

BRIDGING RESEARCH TO POLICY

Collaborative Venture between SLIDA and the Monash University



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SLIDA *"Learning Confers Discipline"*
SRI LANKA INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



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Message from Director General, SLIDA



It is with much pleasure that I take this opportunity to pen a few words for this publication. The publication provides a synopsis of the findings of research studies undertaken by six scholars who were benefitted under the Australia Awards Fellowship Programme (AAF) funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government. The AAF is a collaborative venture between the Monash University and the Sri

Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA).

SLIDA recognizes the importance of bringing the research findings to the notice of policymakers and use such information for policy formulation. In this context, the newly established Sandharani Research Center of SLIDA has arranged to disseminate research findings to the policymakers by means of publications and symposia. As such, I believe that this publication will contribute to the evidence-based policy formulation.

I take pride in extending my sincere thanks to the Australian Government for the support extended to the Sri Lanka's public sector in engaging in research. It is also with much gratitude that I thank the academic staff of Monash University for the guidance provided for the scholars not only during their studies but also after completion of studies to ensure application of findings to achieve the objectives of the scholarship.

I wish to congratulate the researchers for completing a successful academic exercise and wish to thank them for their contribution to the country's development pursuit.

Wasantha Perera

Chairperson, Research Advisory Board of SLIDA
& Director General / SLIDA

Bridging Research to Policy

An overview of Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) and Research Centre of SLIDA

Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration is the premier national institute providing training and development for the public sector executives in Sri Lanka.

SLIDA has grown to become a strong institution, providing a comprehensive portfolio of services in the areas of learning and development, organizational development and Research. SLIDA is networked with several foreign universities and training institutions, that facilitate collaborative research. SLIDA is expanding its scope of research functions providing evidence for policy making.

Establishment of a fully-fledged Research Centre is one of the bold initiatives taken by SLIDA with the mission of facilitating public sector development through research. As an institute, to promote research among the public sector affiliates, research centre is obliged to be engaged in following activities.

- Undertaking research

- Conducting training programmes on Applied Research and Research Methodology

- Dissemination of research findings for policy makers

- Promoting collaborative research with national and international research institutions.

As the first publication of the research centre, this publication is a gist of its collaborative venture with Monash University. It's emphasize is to match the country's development pursuits with more strengthened evidence-based policy formulation.

In place of the research centre, it is a pleasure to be the pathway in evidence based policy making that would be beneficial not only for the public sector but also for the entire society.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The image features a minimalist design. The background is a light beige or off-white color. A dark blue, almost black, diagonal shape cuts across the bottom right corner, creating a sharp contrast. The text "RESEARCH FINDINGS" is centered in the upper half of the image, rendered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Home environmental factors contributing to stress among adolescents in Colombo district Sri Lanka Preliminary results



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Abstract

Adolescents are often subject to stress associated with psychosocial adversities at home, at school and many other factors including peer pressure. The Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) devised by Byrne et al. (2007) has been used in many populations in the world to assess adolescent stress levels. The main objective of the study is to determine home environmental factors that contribute to stress amongst adolescents in Colombo District using the ASQ. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on adolescents aged 14 to 16 (n=70) attending government schools. Baseline data were obtained and the ASQ was administered after validating it in Sinhala Language. Stress at home was assessed by questions measuring conflicts between adolescent and parents, between parents, arguments at home, lack of trust from adults, over expectations from parents, hassling by parents about the external appearance,

not been taken seriously by parents, having to abide by petty rules, little or no control over one's life and others. The mean age for study sample was 15.21 years \pm 0.50 SD. Females were 51 0 0 of the sample.

Subjects were divided into stressed and non-stressed groups based on the ASQ score. 34.28 % were stressed in relation to home environment. The mean home environment score was significantly higher in the stressed group (28.79 ± 4.66 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (13.79 ± 3.76 SD) ($p < 0.0001$). Factors in the home environment significantly contributed to stress among adolescents. Measures to avoid or minimize stress factors in the home environment may significantly reduce stress among adolescents. Parents and care givers should be made aware of these factors to reduce stress amongst adolescents.

Introduction

World Health Organization identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood from ages 10 to 19 (WHO 2014). Adolescents are often subject to stress associated with many psychosocial adversities at home, at school and due to many factors including peer pressure. Most Sri Lankan adolescents live in the safety and comfort of the parental home unlike in western populations. However adversities in the home environment may contribute to stress amongst Sri Lankan adolescents. (Thalagala et al. 2004).

Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Australian National University and has been used in many populations in the world (De Vriendt et al. 2011) to assess adolescent stress levels (Byrne et al. 2007). It contains 58 items under 10 main variables (namely, stresses of home life, school performance, school attendance, teacher interaction, school/leisure conflict, peer pressure, future uncertainty, financial pressure, emerging adult responsibility, and romantic relationships).

Objectives of the study were to determine home environmental factors that contribute to stress amongst adolescents in Colombo District Sri Lanka using the ASQ.

Methodology

A descriptive Cross sectional study was conducted on adolescents aged 14 to 16 years (11=70) attending government schools in Colombo district. Base line data were obtained using a self-administered questionnaire. Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) was administered after translating and validating into Sinhala Language.

Results

The mean age for study sample (11=70) was 15.21 ± 0.50 SD years. 51.42% were females. The mean age of the males was 15.1 years ± 0.5 SD years and of the females was 15.4 years ± 0.5 SD. Subjects were divided into stress and non-stress groups based on the ASQ scores. The mean ASQ scores for the males was 133.2 ± 34.0 SD, and for the females was 136.2 ± 33.7 SD ($p=0.711 > 0.05$). The mean ASQ score for stressed adolescents was 173.25 ± 15.16 SD and for non-stressed adolescents was 114.630 ± 20.38 SD ($p < 0.001$). 34.3 % of subjects were found to have home environment stress. The mean home environmental stress score for males was 22.8 ± 7.1 SD and for females was 22.0 ± 6.4 SD, ($p 0.64$). The mean home environment score was significantly higher in the stressed group (28.79 ± 4.66 SD) than non-stressed (13.79 ± 3.76 SD) ($p < 0.001$). The mean home environment score was significantly higher in the stressed group (28.79 ± 4.66 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (13.79 ± 3.76 SD) ($p < 0.0001$). The mean score for the item "disagreements with father" was higher in the stressed group (2.08 ± 0.91 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.50 ± 0.88 SD) ($p < 0.05$).

The mean score for the item "not being taken seriously" was higher in the stressed group (3.13 ± 1.48 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group

(2.20 ± 1.22 SD) ($p < 0.05$). The mean score for the item "abiding by petty rules at home" was higher in the stressed group (2.58 ± 1.28 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.72 ± 0.75 SD) ($p < 0.05$). The mean score for the item "disagreements between parents" was higher in the stressed group (3.38 ± 1.24 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.70 ± 0.96 SD) ($p < 0.0001$). The mean score for the item "arguments at home" was higher in the stressed group (3.58 ± 1.24 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (2.02 ± 1.06 SD) ($p < 0.05$). The mean score for the item "disagreements with mother" was higher in the stressed group (2.42 ± 1.43 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.70 ± 0.89 SD) ($p < 0.05$). The mean scores for the item "lack of trust from adults" was higher in the stressed group (3.63 ± 1.43 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (2.28 ± 1.34 SD) ($p < 0.05$). The mean score for the item "Parents expecting too much from adolescent" was higher in the stressed group (3.17 ± 1.34 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.65 ± 0.79 SD) ($p < 0.0001$). The mean score for the item "hassling by parents about the way that the adolescent looks like" was higher in the stressed group (2.25 ± 1.15 SD) than the mean score in the non-stressed group (1.67 ± 1.09 SD) ($p < 0.05$). However the mean scores for the item "little or no control over one's life" in the stressed group (2.28 ± 1.10 SD) and for non-stressed group (2.61 ± 1.48 SD), did not show a significant difference ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion and Findings

The stress levels amongst males and females are similar in this preliminary study. However the stress levels amongst the stressed group show that multiple factors contribute to stress amongst Sri Lankan adolescents. In the home environment stress scores too there was stress amongst both males and females.

The item "disagreement with father" was an important factor in the stressed group indicating the Sri Lankan fathers' commanding attitude towards

the adolescent. The higher frequency of disagreements between parents, arguments at home, lack of trust of the adolescent, parents expecting too much from the adolescent, and hassling by parents about the way that the adolescent looks are all stressful factors that affect the adolescents emotionally. These factors seem to contribute to the high stress levels observed in this study. It also indicates an unstable home environment amongst 34 % of adolescents in the Colombo district. Amongst the female adolescents "abiding by petty rules at home" contributes to stress at home. It confirms that culturally, parents respond to their sons and daughters in different ways. It may be due to Sri Lankan parents exhibiting greater protection for a female adolescent more than a male adolescent, in a traditional sociocultural context.

Home environmental factors contribute to stress amongst adolescents in this study.

Measures to avoid or minimize stress factors in the home environment may significantly reduce stress among adolescents. Parents and care givers should be made aware of these factors and adopt measures to reduce stress amongst adolescents.

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