

Prevalence of Emotional Problems among Adolescent Students of Corporation Schools in Chennai

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Abstract : Emotional problems were found to be the predominant cause of suicide and second leading cause of death among adolescents in India. Emotional problems seem to be the underlying cause for various other severe psycho-social problems experienced in adolescence and also in later years of life. The Corporation schools in Chennai city are named as Chennai High School or Chennai Higher Secondary School run by the Corporation of Chennai. These schools fulfill the educational needs of students who hail from lower socio-economic status living in slums of the Chennai city. Adolescent students of Chennai schools tend to lack basic needs like food, clothes, shelter, etc. Some of the other significant problems faced by them are broken family, lack of parental support, frequent quarrel between parents, alcoholic parents, drug abuse and substance abuse among parents and neighbors, extended family, illiterate parents, deprivation of love and care, and lack of sense of belongingness. This prevailing condition may affect them emotionally and could lead to maladaptive behaviour, aggressiveness, poor interpersonal relationship with others, school refusal behaviour, school drop-out, suicide, etc. Therefore, it is very important to investigate the emotional problems faced by the adolescent students studying in Chennai schools, Chennai. A cross-sectional survey design was used to find the prevalence of emotional problems among adolescent students. Cluster sampling technique was used to select the schools for the present study considering the school as a cluster. In total, there are 15 zones, under the control of Chennai Corporation, of which only 7 zones have Corporation Schools in Chennai city, comprising of 32 Chennai Higher Secondary Schools and 38 Chennai High Schools. Out of these 70 schools, 29 schools comprising of 17 high schools and 12 higher secondary schools were selected randomly using lottery method. A sample of 2594 adolescent students from 9th standard and 11th standard was chosen for the study. Percentage analysis was done to find out the prevalence rate of emotional problems among adolescents students studying in Chennai Schools. Results of the study revealed that, out of 2594 students surveyed, 21.04% adolescent students were found to have academic problems ($n = 546$), 15.99% adolescent students had social problems ($n = 415$), behaviour problems was found to be prevalent among 12.87% adolescent students ($n = 334$), depression was prevalent among 15.88% adolescent students ($n = 412$) and anxiety was prevalent among 14.42% adolescent students ($n = 374$). Prevalence of emotional problems among male and female revealed that academic problems were more prevalent compared to other problems. Behaviour problems were least prevalent among boys and anxiety was least prevalent among girls than other problems. The overall prevalence rate of emotional problems was found to be on an increasing trend among adolescent students of low socio-economic status in Chennai city. The findings indicated the need for intervention to prevent and rehabilitate these adolescent students.

Keywords : adolescents, corporation schools, emotional problems, prevalence

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