



## A Study of Adolescent Depression In Relation to Stressful Life Events and Self Efficacy

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This study aimed at finding the relationship among adolescent depression, stressful life events and self efficacy. In the present study the investigator found a significant positive relationship between depression and stressful life events for the total and sub samples. This shows that more stressful life events make the depression more vulnerable and vice versa. There exists a significant negative relationship between depression and self efficacy (academic, social, emotional) for the whole and sub samples.

### DEPRESSION

Depression is a mood disorder, characterized by sadness and dejection, decreased motivation and interest in life, negative thoughts, such physical symptom as sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, and fatigue (Atkinson, R.L., Atkinson, R.C., Smith, E.E., Bem, D.T., Hokes, S.N. 2000). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM-IV) - depressive symptoms include feeling sad or empty, markedly diminished interest or pleasure in activities, weight gain or loss, insomnia or hyper-somnia, psychomotor agitation, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, diminished ability to think or concentrate, and recurrent thoughts of death (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). According to Ramachandran, V., Sarada, M. and Arunagiri, S. (1982) family, sex, low social class, widowed state, unemployed condition, low educational level, nuclear family, living alone, and high incidence of physical illness was associated with depression.

### LIFE EVENTS

Depression is often associated with negative life events, in adolescents such as moving to a new neighbourhood, change of school, death of a loved one, abandonment, disappointment, rejection, serious accident, illness in family, extreme lack of resources, a violent family environment, parental conflict or divorce (Goodyer, I.M., Herbert, J., Pearson, J., 1997). About thirty percent of the adolescents who lost their friend, developed depressive symptoms within six months of the loss (Birmaher, B., Ryan, N.D., Williamson, D.E.,

Brent, D.A., Kaufman, Dahl, R.E. Perel, J., and Nelson, B., 1996).

### SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is defined as people's belief about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that effect their lives (Bandura, A., 1977). Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes, viz., cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. Bandura's social-cognitive theory (1997), says that high sense of self-efficacy is associated with better social integration and low sense of self-efficacy is related to anxiety and depression. (Davis, B. J. 1990) worked on physical self-efficacy, perceived physical status, and depressive symptomatology in older adult. Finding suggested strong relationship between the self-efficacy measures and depressive symptomatology. Physical self-efficacy however was found to be the strongest predictor of depressive symptoms. Maciejewski, P.K., Prjgerson, H.G., and Mazure, C.M. (2000) worked on self-efficacy as a mediator between stressful life events and depressive symptoms.

### RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Thus, the studies cited above have clearly revealed that the incidence of depression in adolescents is increasing and a number of them have in fact tried to commit suicide not to talk of suicidal ideation. The situation becomes worse during and after the board examinations and at the time of declaration of results. This may be due to their own expectations, parents' expectations and/or both or mismatch between the two. Though several etiological explanations have been proposed yet none of them is all accepted and universal and there seem to be a need to understand the psychodynamics of adolescent depression.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the relationship of stressful life events with depression in adolescent students. %To assess

the relationship of self-efficacy with depression in adolescent students. To identify the role of stressful life event and self-efficacy in predicting depression in adolescent students.

#### **HYPOTHESES**

Stressful life events will be positively correlated with depression in adolescent students. High self-efficacy will be negatively correlated with depression in adolescent students.

#### **METHOD**

**Design:-**A correlation study design is used, to fulfil the objectives of the study.

**Sample:-**Two hundred adolescent students (both sexes) of classes-10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup>, age 14-18 were selected on the basis of non-random incidental sampling basis. The subjects were from government as well as public schools of State Haryana.

**Tools:-**The following tools are used in the present study -> Adolescent Depression Scale (Reynolds, 1998) > Everyday Problem Checklist (Vingerhoets & M.Enges, 1987) > Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (Peter Muris, 2001)

#### **STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES**

The obtained data is analysed by Pearson Coefficient of Correlation in addition to descriptive statistics.

For the whole sample, the correlation between adolescents depression and stressful life events shows a high relationship ( $r = .41$ ) and this relationship is significant. There exists a substantial relationship ( $r = .49$ ) between depression and stressful life events for male students and also a substantial relationship ( $r = .47$ ) between depression and stressful life events for female students. In the case of urban and rural students there exists a substantial relationship ( $r = .47$ ) between depression and stressful life events for urban students and also a substantial relationship ( $r = .48$ ) between depression and stressful life events for rural students.

There exists a substantial relationship ( $r = .38$ ) between depression and stressful life events for govt. school students but lower than the relationship ( $r = .55$ ) between depression and stressful life events for private school students. The results obtained revealed that there exist significant positive relationship between depression and stressful life events. Stressful life events tend to increase the level of depression. Private school students have a high level of relationship between depression and stressful life events. Study of Goodyer, Herbertnb, Jamplin, Secber, and Pearson, (1997); Kavos, (1997) reflected that negative life events like moving to a new neighbourhood, change of school,

death of a loved one, abandonment, disappointment, rejection, serious accident, illness in family, extreme lack of resources, a violent family environment, parental conflict etc. increase the level of depression. For the whole sample, the correlation between adolescents depression and self efficacy shows a high relationship ( $r = -0.68$ ) and this relationship is significant. There exists a substantial relationship ( $r = -0.56$ ) between depression and self efficacy for male students and also a substantial relationship ( $r = -0.72$ ) between depression and self efficacy for female students.

In the case of urban and rural students there exists a substantial relationship ( $r = -0.61$ ) between depression and self efficacy for urban students and also a substantial relationship ( $r = -0.75$ ) between depression and self efficacy for rural students. There exists a substantial relationship ( $r = -0.39$ ) between depression and self efficacy for govt. school students but lower than the relationship ( $r = -0.55$ ) between depression and self efficacy for private school students. The results obtained reveal that there exist significant negative relationship between depression and self efficacy. High self efficacy tends to decrease the level of depression. Private school students have a high level of relationship between depression and self efficacy than govt. school students. Study of Davis-Berman (1988) also shows the relationship between self-efficacy and depressive symptomatology and reported strong relationship between general, physical and global self-efficacy and depression. Physical and general self-efficacy however was found to be the strongest predictors of depression.

**Conclusion** In the present study the investigator found a significant positive relationship between depression and stressful life events for the total and sub samples. This shows that more stressful life events make the depression more vulnerable and vice versa. There exists a significant negative relationship between depression and self efficacy (academic, social, emotional) for the whole and sub samples. It depicts that high level of efficacy decrease the depression level and vice versa.

#### **Educational Implications**

The findings of the study suggest that depression and stressful life events are positively related to each other. This shows that more stressful life events make the depression more vulnerable and vice versa. High expectations of parents, teachers and self put the student under pressure. Non fulfilment of personal desires, emotional level of parents, unavoidable circumstances etc. are the root cause of depression

among adolescents. There exists a significant negative relationship between depression and self efficacy (academic, social, emotional) for the whole and sub samples. It depicts that high level of self efficacy decrease the depression level and vice versa. If an adolescent believe that he or she is capable to perform best academically, socially and emotionally then he or she can keep him/her away from depression. Suggestions to keep the depression at low level: • Parents and teachers are the role model for children,

so they must trained the children how to cope up with the problems of day to day life. • Teachers are parents should help the children to express their emotions in the classrooms and at homes. This creates self confidence in children. • Curriculum of secondary and higher secondary schools should be modified so that lessons relating to emotional and social skills are given importance in the classroom activities. • Children should be taught to develop and maintain a positive attitude towards life, always.

**STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table-1 Correlation Table showing the relationship between Adolescent Depression and Stressful Life Events for the whole Sample and sub -samples**

	Whole Sample (N=200)	Sub-samples					
		Boys (N=100)	Girls (N=100)	Urban Students (N=100)	Rural Students (N=100)	Govt. School Students (N=100)	Private Schools Students (N=100)
Stressful life Events and Depression	.41	.49	.47	.47	.48	.38	.55

Significant at 0.01 level

**Table-2 Correlation Table showing the relationship between Adolescent Depression and Self-Efficacy for the whole Sample and sub -samples**

	Whole Sample	Sub-samples					
		Boys	Girls students	Urban students	Rural schools	Govt.	Private schools
Academic Self-Efficacy and Depression	-0.63	-0.56	-0.64	-0.56	-0.68	-0.33	-0.55
Social Self- Efficacy and Depression	-0.65	-0.61	-0.69	-0.54	-0.71	-0.35	-0.49
Emotional Self-Efficacy and Depression	-0.68	-0.64	-0.69	-0.57	-0.73	-0.38	-0.47
Total Self-Efficacy and Depression	-0.68	-.056	-0.72	-0.61	-0.75	-0.39	-0.55

Significant at 0.01 level

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