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A STUDY ON NEUROTICISM IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS RESIDING IN GOVERNMENT WELFARE HOSTELS IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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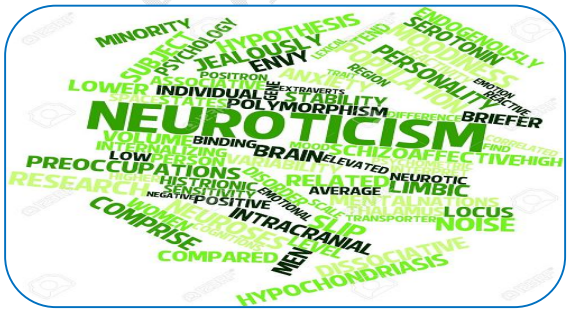
ABSTRACT :

Aim: *The study aims to find out the relationship between the socio-economic and the demographic characteristics and neuroticism of higher secondary students (N=559, male 311, female 248) residing in government hostels run by: Scheduled CasteWelfare Department in Tiruchirappalli district, Tamil Nadu.* ***Method:*** *Out of 684 students, 559 students were selected from all 37 hostels by adopting the census method. A self- prepared questionnaire was used for collecting data in respect of socio-economic and demographic variables and Maudsley Personality Inventory (MPI) was used to find out the neuroticism (one of the dimensions of the personality) of the respondents.* ***Result:*** *The result shows that in neuroticism the gender, social standing, parent's education, course of study, type of school, first generation learners, private tuition, special coaching at schools, extra-curricular activities has significant influence on the neuroticism of the respondents.* ***Conclusion****: Proper counselling through cognitive behavioral therapy, psychotherapy, relaxation therapy, and creative therapies, can been used to tackle problem neuroticism among the students staying in government welfare hostals.*

KEYWORDS : *Scheduled Caste, Welfare Hostel students –Neuroticism.*

INTRODUCTION

The personality plays a vital role in the success or failure of an individual. Personality generally means good appearance, healthy, pleasant, good character and with a pleasant temperament of an individual. It is believed that the personality is developed over the period of time. The student life plays a crucial role in personality development. Nowadays, students are gripped with a multitude of stress, such as making career choices, attending tuition and acquiring social skills to establish a meaningful relationship with others. The most common risks during school days are psychological, emotional, social and academic. Therefore, the individual's problems and factors contributing to personality need to be introspected. According to **Eysenck & Eysenck (**1975), the personality cannot be understood by considering only behavioural aspects of an individual. Eysenck postulated theory of Personality which was rechristened by him from time to time. In the preliminary version, he focused on neuroticism-stability and extroversion-introversion dimension, subsequently, the psychoticism dimension was added to his theory (Lewis et al., 2002). Among the various dimensions of the Personality, the neuroticismis long term tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression. It is one of the personality traits and the individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely than average to be moody and to



experience such feelings as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depressed mood, and loneliness (Thompson, 2008). Students belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes who hails from lower socioeconomic status face more challenges. More particularly, the students at higher secondary strive very hard to achieve success in academics. It is very critical stage for students' career. If due attention and care are not given at this stage, they cannot cope with the demands of life and future career. Hence, the personality dimension of neuroticism of the higher secondary students who are residing in the welfare hostels (meant for SCs/STs and OBC) and their associated factors were taken into consideration for this study.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Various studies have been carried out on the neuroticism in students. Hewitt, (1991) found that the neuroticism was associated significantly with socially-prescribed perfectionism in males and females and neuroticism was correlated with self-oriented perfectionism in female college students. Whitehead (1996) reported that the neuroticism and psychological distress were correlated with all quality-of-life measures in students with irritable bowel syndrome. Amichai-Hamburger (2002) found that introverted and neurotic people locate their "real me" on the Internet, while extroverts and non-neurotic people locate their "real me" through traditional social interaction. Murberg & Bru (2007) reported that both neuroticism and perceived school-related stress were found to be significantly associated with somatic symptoms. A study conducted by Bhagat, & Nayak (2014) revealed that the students with high neuroticism react negatively to academic stress; this factor must have contributed to the low academic performance of students. The authors concluded that there is an existence of neuroticism among medical students, and large number of students fall under high and medium in the Eysenck's scale of neuroticism. The review of previous studies reveals that most of the studies are conducted among the college students and there are no specific studies on the neuroticism of higher secondary school students residing in government welfare hostels. In order to fulfill this gap the present research was undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

***Objective*:** The objective of the present study is to analyse the relationship of neurotic dimension of personality with the socio-economic and demographic background characteristics of the Higher Secondary School students residing in the Welfare Hostels.*Method and materials*: As on 2011, there were 46 Scheduled Casteand Tribal (SC/ST) welfare hostels for school students in Tiruchirappalli district under the administrative control of SC/ST Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu. Among these 46 hostels, only 37 hostels had the provision of accommodating higher secondary school students. Therefore, for the present study, all these 37 hostels have been selected. There were 684 Higher Secondary School Students residing in these hostels. All the 684 Higher Secondary School Students who were living in 37 Hostels were considered as the respondents for the study. Thus, the sample respondents have been selected based on census method (rather than depending upon any sampling technique). However, of these 684 students, 38 were not available during the period of data collection, 72 were not willing to participate in the study and yet another 15 students expressed their inevitable inability to answer all the questions and thereby, the remaining 559 students were selected as the (sample) respondents for this study. Among these 559 respondents, 311 were boys and 248 were girls. To collect the data from the individual respondents, the self-prepared questionnaire was administered by the researcher to collect the background characteristics of the respondents. Eysenck's (1967) Maudsley Personality Inventory (MPI) was used to assess two dimensions of an individual personality. The data were collected during the period between December 2011 and February 2012.

RESULTS

Results based on neuroticism level of respondents across their background characteristics are provided in Table-1 and out of six factors, only two factors found to be significant and the same are discussed in brief as under:

Gender and Neuroticism: Most of the studies conducted earlier have reported that the average scores of neuroticism were higher among girls than the boys (**Margalit and Eysecnk**, 1990; McCrae et al., 2002; Hauser et al., Hoferichter and Raufelder, 2013), while some studies didn't show gender differences in neuroticism scores (Joshi, 2000; Suresh et al., 2007; Chandrasekaran, 2008). While examining the differences in the neuroticism scores by gender (panel 2 of Table-1), it is evident that male respondents (boys) have a higher mean score (11.73) than the female respondents (11.04). The ANOVA test results too established that there is a highly significant ($p<0.001$) difference in neuroticism scores by the gender background of the respondents.

Table – 1: Mean Score of Neuroticism across Respondents' Background Characteristics

Respondents' Background Characteristics		Mean	N	F/ t value
1. Age (in Years)	16 years &<	11.59	191	1.226
	17 years	11.48	248	NS
	18 years &>	11.06	120	
2. Gender	Male	11.73	312	**7.553**
	Female	11.04	247	***0.01***
3. Place of Living	Rural	11.42	538	0.410
	Urban	11.67	21	NS
4. Social Standing (Caste)	Scheduled Castes	11.75	316	**4.410**
	Scheduled Tribes	11.11	114	***0.01***
	Other Backward Castes	10.91	129	
5. Family Size	Small Family (≤ 3)	11.79	42	0.708
	Medium (4 – 5)	11.50	291	NS
	Large (6 – 7)	11.27	226	
6. Birth Order	First born	11.50	231	1.137
	Second born	11.63	186	NS
	Third born	11.03	93	
	Fourth born &above	11.04	49	
	Total	11.43	559	

Social Standing and Neuroticism: In the Indian context, generally, it is expected that the neuroticism level would be higher among those students who belong to lower social standing (SCs and STs in the present context) than their counterparts belong to other backward castes (relatively higher in social standing). The study by Arunmozhi and Rajenderan (2007) revealed that there was no difference between the social standing of the respondents in their personality traits. However, in the present study (panel 4 of Table-1), it is observed that respondents belonging to the scheduled castes have a higher mean score of neuroticism (11.75) followed by scheduled tribes (11.11), whereas a score is still low among those who belong to other backward castes (10.91). Moreover, the ANOVA test results too established that there is a highly significant ($p<0.001$) difference in neuroticism scores of respondents by their social standing.

Parents' Background Characteristics and Neuroticism: Results based on the level of neuroticism of the respondents across their parents' background characteristics are provided in Table - 2 and out of seven factors, only two factors found to be significant and the same are discussed in a nutshell as under:

Table – 2:Mean Score of Neuroticism across Parents' Background Characteristics

Parents' Background Characteristics		Mean	N	F/ t value
1. Presence of Parents	Father & Mother Alive	11.38	495	2.220
	Single Parent / No Parent	11.89	64	NS
2. Father's Education	Illiterates	11.81	301	**4.165**
	Primary School	10.72	79	**0.01**
	Middle School	10.81	57	
	High School & Above	11.22	122	
3. Mother's Education	Illiterates	11.81	294	**3.530**
	Primary School	11.08	119	**0.01**
	Middle School	11.04	48	
	High School & Above	10.90	98	
4. Father's Occupation	Agriculture labour	11.43	420	0.004
	Own Agriculture/Employees	11.41	139	NS
5. Mother's Work Status	Housewives	11.71	89	0.004
		11.30	470	NS
6. Family Income (in Rs.)	3000 or<	11.33	209	0.938
	3001 – 9999	11.70	160	NS
	10000 +	11.31	190	
7. Alcoholic Father	No	11.55	386	2.205
	Yes	11.14	173	NS
	Total	**11.43**	**559**	

Father's Education and Neuroticism: In the present context, it is proposed that students / children born to parents who have better education may likely be with less level of neuroticism than those whose parents are less educated or illiterates. Data given in panel 2 of Table-2 revealed that the mean score of neuroticism appears much higher among those who born to illiterate parents (11.81) than those who born to parents of primary and secondary school education (10.71 and 10.81, respectively), whereas such a score is relatively high among those respondents whose parents are educated up to high school and above (11.22). Moreover, these differences in mean scores of neuroticism across father's education turned out as highly significant ($p<0.01$).

Mother's Education and Neuroticism: As in the case of father's education, mother's education also is likely to play a vital role in affecting the children's neuroticism state of personality. It is proposed here that higher the level of education of the mother lower would be the children's level of neuroticism. Information provided in panel 3 of Table-2, by and large, exhibits that the mean score of neuroticism of the respondents is appearing to be consistently decreasing with an increase in their mother's level of education. For example, the mean score of neuroticism is 11.81 among those respondents whose mother is illiterate, the corresponding scores have been reduced consistently to lower levels of 11.08, 11.04 and then to 10.90 for those whose mother's level of education is primary, middle, and high school & above, respectively. Apparently, the ANOVA test results between the mean scores of neuroticism of respondents and mother's education have turned out to be highly significant ($p<0.001$).

Education Related Factors and Neuroticism: Results based on the level of neuroticism level of personality of the respondents across their education related factors are provided in Table-3 and out of eight factors, only five factors were found to be significant and the same are discussed in brief as under:

Table – 3: Mean Score of Neuroticism across the Respondents' Education Related Factors

Respondents' Education Related Factors		Mean	N	t/F
1. Class of Study	11th std.	11.50	280	0.377
	12th std.	11.35	279	NS
2. Course of Study	MPCC	11.88	170	**2.741**
	MPCB	11.28	138	***0.05***
	PCBZ	10.73	75	
	HECA	11.46	134	
	Vocational Course	11.21	42	
3. Type of School	Welfare School	11.85	137	**3.301**
	Govt. School	11.58	178	***0.05***
	Private School	11.07	244	
4. First Generation Learner	No	11.68	287	**4.356**
	Yes	11.15	272	***0.05***
5. Taking up Private Tuition	No	11.28	466	**6.375**
	Yes	12.14	93	***0.01***
6. Attending Coaching Classes	No	11.01	327	**15.575**
	Yes	12.01	232	***0.001***
7. Getting Scholarship	No	10.90	213	
	Yes	11.75	346	
8. Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities	Not at all	10.85	40	**2.596**
	Low	11.09	152	***0.05***
	Moderate	11.38	189	
	High	11.89	178	
	Total	11.43	559	

Type of Course Studying and Neuroticism: Information provided in panel 2 of Table-3 highlights that the mean score neuroticism of the respondents is observed to be somewhat high among those students studying in the courses like MPCC as compared to those who are pursuing other courses under consideration, whereas such a mean score is observed to be the lowest among those who are undergoing the PCBZ course (10.73). Moreover, the ANOVA results too ascertained that these differentials in mean score by type of course studying differ significantly at moderate extent ($p<0.05$).

Type of School in Which Studying and Neuroticism: Generally, it is expected that the neuroticism level of children would be lower among those who are studying in private schools as compared to those who are in government and welfare schools. Details in this regard from this study (panel 3 of Table-3) revealed that the respondents who are studying in private schools have a lower mean score of neuroticism (11.07) followed by those studying in Government schools (11.58) and such score has been observed as the highest among those who are attending welfare schools (11.85). The ANOVA results too turned out to be moderately significant ($p<0.05$) in the mean difference of neuroticism scores of respondents across the type of schools they study.

First Generation Learner or not and Neuroticism: It is expected that children who go for higher education for the first time in their respective families are likely to experience less neuroticism than those who are not first-generation learners. Data provided in panel 4 of Table-3 shows that the mean score of neuroticism of respondents is found to be lower among the respondents who are the first-generation learners (11.15) than their counterparts (11.68). The ANOVA test results too supported this fact to a moderately significant extent ($p<0.05$).

Private Tuition and Neuroticism: By and large, one can expect that students who take up private tuition are likely to be with higher neuroticism than those who are not attending such classes. When this contention is examined in this study (panel 5 of 4.11), one can see that the mean score neuroticism of respondents appears to be higher among those who are attending private tuition classes as compared to those who didn't take up such tuition classes. Moreover, the ANOVA test results too supported this finding to a highly significant extent ($p<0.01$).

Attending Coaching Classes at School and Neuroticism: Like in the case of taking up private tuition, the neuroticism level among students would be higher if they are attending coaching classes at their respective schools. Data given in panel 6 of Table-3 highlights that the mean score of neuroticism is very high among those respondents who are attending coaching classes conducted at their schools (12.01) than those who are not making use of such a facility (11.01). The ANOVA results too in this regard turned out as highly significant ($p<0.001$).

Getting Scholarship or Not and Neuroticism: It is observed that students whoever getting scholarship are likely to be with higher neuroticism state than those who are not getting such a benefit. Information provided in panel 7 of Table-3 reveals that the mean score of neuroticism is higher among those respondents who are getting a scholarship (11.75) as compared to those who are not getting such assistance (10.90). The ANOVA test results too supported this piece of evidence to a large extent of significance ($p<0.001$).

CONCLUSION

Higher secondary female students reported to be low in terms of neuroticism as against their male counterparts. Students born to their parents on the first and second orders (as compared to those who were born on higher orders – 3 or more) appear to be low in neuroticism. Sample students whose fathers are reported to be alcoholic are low in neuroticism than those whose fathers were not addicted to alcohol. Higher secondary school students who have better educated mothers have been reported to be low in neuroticism dimensions of personality, as compared to those whose mothers are illiterates and with minimum education. Sample students who are studying pure science and vocational subjects appear to have lower in the scores of neuroticism than their counterparts who have taken up other subjects. Higher secondary students who are participating in extracurricular activities have more propensities to be higher in terms of neuroticism personality as compared to those who are not participating in such activities. All these conclusions confirmed that personality is influenced by the background characteristics of the respondents as well as parents and school / study related characteristics. In the present study, various factors like social standing, single parent, first generation learner, level of parents' education/occupation, alcoholic father are statistically significant with personality domains. The aforesaid discussion and conclusions demand suitable policy initiatives and strategies such as organising personality development programmes, identifying the persons with personality problems for referral and professional counselling by professional social workers and psychiatrists to be taken by the Government to improve the personality of the students residing in the welfare hostels.

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