



Psycho-Social Problems of Adolescents at Higher Secondary Level

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Abstract

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social problems.

Increasing independence from adult controls, rapidly occurring physical and psychological changes, exploration of social issues and concerns, increased focus on activities with a peer group and establishment of a basic self identity contribute to adolescent maladjustment. Factors for adolescent maladjustment include economic instability, parental discord, inadequacy of school offerings, lack of understanding of adolescent psychology on the part of parents and school faculties, and inadequate recreational facilities. This study on psycho-social problems of adolescents with 600 higher secondary students will help the parents, teachers, teacher educators and even the public to be familiar with the problems of adolescents. Findings reveal that adolescents at higher secondary level face more problems from educational and emotional aspects.

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Adolescence is a stage in life cycle between 13 and 19 years of age characterized by increasing independence from adult controls, rapidly occurring physical and psychological changes, exploration of social issues and concerns, increased focus on activities with a peer group and establishment of a basic self identity (Hurlock, 1981). It is a stressful developmental period filled with major changes in physical maturity and sexuality, cognitive process, emotional feelings and relationship with others. It is a phase of life marked by special attributes like rapid physical, psychological, cognitive and behavioral changes and developments, including urge to experiments, attainment of sexual maturity, development of adult identity, and transition from socio- economic dependence to relative independence.

Adolescence is a time when many problem behaviors and emotions begin or escalate. The biological, psychological and social changes that occur during adolescence can influence the development of such behaviors and emotions. While these biological and social changes that occurring, most adolescents are moving away from parents, other relatives, neighborhood, friends, and others who supported and guided them as they struggled with the challenges of childhood. The consequent reduction of support and guidance can leave many adolescents to problematic behaviors, reducing their ability to respond in a healthy way when faced with struggling circumstances or difficult decisions (Haugaard, 2001). The majority of young people are confronted by more or less serious problems connected with their home life, their school experiences, their work activities and their social relationships. The factors responsible for adolescent maladjustment include economic instability, parental discord, inadequacy of school offerings, lack of understanding of adolescent psychology on the part of parents and school faculties, unwholesome neighborhood or community conditions, inadequate recreational facilities etc (Bhardwaj, 1997; Kakkar, 1999; Prathiba, 2006; Jeevarthina, 2010). Leaving home may also be a way of telling parents that the home situation has become seriously intolerable (Husen & Postlethwaite, 1994).

Adolescent development matters a serious concern not only for parents but also to school people and other adult who are interested in the present welfare of youth as well as in the future progress of our society. Before we delve into the problems of adolescents, it is



necessary to understand what is happening to the teen physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially. Life for many adolescent is a painful tug of war filled with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, friends, family and themselves. If the problems of adolescents are not identified and helped during their school days would continue to have difficulties dealing with society and their problems may become progressively more serious in later life.

The criticisms like “What is wrong with our teenagers”, “Young people have no respect for authority”, “I have no control over my child”, “my child is not listening to anything I say”, “juvenile delinquency is increasing daily” have become the theme of newspaper and magazine articles and became a popular subject for parents, teachers and educators to have an idea about what is happening to a child as he entering to adolescent period.

The major areas of changes and challenges that face the individual during adolescence are, physiological processes, cognitive processes, and psychological and emotional changes (Kaur, 2006). Behavioral problems like aggressiveness, unruly behavior, negativism, hyperactivity are indicative of immaturity. Many behavioral problems arise as a part of their psycho-social need. The problems like bullying, lying, violation of rules may arise to satisfy social needs. Besides social needs, the need for self respect, the need for freedom and self expression might be expressed by an individual in the form of disobedient, disrespectful, disorderly, un-cooperation etc. It is a time of heightened emotional tensions resulting from the physical and glandular changes that are taking place. The major emotional problems of adolescents center around the failure to make transition to maturity that constitute important developmental tasks of adolescence. Adolescents who know that their attitudes and behavior are viewed by the social group as “immature” , and who realize that others consider them incapable of handling the adult role successful, may develop inferiority complexes (Hurlock, 1981). One of the most difficult developmental tasks of adolescents relates to social adjustments. They spend most of their time outside the home with their peer group. So it is understandable that they are very much influenced by their peers on attitude, speech, interests, appearance and behavior.. The present paper focuses on the various Psycho-social problems of adolescents which help the parents, teachers, teacher educators and even the public to be familiar with the problems and causes of problems in adolescents.

Psycho-Social Problems

Psycho-social Problems refers to various problems of adolescents like behavioral problems, emotional problems, educational problems and social problems. Problems related to any or all the external activities of a person, which are observed directly, like behavior that harms or threatens to harm others, lying, violation of rules etc, are behavioral problems. Emotional problems are the problems related to any of the particular feelings that characterize the state of mind. Educational problems include problems related to cognitive skills, teachers' and parental motivation in academic field, adjustment with the school etc. Social problems are the problems related to social environment such as social behavior, social participation, peer influence and adjustment with family, society and religion.

Objective

1. This study is to gauge the extent of various psycho- social problems among adolescents in higher secondary schools in Kerala.

Participants

The study is conducted on a sample of 600 adolescents drawn from 10 higher secondary schools located in five districts of Kerala viz., Malappuram, Kozhikode, Palakkad, Thrissur and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala with due representation to gender of the students.



Instrument

1. Psycho-social Problem Inventory: Psycho-social Problem Inventory (Mumthas & Muhsina, 2012) consisting of 55 items is used for identifying the extent of Psycho-social problem areas of adolescents. There are two choices for each item in the inventory viz., Yes and No. The students have to read each item carefully and if it is a problem for them put a tick (√) mark in the column under 'Yes' against that item and otherwise put (√) mark in the column under 'No'. The tick marks given under the choice 'Yes' were considered as one problem. The instrument possesses face validity and has proven reliability. Cross examination of the responses in the test-retest administrations of the inventory shows that there is not much wide variations in the two responses which suggests that there is a high degree of consistency in the response.

Results and Discussion

In order to find the extent of various psycho-social problems among adolescents at higher secondary level, the problems were arranged in the descending order of percent of occurrence and find the mean percent of occurrence of each problem area viz., behavioural problems, emotional problems, educational problems and social problems.

a) Behavioural problems

Table 1

Percent of Occurrence of Problems among Adolescents under the Area Behavioural Problems

Behavioral problems	% of occurrence
Impatience	50.45
Shyness	48.28
Talkative	43.40
Unorganised nature	32.55
Hyperactivity	30.56
Introversion	30.02
Extreme passivity	28.75
Disobedience	24.41
Tendency to violate rule	23.15
Over dependence	22.06
Aggressive behaviour	18.63
Bad manners	17.54
Tendency for lying or stealing	17.36
Self harm behaviour	10.13
Disrespect	9.04
Mean percent	27.08

From Table 1 it is clear that almost 50 percent of the adolescents feel that they are impatient and shy. Only 9 percent of the adolescents feel that they are not respecting others. One third of the total sample each is talkative, unorganised, hyperactive and introverts. On an average 27 percent of adolescents are having behavioural problems.



b) Emotional Problems

Table 2

Percent of Occurrence of Problems among Adolescents under the Area Emotional Problems

Emotional problem	% of occurrence
Anxiety	60.76
Hot temperedness	58.77
Day dreaming	50.09
Rapid mood swings	44.67
Nightmares	35.44
Loneliness	35.26
Excessive fears and worries	31.46
Depression	27.31
Feeling of inferiority	25.86
Lack of sleep	15.01
Apathy	14.10
Feeling of insecurity	10.31
Suicidal feeling	3.98
Mean percent	31.77

From Table 2, it is clear that almost 61 percent of the adolescents feel that they are very anxious and hot tempered. Nearly four percent of the adolescents have suicidal feelings. On an average approximately 32 percent of adolescents are suffering from emotional problems.

c) Educational problems

The percent of occurrence of each problem in the order of their seriousness under the area educational problems is given in Table 3.

Table 3

Percent of Occurrence of Problems among Adolescents under the Area Educational Problems

Educational problems	% of occurrence
Academic underachievement	56.96
Over expectation parents	54.07
Lack of concentration	52.26
Strict rules of school	50.09
Fear of failure in exam	48.10
Poor memory	45.03
Over load of school work	38.04
Inadequate educational status of parents	28.21
Disinterest in school work	26.40
Lack of academic skill	26.40
Decreased motivation	22.42
School absence	11.03
Busy schedule of parents	8.14
Learning disabilities	2.89
Mean percent	33.59

From Table 3, it is clear that almost 57 percent of the adolescents feel that they are academic underachievers. About 50 percentage of the sample have difficulties from over expectation of parents, lack of concentration and strict rules of school. Three percent of the



adolescents have learning disabilities. On an average 34 percent of the adolescents are having educational problems.

d) Social problems

The percent of occurrence of each problem in the order of their seriousness under the area Social problems is given in Table 4.

Table 4

Percent of Occurrence of Problems among Adolescents under the Area Social Problems

Social problems	% of occurrence
Low self esteem	40.33
Attraction to opposite sex	39.42
Lack of leadership ability	38.88
Lack of self confidence	36.71
Poor self concept	25.68
Identity confusion	24.23
Social withdrawal	20.61
Lack of social recognition	19.71
Superstitious believes	16.64
Religious conflicts	14.29
Domestic violence	12.48
Participation in antisocial activities	9.76
Isolation from family	8.14
Mean percent	23.56

From Table 4 it is clear that almost 40 percent of the adolescents feel that they have low self esteem, attraction to opposite sex and lack of leadership ability. Only 8 percent of the adolescents feel that they are isolated from family. One third of the total sample has difficulties from lack of self concept and self confidence. On an average approximately 24 percent of the adolescents are facing social problems.

Conclusion

Adolescents at higher secondary level face more problems from educational and emotional aspects. Problems like anxiety, hot temperedness, academic under-achievements and strict rules of school have a highest percent of occurrence among adolescents.

Remedies to reduce the intensity of Psycho-social problems among adolescents include the following.

The problems among adolescents are more from educational area which shows a necessity of reconstruction in the present education system. It would be better to improve the functioning of career guidance and counselling centres in every institution. By providing these services most of the educational problems of adolescents can be reduced. Teachers should ensure that their students are getting better motivation from the institution and they should help in building up a good career. The parents, teachers and other school authorities should ensure conducive physical, social and psychological environments in school because this will help the adolescent both within and outside the school.

The emotional problems are also high in adolescent due to the physical and physiological changes that occur as a part of their development. Adolescents need maximum attention and care. Adolescents of today have an intense desire for independence and freedom for self expression that they deserve. If this need is not satisfied, they will start to deviate from the social norms and social values. So the teachers, parents and other caregivers should consider them as an individual and should treat them in an appropriate way. They should be aware of the changes occurring within the adolescents and should try to reduce the conflicts



in them. Other agencies in the community should join this effort to ensure a meaningful experience for the adolescents in their total environment recognizing that future depends significantly on them.

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