

## **INCREASING TREND OF MENTAL STRESS AMONGST TEENAGERS**

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### **Introduction**

It is estimated that 6-7 % of population suffers from mental disorders. The World Bank report (1993) revealed that the Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) loss due to neuropsychiatric disorder is much higher than diarrhea, malaria, worm infestations and tuberculosis if taken individually.

Recent news of suicide committed by School going Children, particularly, teenagers is worrisome. If we look at few of the incidences as,

A girl (name is kept secret) from Nagpur of age 13 tried to commit suicide by hanging herself was rescued by her mother and the reason for taking such extreme step observed to be unable to fulfill the parents expectations. Similarly, Bengaluru student's (name is kept secret) parent couldn't understand why he didn't want to attend school, despite getting good grades. The 15-year-old skipped meals and had angry outbursts. His worried parents took him to a therapist. After several sessions, he told her counselor that he was a victim of cyber bullying.

Physical and psychological deterioration, generally termed as mental morbidity, has many manifestations. These may include mood disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, drug abuse, attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and anxiety. Experts stress that while it can be triggered in childhood, it

mostly manifests itself in children at the onset of adolescence. Psychologists refer adolescence as Transition Stage as this is the period where the adolescents transform from a child to an adult.

Mental health professionals believe there are several reasons why mental morbidity is on the rise among teenagers. Some of the major factors are substance abuse, family conflict, relocation, peer pressure, peer-to-peer relationships and performance pressure in academics and other fields. Internet addiction is another problem that minors grapple with. Panic attacks have become very common in school children. There has been a rise in the number of cases related to body shaming as well. Children are increasingly involved in activities where they sit at home, instead of playing physically, or are involved in performance sports at all times. Often parents' work stress is transferred to their children.

As per the experts in the field of Counseling and many of the Psychiatrists, puberty is anyway a vulnerable period, and usually leads to some disruption in an adolescent's life, however, if one's home life and educational environment are balanced and supportive, there is no reason why puberty cannot be smooth sailing. Small crises are also necessary for children to develop resilience in life.

One of the roadblocks to effective treatment, however, is the parents' reluctance to accept that their child may need professional help. And the law on mental health makes no mention of a meaningful role that a teacher or any other adult can play in dealing with childhood mental morbidity.

Though this study has been planned to highlight the reason of mental stress amongst teenagers, it will also help in drawing recommendations and rendering suggestions to create awareness amongst responsible to help eliminate or at-least reduce the activities creating mental stress in teenagers.

**Objectives**

1. To understand major factors responsible for mental stress in teenagers,
2. To study Socio-economic status of families influencing on creation of such factors,
3. To understand behavioral change in teenagers, and,
4. To help parents to understand mental status of their Child.

**Methodology**

Research work carried by randomly selecting samples of teenagers, both girls and boys, of age 13 to 19 years, belongs to Joint & Nuclear Family along with financial status of their families and their education level. Samples are selected from old Jalna.

The Data was collected by 1.Primary Data and 2. Secondary data.

Primer data collected through interview and duly filled questionnaire while secondary data was through various references.

Age Group	Sample Size	Yearly Income of Family five lacks and above per annum				Yearly Income of Family below five lacks per annum			
		Parents/Mothers education Status				Parents/Mothers education Status			
		PG		UG		PG		UG	
		JF	NF	JF	NF	JF	NF	JF	NF
13 to 15	24	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
15 to 17	24	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
17 to 19	24	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
<b>Total</b>	72	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

JF : Joint Family, NF : Nuclear Family, PG : Post Graduate, UG : Under Graduate

**Hypothesis**

1. Teenagers with mental stress more in Nuclear Families,
2. Parents with lower education level are unaware about factors influencing and developing mental stress in the child,

3. Teenagers belongs to Joint family are seldom stressful , and
4. Socioeconomic condition hugely influence on mental health of teenagers.

**Findings**

Major factors creating mental stress amongst teenagers are

**A. Yearly Income of Family more than Rs 5 Lakhs per annum**

Age Group	Sample Size	Particulars of Factors	Parents/Mothers education Status											
			Post Graduate & above						Under Graduate and below					
			Joint Family		Nuclear Family		Total		Joint Family		Nuclear Family		Total	
			No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6
13 to 15	6 nos each PG & UG	Parents unable to share emotional space with child	-	-	2	33.3	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
		Parents expectations from the child	2	33.33	2	33.3	4	66.7	3	25.0	3	50.0	6	100
		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	2	33.33	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
15 to 17	6 nos each PG & UG	Parents unable to share emotional space with child	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
		Parents expectations from the child	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7

		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3
17 to 19	6 nos each PG & UG	Parents unable to share emotional space with child	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
		Parents expectations from the child	3	50.0	3	50.0	6	100	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>86.1</b>			<b>19</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>80.6</b>		

- Overall observation is, **86.1 & 80.6 %** teenagers, belongs to Nuclear Family with education level of Parents as post graduate and under graduate respectively, are under mental stress than the one living in Joint Family. During the discussions, it has emerged that teenagers belongs to nuclear family unable to exchange their anxiety/anger/emotions with parents or any of the family members thereby they become introvert and seldom mixed-up with their peers. On the contrary, teenagers belong to joint family can exchange their feelings, any time, with the members other than their parents and become more social.

2. Parents' expectation from the child, **100%** in case of under graduate parents, is observed to be major reason for the mental stress. That unnecessarily creates burden and the child become hyperactive.
3. Now a days, even Cyber related issues are major reason for mental stress in teenagers, **83.3%** observed in higher educated families were child has easy access to electronic gadgets.

**B. Yearly Income of Family Rs 5 Lakhs and less per annual**

Age Group	Sample Size	Particulars of Factors	Parents/Mothers education Status											
			Post Graduate & above						Under Graduate and below					
			Joint Family		Nuclear Family		Total		Joint Family		Nuclear Family		Total	
			No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6	No.	% to 6
13 to 15	6 nos each PG & UG	Child unable to share emotional space with Parents	-	-	2	33.3	2	33.3	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
		Parents expectations from the child	2	33.33	2	33.3	4	66.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3
		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	1	16.7	2	50.0	3	50.0	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
15 to 17	6 nos each PG & UG	Child unable to share emotional space with Parents	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
		Parents expectations from the child	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7

		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3
17 to 19	6 nos each PG & UG	Child unable to share emotional space with Parents	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	4	66.7
		Parents expectations from the child	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3	2	33.3	3	50.0	5	83.3
		Getting trolled on social media and/ or failure of first love	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7	2	33.3	2	33.3	4	66.7
		Parents quarreling on regular basis or hot tempered parents	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>47.22</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>77.8</b>			<b>18</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>77.8</b>		

1. In case of Family with low income, similar to higher income group, **77.8%** teenagers belongs to Nuclear Family are under stress.
2. Again, parents' expectation from child, almost about **83.3%**, observed to be major factor for mental stress amongst lower educational group.
3. Here also, parents are unable to spare time with the child to understand his/her mental condition and to create emotional bonding.
4. Cyber related mental stress in teenagers is more in case of higher educated parents than the low. This is due to easy availability of electronic gadgets to the child.

Due to stress, major behavioral changes observed in teenagers are

- a. Teenagers become aggressive and respond loudly,
- b. Teenagers become introvert and do not get mixed up with peers,
- c. Remain within the home and avoid outdoor games or playing with peers,
- d. Teenagers observed to inculcate fear within them,
- e. Teenagers become very choosy and get upset instantly if things do not happen to their requirements, and,
- f. Few of respondents observed to be violent, particularly of 17 to 19 age group.

### **Limitations**

1. We presume that all the information provided by the respondents is true & factual,
2. Data collected from sample size 72 only, which is miniscule to generalize the trend as found.
3. The data collection has been done from a limited geographical area. Hence the findings & conclusions have got their own limitations.

### **Conclusion**

Puberty period is any way a very vulnerable period in teenagers and during that period, if they do not get outlet to share their feelings/ anxiety/ anger, then they start developing the feeling of loneliness and that is really a major worry of mental stress. Further nuclear family that to with parents working adds to further complicating the issue. Another factor which is observed to be very common is Parents expectations of their child to be a winning horse. This not only burdens the child but also seclude him/her from the peers.

The MHCA places almost the entire responsibility for health-care decisions for minors on parents or guardians. In order to avoid any complex situation arising out of mental stress, parents, particularly mother, needs to spend quality time with the child. They need to interact/communicate with the child frequently,



appreciate child for even a smallest achievement. Encourage child to play outside games, help them find good friend. Take the child for outing and some time for lunch or dinner.

Elders amongst the joint family, to not to be extra careful or pamper to spoil his/her habits.

Lots can be done at school level,

- Appointing professional social workers in all schools.
- Giving equal importance to the extra-curricular activities of the students.
- Creating conducive school environment for the students.
- Focusing on the mental health aspects of the adolescent school students.
- Providing Life-skills training to the adolescents which would help them to handle the difficult situations positively.
- Having periodical parents-teachers meet to discuss on the 'holistic' development of the student rather than discussing only about academic progress.

Thus, this study emphasis that stressed feelings among adolescents should not be neglected, but has to be properly intervened, so as to avoid a larger destruction.

### **References**

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