



Stress Management in Adolescence

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Received 10 July, 2014; Accepted 25 July, 2014 © The author(s) 2014. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

ABSTRACT:- This is an extensive Review of Literature Study on Stress Management in Adolescents. Stress is being experienced by everyone nowadays. Stress Management has become very essential. Stress can be constructively channelized to reduce the stress. Managing stress is also a skill which we all have to develop. Stress among the Adolescents can be crucial in the well being of the family as a whole. Stress can be caused due to many factors and can alter the relationships dynamics in the family. Especially stress in the adolescence can be very taxing on the parents and the adolescents themselves. During adolescence boys and girls go through lot of turmoil. The reasons for Stress during adolescence as per the review of literature are because of disturbed family dynamics , peer pressure , inability to cope with studies, drug abuse, lack of competence. One of the important trends which are being observed is getting instant gratification from the electronic media and gadgets. The involvement of adolescents in getting instant gratification of needs has led to lot of stress in them and in their relationships with family and peers. Stress leads to maladaptive behavior as mentioned above.

Keywords:- Stress Management and Adolescents.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technically Adolescence is the period from the beginning of sexual maturity (puberty) to the completion of physical growth. The teenage years are also called Adolescence. During this period there will be great amount of growth in height and weight. It is also time for puberty changes. Some adolescents may experience these signs of maturity sooner or later than others.

Stress is a very uneasy feeling that we all go through in our life. During adolescence they imbibe both positive and negative things from their parents and environment. The choice they make in this phase is very much dependent upon the upbringing they get and expectations from Family, Society, Peers, and more importantly their own 'Self'.

The problem arises when the adolescents are unable to cope with stressful situations and end-up themselves in the distressed state of mind. In this distressed situation they indulge themselves in Anti-Social and Self-Destructive Activities.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Adolescence is one of the transitional periods in everyone's life. The term Adolescence has been derived from Latin word *adolescere* which means "to grow up". Adolescence is linked to teenage years. But puberty begins prior to teenage years. Adolescence can be understood with the help of stages that is early adolescence and late adolescence. Beginning of puberty in girls average age is 8-13 and in boys 9.5-14 years. It also depends upon the heredity and nutrition. The total years of Adolescence are from 13- 18 years. During puberty there will be key changes they are Primary sexual Characteristics and Secondary Sexual Characteristics. These are essential changes of Adolescence. Adolescents will be very Vulnerable to Stress because of the rapid Physical and Psychological changes .The onus is on the parents to take care of their Adolescents because they may succumb to pressures from schoolwork, peer relationships, mood swings because of stress. Environment at home also plays important role. The chances of Adolescents to Indulge in deviant behaviors are very high when they are not paid attention by parents and teachers. In this study with the extensive review of literature I have tried to present the causes and symptoms of Stress and Coping Mechanism for Stress.

The observations made by eminent Psychologists on Adolescence phase:

Havighurst (1952) suggested that two important areas of focus for Adolescents included work and relationships. Levinson (1978) suggested that two important areas of focus for Adolescents includes changing relationships and on exploration. Erikson (1968) commented on Adolescents intimacy and commitment to goals. Super (1963) indicated that exploring and crystallizing vocational choice are important to older Adolescents and young adults.

Comprehending what the psychologists have observed about adolescents is that, the adolescents are focused on making their personal life better and also to have good education and then career. Their world revolves around these things and they want to have control over things.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An intensive literature search was conducted by Angela J Dean et al (2010) to locate controlled trials that described specific interventions focusing to improve abiding to long-term medication, where participants were aged 18 years. These findings suggest that education interventions alone are insufficient to promote adherence in children and adolescents and that incorporating a behavioral component to abiding intervention may increase efficacy.

Ann.C.Crociter and Mathew (2001):Study linking parents work stress to Adolescents Psychological Adjustment. It reveals that the effects of parental work stress on Adolescent's Adjustment appear to be indirect .Work stress is linked to parents feelings of overload and strain , which in turn are related to less positive adjustment of adolescents . In the face of high work stress withdrawing from family involvement may be adaptive in the short run but ultimately problematic. The strength of those associations depends on parent's personality, coping styles, work and family circumstances.

BJ Cassey , Rebecca M. Jones et al (2010) indicate that the adolescence is the time of storm and stress. In spite of intense and frequent negative affect this period has been hypothesized to explain increased rates of affective disorders, suicide and accidental death. Yet some teens emerge from adolescence with minimal turmoil. It provides neurobiological model for adolescence which proposes that an imbalance in the development of sub cortical limbic (eg amygdala) relative to prefrontal cortical regions as a potential mechanism for heightened emotionality during this period.

Bruce.E.(1987) In his research article, how child and adolescents cope with stress. And coping's role in reducing the adverse psychological states associated with stress is reviewed. Child and adolescent coping is reflected in seven different lines of research- infant's responses to maternal separation, social support, interpersonal and cognitive problem solving, coping in achievement contexts, Type A behavior pattern in children, repression-sensitizing, and resilience to stress. A variety of different coping resources, styles and specific strategies are important in successfully adapting to stress, including efforts that focus directly on the problem, as well as attempts to deal with adverse emotions associated with stress.

A study conducted by Caplan, Merlen etal (1992) reveals that positive training effects on S's skills in handling interpersonal problems and coping with anxiety. Teachers' ratings revealed improvement in S'S constructive conflict resolution with peers, impulse control, and popularity. Self report ratings indicated gains in problem solving efficacy.

Daniel M. Finkelstein et al (2007) investigated whether psychological resources influenced the association between parent education(PE), a maker of socioeconomic status (SES) and perceived stress cross-sectional analyses were conducted in a sample of 1167 non Hispanic black and white junior and senior high school students from a mid western public school district in 2002-2003. Results reveal that adolescents from families with lower parent education are less optimistic than teens from more educated families. This pessimism may be a mechanism through which lower SES increases stress in adolescence.

Study conducted by Hains Anthony et al (1990) examined the effectiveness of a cognitive intervention to help adolescents cope with stress and other forms of negative emotional arousal. The trained adolescents showed significant reductions in levels of anxiety and anger, and also improvement in self-esteem.

James.D.A Parker et al (2008) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and several addiction related behaviors like gambling, internet use and video games playing in two community based sample of adolescent 13-15 years old (N 209) and 16-18 years old (N= 458) both were measured using

respective scales. Emotional Intelligence was found to be moderate to strong predictor of addiction related behavior in both the groups.

Jodi B.Dworkin et al (2003) : little theory and research exist on the developmental processes that occur during adolescents participation in extracurricular activities, community based activities. As a step in that direction they conducted study on high school students which reveals that the students shared about personal experience which includes experimentation, leadership qualities, setting goals, time management, emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships, they learnt to build team and work as a team, developing valuable connection with adults. Across domains adolescents described themselves as agents of their own development and change.

The study conducted by Jigisha Gala and Sangeeta Chaudhary (2004) on seventeen to eighteen years old adolescents revealed that academics is the major stressor. Adolescents cope with stress in distinct ways; Two major ways to cope with stress one way is problem solving. This involves trying to deal with the problem. Another way of handling stress is managing emotions. This involves wielding the thoughts and feelings caused by the problem. Adolescents use both methods, and both can be effective, depending on the situation. Most adolescents seek help from their parents, as the parents are perceived to be understanding and supportive.

Leslie Morrison Gutman et al (2005) using latent variable structural equation modeling that they tested theoretical model linking financial strain, neighborhood stress, parenting behaviors and adolescent adjustment . The sample consisted of 305 African American families 40% were living at or below the US poverty threshold. The results indicate that the in come to need ratio was significantly related to financial strain and neighborhood stress, both of which were positively associated with psychological distress, both of which were positively associated with psychological distress in parents. The findings demonstrate that neighborhood characteristics are an important mediators between economic hardships and parent and adolescent behavior. Mark Scott Smith and William Womack(1987) conducted study on selected adolescents who were suffering from Psychophysical Stress. After clinicians examined, the adolescents were taught relaxation techniques which included progressive muscular relaxation, Meditation, biofeedback and self hypnosis. These techniques worked for the adolescents.

Martin H.Teicher (2006) Studies reveal that recent studies have reported an association between exposure to childhood abuse or neglect and alteration in brain structure or function. Exposure to early abuse and early stress has been associated with the emergency of epileptiform electroencephalogram (EEG) abnormalities, alterations in corpus callosum area and reduced volume or synaptic density of the hippocampus. Further there is evidence that different brain regions have unique periods when they are maximally sensitive to the effects of early stress. To dopreclinical studies have guided clinical investigation and will continue to provide insights.

Pamela Martyn-Nemeth et al (2009) The purpose of study was to examine relationships among self-esteem, stress, social support ,coping and to test a model of their effects on eating behavior and depressive mood in a sample of 102 high school students. Results indicate that stress and low self-esteem were to avoidant coping were related to unhealthy, eating behavior. Results also suggest that teaching adolescents skills to reduce stress, build self-esteem and use more positive approach to coping may prevent unhealthy eating and subsequent obesity and lower risk of depressive symptoms.

A study conducted by Raymond Montemayor (1986) elicits that parents and adolescents who have good communication between them and when parenting style is helping the adolescents to communicate their stress have better relationship. And parents also facilitate the adolescents to combat stress.

A study conducted by Rex Forehand et al (1991) on Adolescents and their parent's stress. The Study indicated that the stress in the family like divorce, intrapersonal conflict and maternal depression leads to stress in the adolescents which deteriorates functioning. Further a positive Parent-Adolescent relationship as perceived by the Adolescents was associated with less deterioration in all areas of functioning.

Sangeeta Chaudhary and Priya Mary. Joseph (2010) conducted a study it was designed to understand adolescents' perceptions on coping with stress in middle income group. It mainly aims to explore their awareness regarding alternate ways of coping, adaptive coping and its need and importance .This research is descriptive in nature. The results revealed that across the four domains, adolescents perceive parental support for their adaptive coping styles, whereas for adaptive coping, adolescents perceive guidance or no support. However, adolescent girls have perceived parents to be stricter with boys especially in academics and boys have

perceived parents to be more concerned for girls in heterosexual relationships and physical appearance. Academics were found to be major stressor.

In an article by Suvarna Sen (2006) has touched upon every aspect of the adolescence phase. Through review of research she has put forth the important aspects of adolescence. And they are: a) the role confusion among adolescents b) encouraging adolescents to explore opportunities c) Helping the adolescents with Identity crisis d) Influence on adolescents of family e) the attitude of parents towards and vice-versa.

Suldo, Shannon M et al (2009) The study investigated the environmental stressors and psychological adjustment of 162 students participating in the IB program and a comparison sample of 157 students in general education. Factor analysis revealed that primary source of stress experienced by IB students was related to academic requirements. In contrast, students in the general education program indicated higher levels of stress associated with parent-child relations academic struggler, conflict within the family and peers relations, as well as role transitions and societal problems. Applied implications stem from findings suggest that students are more likely to experience stress due to exams than any other stressors.

The causes of stress during Adolescence are:

The Biological Cause:

Stress occurs due to sexual and other physical maturation that occurs during puberty and results in hormonal changes. As child nears puberty a gland in the brain, pituitary gland increases the secretion of a hormones called Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). This hormone then causes additional effects. In girls FSH activates the ovaries to start producing estrogen. In boys FSH, causes sperm to develop. Beginning of puberty in girls average age is 8-13 and in boys 9.5-14 years. Here one of the important factors that need to be considered is Nutrition. It plays very important role in growth of the adolescents.

To support the above biological cause of stress a study conducted on adolescents by BJ Cassey , Rebecca M. Jones et al (2010) indicate that the adolescence is the time of storm and stress. In spite of intense and frequent negative affect, this period has been hypothesized to explain increased rates of affective disorders, suicide and accidental death. Yet some teens emerge from adolescence with minimal turmoil. It provides neurobiological model for adolescence which proposes that an imbalance in the development of sub cortical limbic (eg amygdala) relative to prefrontal cortical regions as a potential mechanism for heightened emotionality during this period. The presence of environmental factors may exacerbate the turmoil of Adolescents.

The biological causes affect the adolescents both internally and externally. Internally the body undergoes hormonal changes and at this crucial phase counseling and advice by parents and teachers could stem the deviant behavior. It can cause disorders and it may even precipitate to suicide and an adrenalin rush often leads to risky behavior which may cause death. The internal imbalance may also result in extreme emotional behavior that could harm an individual.

The external factors like parents' divorce, domestic violence, bad company and unhealthy habits would affect the adolescents personality.

These adolescents deviant behavior are common where parents are of lower income groups, unemployed parents, compared to higher income middle class groups. This may also be true in higher income groups where they experience deviant behavior due to lack of parental attention and extreme indulgence.

IV. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

This is one of the important causes of stress because during cognitive development adolescents try to experience the world on their own. This is the phase of information gathering and experimenting. It causes stress because an adolescent is expected to enter the final stage of cognitive development. According to Jean Piaget's theory an adolescent is capable of thinking like an adult about the age of 16. He proposed that the basic process we use to think do not change much beyond this stage. The process what Piaget calls is Formal Operations. It involves stages and they are Abstract Thinking, Hypothetical Thinking, Inter Propositional Logic and Reflective Thinking.

Cognitive development in the form of: thinking, reasoning, learning, reflecting takes place during adolescence. In this computer age the adolescents try to experience both the real and virtual world on their own. They are also bombardment with information both good and bad that may make them to experiment which would create an inquisitive mind and help them to be analytical and logical. But at the same time wrong use of information may lead to risky and deviant behavior.

V. DECISION MAKING

Building on Piaget's work Lawrence Kohlberg (1976) and his associates (Colby et al 1983) studied the development of moral reasoning by asking people of various age to resolve moral dilemmas. Kohlberg argued that moral reasoning passes through three levels as we grow. They are pre conventional level, Conventional, and Post Conventional level. Most theorists agree that as both males and females move from childhood into adolescence they rely mostly entirely on abstract moral principles to make decisions.

The above three levels of decision during adolescence are based on moral judgment : The first level, is a gross moral judgment where the individual thinks of himself and does not bother of the larger consequences. At the second level, the issues of society and law enter into decision making process. At third level, they get into abstract moral principles where they feel the social order of the society would disintegrate and question of moral and ethical principles creep in decision making process. If their reasoning is influenced by above three levels, they may reason in and enter into a proper decision making process.

VI. ACHIEVING IDENTITY, A KEY TASK OF ADOLESCENCE:

Erik Erikson in his developmental theory, the core conflict is between role Confusion and Identity. Seeking Identity involves searching for continuity and sameness in one-self and trying to get a clear sense of what one's skills and personal attributes are to discover. Where one is headed in life, and that one can count on recognition from "significant others". According to Erikson Adolescent who forms a sense of Identity gains two key benefits they are 'A feeling of being at home in one's body' and 'A sense of psychological Well-being". He also speaks about Psychosocial Moratorium that is an Adolescent may delay in taking up responsibilities and showing Rebellion Pattern where in the Adolescents go against their parents and well wishers in spite of being told for their own good. To seek out the confusion the Adolescents make use of their Abstract Thinking.

In confusion and Identity crisis an individual tries to understand himself about his strength and weakness. He seeks to establish his identity in the world around him. Confusion sets in when he is not sure of his potentialities and skills. So, he has to hone up his skills and set them a tune to his personality. He has to identify his role in the society and strive towards that goal. Once he is focused about his role there ends its confusion, as, he has goal to reach and thus works towards it.

VII. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This is also one crucial Stressor because it is the phase where Adolescents prefer to spend their time more outside family and demand for freedom. As proposed in one of the studies; In relationship between Adolescents and their parents a central theme is often that of testing limits. Most teen parents' arguments concern the timing of rights and responsibilities (Hartup 1983). In this phase parents can expect less obedience and more resistance that is because the adolescents can think of alternatives to parents' rules.

To support the above, a study conducted by Rex Forehand et al (1991) on Adolescents and their parent's stress. The Study indicated that the stress in the family like divorce, intrapersonal conflict and maternal depression leads to stress in the adolescents which deteriorates functioning. Further a positive Parent-Adolescent relationship as perceived by the Adolescents was associated with less deterioration in all areas of functioning.

In another study linking parents work stress to Adolescents Psychological Adjustment. It reveals that the effects of parental work stress on Adolescent's Adjustment appear to be indirect .Work stress is linked to parents feelings of overload and strain , which in turn are related to less positive adjustment of adolescents . In the face of high work stress withdrawing from family involvement may be adaptive in the short run but ultimately problematic. The strength of those associations depends on parent's personality, coping styles, work and family circumstances.

The crucial concern during the process of social development is first within the family and then within the society . Healthy family would generate a healthy adolescence period. And troubled family could endanger the parent child relationships resulting in deviant behavior.

The relationship between parents and adolescents is vital during these disturbed times of adolescence parents should take great care, watch the adolescents and oversee their movements among their friends and the external environment. The emotional support which the parents give to their adolescent is very essential as, this, would keep them in constant touch with their parents and would be easy to take care of them. In the absence of such a parent child relationship, the child would try to seek emotional support outside his family which could be dangerous.

VIII. PEER RELATIONSHIPS

A peer group membership assumes more importance during adolescence than at any other time of life. A peer group can provide a refuge and a source of support for youngsters in conflict with their families. Moreover, being part of a clearly defined group can help answer the burning question, "Who am I" for these and

other reasons. Adolescents spend great deal of time with other Adolescents. One study which used beepers to contact adolescents at random times (Larson et al 1977), found that they spend more time talking with peers than doing academic work or being alone.

The structure of peer groups seems to change over the course of adolescence. (Coleman, 1980, Dunphy, 1963) Adolescents move from small unisex groups to large groups and later develop contact with opposite sex. Dominance hierarchy it is the leadership quality that is developed during adolescence (Hartup, 1983, Savin-williams, 1980).

The other important problems that cause stress are: Substance Abuse, Instant Gratification from Electronic Media and Gadgets, Lack of Competence, Risk Behaviors, Emotional disturbance, bullying, Cyber bullying.

In the absence of family support adolescents seek refuge in peer groups. They feel that peer group satisfy their needs. As said earlier, adolescents move from small unisex groups to larger groups and then towards opposite sex. These may be trying times because an adolescent is trying to establish his identity within the group. At the same time hierarchy practiced in the groups would lead to developing leadership skills.

Symptoms which will be helpful in identifying the stressful behaviors of Adolescents:

- ✓ Adolescents may be experiencing irritability because of lack of proper sleep at night. Then it's a Wakeup call for parents.
- ✓ They may be unable to concentrate on academics and sports.
- ✓ Adolescents may be having unexplained fears or increased anxiety.
- ✓ Adolescents isolate from family activities or peer relationships.
- ✓ Adolescents may be experimenting with drugs and alcohol.
- ✓ Adolescents may complain about headaches or stomach aches.
- ✓ Adolescents may have poor appetite and low immunity.

The Role of Parents' in reducing the Adolescents' stress.

- ❖ The parents have to be aware of their child's behavior and emotions.
- ❖ The parents have to be available and open to talk with their child when they are ready.
- ❖ The parents have to teach and model good emotional response.
- ❖ Remind the adolescents of his/her ability to get through tough times, particularly with love and support of family and friends.
- ❖ Keep the adolescents aware of anticipated family changes.
- ❖ Monitor television programs that could worry adolescents and pay attention to the computer games, movies and the internet.
- ❖ Help the adolescents select appropriate extracurricular activities and limit over scheduling.
- ❖ Encourage healthy and diverse friendships.
- ❖ Teach the adolescents to solve problems.
- ❖ Encourage "safe" risk taking.
- ❖ Encourage them to tell if they feel overwhelmed.

The Coping Mechanisms for Stress Management:

- Adolescents must learn to solve problems.
- Should develop positive relationships at home, school, with peers and adults.
- Adolescents should have Clear Goals.
- Adolescents should have Permission and ability to learn from mistakes.
- Adolescents should develop competencies (academic, social, life skills).
- Adolescents being Consistent, Positive and Disciplined helps in combating stress.
- Adolescents should take good nutritional food and exercise regularly.
- Adolescents should take time out to relax or to do recreational activities.
- Adolescents should develop hobbies.

Having learnt the causes, symptoms and how to prevent stress from review of literature we can draw inference that Adolescence is a phase in which there is rapid physical and psychological growth that is bound to create stressful events. "Storm and Stress" this was the view of G. Stanly Hall, (1904) an American Psychologist whose book Adolescence helped make this age period a focus of scientific study. Anna Freud argued that those Adolescents who maintain their psychological stress during Adolescence may be abnormal.

It's very much evident that the Adolescents who use coping mechanisms and who are taught life skills are less stressed. They can deal with their stress in a much better way. The Adolescents who channelize their

stress are much better academic performers, are involved in extracurricular activities and community services. They are more positive compared to the adolescents who do not channelize their stress. To substantiate that stress management leads to better life. There are few research studies that have indicated the above

A study conducted by Raymond Montemayor (1986) elicits that parents and adolescents who have good communication between them and when parenting style is helping the adolescents to communicate their stress have better relationship. And parents also facilitate the adolescents to combat stress.

In another study pretest and posttest control group design was employed to determine the effectiveness of a ten-week stress management for middle school control group. The experimental group used cognitive control coping strategies. The Adolescents in the experimental group reported significantly lower degree of stress than those in the control group. Then experimental group also used relaxation procedure. The program appears to have been successful in developing stress management skills in two major areas emphasized in the intervention, cognitive control coping strategies and relaxation methods.

Mark Scott Smith and William Womack(1987) conducted study on selected adolescents who were suffering from Psychophysical Stress. After clinicians examined, the adolescents were taught relaxation techniques which included progressive muscular relaxation, Meditation, biofeedback and self hypnosis. These techniques worked for the adolescents.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

To Conclude Stress is part and parcel of every one's life. Stress among adolescents can create havoc in their life. But sometimes Stress can yield better results. It can make the Adolescents perform better at task and helps to become better and competitive person.

Because of the biological, cognitive and social causes the adolescents go through a harsh period in their life. So the parents have to be alert in managing the stress during adolescence.

Two common trends among adolescents being observed from the above literature are Academic Stress and Emotional Turmoil. Problem solving, cognitive interventions and relaxation techniques are widely used to combat stress among adolescents.

The high level of stress during adolescence may cause dysfunctional personality like anti-social.

The present day adolescents are extremely vulnerable to various kinds of bad influences through various sources of communication.

Adolescents can take wrong decisions under the influence of stress. Under stress the performance gets hindered.

In order to overcome deviant behaviors the parents play a constructive role in channelizing energies of the adolescents. Proper care should be taken in helping to take the right decisions which may affect their future.

The social implications of this study:

- 1) The review of literature will be helpful in making policies on adolescence.
- 2) This study can play a crucial role in providing timely help to Adolescents by providing Counseling.
- 3) Strong, proper coping mechanisms have to be developed to have healthy Personality and Society.
- 4) Adolescents should be encouraged to take part in social service.
- 5) Intervention programs should be conducted for both parents and adolescents for better society.
- 6) Academic curriculum has to be framed very diligently so that the adolescents can no longer feel the stress.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to the organizers of International Stress Management Association^{IND} held on 8th and 9th November 2013 at Hyderabad, for having accepted and allowing me to present the above paper .

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