

Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter attempts to describe the key aspects of Assessing the Effectiveness of Integrated Intervention to Reduce the Academic Stress and improve Academic Achievement among the SC/ST Youth School Students considering the available theoretical and conceptual framework.

- Section I presents the Introduction of highlighting the meaning of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes youth profiling their general description
- Section II discusses the ways of Academic Status of SC & ST youth students
- Section III deals with Necessity of focusing on Academic Achievement of SC & ST youth
- Section IV Academic Stress and theoretical backdrop of Academic Stress
- Section V Test Anxiety and its relation with other problems
- Section VI Self-Esteem and its theoretical background
- Section VII Academic Achievement and the Factors Related to Academic Achievement
- Section VIII Nature of Integrated Intervention used in the Present Study
- Section IX Objectives of the present study

Section I presents the Introduction of highlighting the meaning of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes youth profiling their general description

Section I: Introduction

India is the home to numerous diverse populations, and historically, the Indian Caste System differentiated the people of India based on class, religion, tribe, gender and language. The individuals and families belonging to different communities were grouped based on the above classification, and those communities were given a specially designated name. Traditionally, the caste system, which was in practice for many centuries, presented many privileges to the upper castes resulting in those group of the population getting lopsided access to wealth, education, authority, prestige, and income.

The section of the population belonging to the lower caste classification, failed to receive any such privileges extended to the upper castes, thereby resulting them getting pushed to the lowermost section of the economic and social development. Such a caste based classification created a widespread inequality among the upper and lower castes of the country regarding educational opportunity, power, income, and wealth. After India attained independence, this regressive and unjust discrimination of the population based on the caste system was banned by the Independent India's constitution under the stewardship of Dr. B R Ambedkar. The Constitution of India has identified and categorized Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the administrative basis for providing them special protection and for compensating them for their earlier discrimination. After independence, Government of India has taken various legal and administrative measures to promote socio-economic development of schedule castes and Scheduled tribes. There are several reservation policies extended to the backward communities in various government and

non-government sector, with objectives to pull out these population and make them equivalent to the mainstream section of the country. Literacy is considered as one of the important indicators of social development and reservation policy is being adhered in recruitment and in education. (NCERT, 2005)

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The section of the population designated by the Indian Constitution as Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) form the most disadvantaged population segment of the country. Scheduled Castes are referred as AdiDravida or Dalits in modern literature, while the Scheduled Tribes are the official name used to refer Adivasis or indigenous people of the country. As per the First Schedule of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 there are about 1,108 scheduled castes spread across 29 states in India. While the First Schedule of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 lists 744 Scheduled tribes across 22 states in the country. They are widely known around the country as Dalits and predominantly work as landless agricultural labors in many rural regions of the country.

The families of these backward communities are afflicted with increasing incidence of poverty as a result of rising levels of rural unemployment and wage reduction. Thus, there is a widespread migration of rural SC population to urban regions, and their primary occupation has undergone a significant change. According to census report, Scheduled Castes account for 16.6% of the total population and the decadal period 2001-11 saw the SCs growth percentage as 20.8 percent. Scheduled castes are dispersed in different proportions in various regions of the country. In state-wise breakup, Punjab has the largest SC inhabitants accounting for 28 percent of the total SC population, while Gujarat

has only just over 7% of the total SC population. The highest SC populations, 31.9 percent of the state's total number, is in Punjab. Lakshadweep has the highest proportion of STs at 94.8 per cent. Historically the Scheduled Caste was oppressed under the earlier practice of caste feudal society, and Scheduled Tribes were completely isolated and the marginalized by the dominant section of society. Hence, both the disadvantaged segment was completely excluded from the formal education, thus leaving them to do the lowest level jobs. (Muralidharan, 2016)

The social and educational problems of the backward communities are integrated and interrelated. The education has been recognized as the best means for improving the social and economic status of the deprived population. However, it has been found that education has not reached the majority of the scheduled castes, which is found to suffer from structural and functional blockades and challenges. The social issues of these deprived population groups have been identified to block the motivation level, quality and the utility values of the education. Understanding the importance and the contribution of the education to the economic improvement of their families, many parents belonging to the SC communities encourage and constantly support their children to take up formal education by sending them to the government schools located in their neighborhood.

Youth students from the SC communities belonging to the first generation entrants to education have higher aspirations to study up to graduation levels and are not interested in continuing the traditional occupations of their family ancestors. Thus, many studies have emphasized education as the foundation and a better avenue for these disadvantaged youths to migrate to better occupations that give them more self-worth and economic development. Migration to urban areas, education, occupational changes and

religious conversion have been undertaken by the scheduled castes as key approaches for socio-economic development, status change and attainment of a new social identity. They have achieved varying degrees of success. The educated SC youth have been found to display an affinity to move out of the low status occupations that are defined in their communities. Education is recognized as a significant means for bringing an orientation among SC students towards upward social mobility and has brought considerable improvements in the social and the financial growth of the education families belonging to the SC communities.

Scheduled Tribes population form the other major section of the population that suffer from poor social status and economic development. Scheduled Tribes population is about 8.6% of the whole people of the country and the decadal period 2001-11 saw the STs Growth percentage as 23.7 percent. On the contrary to a relatively dispersed SC population, about 90 percent of the Scheduled Tribes populations are concentrated majorly in few states of the country. The majority of the population of Scheduled Tribes is focused on the central part of the country comprising regions like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand Maharashtra, Orissa, and Gujarat. As per the 2011 census, the tribal population of the country is 10.43 crore, which constitutes 8.6 percent of the total population. The states of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh account for around 20 percent of the total ST population of the country.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs report has reported that the Scheduled Tribes exist in a variety of ecological conditions ranging from normal plains, forests to hilly regions and also inaccessible areas of the country.. They inhabit isolated mountain regions and are significantly concentrated mainly in the central, eastern and north-eastern parts of the

country. In India there are over 60 major tribal groups, more than 100 medium tribal groups and around 130 minor tribal groups, who collectively represent one of the most economically poor and marginalized groups in the country. The tribal populations have undergone forced migration due to the dispossession of land and resources on account of the development of the mega projects such as big dams and power plants.

Section II discusses the ways of Academic Status of SC & ST youth students

Researchers indicated that the level of literacy and educational achievement are critical signs of development in a society. According to Indian census, 'A person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is to be taken as literate'. There has been an exponential increase in the literacy level and the proportion of literates of the entire population in the last decade. As per the census report 2011, 74 percent of the populations of the country are literates as compared to 65 percent in 2001. The census report indicated the effective literacy rate for males and females are around 82 percent and 65 percent respectively.

Education is an essential element for the development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to bring them to the mainstream of economic development. Literacy is recognized as an essential need of life for the future development of the society and a lower degree of education is one of the major obstacles hindering the growth of the community. Formal education is necessary for the getting suitable jobs in the market, which will enable the children belonging to the backward communities to take up lucrative jobs. Education, over the years, has significantly increased the living conditions in the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and is one of the primary contributing factors for upgrading the prevailing economic and social situation of these disadvantaged population

groups. Literacy and education are recognized as the dominant indicators for bringing a marked improvement in the quality of life among the backward group of the country on an immediate and long-term basis. Special measures in the form of financial incentives and reservation policies in higher education are undertaken for the educational advancement of students belonging to backward communities, but many studies state that the SC/ST population is lagging significantly behind the other sections of the population.

Though the education system in India has made rapid progress in the recent decades, the education and the literacy level of marginalized groups like SC's and ST's have not improved much in the corresponding period. (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2014)

Literacy Rate of SC/ST Population

Literacy Rate is defined as the percentage of literates among the population group who are above the age of seven years. Literacy rate of Scheduled population has increased significantly in the last few decades, due to the various educational promotional programs of the government. As per the census 2011 report, Literacy rate of SC population rose from 54.7 % in 2001 to 66.1% in 2011, growing at an encouraging rate of 11.4 % in the last decade. As per the 2001 report, the literacy rate of SC men stands at 75.2%, while that of female SC is 56.5%, registering a major increase as compared to the 2001 census report.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs, on its 'Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013' report, has stated that the literacy rate of Scheduled Tribes has increased from a mere 8.53% in 1961 to 58.96 % in 2011. The ST population Literacy rate for the decade 2001-2011 grew by 11.86 %, while the growth of Literacy Rate for the entire population

of the country stood at 8.15% during the corresponding period. Also, the report has shown that the literacy rate gap among the male and female population of the Scheduled Tribes has declined from 24.41% in 2001 to 19.18% in 2011 period.

In this regard, ‘Statistical Profile of Scheduled Tribes in India 2013’ report to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs indicate that the percentage of enrollment of ST students in primary education has increased from 9.7% in the 2000-2001 period to 11% in 2010-2011. Similarly, the upper primary rose from 7.2% in 200-2001 to 8.7% in the 2010-2011 periods, and the secondary education category has increased from 5.4% to 6.4 in the corresponding period. (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2013)

Literacy Rate of SC and ST in Tamilnadu

Tamilnadu is one of the most literate states in India with 80.9% of the state’s population is literate as per the 2011 census report. The literacy rate of Tamilnadu male stands over 86%, and that of the female is at 73.14 as reported in the census report. As per the report of Education Status Report- Tamilnadu, the literacy rate of SC students in 2010-11 period stands at 66.6% as compared to the country’s average of around 63%. The report indicates that SC male literacy rate is over 75% as against the national average of 73%, while the literacy rates of female SC is reported as 58.7% as compared to the country’s average of 52%. On the contrary, the report indicates that the literacy rate of male ST in Tamilnadu is only 55.8% as compared to the country’s average of over 70% literacy rate. Similarly, the literacy rate of female ST in the Tamilnadu state is only 39.2% as compared to the national average female ST literacy rate of 52%. Thus cumulatively, only 48.8% of the ST population in Tamilnadu is literate as compared to the 61.6% literacy rate among the country’s ST population. (Catalyst Management Services, 2012)

Government Measures to improve education among SC/ST population

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the main program implemented by the Government of India for universalizing elementary education to all disadvantaged sections of the population with primary objectives to provide universal access to education, to bridge the gender gap and to increase the learning levels of the children. All the children in the 6-14 age groups are entitled to free, compulsory enrollment, attendance, and completion of basic education. The scheme provides major focus on girls belonging to disadvantaged sections of SC/ST communities, by providing them with free text books and other related educational materials for the educational welfare of the girl students. SSA conducts sensitization programs for teachers with an objective to encourage equitable educational opportunities to all the students belonging to the backward sections of the society. In order to encourage girl children's education, the program has allotted 50% reservation policy for the females in the teacher recruitment process of the program. Thus, this flagship program aims at changing the face of the elementary education sector of the country by providing quality elementary education to SC/ST students and other minority groups. (Planning Commission, 2012)

District Primary Education Program (DPEP) is an externally funded project with 85% of the project funding comes from the central government and the remaining 15% share comes from the concerned state government. As per the Indian Government archive, DPEP has instituted more than 1,60,000 new schools and around Alternating schooling (AS) centers. The educational development of the disadvantaged groups like girls, SC/ST children, and disabled children scheme are the major thrust areas of this scheme. Under this program, village education committees and school education committees have

been set up in all project villages to enroll some SC/ St Students. The Indian Government archive reports a significant improvement of enrolment of girls in all village schools where the program has been implemented. (Indian Government Archive, 2016)

The Government's legal framework on education is based on the principles of equity and non- discrimination, thereby making elementary education accessible to all sections of the society.

The Indian Constitution through its Articles 15(4), 45 and 46 has underlined the government's commitment to improving the education of SC and ST children. Article 15(4) emphasizes the primary obligation of the state to provide affirmative action regarding grants and scholarship support for backward classes like Sc and ST. The Article 45 underscores the Government's measures to provide free and compulsory education till the age of 14 years for all children belonging to the backward classes. And Article (46) states the specific plans of the Government to promote the educational and economic welfare measures of SC/ST.

The Government has conceived various provisions that would negate the educational and socio-historical disadvantage suffered by these backward sections of the society, thereby facilitating the natural educational access. The important measures are designed with an objective to improve the enrollment in primary and secondary education and to ensure retention/ reduce dropouts of SC and ST children in school. Currently, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Government offers various special educational schemes to SC and ST children. The department has ensured the provision of free textbooks and related stationary materials at all levels of school education for the educational betterment of SC/ST students. These students are given educational stipends through schemes like Pre-matric and post-matric scholarship to minimize the incidence of dropouts from the school. The ministry

has established Ashram schools for ST children residing in the remote regions of the country by providing necessary infrastructure and teaching facilities for the improvement of education. To enable the parents from the lower social economic groups to send their children to schools, there is a provision of free uniforms to SC/ST children in government approved Ashram schools. Free lodging facilities in the form of girls and boys hostels are made available for SC/ST students. All these measures are designed to provide preferential treatment and incentives to the underprivileged sections of the society to achieve social and economic development. (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, 2015)

Another important factor regarding the education of SC/ST is their dropout rates. Dropout Rate is a critical indicator that gives a measure of the students who stopped coming to school during the particular year and also the proportion of the students who have completed the year level but fail to enroll for the next level in the following year. It is an important indicator that reflects the lack of educational development taking place in the community and the failure of the particular population section to complete the specific level of education.

The Ministry of Tribal report has quoted the Statistics of School Education 2010-11 data, which shows that the dropout rates of STs are very high as compared to that of the general population. As per the report, the dropout rates of ST students studying in classes' I-X is as high as 71% as compared to around 50% dropout rate in the All India category. Also, the statistical data reveal that out of the 100 students who registered for the class I education, around 67% of them completed up to Class V, while around 42% completed class VIII and only 14% of the 100 ST students completed the XII standard. It shows that while the

number of enrollment for education among ST students has increased in the last decade, the dropout rates of students are significantly high after class VIII, indicating the difficulty faced by these students to pass the higher grades.

Section III deals with Necessity of focusing on Academic Achievement of SC & ST youth Students

While the subsequent Governments in the past decades has undertaken various measures to improve the educational status of the SC/ST population, a comprehensive analytical study is necessary to evaluate the academic achievement and the relating academic stress factors among the SC and ST youth students. Accordingly, in recent years, academic stress, causative factors of academic stress and the extraordinary measures to minimize the academics induced anxiety has been gaining vital importance among the psychologists. Academic stress and the various initiatives of the government to lessen the stress of the students have been gaining considerable significance among the educational and behavioral psychologists in the recent years. Also, these studies have reported that student community from the rural regions of the country has limited opportunities to make use of educational resources such as library, internet facilities, educational web portals and other technological developments that put them in a deprived position as compared to the students residing in urban regions of the country. It is also reported that the resulting stress levels due to academic performance are also higher in rural students due to their disadvantaged positions and their emotional abilities to cope with the demands of the education.

Problems Concerning Poor Education Status among SC and ST students

As per the research studies relating to the educational status of the backward communities, the SC and ST students face many critical issues and challenges that prevent

them to lag in academic performance as compared to the other sections of the society. Some of the important key issues discussed in these research studies include: The lack of suitable educational facilities in their native village is another important discouraging factor for these disadvantaged sections of the country to pursue higher education. These populations live in clusters, and the unavailability of primary schools plays a significant role in the poor educational status of these disadvantaged sections of the country.

Many parents from these backward communities are forced not to send their children to schools due to extreme poverty conditions prevailing in their neighborhood. Abject poverty prevailing in the society discourages parents from sending their children to pursue education. They prefer to send them for odd menial jobs just for supporting the economic condition of the family many of the schools catering education to the SC, ST community have an inadequate number of qualified teachers resulting in their dismal academic performance.

The medium of Education

Language is one of the significant limitation of SC and ST students that prevents them having proper educational access. The students frequently drop out from the school due to the difficulty faced by them in understanding the subjects. Improper supervision of these students' education progress by the respective School authorities is also a major factor contributing to the increased dropouts of SC and ST students from the school. Thus it becomes necessary to focus on the academic achievement of the SC and ST youths to promote equity in education among the different sections of the population and to develop a better society. (Kharde, 2008)

Similar to regular school students, rural school students comprising SC and ST communities also face various pressures due to the different student background, teaching methodologies, learning styles, individual needs and requirements. Rural schools all across

the country face a unique set of challenges, essentially due to their geographical distribution and isolation. Lots of research studies conducted on the academic stress of the students primarily covers the urban section of the population, leaving a bigger opportunity to carry out research studies on academic stress concerning the rural students especially from the backward sections of SC and ST students.

Section IV Academic Stress and theoretical backdrop of Academic Stress

Stress

Stress plays a major role in the academics and the emotional stability of the student's population, where they undergo various stress factors that affect their performance. Many educational psychologists have conducted studies to emphasize the importance of stress in the life of students. The following definition of:

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being."

According to Beckner (2004), Stress is defined as how an individual reacts physically and emotionally to various situations that are regarded as complicated or challenging.

Stress negatively affects an individual's emotional status and causes a multiple of psychological symptoms like anger, nervousness, excessive botheration, insomnia or loss of sleep. These early symptoms of stress can cause a lot of distraction from performing the day-to-day activities, resulting into nervousness, changes in sleep pattern and depression.

Academic Stress comes from the internal pressures associated with learning difficulties, as the academic challenges put undue pressure on the body and the minds of the students. Anxiety can have adverse effects on all students. Students with anxiety problems tend to

show lower levels of academic achievement, self-efficacy, and self-concept. Academic stress has gathered a lot of significance with many research scholars in the field of behavioral science has undertaken wide-ranging research on stress and its outcomes on the student's academic performance.

Studies have remarked that the schools constitute a major portion of the children's upbringing and they learn education and also the positives and negatives aspects way of life. The students spend a significant part of their time in the school, and they learn, apart from education, the necessary living skills, thoughts, behaviors and habits that are essential for them to live in the society. It is more so particular in the rural community, as the children tend to learn the necessary living skills from the school than from their parents who may be low in education. In such a case, students from the backward communities of rural regions will find it a huge challenge to cope with demands of the education resulting in the mental and emotional problems and associated stress.

Behavioral Researchers indicate that the coping problems of these students to education will result in their low self-esteem, which can pessimistically affect the development of learning skills and habits in these students. The extreme stress, in turn, will have a profound adverse effect on their academic performance leading to increasing of student dropout rates from pursuing education. Poor academic performance indicates higher levels of stress, coping issues, changes in behavioral patterns and health compromising issues. The stress level increases as the students move from the elementary education to the high school life due to lack of coping to the upper demands of education. Studies indicate that the higher expectation

of family about their children's academic performance is also a major factor that increases the stress levels of the students who do not possess the adequate learning abilities to perform well in academics. (Dobson, 2012)

ACADEMIC STRESS

Academic stress is considered a major hurdle by many educational psychologists that can have detrimental effects on the students. Many studies have reported that students suffering from stress related problems tend to show lower levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and academic achievement. The internal pressure builds up in these individuals creating irritability, intolerance towards others and even has the potential to hurt self or others in the process.

Students face lot of pressure that comes along with education in both school and college level in the form of studying, homework, preparation for tests, labs and other academic related activities. In addition there is time management stress, where the students need to balance their time for their studies and extra-curricular activities. It is reported in educational research studies that the academic stress is very high in school students, who come out of the home for the first time to pursue their education. Many research studies have been conducted on the effects of academic stress on the students and researchers have recognized important stressors as excessive assignments, unhealthy competition for better academic performance among other students, less than cordial relationship with other students and teachers. (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003)

Effects of stress

According to behavioral Psychologists, Stress is normal and beneficial as long it is within the manageable limits, as normal stress factors will give extra motivation to the students to focus more and put their additional efforts to excel in the education. The positive

aspect of academic stress is that it provides the students with energy and motivation to meet their daily challenges they face at home and school. Once the outcome of academic stress brings out the best in the student's academic performance, they will feel happy, and satisfied having met the challenge successfully.

However, too much of stress can have significantly higher negative impacts that will lead to an overall drop in the effectiveness of the performances in the regular individuals. According to behavioral researchers, negative signs and symptoms of stress are seen when the students experience the education as a too demanding challenge for them to cope. Thus, the feeling of satisfaction to do well in their studies can turn into physical and mental exhaustion resulting in unhappiness and frustration feelings among the students.

Studies indicate that physical and emotional reactions to stress take place together in general and they tend to result in negative behaviors in individuals when the resulting stressors become more intense in nature. As in the case of students, the intense stress feelings perceived by them towards academic performance will result in them exhibiting mild to moderate reactions. The psychosomatic responses to stress can manifest as changes in feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Fear of failing in the examination will have many detrimental effects on the minds and the resulting attitude of the students experiencing the stress. Depending on the intensity of the pressure feeling, they tend to exhibit mild to severe changes in their physical and emotional behaviors.

The academic stress can disrupt the thinking abilities of the students and can obstruct their learning, resulting in the lower academic performance. The stress level is elevated during the high school life of the students, and they have to deal with many difficulties to pursue their desired educational goals. Students who are mentally tough can cope up with the

increased stress levels; on the other hand, some students will feel such stress levels unbearable that will have an undesirable impact on their academic performance. In such cases, teachers play a vital role in guiding the students by providing necessary information about the stress management and facilitate them to cope with the higher stress levels. Klien and Boals (2001) have reported that stress affects the memory process of the individuals and have found that there exists a correlation between stressful life events and working memory decrease. Working memory refers to the temporary storage of the brain, where maintenance and manipulation of information take place. In three studies, the relationship between the life stress events and working memory capacity was observed, and they have reported that the participants with higher stress level performed poorly in the tasks that were assigned to all the participants of the study. It is said that when the students cannot match the demands of the academic pressures, they become worried and uncomfortable than might lead to stress. Under stress, the students face the internal pressures start troubling them physically or emotionally as they are unable to cope with the academic stress.

The Higher expectation on the student's school performance may also lead to academic stress that might potentially create anxiety symptoms, and frustration feelings, which might ultimately result in poor academic achievement, study habit changes and mental health issues. Schools need to provide a well-balanced academic environment that provides opportunities for the students to focus on their personal needs and gain better learning. Stress management measures like special counseling programs will help the students in a great deal to overcome their academic stress. Students need to be trained about the importance of developing necessary knowledge and skills to manage stress levels to improve their academic performance. To mitigate the growing academic stress

among students, schools are undertaking supplementary academic programs, time management training sessions, and alternative stress relieving techniques like deep breathing, yoga and group activity engagement of students.

The Model of stress

To comprehensively explain the response of stress, Hans Selye, in 1936, created a stress model "General Adaptation Syndrome," which categorizes the stress response in three predictable stages and explain how the aging process and disease conditions are developed by constant exposure to the stress. The model classifies the first stage as alarm stage that provides a burst of energy, which must be utilized by some physical activity. Otherwise, it will turn harmful. The second stage is known as resistance stage, where the body makes an attempt to resist or adjust to the stressor. At this stage, homeostasis or the mechanism of the body to regulate its internal conditions takes place. Stress hormone levels become normal during this period of recovery for repair and renewal mechanism, and the individual will have reduced defense levels and less adaptive energy. If the stressful conditions still continue in this resistance stage, the body remains in a state of awakening and resist the stressor. The final stage of "General Adaptation Syndrome" stress model is known as exhaustion stage as the energy is completely depleted as the result of body's resistance functions to the stressors. Due to the depletion of the adaptive energy supply, the body has lost its resistance abilities and the continued presence of stress. This state is referred to the model as excess load, burnout, adrenal tiredness, maladaptation or dysfunction. It is at this stage, where the stress levels increase and continue to remain unabated. As per the model, the individuals experiencing this stage need to learn stress management and relaxation techniques to improve and maintain disease-free lifestyle. (Selye, 1976).

Section V: Test Anxiety and its relation with other problems

Anxiety

This section covers the important aspects of anxiety, which is commonly experienced by all human beings on an almost every day basis. Behavioral psychologists have indicated that anxious feelings are a normal phenomenon that can range from very low levels to higher levels depending on the effects of societal, personal and academic performance on every specific individual. Spielberg (1972) presented a definition of anxiety as a 'state of arousal' resulting from a threat to comfort and safety. The cause of anxiety differs from individuals to individuals depending on their age and whether they are students or working and also on the nature of the job and education. It is usually referred in terms like jittery, nervousness, uneasiness, and restlessness. It is reported in behavioral research studies that anxiety can be beneficial, at moderate levels, as it can make the individuals be more alert to dangers, enabling them to take some precautionary action for protection.

Various studies have also indicated that anxiety can originate from real or imaginary situations that an individual may perceive. For instance, a student may develop anxiety about the future school tests or final exams or be excessively worried that he/she may fail in the test or exam and be ridiculed by the friends or teachers, which is the imaginary phenomenon. Thus behavioral studies state that the anxiety can result from the thoughts of real or imagined events in students and nearly any circumstances can become the triggering factor for the origin of anxiety. It is also found that one of the major causes of anxiety among students is the exam problem, which makes them more anxious as the exams come nearby. Students experience severe anxiety when the exam date nears and their anxiety levels reach severity level in the exam night. (Onem, 2010)

The term test anxiety as phenomenological, physiological and behavioral reactions associated with unenthusiastic consequences and expectations from a test or an examination (Zeinder & Methews, 2005). Anxiety is defined as a physiological and emotional state characterized by psychological, somatic, cognitive and behavioral elements. Anxiety is exhibited as a distressing feeling of fear and apprehension and can cause thoughts of panic, worry, nervousness and dismay. It is also linked with impatience, tiredness, concentration problems and muscle strain. Psychologists opine that anxiety should not be substituted for fear, which is a more of a frightening feeling regarding something that looks threatening and can defeat a normal person.

The effect of anxiety on students

The research indicate that students with higher anxiety levels can poorly perform in academics as they are unfocused and have diminished concentration skills and working memory skills. These studies have suggested that impaired reading habits and weakening physiological impacts due to anxious feelings result in poor academic performance. The troubled students have to put additional efforts to achieve better grades in the exams as they have to manage their anxiety levels while preparing for the exams. It is identified that timely and proper intervention can minimize the anxiety levels and improve the learning abilities. It is recognized that the physical distractions that cause children to become less focused include raised autonomic actions like sweaty palms and muscle tension. Some students with anxiety feelings can present some signs that are easily recognizable and consistent in nature like flushed cheeks and tense muscles.

The important behavioral attributes of anxiety can be identified by the students' frequent display of frustration feelings, crying behaviors and expression of worries. These students who suffer from anxiety are reported to present complaints of physical pains like headaches and stomach aches frequently. Behavioral studies indicate that these students have fear symptoms present in them and they are identified to get upset for simple mistakes for more number of times. They look for perfectionism in whatever activities or tasks they indulge in and repeated failures to achieve perfection is reported to develop anxiety among these students. The anxious feelings affect the normal functioning of the students and they are reported to be late in the completion of their regular home works given in the school. Some of these anxious students has constant irritability and angry feelings and tend to possess over-reactive and impulsive behavior. Among these attributes, behavioral researchers identify some of these attributes as classic attributes that are visible in all anxious students in schools and some as less-obvious attributes like inflexibility, repetitive behavior. (Minahan & Rappaport, 2013)

Test anxiety

Researchers describe test anxiety as a psychological state in which individuals' experience severe grief and anxiety in testing circumstances. Test anxiety is described as an uneasiness and distress state that exist among the students before and at the time of test, which more often lowers the performance of the students. Zeidner (1998) has defined test anxiety as the "set of phenomenological, physiological, and behavioral responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation. Also, he categorized text anxiety into three components namely: cognitive, affective and behavioral. The cognitive component comprises worry

or negative feelings, depreciating self-assessments that happen during review and performance constraints, which may originate from anxiety. Difficulty in recalling specific details, and problems in reading and the understanding the questions are some of the instances of cognitive components of anxiety. The second categorization of anxiety, affective component, consist of the individual's evaluation of his/her physiological condition such as strain, tensed muscles, and shaky movements. While, the behavioral component comprise impaired learning skills, escapism, and postponement of tasks.

Test anxiety is a natural phenomenon that is commonly experienced by all students before and during the examination. However, when the students have more than normal levels of test anxiety it is found to have negative effects on the physical and emotional health of the students. Test anxiety causes lot of physical and emotional problems for the students, which needs to be controlled for their better academic performance. Sweating, unusual heartbeat, nausea, and dry mouth are some of the symptoms experienced by the students with test anxiety. Those students have emotional symptoms like low levels of self-esteem, fear, frustration, helplessness and hopelessness that have been found by various studies to significantly reduce the academic performance of the students. While it common that all students experience some level of stress and anxiety feelings during the examination period, it is reported that test anxiety can essentially disturb the learning process and hamper test performance. Thus, test anxiety is recognized as a significant variable in basic research studies relating to personality and social psychology topics. (Stober & Pekrun, 2004).

THEORIES OF ANXIETY

The explained anxiety through various theories that describes the factors that causes anxiety symptoms and the respective behavioral patterns of the students.

Behavioristic theory

Theory of Behaviorism is based on the premise that the learning happens with the achievement of new behavior and it occurs consistently if there is an incentive. It deals with the concept of motivating the individuals through rewards to ensure learning process. This theory is based on the traditional teaching methods of teachers who consider that rewards and punishments are the only means of education. Behavioristic theory of anxiety is concerned with the mechanism through which the reinforcement and reprimand influence the possibility of the individual's experiencing the anxiety feelings. However, critics of the theory indicate that the behaviorism theory is not able to provide a proper explanation for the complex human behavior. (Singh, Narania & Jamwal, 2014).

Skinner's theory of learning

Skinner's theory of learning is all about control of human behavior, and the fundamental idea of this theory is that individual behaviors, which are reinforced, will essentially continue to exist, while in contrast, those behaviors that are punished will cease to exist. The concept of reward and punishment propounded by the theory is very beneficial for the classroom learning, where the students can be motivated to develop their learning skills to improve their academic performance. Also, by giving relevant punishment for the student's bad behaviors, the teachers can bring changes in their behavioral pattern and can positively improve the learning skills and reduce the anxiety

levels associated with their academic performance. The theory does not give importance to the mental activities of the learners and is based on the concept that learning takes place when certain universal behavioral conditions are met by the concerned individual.

Hebb's Theory of Arousal

Hebb developed the Theory of Arousal (1955), which explained the relationship between a person's anxiety and academic performance. Arousal is referred as a condition of emotional, intellectual and physical movement. The foundation of the arousal theory is that the individuals in aroused state will have increased heartbeat, breathing rate, and blood pressure, which will make them awake and alert. According to the Arousal theory, all individuals look for an optimum level of arousal in such a way that lower level arousal gives boredom, while on the other hand, an extremely high-level arousal results in stress.

Thus, students will perform the best when their arousal level is at the optimum, where they will feel comfortable and without any anxiety. It is reported that the teachers need to adopt various strategies to increase the arousal level of students to optimum that includes introducing subject topics in an engaging manner, employing humor in classroom lectures, and encouraging active participation of students in class discussions. The school must provide adequate break periods during long sessions, to avoid burn outs of the students. It is reported that the ample break periods allows them to rejuvenate and facilitate them to concentrate on subject lectures. Teachers have to adopt innovative methods to capture and hold the concentration of the students for a longer period, by avoiding monotonous presentation of subject topics. Educational psychologists insist that teachers need to give periodic tests or ask questions in regular intervals to make students less anxious about their performance in the final examination.

This theory depicts the relationship between the arousal or anxiety and performance to be a U-shaped function, by assuming that anxiety at both low and high levels normally generate minimum performance in the individuals, while the moderate level anxiety produces maximum performance. And individuals get maximum arousal when they experience a state of panic or excitement. Thus they must maintain optimal arousal to maximize their performance and have low anxiety feelings. (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013)

Section VI Self-Esteem and its theoretical background

Self Esteem

The construct of self-esteem (or self-concept) dates back to William James, in the late 19th century. In his work *Principles of Psychology* (1890), James studied the splitting of our “global self” into “knower self.” According to James, from this splitting, which we all are more or less aware of, self-esteem is born. In the 20th century, the initial influence of Behaviorism minimized introspective study through experiments on behaviors observed in relation with environment.

Behaviorism placed the human being as an animal subject to reinforcement, and suggested placing psychology as an experimental science, similar to chemistry or biology. As a consequence, clinical trials on self-esteem were overlooked, since behaviorists considered the idea less liable to rigorous measurement hypothesis.

In the mid-20th century, Phenomenology and humanistic psychotherapy made self-esteem gain prominence again, and it took a central role in personal self-actualization and in the treatment of psychic disorders. Psychologists started to consider personal satisfaction and

psychotherapy, and new elements were introduced, which helped to understand the reasons why people tend to feel less worthy, discouraged and unable to understand challenges by themselves.

Carl Rogers (1902-1987), the greatest exponent of humanistic psychology, exposed his theory about unconditional acceptance and self-acceptance as the best way to improve self-esteem. Robert B. Burns regards self-esteem as a collection of an individual's attitudes toward himself. The human being perceives itself at a sensory level; think about itself and about its behavior, and evaluates both its behavior and itself. Consequently, humans feel emotions related to themselves. These emotions prompt behavioral tendencies aimed at oneself, at one's behaviour, and at the features of one's body and character. These tendencies affect the attitudes which, globally, we call self-esteem. Thus, self-esteem for Burns, is the evaluative perception of oneself. In his own words, an "individual's behavior is the result of his environment's particular interpretation, whose focus is himself".

The core self-evaluations approach includes self-esteem as one of four dimensions that comprise one's fundamental appraisal of oneself, along with locus of control, neuroticism, and self-efficacy. The concept of core self-evaluations as first examined by Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), has since proven to have the ability to predict several work outcomes, specifically, job satisfaction and job performance. Self-esteem may, in fact, be one of the most essential core self-evaluation dimensions because it is the overall value one feels about oneself as a person.

The idea of the importance of self-esteem especially in education has gained endorsement from some government and non-government groups, such that one can speak of a self-esteem movement.

In the mid-1960s, Morris Rosenberg and social-learning theorists defined self-esteem as a personal worth or worthiness. Nathaniel Branden in 1969 defined self-esteem as “the experience of being competence of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness”.

As a social psychological construct, self-esteem is attractive because researchers have conceptualized it as an influential predictor of relevant outcomes, such as academic achievement or exercise behavior (Hagger et al. 1998). In addition, self-esteem has also been treated as an important outcome due to its close relation with psychological well-being (Marsh 1989). Self-esteem can apply specifically to a particular dimension or a global extent. Psychologists usually regard self-esteem as an extent. Psychologists usually regard self-esteem as an enduring personality characteristic (“trait” self-esteem), though normal, short-term variations (“state” self-esteem) also exist. Synonyms or near-synonyms of self-esteem include: self-worth, self-regard, self-respect, and self-integrity

This section covers about Self-esteem, which is another important variable that can have a significant impact on the student’s academic performance due to their higher anxiety levels. Behavioral studies describe self-esteem as an overall feeling of the self or to a certain specific characteristic of self and refer to an individual’s confidence in his/her own worth or abilities. It describes how individuals feel about social status, self-respect, ethnicity, physical characteristics, interpersonal or communication skills, and academic performance. Self-esteem illustrates the manner in which a particular person makes a self-evaluation of his characteristics about that of the other individuals as per his/her perception. Self-esteem is recognized as a critical variable for gaining an understanding of a person’s mental health development and adjustment process. (Young & Bagley, 1982).

Behavioral researchers state that the younger people make a comparison of their actual and ideal self and make a self-judgment as to how they will measure up to the societal outlooks and standards and how well be their actual performance as compared to the criteria. Research studies indicate that a positive self-esteem and higher grades in academic examinations can significantly determine whether a particular student will be happier with his/her performance or not. Studies signify that when an individual reaches the adolescence, he/she will have attained the standard set of self-assessments and even the specific tasks like academic learning will more likely be improved or hampered by the self-esteem that already exists in the individual. Researchers specify that the parents, concerned counselors and others associated with the particular individual must be attentive to the negative effects of stress, which can ultimately lower the individual's self-esteem. Researchers have identified that the young persons who have more stressful life-events be more likely to possess less self-esteem as compared to young people with less stressful life-events. (Bagley, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 1997)

Levels of self-esteem

The notion of self-esteem, conventionally, has been classified into two types namely, high self-esteem and low-esteem. While, the high self-esteem comprises individual's general feelings of self-liking, self-respect and self-acceptance characteristics, the low self-esteem is illustrated by more disinterested self-feelings. (Kernis, 2003).

Studies specify that self-esteem plays a vital role in raising and controlling the stress of students. It is identified that the students who were experiencing high stress were found to have lower levels of self-esteem and were also found to possess lower self-awareness concerning their health. It is described as a hopeless situation, which

prevents individuals from understanding their full potential. Researchers' state that a person with a low self-esteem considers himself/ herself to be incompetent, worthless, helpless and incapable of achieving any normal tasks. Low self-esteem people tend to possess a pessimistic behavior, negative outlook on life, fear to take risks, blaming attitude, self-pity, and perfectionist attitude. These individuals have been recognized by research studies to feel very poorly about them, which make them remain as a low-esteem person continuously. The low socio-economic conditions are found to cause environmental deficient status that ultimately leads to low self-esteem of students. (US Department of Education, 2003)

On the other hand, individuals with high self-esteem normally possess positive feelings about their capability to participate, self-assured in social circumstances and satisfied in their daily life. Behavioral researchers state that high self-esteem is characterized by self-confidence, positive self-worth, optimistic feeling, encouraging behavior, supportive attitude and better communication. High self-esteem peoples are recognized as extroverts, brisk, motivated and possess attitude to learning from their past mistakes. Positive self-esteem enables the individuals to gain great awareness about their inherent strengths, be continuously optimistic, independent, trustworthy, and presents them with the confidence to trust their problem-solving skills. Studies identify them as flexible, assertive with excellent abilities to pursue their tasks with confidence and devoid of fear. Also, Studies report high self-esteem individuals to lead a happier life and emotionally more healthy lives. (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003)

Impact of self-esteem on academic performance

Behavioral psychologists state that the self-esteem plays a significant role in determining the overall functioning of the individuals, without their knowledge and significantly determines the level of success. It is more so particular in the case of academic achievement, where students with higher self-esteem are recognized to fare well in their exams as they have the required confidence to face the anxious feelings that they may experience during the exam night. Research studies have documented the significant contribution of high self-esteem nature to the academic performance, societal and individual responsibility.

Researchers have reported that higher grades in the exam can also improve the self-esteem of an individual by enhancing the sense of worth, confidence, and competence. Self-esteem is identified in studies to play an important role in the development of particular identity in young person. Self-esteem has allowed adolescents to tackle academic challenges in a much better manner thereby improving the reading and learning styles to achieve better grades. (SaralaDevi, & Dr. Jyotsana, 2016).

Theoretical model

There is a major theoretical model that explains the concept of self-esteem through several behavioral elements. Many early theories suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need or motivation. American psychologist Abraham Maslow included self-esteem in his hierarchy of needs. He described two different forms of esteem: the need for respect from others, and the need for self-respect, or inner self-esteem. Respect from others entails recognition, acceptance, status, and appreciation, and was believed to be

more fragile and easily lost than inner self-esteem. According to Maslow, without the fulfillment of the self-esteem need, individuals will be driven to seek it and unable to grow and obtain self-actualization.

Modern theories of self-esteem explore the reasons humans are motivated to maintain a high regard for themselves. Socio meter theory maintains that self-esteem evolved to check one's levels of status and acceptance in ones' social group. According to terror management theory, self-esteem serves a protective function and reduces anxiety about life and death.

The importance of self-esteem lies in the fact that it concerns to ourselves, the way we are and the sense of our personal value. Thus, it affects the way we are and act in the world and the way we are related to everybody else. Nothing in the way we think, feel, decide and act escapes the influence of self-esteem.

Abraham Maslow, in his hierarchy of human needs, describes the "need for esteem," which is divided into two aspects, the esteem for oneself self-love, self-confidence, skill, aptitude, and respect receives from other people recognition, success, etc. The healthiest expression of self-esteem, according to Maslow, "is the one which manifests in respect we deserve for others, more than renowned, fame and flattery".

Carl Rogers, the greatest exponent of humanistic psychology, exposed that the origin of problems for many people despise themselves and they consider themselves to be invaluable and unworthy of being loved; thus the importance he/she gave to unconditional acceptance of client. Indeed, the concept of self-esteem is approached since then in humanistic psychology as an inalienable right for every person, summarized in the following sentence:

“Every human being, with no exception, for the mere fact to be it, is worthy of unconditional respect of everybody else; he deserves to esteem himself and to be esteemed”.

By virtue of this reason, even the evil human beings deserve respect and considered Treatment. This attitude, nonetheless, does not pretend to come into conflict with mechanisms that society has at its disposition to prevent individuals from causing hurt-of any type-to others.

Michele Borba's Self-esteem Theory

Michele Borba, an educational psychologist, presented self-esteem theory, which provides the five building blocks of healthy self-esteem namely, Security, Selfhood, Affiliation, Mission and Competence. The five elements describe various behavioral patterns and outlook of individuals play a major role in significantly their developing self-esteem.

The author explains that the sense of security means a feeling of high assuredness, comfortableness, safety feeling, having a strong knowledge of expectations, which are important for a positive and trusting relationship. Selfhood means a sense of individuality and gaining self-awareness. The author explains the third component, affiliation, as a feeling of belongingness and acceptance, especially in those relationships that are identified critical for the individuals. The fourth element, Mission, give a sense of purpose and motivation in life by being accountable for one’s decisions, which will enhance the ability of the individuals to look for alternatives and take effective decisions. The author explains the final component, competence as a sense of triumph and accomplishment in matters that people consider important or valuable. (Borba, 1989)

Section VII Academic Achievement and the Factors Related to Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement or academic performance is the outcome of education the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects is most important procedural knowledge such a skills or declarative knowledge such as facts.

It is recognized as a significant characteristic of the students' life, and their relative success or failure is evaluated regarding academic achievement. The principal objectives of the assessment of academic achievement are to specify and verify learning process and to judge the student's progress and making decisions about them. The school achievement represents performance outcomes that provide an indication as to the extent to which the students have accomplished the specific goals of the learning process at the school and college level. It refers to the student's performance in different subjects of the school curriculum for the period of the entire academic year. At the higher secondary level, the academic achievement plays a significant role in shaping the career of the students, like better grades in the academics will facilitate them to pursue higher educational programs of their choice. Educational psychologists indicate the better academic achievement of students will lead to the effective development of society and the region on the whole. In a study on learner's attitudes towards subjects, academic aspiration, and achievement, Maher M. Abu-Hilal [2000] reported that expectation levels of students had a significant direct impact on the academic achievement, while their attitudes to school subjects had only indirect influence on their academic achievement. (Jhansi & Dr. Bhuvaneshwara Lakshmi, 2014)

Factors Affecting Academic Achievement

Academic achievement indicates the cumulative knowledge acquired through learning in educational institutions. Educational psychologists have documented that there are numerous factors available, which are responsible for the relatively higher and lower academic achievements of students. They state that these factors can be categorized into two broad groups namely, Subjective factors and Objective factors. It is explained that the subjective factors are associated with the individuals themselves, which has significant influence in their achievement. Some examples of subjective factors include intelligence, learning capabilities, enthusiasm, learning methods, reading habits, creativeness, and the level of ambition, self-esteem, and self-control. On the other hand, objective factors are referred about the surrounding environment that includes the individual's socio-economic standing, education structure, family atmosphere, assessment mechanism, competence level of teachers, school conditions and atmosphere.

Also, psychologists indicate some home related factors that can affect the academic performance of the students, which includes family size, the order of birth, parental participation, parental expectation, and cooperation from siblings. Also, studies indicate few miscellaneous factors like culture, neighborhood locality, student's gender and age. Researchers have documented that three different variables affect the academic achievement of students from socio-economically disadvantaged sections as compared to others sections of the population. These factors are cognitive variables, personality variables, and motivational variables. Cognitive factors include the intelligence, creativity, and logical thinking. Personality variables include emotional maturity, perseverance, and stress. Motivational variables refer to levels of aspiration, interests, and social maturity. (Miller, 1991)

Theories of Academic Achievement

Goal Orientation Theory

Educational psychologists Elliot and Dweck (1988) identified that the children with two different objectives for increasing and demonstrating their abilities, namely, a performance and a mastery objective direction be likely to have different learning processes. According to the theory, students with performance goal orientation tend to focus on the end outcomes, have failure anxieties, and give more importance to the consequences of their poor performance like dissatisfaction of others. The theory found that these students select tasks, which will facilitate them to display their competence at the cost of their learning. On the other hand, the method found that the students with a mastery goal orientation look for demanding tasks, which will offer them the opportunity to improve their competencies.

Theory of Educational Productivity

The theory of Educational productivity by Walberg (1981) is an important research study that categorized the nine factors, based on three groups, which affected the quality of the academic performance of the students. The three groups include aptitude, instruction and environment sets that are necessary for the optimization of the learning process. The theory grouped ability, development, and motivation under the skill set, amount and quality of the instruction group and home, classroom, friends and television under the environment group. Thus collectively these factors, which are based on the affective, cognitive and behavioral skills of the students play a major role in the determining the educational productivity and academic performance of the individuals.

Section VIII Nature of Integrated Intervention used in the Present Study

Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is an important technique developed by American physician Edmund Jacobson in the 1930s to reduce anxiety feelings among individuals, which involves alternating tension and rest in all the major muscle groups of the human body. Edmund Jackson, who was a pioneer in biofeedback research, carried out research on the chemical and the electrical nerve transmission in the human muscles and explained the correlation between the longitudinal muscle tension, psychological and mental disorders. Through various experiments, he proved that physical relaxation significantly affects the mental relaxation process by alternatively controlling the tension and relaxation mechanism of various muscle groups. (Dr. Rema, & Deepa, 2015)

According to the theory, during PMR, individual concentrates on steadily testing particular muscle groups present all over the body for several seconds and then start relaxing the muscle groups. It is identified that on regular employment of this process, a new habit is acquired, which allows the individuals to be able to relax their muscles automatically. This technique is intended to reinforce the ability of the mind to influence the body functions. Every disease conditions can potentially create a lot of stress for the concerned individuals and PMR muscle relaxation method is found to be very effective in reducing the stress and anxiety levels of such individuals. (McCallie, Blum & Hood, 2006)

Studies report that the PMR is commonly used the methodology to reduce anxiety as it is simple to teach, inexpensive and highly effective, where the participants focus on the alternating feelings of tension and relaxation. The participants can be motivated to practice this method on their own once they have done the process with guidance.

Research studies have been conducted to observe the outcomes of the study skills training process and deep muscle relaxation on variables like test anxiety and academic performance. These studies reported that progressive muscle Relaxation technique would be helpful to reduce test anxiety and to result in improving the academic performance of the students. (Rasado, 2013)

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness Meditation has been considered as the heart Buddhist tradition, which requires individuals to remain purposefully aware of their internal beliefs, feelings, and sensations and also the stimulus present externally. It is reported that in the process, they combine to produce the current experience of the individuals, without them becoming preoccupied with such experiences. The studies emphasize that the attention value brought up the individuals to their present moment must represent neutrality, fairness, empathy and concern for both the self and others. Studies have documented that the sustained and consistent practice of mindfulness through meditation techniques leads the individuals to gain numerous insights, thereby assisting them to change their self-perception as well as the practice. Also, a continued, non-judgmental scrutiny of a person's thoughts, emotions and physical sensations without instantaneously responding or reacting to these feelings in routinely habituated ways generates a rational breathing space for those individuals. In the process, their individualistic opinions about their feelings, belief and sensations, their related significance, acquired or routine behaviors are disregarded and reviewed. (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)

Research studies describe mindfulness as an insight meditation that involves a deep, penetrative and non-conceptual vision into the nature of the mind and worldly matters. Individuals practicing mindfulness have been reported to improve the monitoring

of their internal emotional states; thereby it has the potential to facilitate them to achieve better balance in their lives, particularly during stressful conditions. These individuals also improve their self-control and self-efficacy perceptions that constitute the standard measures of academic success. It has been documented that students engaging in mindfulness scored higher on standardized tests and college course exams. (Docksai, 2013). In another study, mindfulness has been reported to improve the working memory capacity of the individuals by releasing the availability of the short-term and long-term memory stores, enabling the students to efficiently retain more information as they progress to the next class. Mindfulness meditation is useful for all students and more particularly those students who are suffering from attention deficiency. Mindfulness is documented to result in greater cognitive flexibility, attention abilities, thereby bringing improvements in student's motivation levels for learning and better academic performance. (McCloskey, 2015)

Researchers opine that the children spend the majority of their time in school learning new knowledge and behavior in the process. Thus, schools can introduce the children to mindfulness-based tasks that will help them to become better prepared while facing the present and future challenging situations. Also, it is reported that the openness and enthusiasm in learning that many school children possess may enable them to learn the technique of mindfulness easily in the school environment.

The objectives of mindfulness-based programs with children are to promote their concentration to day-to-day duties and improve their social skills like patience, modesty, kindness, attentiveness. It is also reported that mindfulness improves the self-esteem, concentration, and optimism levels of the children, which will help them to develop positive outlook in all their functions. Studies report mindfulness-based programs facilitate

them to develop Self-control, which will allow them to maintain a calm behavior even when they are angry, frustrated or stressed. On the whole, these mindfulness meditation programs allow them to focus their attention on academic learning and improve their examination performance. The studies have reported that the mindfulness teachings in schools are beneficial to the children by increasing their creativity, cognitive flexibility, improving memory retention of knowledge and allowing better usage of information by the children. (Semple & Lee, 2008)

SQR3

SQR3 is a textbook reading method developed by Francis Pleasant Robinson in 1946, to help the college students in improving their reading process and enhance the retention of textbook information. The author explained the concept of SQR3 in his book called *Effective Study*, where he noted that the students require assistance in any study task and they need to develop some skills related to studies like reading and thinking. According to the author, SQR3 technique can make the complex task of reading a textbook less challenging and possibly, even a more interesting. SQR3 stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. According to the author, the objective of surveying is to warm up the student's brain and give an overview of the chapter in the textbook. Here, students need to look for titles and headings, pictures, questions, bold or italicized prints, introduction and conclusion section and footnotes, if any. The next stage of the SQR3 method is to turn the heading of the text into a question, which will arouse the curiosity of the students and increase their active involvement and understanding of the topic. (Wiseman, 2014)

Then the third step of the method is to read an answer to that question by searching the main ideas that are relevant to the concept. The author explained that the purpose of the Recite step is to summarize the reading, to test the comprehension skills of the students and to put the important information in their long-term memory. Once the students completed the reading of the chapter or selected topics, they need to do a review of what has been learned by reciting the major points collected under each heading. The author pointed that thus the students can check their memory by trying to recall the information gathered in the process. Studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of SQR3 method revealed that is a useful reading strategy to stimulate student's comprehension abilities, thinking skills, concentration and focusing abilities, and to nurture their communicative skills. (Khaghaninejad, Saadabadimotlagh, & Kowsari, 2015)

Enriching Psychological Resources for SC/ST students

Need for the Intervention study

In recent decades, State and the Central Governments have undertaken various measures to improve standard education levels of SC and ST children. While the educational enrollment levels of SC/ST communities have improved considerably as the result of these various promotional measures, still a good portion of these student population suffer from academic stress, social relationship issues and emotional problems, higher school dropout rates and poor academic achievement. Jayanthi, Thirunavukarasu & Rajkumar (2014) in their interventional study stated that academic stress of students needs to be monitored in order to improve their academic achievement. In addition, this researcher is of the opinion that there is less number of research studies are conducted among the SC/ST youth belonging to the rural region. Evans, Vermeylen, Barash, Lefkowitz & Hutt (2009)

has reported that the students in the rural region are neglected populations and more number of researches have been conducted only among the students from the urban population. This has motivated this researcher to conduct a rural study to provide interventions to reduce academic stress and test anxiety and to improve the self-esteem of SC/ST youth students. The objective of the research study is to investigate whether the outcome of all these independent variables positively influence the overall academic achievement of the targeted SC/ST youth students.

Thus, it becomes essential to enrich the psychological resources of SC/ST students by designing an integrated intervention program among these backward sections of the population. This researcher planned the study for the duration period of six to eight weeks with objectives to improve their psychological resources significantly, which in turn may positively influence the academic performance of SC/ST students. Further, based on the outcome of this study, a simplified version of the integrated intervention can be framed so as to implement it across all the SC/ST youth as a regular program at schools.

Diagram

Conceptual framework

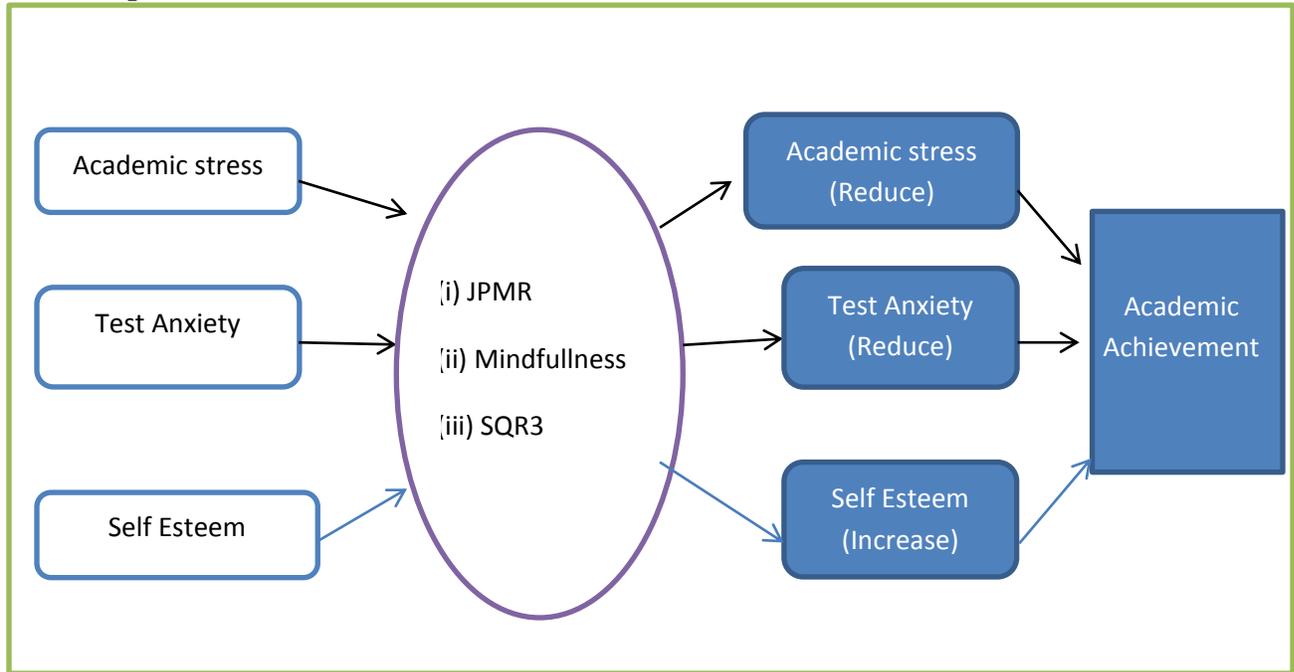


Figure 1: The concept frame work of SC/ST youth students

Objectives of the study

- i. To determine whether the Integrated Intervention strategy directed at the SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant gain in their academic achievement.
- ii. To determine whether the Integrated Intervention directed at SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant decrease in their Text anxiety.
- iii. To determine whether the Integrated Intervention strategy directed at the SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant gain in their Self Esteem.
- iv. To determine whether the Integrated Intervention directed at SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant decrease in their Academic Stress.

Summary

Numerous educational research studies conducted in the past have identified all these variables to be important in determining the academic achievement of the school children. This researcher believes that it is very important for the students especially the SC/ST youth students to develop their self-esteem and manage their test anxiety and academic stress better to improve their overall academic performance in a significant manner. Thus, this researcher has conducted and integrated interventional study using mindfulness, JPMR and SQR3 on selected youth students belonging to SC/ST communities to reduce their academic stress and test anxiety as well as to improve their self-esteem with the prime objective to facilitate a significant gain in their academic achievement.