. This hypothesis is verified and shown in table. No.8.

Table No. 8. Significance of 't' between male and female students with respect of stress

Category	N	Mean	SD	Df	't'	Sig
Male	30	4.33	2.23	48	2.131	Sig.
Female	20	6.20	4.10			

Table value 2.00 at 0.05 level of significant

Calculated 't' value is found to be greater than the table value at 48 df, therefore the value of 't' is found to be significant and the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is significant difference between male and female students in respect of stress. This shows that, effect of gender difference is found in stress of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of stress among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of stress than the males.



Fig.6: Means scores of male and female with respect to stress

4- Interpretation/Analysis

- It is found that majority of students' i.e., 36% of students have normal level of anxiety. 36% of students have mild level of anxiety. Around 20 % of higher secondary school students were found to have moderate level of anxiety. There are very few students i.e. 08% of students having severe level of anxiety. This could be because of academic activities and the situation of online classes being conducted during this period. The sample was taken from higher secondary students so their examination dilemmas can also cause anxiety among them. Although maximum percentage of the students have normal, mild and moderate level of anxiety it shows that they are somehow able to adjust with the environment and present situation whereas very few students have severe level of anxiety which can be reduced strategically with the help of teachers and parents if required counsellors could also help them out. One way to reduce anxiety could be conversation and discussion among peer group.
- It is found that majority of students' i.e., 56% of students have normal level of depression i.e. they are not suffering from depression. 20% of students have mild level of depression. Around 20 % of higher secondary school students were found to have moderate level of depression. There are only two students (04%) out of the sampled student having severe level of depression. Depression is a psychological situation where students needs support, care and appreciation from their teachers, parents and peers. Only two students of the sampled group are at severe level of depression whereas maximum number of students are at normal level of depression. Although in the present situation the environment around the globe is somehow in negative direction but still the students are trying to cope with the present calamity and are trying to adjust with the environment.
- It is found that majority of students' i.e., 48% of students have normal level of stress. 24% of students have mild level of stress. Around 20 % of higher secondary school

students were found to have moderate level of stress. There are very few students i.e. 08% of students having severe level of stress. Stress has become part of students' academic life due to the various internal and external expectations placed before them. Higher secondary students are particularly vulnerable to the problems associated with academic stress as transitions occur at an individual and social level. It therefore, becomes imperious to understand the sources and impact of academic stress in order to derive adequate and efficient intervention strategies. Improving the holistic well-being of the student would eventually be productive not only the individual but, for the overall productivity of the society as well.

- The value of 't' is found not to be significant and the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female students in respect of anxiety. This shows that, no effect of gender difference is found in anxiety of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of anxiety among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of anxiety than the males. The result of the study is in accordance with the study done by Parker & Brotchie been found that sex differences in the development of internalizing and externalizing disorders like depression may be partly due to differences in socialization processes that are strengthened during adolescence and stimulatentions of masculinity and femininity. Gender differences in anxiety have been reported universally and it could be because of cultural differences, a biological component and socialization process. Gender-role stress has been reported to increase anxiety.
- The value of 't' is found not to be significant and the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female students in respect of depression. This shows that, no effect of gender difference is found in depression of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of depression among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of depression than the males. This may be due to hormonal changes, biological factors, inherited traits, personal life circumstances, conflicts with parents, increasing pressure to achieve in school, sports or other areas of life and other experiences associated with females. The value of 't' is found to be significant and the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, it is concluded that there is significant difference between male and female students in respect of stress. This shows that, effect of gender difference is found in stress of higher secondary school students. Further when the mean of stress among males and females were compared it was found that female possess high level of stress than the males. Matud (2004) results were in accord with the findings of present study where result reveals that women suffer more stress than men and their coping style is more emotion-focused than that of men where as Busari (2014) found that male students differ significantly in their level of adjustment to academic stress than the females. Social roles, family status, social status, gender-role identification and stressful life experiences of male and females plays an important role towards stress. Family dynamics, peer pressure, inability to cope with studies, lack of competence could be the reason behind stress among females. Therefore, the family environment should be congenial and the learning process should

be made pleasurable and parents should avoid making it as a stressful event for adolescents so as to reduce stress among them.

Conclusion

The present study reveals the students of higher secondary schools vary from normal to moderate level of anxiety, depression and stress. Very few among the sampled students are found to have severe level of anxiety, depression and stress. Gender difference in anxiety and depression among students of higher secondary schools was not found to be significant although there is a difference in mean between male and females but there is a significant difference in stress among male and female students. It is also found that female have higher mean than male in anxiety, depression and stress. Although there is difference in gender roles, biological, psychological and social factors could also be responsible for this difference. If we think of school peer pressure, competition, academic achievement, inability to cope with the studies could be the contributing factors. Social factors such as family status, family environment, family dynamics, family education level, neighbours and various factors associated with it, are the contributing elements towards anxiety, depression and stress. Females are more likely than males to seek and receive counselling. Helping women to achieve a greater sense of control over their circumstances and to engage in problem solving rather than emotionality dealing with stressors, as well as changing the social circumstances that cause these reactions, would be useful.

Some strategies which could be adopted so as to reduce anxiety, depression and stress are students should always set 'realistic' goals in life and never let negative thoughts get into one's mind. Knowing the right way to handle stress, anxiety and identifying depressed students in the classroom can make the difference between success and failure for the millions of students going back to school this fall. Techniques like biofeedback, yoga, life-skills training, mindfulness meditation, psychotherapy have been found to be effective in reducing anxiety, depression and stress among students and these techniques should be effectively adopted in schools so as ensure wellbeing of the students. Understanding the sources of stress, anxiety and depression would facilitate the development of effective counselling modules and intervention strategies by school psychologists and counsellors in order to help students alleviate stress. Counsellors in school should understand the source of anxiety, depression and stress from various spheres of student's life which will enable them in the field to tailor and make intervention for students combining the most effective strategies thus improving the holistic life of students.

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