A STUDY OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

SYNOPSIS
of the Thesis submitted for the Award of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

By
JAMPA VENKATA RAMA CHANDRA RAO
M.A (Psychology), M.Ed
Lecturer in psychology, H.P.T.College, Vijayawada-4

Under the guidance of
Dr. Mrs.G. ARUNA
M.A (Psychology), M.Ed, Ph.D
Reader in Psychology
St. Joseph’s College of Education for Women, Guntur.

ACHARYA NAGARJUNA UNIVERSITY
Nagarjuna Nagar – 522 310, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh

February- 2011
A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS AND INTERVENTIONS

SYNOPSIS

1. Introduction:

   Educating a child means drawing out what is ingrained in the child. Education is for the development of the personality of an individual in all the aspects -- physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, cognitive, emotional, social etc.

   Adolescence in human life is the stage when rapid changes take place. The individual's physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual outlooks undergo revolutionary changes. Such changes during adolescence are more rapid than during infancy and childhood. Due to these various changes his personality develops new dimensions.

2. Conceptual background of the study:

   The ambiguous status of today's adolescents is advantageous in that it gives them time to try out different life styles and decide what patterns of behaviors, values, and attitudes meet their needs.

   Adolescents begin to crave identity and are no longer satisfied to be like their peers in every respect. Adolescents try to establish themselves as individuals using even status symbols in the form of cars, clothes and other readily observable material possessions.

   Adolescents experience a number of conflicts between the tendency to depend and ability to be independent, reality and fantasy; to follow or not follow the social norms; between empathy and social concern and between idealism and reality.

   Some of the important problems of Adolescents in educational institutions are delinquency, day-dreaming, ragging, scholastic backwardness, examination fear, self
pride, inferiority complex, identity crisis, addiction to drug, alcohol & cigarettes, depression and suicide.

3. Guidance needed for Adolescents

Guidance helps in the selection of educational courses and profitable occupations in job placement; placement in the next stage of education and training, improvement of study skills; maintenance of mental health, counseling regarding personal adjustment problems; identifying the gifted and the backward and helping them achieve the maximum. Educational, vocational, social, personal, moral, physical and even material problems of individuals are the concerns of guidance. Its scope is indeed vast.

Guidance services needed to the adolescents are the pre-admission service, the admission service, the orientation service to new entrants about physical facilities offered by the institution, its rules and regulations, expectations and standards. The Student information services to obtain a realistic picture of his abilities, interests, personality characteristics, achievement in different subjects and activities, level of aspiration and state of health, counseling services to assist the in achieving educational, personal-social development and adjustment, Referral services to receive better help and the remedial service when they are needed. Almost all students could profit by these services through some training in study skills and special education.

4. Need for the study on psychological problems of adolescents:

Many of them feel that adolescent’s emotional life is out of their control. It is equally sensitive for present day parents and teachers as adolescents often feel that people do not understand, at times curse the whole world for that. The adolescents would like their feelings to be respected, to be loved and to speak out their minds. The
problem behaviors are observed both by parents at home and teachers at school. But whether they care to probe into why of their problematic behavior is questionable.

The nuclear family system has become the new unit of society. With its rise, things began to change. Parents had to take charge of children for all day to day dealings and decisions. They could no longer depend on grand parents, aunts, uncles, older cousins and so on to take care of things. They had to do it all by themselves, whether it was organizing household chores; seeing to the educational needs of the children; doing out punishment for misbehavior or coping with the highs and lows of adolescents. Tasks had increased but time was at a premium, parents had no time.

Our adolescents thus are at a loss about role models that they can consistently emulate. The parents too are not sure how to guide them. They know that the scientific and electronic age is important, but they do not want to let go of their culture and their traditions. They are always trying to strike a balance between western influences and our own culture and heritage. Life styles have changed as well; Indians have absorbed a lot of foreign habits, likes and dislikes. Films, the mainstay of our entertainment, have cashed in on this trend and romanticized it endlessly. Advertising too has contributed to this change in life styles.

Adolescents have a strong urge to be independent and this is another area where there are psychological conflicts. This is because parents often give out mixed signals. On the one hand they feel reassured, if they think their children are becoming responsible and self reliant. On the other hand they want things done their way.

In middle-class families, however fewer children have become a very valuable commodity. Parents are putting in greater efforts on their behalf and a lot of focus is directed towards them in terms of budgeting, living location, fixing the social calendar and by no means is an easy task. Added to this is the rising cost of living, a swing towards materialism and the end result often is stress. This stress takes a heavy toll and
creates untold problems for parents to whom children are the embodiment of their unfulfilled dreams and ambitions, insurance for the future and their source of joy and happiness. The pressure gets transmitted in turn to the adolescents and affects their well-being too.

One of the most intense conflicts of our adolescents today is in the area of psycho sexual development. No matter how progressive or liberal a parent is, it is very difficult to give any license for sexual activity. Of course nowadays with the increase of co-education, there is an acceptance of casual friendships between boys and girls from an early age. Western teenage norms have entered our urban social life. Parents often do not agree with many of these demands. This leads to arguments, heart breaks and tears on both sides.

Adolescents do begin to take responsibility, but that is generally in the frame work of their own reality. Their world of reality may differ from elders because adolescents basically seek out pleasant and pleasurable experiences such as a game or a television programme and avoid unpleasant ones, namely chores! If parents can remember this and make chores a pleasure and their requests pleasant it could be smooth sailing for both sides.

What has changed is that education has become child-centered and learning-oriented. There is a growing emphasis to help and mould children to become fully functioning individuals capable of accepting themselves and others as they are. The concept of the child as a future citizen of India has become very important and educationists and educational institutions are not only upholding this concept but giving it the required push in the right direction. With this aim in view children are being taught to think for themselves. They are asked to develop their decision making skills and they are encouraged to differentiate between right and wrong. The school helps them to identity their strengths and weaknesses. It facilitates their ability to make a better career choice.
The schools do teach children to respect their parents and elders. At the same time they are taught about the United Nations rights of children and other human rights. Children are taught to fight for their rights, while they perform their duties—and adolescents in particular have their own interpretations of what their rights and duties are.

The pressures have increased because of the ever increasing population in the country in spite of the higher literacy rates and the innumerable campaigns promoting family planning measures, techniques and population. This automatically means more children without the proportionate increase in the number of schools, colleges and other educational outlets. This naturally leads to the survival of the fittest, not student’s ability to pay. This in turn has led to a high level of competition in the world of academics and careers which has put additional strains on both parents and children.

Indians face a wide cultural gap. The result is more and more friction between parents and children which reaches its peak during adolescence. Parents realize that children cannot be controlled any more. They want to be seen and to be heard. They are tired of monologues and of being spoken to. They want dialogues, not dictates.

5. Scope of the study:

Adolescent children appear problematic to many elders and parents. Hence the present study of psychological problems of adolescents and the necessary interventions is taken for in depth investigation. The common prevailing causes can be known but also can be prevented to the possible extent. The teachers can identify the problem cases with the knowledge of symptoms, can inquire the parents or take care of the students by giving some time to listen to them in private. If possible the teacher can guide or counsel the students with mild problems. Moreover, the teachers can play a good role in preserving the mental health of the adolescent students.
Educational counseling has emerged as a discipline to provide help to students on campuses of schools, colleges and universities, such that they are not tormented by their internal conflicts, do not become cynical and do not resort to self-destructive strategies. The school has an important pervasive counseling function. It is here that the future citizen is encouraged to become a free and autonomous individual.

The present study will cover the mild and moderate psychological problems of Adolescent students specifically their symptoms, causes and the suitable interventions needed to be overcome. This would be of great help for the teachers and parents.

The reality is that Guidance and counseling services were not a regular feature in most of the schools. There existed no separate fund for guidance purposes. The help extended to students even was mainly in the educational area to the neglect of personal and vocational areas.

If the problems occur during these adolescent years are not resolved and they continue into adulthood and create hurdles in their schooling, and college education, Therefore, the problems arising out of lack of skills of interaction at home, in family, with peers and teachers, in academic matters etc. need to be resolved by way of direct intervention in developing their competencies, It may orient the teachers to address these aspects of pupils development while transacting curriculum.

Some kind of professional help needs to be made available to parents and teachers for dealing adequately with children having problems. Especially teachers need to know about the children having problems in the absence of professional guidance and counseling services at school. Hence the case studies were collected from the trained & experienced counselors.
6. Research gap:

The summary of the reviewed studies shows that a study of the mild and moderate adolescent problems of both the genders at two levels of education along with the intervention programs to remedy their problems was not so far taken up by the investigators of education which can throw some light on the origin, development, expression, and possibility for returning to normalcy on being free of problems. Hence the present study is taken up to understand, as an educator, this whole process, to have healthy interventions with adolescent students.

7. Statement of the problem:

As on today due to cross cultural impacts and competitive educational scenario the life of adolescent students has turned complex and stressful. Due to academic stress and day to day complexities of life adolescent students need guidance and counselling on one side and psycho therapeutic interventions to serious psychological disturbances on other side. The researcher has titled the present study as “Psychological problems of adolescent students and interventions”

8. Operational definitions of the key terms:

Operational definitions of the key terms are furnished below.

**Psychological problems:** Psychological problems may be defined as the psychological disturbances with in the person and having the signs of belligerence, moodiness, excessive worry, anxiety, suspiciousness, helplessness, emotional out bursts or depression and symptoms of drug or alcohol abuse.

**Adolescent Students:** Adolescent Students may be defined as the students in adolescent period with an age between 12 to 19 years and studying secondary and higher secondary courses in various schools and colleges.
**Intervention:** Intervention is responding to the request of the parent, teacher or an adolescent to intervene either (a) to guide or (b) to counsel and help through guidance and counseling.

**a) Guidance:** Guidance is essentially a helping process to overcome a problem. Guidance is the systematic, professional process of helping the individual through educative and interpretive procedure to gain a better understanding of his own characteristics and potentialities and to relate himself more satisfactorily to the educational progress.

**b) Counselling:** Counselling is a process which takes place in a one to one relationship between an individual beset problems with which he can not cope alone and a professional worker whose training and experience have qualified him to help others reach solutions to various types of personal difficulties.

9. Objectives of the study:

1. To collect case studies of the psychological problems (mild and moderate) of Adolescent students and classify them.
2. To identify the Common causes for the psychological problems of Adolescent students.
3. To identify the symptoms of each category of psychological problems of adolescent students.
4. To identify the suited Interventions for the specific causes and specific symptoms of specific psychological problems of adolescent students.

10. Plan and procedure:

   Descriptive survey of the problematic adolescents was done.
11. Sample and sampling of the study:

The investigator purposely selected minor problematic cases and also purposely left serious psychological problems. But primarily the information about the identified units of the population consisting of psychological problems of adolescent learners was gathered from the counselors. Counselors used clinical case study method to diagnose and counsel the cases. The investigator collected from them the cases of mild and moderate psychological problems of adolescent students of high school, higher secondary and first year degree students of college who are up to 19 years. Thus, purposive sampling technique was followed.

The investigator, after identifying the mild and moderate adolescent problems, verified and confirmed with the respective counselor. Thus the final sample of the mild and moderate problem cases taken for the study from three counselors was fifty (50). It included 25 high school adolescent students and 25 college going adolescent students that included 17 intermediate and 8 first year degree students.

12. Tools of the study:

1. Interviews with the counsellors.
2. Study of the case registers to identify the mild and moderate psychological problems of adolescent students from the case studies.
3. Collection of cases from these secondary sources.

13. Delimitations of the study:

1. The present study was limited to mild and moderate psychological problems of adolescents only.
2. The sample included school going & college going students only.
3. College going students included intermediate and first degree students only.
4. The sample of adolescents was limited to Vijayawada and Guntur only where the counseling centers were.

5. The number of sampled students was limited to 50 only.

6. The problems were identified basing on the initial symptoms of the cases. The secondary symptoms were gathered through the explanatory data collected.

14. Findings:

   As each case was unique with its background that led to the present problem and in its expression of symptoms the interventions also were given suitable to the case.

The following is a model case:

Reason for referral : Fear of Examinations

Symptoms: Anxiety about future education, Confusion, Dullness, Sadness, Hopelessness, Forgetfulness, Lack of interest in education, and Tension

Identified causes: Poor performance, Lack of guidance and improper preparation, Comparison with peer group, Stressful work and over discipline

Interventions followed:

1. Self assessment ↔ review of the learnt material to reduce fear
2. Trained for examination preparation
3. Memory techniques were taught to remember the subjects well.
4. Divided the tasks in to small parts to reduce work pressure and feel comfortable.
5. Helped to have initial success, and built it with later efforts to reduce hopelessness
6. Advised to take the support and guidance from the teachers
7. Advised to avoid comparison with other students
Counselling to parents:

- Parents were advised to set realistic, attainable goals and have clear expectations from the child,
- Parents were advised to advise teachers to reduce pressure on studies and create a stress-free and relaxed environment.

The psychological problems along with symptoms, the causes for them and the interventions of the Counselors were summarized.

Adolescent’s problems (symptoms):

The identified educational problems of the studied sample were 1) Lack of interest in education, 2) Anxiety about future education, 3) Fear of school/college, 4) Fear of examinations, 5) Negative thoughts about education, 6) Fears about studies, 7) Forgetfulness, 8) Lack of concentration, 9) Fear of hostel, and 10) Lack of goal in education.


Identified causes of adolescent’s problems:

1) Poor performance, 2) Criticism and unhealthy comparisons of parents, 3) Lack of parental care and concern, 4) Stressful work load and over discipline in the school /

**The Interventions followed for the Adolescent students problems were:**

1. Trained in thought stopping technique.
2. Trained for relaxation techniques
3. Assertiveness training was given
4. Trained for Aversion technique
5. Reality therapy was given
6. provided for ventilation using TAT (Thematic apperception Test)
7. Trained for positive thinking
8. Memory techniques were taught to remember the school subjects well.
8. Remedial teaching techniques were followed for slow learners
9. Trained with SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review) technique to improve performance
10. Trained for anger management
11. Stress management was done by having breathing exercise & muscular relaxation
12. Trained for time management
13. Trained for social skills
14. Trained for the development of comprehension skills
15. Trained for the development of reading skills
16. Phonemic Awareness was given to manipulate the sounds in the spoken words by focusing only on sounds.
17. Trained for fine hand writing skills
18. Confidence building training was given
19. Trained for concentration building exercises
20. Trained for examination preparation
21. Group Study was advised
22. Trained for proper study habits
23. Trained to have continuous Self assessment ↔ followed by a review of the learnt material to reduce fear.
24. Counseled to develop English by reading, listening and writing to express well to cope with the change of medium of instruction.
25. Helped to have initial success, and build it with later efforts to reduce hopelessness
26. Realities of life were discussed quoting live examples to develop interest in education
27. Advised to have physical activities
28. Advised not to be possessive in friendships
30. Advised to avoid comparison with other students
31. Advised to take guidance from teachers and classmates
32. Suggestions to parents were given with respect their children.

15. Educational Implications:

1) The institution has to help the students by arranging necessary programmes on life coping skills, time management, aversion techniques, relaxation techniques and awareness programmes on health issues especially at intermediate level.
2) Teachers and parents are to be sensitive to the adolescent’s to recognize their problems and deal with them.
3) Teachers are to feel responsibility and give right guidance to use their potential to the maximum extent.
4) Teachers may have specific periods to have interaction with students apart from academic aspects.
5) Teachers are to be flexible with timelines and work load of the students.
6) Teachers are to provide tutoring in difficult subjects and to the students absent for a length of time.
7) Teachers are not to insult and not to give corporal punishment and not to encourage cut throat competitions.
8) Teachers are to stop the students from bullying, ragging and also to create a stress free and relaxed environment.
9) Teachers are to create a friendly atmosphere in school where the students can express their doubts and increase their participatory levels.
10) Teachers may identify the student’s classroom problems to guide appropriately.
11) Teachers may work with pupils on self understanding both incidentally and through planned instruction.
12) Parental education is to be given by the teachers on secure environment for healthy growth of children and healthy methods of discipline.

13) Teachers have to inform the progress of their students to their parents regularly and constructively which may avoid the students to be backward continuously.

14) Social skills could be developed through group discussion debates, elocutions, excursions, peer teaching, peer learning and so on.

15) Teachers are not to utilize games hours for teaching of their subjects as games are the outlets for adolescents emotions.

16. Suggestions for Further Research:

A few suggestions for further research based on the outcomes of the findings of the present study are given below:

1. A study can be extended to other samples under other counselors.
2. A study of academic problems of adolescent students and interventions can be taken up.
3. A study of behavioral problems of adolescent student’s and interventions can be taken up.
4. A study on the alcoholic and drug addicted adolescent students and interventions can be taken up.
5. A study of psychological problems of street adolescents and interventions can be taken up.
6. A study of orphan & semi-orphan adolescent’s problems and interventions can be taken up.
7. A study of physically handicapped adolescents problems and interventions can be taken up.
8. Adolescent problems in relation to classroom and interventions can be taken up.
9. Similar case studies can be thought of at each stage level to find out the problems, symptoms, causes, and interventions.

17. Conclusion:

As of today, students seem to be touchy, intolerant of criticism not open in their conversation, hypo critic many a time and feel every challenge and any change a problem. Hence the teachers are to be observant of student turning problematic, withdrawing or turning aggressive. Student friendly teacher can spare some time in each school to talk with them in private or can extend referral services, if he/she can not spare time further.

Parent teacher meets are to be conducted to care the student welfare more. The various causes making the student having academic problems can be identified in mutual discussions.

As SQ3R method had good effect on the high school students, the teachers can also help i) to have an over all comprehension of any subject starting from the language to mathematics. ii) to question one self to find out where he or she is poor iii) to care more on the weak aspects whether it is reading the content and its comprehension or speed of reading and quality of reading that involves clarity, pronunciation and meaningful pauses; or reproducing the necessary content suitable to the questions asked either in the classroom or in the examination. Self analysis on the apart of the learner with respect to academic aspects helps in self assessment and self improvement.

Writing skills of the learners can be improved by helping them starting from the handling of pen, to the development of eye hand coordination and grapho motor skills.

The learners can be helped to improve their memory by having the meaningful organization of their learning material, or implementation of mnemonic devices like
development of acronyms, or developing learning maps which also help as memory maps before examinations.

Teachers can insist on regular study or spaced learning of the students to avoid retroactive and proactive interferences and to have consolidation and stabilization of the learnt material which also help in understanding the day to day classroom teaching.

Teachers can also learn thought stopping technique, relaxation techniques, and aversion techniques to help themselves and help the students when necessary.

The backward students can be helped in proper study habits, group study habits, in examination preparation and in concentration building.

Anger management and stress management techniques can be learned and exercised.

Reality orientation has to be cared which can make person assertive and confident.

18. Bibliography:


