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Stress, depression among tribal students of Warangal district

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Abstract

Stress is a biological process in which exposure to stressors is associated with bad health effects, decreased ability of disease management, and a higher likelihood for disease-related complications and comorbidities. Stress has been considered the main factor in the etiology of many diseases such as diabetes mellitus, cardiac diseases, and body aches for centuries. Students meet many stressful situations such as the need for success, academic demands, homesickness, and lack of social support. Coping with stress can be a leading cause in preventing psychological distress and a serious illness. Stress is a common experience that everyone encounters from time to time. In the realm of academia, stress has become an unavoidable aspect of the lives of students and all those associated with them. Parents of adolescents must confront the burden of assisting their children in managing scholastic stress. Tribal students after enrolling themselves into experiences high level of stress and anxiety which later shows signs and symptoms of depression at early age. The present study is undertaken to study the level of stress, depression among tribal students. Students attending college and schools are more stressed because they are undergoing a developmental shift from teenager to early adulthood, which can be challenging and vulnerable to numerous forms of stressors, such as academic stress, the obligation of success, an uncertain future, psychological and social problems, homesickness, friend sickness, a sense of loneliness, and elevated interpersonal conflict.

Keywords: Stress, depression, coping, academic, tribal students

Introduction

The tribal students possess the basic cognitive abilities and psychological dispositions for successfully participating in schools and their low achievement levels are attributed to school related variables just as they would be for non-tribal students. This is in contrast to the common perception that tribal students lack these abilities and dispositions. There are a number of interconnected variables that contribute to the poor academic performance of pupils from tribal communities as well as the below-average basic education level in tribal regions. The majority of students are members of the first generation of learners and their education is typically supported by the circumstances in which they are raised. For ages the tribal people were kept segregated to the jungles and kept them away from the educations. How one can expect the same level of performance in education with the dominant class of people. Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution of India enumerate the scheduled tribes. Scheduled tribes are the most oppressed communities in India. Article 342 gives members of Scheduled Tribes notice that they have access to educational opportunities. When it comes to educational opportunities, Scheduled Tribes are among the most underserved and underrepresented communities in the country. Due to external as well as internal restraints, the socio-economic and cultural backdrop of the tribes, and the psychological challenges of first generation learners, the individuals who live in tribal communities have fallen behind in terms of their educational attainment. In spite of the safeguards provided by the Constitution, the educational attainment of tribal students remains much lower than that of the mainstream community.

The Lambadas are the largest and historic formed group in Telangana and also known as BANJARA. The Lambada peoples maintained a unique and separate tribal identity. This uprooted their tribal identity and displaced them from their forest right. Lambada unlike any other people have a unique tradition of socio-cultural life, Thanda settlement, dress,

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language, festivals, gods, customs and manners as independent of public life. unique tradition of livelihood, and much evident in their lifestyle, food habits, festivals, rituals, worship, likes and dislikes, dances, songs, languages, clothing and Thanda life. Lambada people live in "Thanda" keeping a distance from non-Lambada people. The community was held above the individual interests and "Naik" (head of the community) led the community both in matters of socio-political and religious life. The settlement of Lambada in camps outside the non-Lambada habitations was called Thanda/encampment. It was their exclusive characteristic to live in "Thanda" which they acquired from the days of their nomadic life. In the Modern time though have Settled still continued to live in Thandas. The Lambada settlement was a sign that they did not mixed with others. Lambada lived outside the villages in camps keeping the distance from other non-Lambada people. This helped them to preserve their unique socio-cultural life, language, dress, the songs and religious life. The political organization of Lambada tribe was headed by the Naik/chief for the disciplinary and juridical matters of the community. Naik is the head of the both spiritual and secular matters of the Thanda and governs his people standing in front. Each Thanda was under a Naik and this post could be mostly hereditary but sometimes people chose able persons. (Shyamala Devi, Bhangya Bhukya).

Stress

Though stress causes both positive and negative effects, excessive stress produces not only psychological disturbances but also several harmful effects on the bio-system. Academic stress demands an effective adjustment not only on the part of students but also on the part of teachers and parents especially in the modern ever changing competitive world. It is natural for a fresh intermediate (1-2) student hailing from different social background with vast and varied cultural diversities to have some stress in situations upon his immediate entry from school background to college atmosphere. The college provides enlarged spheres of self-directed activity and self-dependence to the student. But the demands upon him are greater now, than in his earlier social life, because of specific directions by parents. Fresh college students face heavy pressure from Private college managements, teachers and peer competitions and followed by heavy expectations from parents' on their children regarding academic success. The change from high school and home to college and hostel is sharp and abrupt. Apart from the thrill the fresh intermediate student has, when he first enters the portals of the college, he may have many problems, regarding how he is going to *get along* in the college, with his peer group, new teachers, (especially for Telugu medium students), new curriculum, new management demands and parental expectations and most of other factors confront him. Most of the freshman's problems are often transitory in nature as they largely arise out of the novelty of the situation in which he finds himself on one hand, and his ignorance of the demands and possible solutions for them, on the other. In the contemporary Intermediate academic climate, in the wake of mad rush for professional courses, parents, teachers, management and the vital student community are facing a lot of problems. Therefore, the situation warrants empirical investigations to help all concerned to cope effectively with situation for better academic adjustment. But if student is *let alone* by

the end of first year he would have achieved satisfaction and adjust to the natural course of events, provided if he has given adequate training and planning for realistic goals in life. Unfortunately the situation is different in reality. Therefore, students' academic failures often result in failure to adjust themselves to the academic situations adequately.

Depression

Stress can lead to feelings of depression. Depression is quite normal, but severe and prolonged depression is a serious disorder. Symptoms of clinical depression are: A generally unhappy mood Feelings of helplessness about the future. They appear listless and passive Disrupted eating and sleeping habits, Low self-esteem, A long-term disabling health problem, such as being paralysed, often leads to depressive disorders. Assessing depression in children is difficult because they are unable to express their feelings very well.

Depression is a mental health disorder characterized by persistently low mood, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, and various emotional and physical symptoms such as fatigue, changes in sleep and appetite, difficulty concentrating, and feelings of worthlessness or guilt. It can significantly impair a person's ability to function in daily life and may require medical or therapeutic intervention.

Review of Literature

Mohd Mustafa (2024) ^[9] assessed the sources of stress and coping strategies among college students in Ladakh. Further, to explore the gender difference among college students on the study variables. For this purpose, a sample of 160 (80 Males and 80 Females) college students in the age range of 18 to 22 year were selected through a random sampling technique. Students Stress Inventory by (Arip *et al.*, 2016) and BRIEF COPE by (Carver, 1997) were used to collect data from the participants. An Independent t-test was computed to determine whether there is a significant mean difference between males and females among all the variables. The findings of the study revealed that majority of college students were experiencing a moderate level of stress and there is a significant difference in Stress with respect to Gender, indicating that female college students have more stress than male college students. The findings also revealed that there was no significant gender difference exists in the majority of the coping strategies. However, Gender differences have been observed in the subscale of Active coping, Self-distraction, and Humor. Males were found to utilize more Self-distraction, Humor, and Active Coping than females. By identifying the main sources of stress and highlighting its impact on students' well-being and achievement, educators, parents, counselors, and policy makers can develop effective intervention techniques for reducing the stressors faced by college students.

Paul C. Mansell and Martin J. Turner (2023) ^[10] investigated the mediating role of proactive coping on the relationships between stress mindset and challenge appraisal tendencies and examine how this in turn related to psychological wellbeing. A secondary aim was to investigate if there were any differences in stress mindset between athletes and non-athletes. It was hypothesised that stress mindset would be indirectly positively associated with challenge appraisal tendencies through proactive coping, that a challenge appraisal tendency would positively relate to vitality, and that vitality would negatively relate to depressive symptoms.

It was also hypothesised that athletes would possess more facilitative views of stress compared with non-athletes. Methods: Two hundred and seven individuals (n=101 athletes, n=106 nonathletes, Mage=22.76 years, SD=4.94) completed an online questionnaire pack assessing stress mindset, proactive coping, challenge appraisal tendencies, vitality, and depressive symptoms. Results: Using path analysis, the hypothesised model demonstrated a good fit to the data and the positive relationship between stress mindset and challenge appraisal tendencies was mediated by proactive coping. Challenge appraisal tendencies were positively associated with vitality, which was negatively associated with depressive symptoms. Athletes reported a significantly greater 'stress-is-enhancing' mindset, greater vitality, and fewer depressive symptoms than non-athletes.

Hillool Mukherjee *et al.* Sanyal (2023) the status of subjective well-being, role stress, coping and ego functions of the tribal and non-tribal people of Tripura the present study attempts to synthesize and evaluate the factors present in organizational role stress, individuals' unique coping styles and ego-functions which might play an effective role in the development of SWB on one hand, and on the other hand, might also cause deterioration in SWB of the tribal population of Tripura. The study was conducted over a sample of 800 working people drawn from different government and non-government organizations of Tripura. Result showed that the tribal people are significantly happier, stress-free than the nontribal that can be attributed to their simple life style and less competitive nature.

Nilamani Maharana, Dr. Rupashree Goswami, (2022) [12] Explored the stress and anxiety level of tribal Undergraduate college students of Odisha during the covid-19 pandemic. We conducted an online as well as offline questionnaire survey of tribal undergraduate students by using the "Covid-19 Student Stress Questionnaire" (CSSQ) and the "Anxiety Questionnaire" (AQ). The data were collected by using some social media apps such as; WhatsApp and messenger and some data were collected using paper and pen. The present study was conducted on a sample of 204 (N=204) tribal undergraduate students of Odisha, where male members are 54% (N=110) and female members are 46% (N=94). The mean age of the students is 20.17. The data were also collected data from three streams such as; Arts (N=80), Science (N=67), and commerce (N=57). The data were gathered through a stratified random sampling method. Here we will apply different statistical tests such as descriptive and inferential statistics to find out the result by using the recent version of SPSS software. According to the previous literature, the covid-19 stress is significantly correlated to anxiety. Males and Females did not differ significantly in stress and anxiety.

Jesa & Meera (2022) [13] assessed "Academic Stress and Self Esteem of Tribal School Adolescent Girls in Kerala" The disadvantaged and those cut off from daily life are welcomed by an inclusive social, physical, and emotional environment, which also offers them the chance to preserve some of what is indigenous. However, a child from a marginalised group is more likely to experience psychological issues, and academic stress and discontent have been highlighted as two significant mental conditions that necessitate a safe haven in the contexts of family, community, and the classroom. There is a difference in educational success between scheduled castes and scheduled

communities. If the disadvantaged population does not have access to high-quality education in a secure setting, the Dream of India will never come true. In Kerala, disparities in educational attainment between scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities have been found. There are many studies, strategies, suggestions, projects, plans, and conversations on the topic of tribal education in India, particularly in Kerala, where 4 lakh tribes of various ethnicities live. Using the academic stress scale and a self-esteem questionnaire, a survey study was conducted among a stratified random sample of 120 tribal adolescent girl students with the aim of determining the relationship between their academic stress and self-esteem.

Kumari *et al.* (2020) [14] found that working women who have double functions encounter more stress as they still perform almost all the household tasks and also child care and elder care that can be considered equal to their full-time professions. Their life satisfaction, adaptation, mental health, and happiness were affected due to double work pressure.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate whether male and female students differ significantly in their stress, depression, well-being and copying styles.
- To explore whether educational level has any significant impact on stress depression and among tribal students.

Hypotheses

- Male and female tribal students differ significantly in their Stress, depression and coping styles.
- Educational level of the tribal students would significantly affect their stress, depression, wellbeing and coping styles.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample

| Sample | Male | Female | Total |
|------------------|------|--------|-------|
| 10 th | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| Intermediate | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| Graduation | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| Post-Graduation | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| | 200 | 200 | 400 |

Population

Tribal students both male and female studying High School, Inter, Degree and PG Warangal district in Telangana constitute the population of the study. There are around in combined Warangal 10th Students are 10,000, Inter are 9,000, Degree 6,000, PG 4,000.

Sample

400 tribal students both male and female studying in SSC, Inter, Degree and PG constitute the sample of the study. Sample was randomly selected by the sample statistical random sample. Their age ranged from 15 to 24 years. The distribution of the sample is presented in table.

Method

Visited the various schools and colleges located in and around combined Warangal district. He made the authorities i.e., headmasters and college principals. he explained to them the significance of the study and obtained permission from them to collect data from the tribal students

investigator met the students in group of 20 distributed four questionnaires i.e. student stress scale, beck depression scale, General Well - Being Questionnaire, Brief - Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief - COPE) the investigator explain to the students seconds of the study the students are asked to go through the instructions on the questionnaires designator add the doubts raised by some students. in the first session given first two questionnaires, and second session given to them remaining two questionnaire sufficient time was given to them to give the responses the field in questionnaires are collected from

the students the responses of the students are scored accordingly this constitute the data of the study.

Statistical analysis

The data are subjected to descriptive statistics such as mean and SD and inferential statistics such as ANOVA and 't' test whenever necessary to test the hypotheses.

Tools

Standardized and validated measures to assess stress, depression, wellbeing and coping styles among the students.

1. Student Stress Scale (Dr. Manju Agarwal)

Table 2: Presents means and SDS of scores and stress

| Education | Male | | Female | |
|------------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 10 th Class | 324.88 | 83.82 | 309.28 | 71.73 |
| Intermediate | 312.04 | 71.39 | 301.06 | 70.42 |
| Degree | 303.46 | 68.36 | 283.56 | 68.06 |
| Post Graduate | 262.56 | 55.58 | 239.72 | 50.07 |
| Total | 300.73 | 73.77 | 283.40 | 70.51 |

A close observation of table 2 reveals that 10th class male tribal students have obtained the highest mean of 324.88 with an SD of 83.82. Including that 10th class male tribal students experience higher level of stress compare to other students. Post graduate female students have obtained the lowest mean of 239.72 SD of 50.07 suggesting that they experience low level of stress compare to other group of

subjects there are mean differences among the 8 groups of subjects with regard to their levels of stress however in order to test whether there are any significant differences among the 8 groups of subjects in their level of stress, the data are further subjected to analysis of variance and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Anova of scores on Stress (K=8)

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | 'f' value | p value | Sig |
|------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-----------|---------|-----|
| Gender | 3002.89 | 1 | 3002.890 | 6.471 | 0.011 | ** |
| Education | 251250.90 | 3 | 83750.300 | 18.046 | 0.000 | ** |
| Gender*Education | 2007.01 | 3 | 669.003 | 0.144 | 0.933 | NS |
| Error | 1819231.24 | 392 | 4640.896 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 2102522.04 | 399 | | | | |

The f value of 6.471 for the variable gender is significant at 0.01 level suggesting that there is significant difference between male and female tribal students in their level of stress. male tribal students experience higher levels of stress (M=300.73) compare to female tribal students (M=283.40) the 'f' value of 18.046 for the variable educational level significant beyond 0.01 level suggesting that educational level of the tribal students significantly influence their level

of stress. 10th class tribal students experience higher level of stress. (M=317.08) followed by intermediate (M=306.55) degree (M=293.51) and PG tribal students experience low levels of stress. The 'f' value of 0.933 between Gender and educational level is not significant. Suggesting that there is no significant interaction between gender and educational level of the tribal student's with regard to their levels of stress.

Table 4: Presents the means and SDs of scores on depression (k=8)

| Education | Male | | Female | |
|------------------------|-------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| 10 th Class | 22.30 | 8.89 | 19.82 | 7.94 |
| Intermediate | 27.88 | 6.27 | 23.80 | 7.67 |
| Degree | 34.90 | 7.24 | 32.24 | 10.32 |
| Post Graduate | 41.46 | 13.14 | 38.24 | 12.60 |
| Total | 31.63 | 11.70 | 28.52 | 12.13 |

Grand Mean 10th = 21.06
 Male - 31.63 Inter = 25.84
 Female -28.52 Degree = 33.57
 PG = 39.85

An observation of Table 5 reveals that male graduate students have obtained the highest mean of 41.46 with an SD of 13.14 indicating that post graduate tribal students experience high level of depression whereas 10th class

female tribal students have obtained the lowest mean of 19.82 with an SD of 7.94 indicating that 10th class female tribal students experience low levels of depression compare to other higher class tribal students. However there are mean

differences among 8 groups of tribal students in their depression. In order to test whether there are any significant differences among the eight groups of tribal students in their

depression the data are further subjected to analysis of variance (Anova) and the results are presented in table 6.

Table 5: Summary of Anova of scores on depression (K=8)

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | 'f' value | p value | Sig. |
|------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-----------|---------|------|
| Gender | 967.21 | 1 | 967.210 | 10.596 | 0.001 | ** |
| Education | 20697.1 | 3 | 6899.033 | 75.580 | 0.000 | ** |
| Gender*Education | 38.81 | 3 | 12.937 | 0.142 | 0.935 | NS |
| Error | 35782.32 | 392 | 91.281 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 57485.44 | 399 | | | | |

The 'f' value of 10.596 for the variable gender is significant at 0.0001 level indicating that tribal boys and girls differ significantly in their levels of depression. Tribal students (M= 31.63) experience high level of depression compare to female tribal students (m =28.52). The 'f' value of 75.580 for the variable education is significant beyond 0.001 level suggesting that there are differences among 4 groups of tribal students with different educational levels. That is 10th inter degree post graduate tribal students experience high levels of depression (M=21.06). The 'f' value of 0.142 for interaction between Gender and education is not significant suggesting that there is no significant interaction between Gender and education level with regard to depression.

Findings

- Tribal male students experience high levels of stress compared to Tribal female students.
- Tribal male students are relatively more depressed compare to Tribal female students.
- 10th class tribal students experience relatively higher levels of stress.
- Post graduate Student experience relatively less stress.
- 10th class tribal students experience relatively less depression whereas PG students experience higher levels of depression.

Suggestions

The present research is carried out on small sample of 400 tribal students residing in combined Warangal district. The conclusion drawn from the study may not be generalized. To the entire the tribal population. The study may be further carried out on a larger sample preferably drawn from various tribal communities located in Telangana region. In the present study only to independent variables are considered that is the gender and educational level of the tribal students. The study may further carried out taking the sample from different tribal communities such as lambada Koya gondu chanchu yerukala sugali...etc. The sample for the present study comprises aap students studying at 10th inter Degree and PG levels. Further study may be conducted taking the tribal people who live in remote places that is far away from the urban influences. Parental educational qualifications there job or occupation may also be considered as a variable in future studies certain other factors like personality their emotional status self-concept and economical background me also be considered in further studies.

Conclusion

Stress, being an unavoidable aspect of life, affects a diverse spectrum of people regardless of their age, gender, educational level, or financial background. As a human, we

often find ourselves in a situation in which we have no idea how to handle it. Depression is a common health issue that college students frequently face. It can be debilitating, and if left untreated, it can lead to significant psychological, emotional, and physical consequences. Additionally, it adversely affects interpersonal relationships and academic performance. The occurrence of depression among college students has risen in the past decade, and many students consider mental health problems as major barriers to their academic success. According to a 2017 survey, around 16 percent of college students attributed depression as a factor affecting their academic performance (Lam 48). In today's society, depression is more prevalent among young people compared to adults. Consequently, it is crucial for higher education institutions to offer support and resources to help students address the challenge of depression. Depression has severe repercussions for college students, such as decreased academic achievement, the emergence of suicidal thoughts, social isolation, difficulties in relationships, and loss of motivation to accomplish goals. Tribes or adivasis are collections of families of indigenous people having a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying a common territory, and observing specific customs. The vast changes that have taken place in the mainstream society did not affect the tribes much. They still live under almost the same circumstances, facing all sorts of discriminations, exploitations, and alienation. Though the central and the state governments have enacted several rules, regulations, and reservation benefits for the upliftment of the tribes, these met with only partial success. Even today, several decades after independence, the tribals are not aware of their rights, privileges and powers. In all indices of development - social, political, educational, and economic - they are far behind all other communities. What is needed for bringing progress in the tribal communities is the empowerment of the tribes, and education seems to be the primary means for such an empowerment. And, educating and empowering the tribes warrant scientific understanding of the tribes. Especially the educational policy makers, teachers, counselors, social workers, tribal development personnel, local self-governments', as well as state and central policy makers. It is also hoped that the present study may open the doors for and stimulate further psychological research on tribals.

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