

STRESS AND COPING STYLE OF URBAN AND RURAL ADOLESCENTS

Samata Srivastava¹, Dr. J. P. Singh², Dr. Om Prakash Srivastava¹

¹Department of psychology, P. G College Gazipur Uttar Pradesh (India)

²Department of Psychology, Rashtriya P.G. College, Jamuhai (Jaunpur) samsrivastava18@gmail.com

Abstract— This study aimed to assess the nature of stress, and coping styles among rural and urban adolescents. **Methods:** 200 students in 10+2 and graduation first year of both genders in the age range of 16-19 years were assessed with the Adolescent Stress Scale, and a self-report coping scale. **Results:** The Result of present study reveals that in both environmental settings male reported more stress than their counterparts girls, however, to utilize coping strategies female adolescents are in higher in number than male adolescents. **Conclusions:** It is important for research to examine how adolescents suffering from typical stressors such as school examination, family conflict and poor peer relations. Social support is likely one of the most important resources in their coping process.

Key words— Adolescents; Stress; Coping; Environmental setting.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is conceptualized as a transitional period, which begins with the onset of puberty and ends with the acceptance of adult roles and responsibilities. Of all life-stages, except childhood, adolescence is the one most marked by rapid and potentially tumultuous transition (Williams, Holmbeck, & Greenly, 2002). This is to be seen in the domain of biological development where the changes are physically externally manifest as well as in the progression of both cognitive and psychosocial maturity from that of childhood to that of the fully functioning adult (Byrne, Davenport, & Mazanov, 2007). While the transition through adolescence is inevitable the speed and magnitude of these changes overtax the capacity of many young people to cope and the resulting phenomenon of adolescent stress is now well recognized (Byrne, et al., 2007). The adolescent period involves a number of different intensities biological, cognitive, and psychosocial changes (Susman & Dorn, 2009). The biological changes involve physical changes in an Individual's body with extraordinary growth and change in physical appearance and biological functioning. The pubertal changes also affect the adolescents psychologically, in different ways, and with and timing. The cognitive processes are one of the most striking changes to take place during adolescence and involve the development of far more sophisticated thinking abilities and reasoning ability. The rapid development of psychosocial processes during adolescence involve changes in emotions, personality, relationships with others, and social contexts (McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009). A critical task of adolescence is the establishment of a stable sense of identity as a part of achieving autonomy. Adolescents must learn to deal with an expanding social universe and must develop the social skills to find friendship, romance, employment, and social standing within multiple social spheres (Cote, 2009). Adolescents must therefore develop a range of mechanisms, which allow them to function effectively in the face of the stress, which comes about from the transition of adolescence (Byrne et al., 2007).

A. Stress and adolescence period

Stress has traditionally been conceptualized in three ways; as a stimulus (an event or accumulation of events); as a response (a psychophysiological reaction); or as a transactional process, in which a person and the environment interact to produce an appraisal of threat or loss (Caltabiano, Sarafino, & Byrne, 2008). "Stress" is used to describe the subjective experience of pressure, implying an evaluation of the outcome of a process. This is in line with the transactional view of stress as a relationship between environmental events or conditions, and the individual's cognitive appraisals of the degree and type of challenge, threat, harm or loss (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The most widely accepted definition of stress is the transactional definition offered by Lazarus and Folkman (1984): "Psychological stress involves 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" (p. 19). According to this definition, stress is subjective by nature, since it involves an appraisal of individual experiences. Many adolescents today experience numerous potential stressors throughout the process of growth and Development (Compas & Reeslund, 2009). Stressors of both an acute and chronic nature are important in the course of normal as well as disrupted development during adolescence. The types of stressors experienced in adolescence can broadly be divided into three categories. These categories are normative events, non-normative events and daily hassles (Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008). Normative events refer to events that are experienced by most adolescents, but usually within a relatively predictable timescale. Examples of these includes internal and external changes related to pubertal development, psychosocial changes related to school, family, peers and academically demands. One important aspect here is that these are events, which all young people have to confront, but usually within a relatively predictable timescale (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Suldo et al., 2008). Non-normative events are different in the way that they are events affecting one adolescent or only a smaller group of adolescents, and can occur at less predictable points in the life course (Grant et al., 2003). Such events can include for example, divorce, illness, injury or natural disasters. The last category is daily hassles. Daily hassles differ from major events in life that they are defined as minor, irritating, and frustrating events that are typical of daily interactions between individuals and their environments.

B. Coping style and adolescence period

Coping has been defined as the constantly changing cognitive and behavioral effect to manage specific external and /or internal demand that has been evaluated as taking up or exceeding the resources of the person (Lazarus & folkman, 1984). Research

recognizes two functions of coping: regulating stressful emotions and altering the personenvironment relation causing the distress (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis & Gruen, 1986).

Coping is thus expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate the stress of conflict. Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skill. The term coping generally refers to adaptive or constructive coping strategies, i.e., the strategies reduce stress levels. However; some coping strategies can be considered maladaptive, i.e. stress levels increase. Coping response are partly controlled by personality trait, but also by the social contexts of person, particularly the nature of the stressful environment. Coping is also an important mediator of experience that shapes personality development and influences adaptability and resilience in difficult situations (Garnezy, 1987). Conceptualization of children's/adolescent's coping was derived from the adult coping work. However, growing evidence indicates that coping abilities of children/adolescents may differ from those of adults in some very important ways (Arnold, 1990; Compas, Banez, Malcarne, & Worsham, 1991; Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985; Omizo, Omizo, & Suzuki, 1988). Adolescents/Children may be limited in their coping repertoire by cognitive, affective, expressive, or social facets of development and by lack of experience. The adolescent's environments are quite different from adults' environments, particularly because children have less control over circumstances. Adolescents/Children are limited by realistic constraints, such as restricted freedom to actively avoid stressors (though restricted freedom also limits their exposure to some stressors), and a state of personal and financial dependence on parents. Thus, aspects of development and the environment may limit the coping responses, adolescents are capable of making, and the coping strategies promoting adjustment in adolescents may differ from those promoting adjustment in adults. Teenagers are also at the stage of developing their personal styles of coping. The coping strategies can be reviewed, modified if needed and crystallized from one experience of using certain mechanisms of coping with another, during adolescent years. Miller and Kirsch (1987) they found that many studies report differences in how women and men cope with stress, with men tending to deal with stress by problem-focused coping, while women tend to use strategies that modify their emotional response, although these tendencies can change in certain circumstances. Several authors (i.e., Almeida & Kessler, 1998; Barnett et al., 1987) have suggested that the impact of gender on the stress process could be conditioned by traditional socialization patterns. The traditional female gender role prescribes dependence, affiliation,

emotional expressiveness, a lack of assertiveness, and the subordination of one's own needs to those of others. On the other hand, the traditional male role prescribes attributes such as autonomy, self-confidence, assertiveness, instrumentality and being goal-oriented. . As a summary, we can conclude that there are some gender differences as well as similarities in adolescents' coping.

II. METHOD

Sample: - The sample consisted of 200 adolescents from rural and urban population residing in the eastern district of U.P 100 adolescents were from rural background (50 male and 50 female) and 100 were from urban backgrounds (50 male and 50 female). The age ranges of the subjects were 16 to 19 years.

Materials: - In the present investigation, two tools have been used to measure two dependent variable. The detailed description of these has given below.

I. Psychological stress scale (Prof. A. K. Srivastava)- The questionnaire was designed to assess the extended of individual's feelings of basic components of psychological stress (such as pressure tension anxiety, conflict, frustration, etc.) resulted from perceived stress situations (such as adversities, hardships, threats, affliction, failures, constraints excessive demands, conflicting roles etc.) in various spheres of his social life. The Questionnaire altogether consisted of 40 items representing following seven categories of the social situation of stress.

S.No.	Psycho social stressors	No. of items
1	Tense or strained interpersonal relationship	5
2	Economic constraints ; Extra 8 economic burden	
3	Excessive/ demanding responsibilities 5 and Liabilities and expectations of others	
4	Marriage related problem (of own or/ 4 and of family members)	
5	Health related problems (of own or/ 3 and family member or near relations	
6	Social situation; legal or property 10 related disputes or problems.	
7	Perceived or imagined threats to social 5 and economic status or prestige	

II. Coping Strategies scale (Prof. A.k. Srivastava)-

The present measure of coping strategies comprises so items, to be rated on five point scale, 0 to 4 describing varieties of coping behavior underlying following five major categories of coping strategies based on the combinations of 'operation' and 'Orientation' of Coping.

ACTIVE / APPROACH
 COPING (Problem- Focused coping)

Behavioral	Approach Coping Strategies
Cognitive Coping Strategies	Approach
Cognitive	Behavioral coping Strategies

AVOIDANCE COPING

(Emotion Focused coping)

Behavioral	Avoidance coping Strategies	Cognitive
Avoidance coping strategies		

Procedure: For purpose of the study two groups of subjects were undertaken, one belonging to extreme rural and the other

from extreme urban environment. To meet the requirement, it was decided to adopt schools situated in two entirely different environments giving education to two category of students, one belonging to very-very poor family background and were less privileged from the view point of socio-economic status, while the other school chosen were from well-developed? environment where the student from one of the richest families were taking education. After selection of the institutions researcher contacted to the principle of all institutions for permission to collect the data from their institution. After seeking permission from principle of respective institution main procedure has started, in the process all the participants were contacted personally and provided a consolidated questionnaire have psychological stress scale and coping strategies scale. The data were collected individually. The subjects were interviewed to make the observations more precise and accurate. The filled questionnaires were reexamined and the scoring was done as per manual instructions for each questionnaire. Scored data were analyzed by using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 for windows.

III. RESULT

The results of the present study are presented in two sections. The statistical procedure used is descriptive and twoway analysis of variance. The first section reports the mean value and S.D. Of dependent variables as a function of environmental setting (Rural and urban) and Gender, the second section report the main effect and interaction effect of the environment setting (urban and rural) gender.

Section-1

Descriptive statistics for stress and coping strategies in rural and urban subjects.

Dependent Variable	Rural		Urban	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Stress	54.58	24.77	73.42	30.89
Coping strategies	75.12	30.87	88.53	25.32

Table-1.1 Mean and S.D. of stress and coping strategies in rural and urban setting.

Dependent Variable	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Stress	78.08	29.27	49.92	22.13
Coping Strategies	66.18	29.25	97.47	18.298

Table-1.2 Mean and S.D. of stress and coping strategies in Male and female adolescents.

Section-2

Two-way analysis of variance between stress and coping as function of environmental setting (Urban and Rural) and Gender.

Environmental setting	Gender	Mean	SD
Rural	Male	60.86	29.00

	Female	48.39	17.84
Urban	Male	95.30	16.88
	Female	51.54	25.80

Table-2.1 Mean and S.D of stress as a function of environmental setting and Gender.

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F
Environmental setting	17747.280	1	17747.280	33.636**
Gender	39644.280	1	39644.280	75.146**
Environmental setting*Gender	12168.000	1	12168.000	23.062**

Table.2.2. summary of two-way Anova for the score of stress.

*p <.05

**p<.01

Environmental setting	Gender	Mean	SD
Rural	Male	48.30	14.73
	Female	101.94	15.50
Urban	Male	84.06	29.32
	Female	93.00	19.86

Table.2.3. Mean and S.D of coping strategies as a function of environmental setting and gender.

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F
Environmental setting	89991.405	1	89991.405	114.355**
Gender	48953.205	1	48953.205	21.004**
Environmental setting*Gender	24976.140	1	24976.140	58.344

Table.2.4. summary of two-way Anova for the score of coping strategies.

*p <.05

**p<.01

Result of present study reveals that in both environmental settings male reported more stress than their counterparts girls, however utilization of coping strategies in numbers are higher in female adolescents than male.

IV. DISCUSSION

The objective of the present investigation is explored rural and urban differences in the level of, and relation between stress and coping in adolescents. The findings indicated that male reported more stress than females in both settings (rural-urban) This result was similar with the result of Vijayalakshmi and Lavanya (2006), Kumar and Jejurkar (2005), Carlson and Grant

(2008), Pастey and Aminbhavi (2006) which indicated that boys tend to have significantly higher stress. Next finding of present study reveals that girls are more likely to utilize coping strategies their counterparts boys. Our finding is consistent with Barusch and Spaid's (1989) research which revealed that women caregivers tend to use a greater variety of coping styles overall than men. Other findings of the present investigation, explore that urban adolescents reported more stress than their counterparts' rural adolescents. The results were similar to the results of Vijayalakshmi and Lavanya (2006) which revealed that urban students experienced more stress as compared to rural students, but contrary to the results of Elgar et al. (2003). In the context of coping strategies, urban adolescents use more coping strategies than rural adolescents. Reason behind this is may be the urban adolescents have many options to solve the problem or cope with stress, but rural adolescents have little amount of option to cope with stress. Rural adolescents are deprived in many aspects of their lives e.g. They have not enough money to buy things in comparison to urban adolescents. In rural India adolescents affected by lots of environmental problems such as lack of electricity, lack of drinking water, lack of healthy academic atmosphere and so many things, these are the factors that directly or indirectly affects the personality of the adolescents.

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