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Topic: Construction of Self and Perception of Stress among Students of Kashmir University

Abstract

Kashmir is a place, which has been under the conflict situation from almost six decades now. All this has hampered the growth and development in all the regions of the valley and education is no exception in this. Needless to say, the prolonged conflict has taken a heavy toll on the youth of Kashmir, destabilising their economic, social, educational and political lives. However, its impact can be felt nowhere more than on the ongoing college students of Kashmir valley. The regular schedule of schooling has been totally interrupted with examinations postponed and the results of any taken delayed. The average age at which young people complete their education has risen, putting them at a considerable disadvantage for any jobs and further study opportunities inside and outside Kashmir. And even if they are able to take the exams, the students' performance is affected by erratic and irregular attendance that is the result of curfews, strikes and other security issues. This context compels one to investigate into the kind of self-i.e. (Self-concept and Self-esteem) that is constructed in such chaotic situations and to find how the students in higher education perceive the level of stress. Sample of the study consisted of 200 respondents which comprised of 100 professional and 100 non professional. As getting 100 professional out of 200 respondents was not possible, researcher had to exceed the identification beyond 200 which had been set as the sample size of the study. Thus, in order to get equal number of professional and non professional, it took researcher to approach 240 respondents. Professional as well as non professional were further divided according to their gender, thus each group consisted of 50 males and 50 females.

Further, male and female students were divided on the basis of the courses they were in. Thus each group consisted of 25 undergraduate and 25 postgraduate making a 2x2x2 factorial design. Data was collected by using three questionnaires viz., Self-concept scale by R.K Saraswat, Self-esteem scale by Stanley Coppersmith and Perceived Stress Scale. ANOVA, t-test and correlation were used to analyze the data. Three- way analysis of variance revealed significant effect of undergraduate and postgraduate subjects whether an individual is professional and nonprofessional on the total score of self-concept. A significant effect was also found with regard to self-esteem between undergraduate and postgraduate students. There is also a significant effect of group, gender and course on the total score of perceived stress. A significant negative correlation between stress and educational dimension of self-concept on professional subjects. There is also a significant negative correlation between stress and self-concept and self-esteem on professional subjects. There is a significant negative correlation between stress and self-esteem on female subjects. There is also a significant negative correlation between stress and self-esteem on undergraduate and postgraduate subjects. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that Self-concept and Self- esteem is greatly influenced by level of course and gender besides the perceived stress among college students differently in professional and nonprofessional groups. These relationships perhaps are also accounted by the specific culture of Kashmir valley. It may be attributed to the feelings, perceptual and thinking styles of the people of Kashmir depicted in their behavioral pattern. Hence, it is suggested that stress level among the college students has alarmingly increased due to the ongoing situations of conflict and turmoil in the state.