

Depression among College and University Students- A Sociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The present empirical study carried out by studying under graduate and post graduate student. A large number of students possesses complain about mild to severe depression. Yet a very few number of them sought treatment for their symptoms. Further it is evident from the study that the men are more prone to depression than the women. The role of social support and social institution reviewed in this process and there is also suggestion for future research.

1. Introduction

Students are the future of our society, so their well being is very vital for the development of the society. Many researchers suggest that students are becoming more prone to depression. It is said that depression will be the most major disease in the world after the heart disease. Depression is a common mental illness. According to WHO more than 300 million people are living with depression. College students are facing more problem than previous time. Now a days because of the exposure in environmental stressor, family pressure, lack of adjustment in new social setting making them more prone to depression. There are many emotional problems related to depression such as feeling inferior to others, worrying too much, life seems valueless. The college and University going students have different ailments as they are entering in completely new life. There is hope and enthusiasm of beginning a new life. With such positive and good feelings there is also stress and anxiety related with the student life of college and university goes. There are academic pressure, pressure of being economically independent, responsibility of family; some of them even lose their familiar surroundings, there is also relationship problem, this student population also seems to be worried about their appearance. Because of these circumstances they face tremendous pressure which makes them anxious and prone to depression. These challenges affect the well being of the student. These stresses are result of social settings and social organization therefore we need to study briefly the social institutions role in the present scenario of depression. Depression among college and university students is emerging as a social problem. College and University students are in such an age which is a transitory period of their life. They are in the age which cannot be considered teenage neither adult. They are in the age which we can call as 'Emerging adulthood'. Depression is often associated with anxiety and it becomes worse with the passing of time and lead to suicide and drug abuse. It is also an issue of concern that the students many times can not realize that they are depressed and never ask for treatment or speak about their problem. Therefore we need to study briefly about the problem of depression among the college and university students and social institution's role in this process.

2. Rationale of the study

Students are future of our society. Any kind of obstacle in their path of development simultaneously affects the general well being of the society. As there are many social factors associated with the depression therefore we also need to analyze sociological factors and societal organization that are associated with the depression.

Review of literature- There are several articles and research work which are indicating that a large number of student population are suffering from this mental illness.

Mental disorders are estimated to account for nearly one half of the total burden of disease for young adults.(World Health Organization,2002). Chaudhary (1979) studied 100 university students to look for the prevalence of mental illness. Among them he found 28 students showed psychological problem like depression which need treatment.

Beck and Young stated that psychological problem varies in the student population from 2% to 50%. If anyone study student population they will find that about 1 of the 10 students are depressed and need medical help.(Beck and Young,1978).Kumaraswamy in his article 'Academic stress, anxiety and depression among college students- a brief review' (2003) stated that "low family income is also associated with depression. The unhappy home situation is related with the depression. Dissatisfaction from life style, stressful social relationship are significantly related with depression." Thackore et.al studied medical students to look for their psychological problems and they found that about 85% of suffering from anxiety, depression and related mental disorders. According to Sarah K. Dixon et.al (2008) studies that though the University period is a major transition period of a student's life but they face many challenges in this face. There is problem related to social activity, social relations, worrying about career and future. Kumaraswamy also studies 100 medical students in the year 1990 and this study he found that about 26% of them are depressed due to their stressful situation where 31% of them were anxious about their circumstances.(Kumaraswamy,1990).

3. Methodology

Methodology is the systematic and theoretical analysis of methods that are applied to a particular study.

- ✓ **Unit of analysis-** In this research our unit of analysis is a student.
- ✓ **Research area-** In this study depression among college and university students' one college and one university is chosen for the study. This two are Dinabandhu Andrews College and Jadavpur University.
- ✓ **Population-** For this particular study our targeted population is Under graduate and post graduate students of age group 19-24 years. Most of these students belong to middle class and lower middle class family.
- ✓ **Research design-** In this study 'Depression among college and University students' I have focused on descriptive research. As in this research I want to know what exists will try to uncover new facts and meaning. In this study I have tried to show why depression is occurring among college students due to individual and social issue. I used mixed method for this study. Quantitative because we are using charts and graphs for data interpretation and at the same time we are describing human emotions, feeling and non-verbal communication.
- ✓ **Data collection-** For data collection I have used interview schedule and semi structured questionnaire.
- ✓ **Sampling-** Here I have used non probability sampling because I did not know about the sampling frame. This sampling includes sampling method like snow ball sampling. I have chosen purposive sampling for my study. The subjects are selected due to some knowledge in my mind and my convenience. Because I wanted to know social causes associated with depression I chooses subject based on psychological scale given by different mental health professional ,after choosing sample based on this symptoms I tried to look upon the social factors associated with depression I used this method as it is a bit less restrictive and snow ball method because I get to know about the one sample from the other sample. I have chosen total 20 students as the sample of my study.

Definition of term- Depression- A depression requires of the five or more of the following symptoms with two week period or more, this are depressed mood, decreased interest of social activities, significant weight changes, sleep disturbances , low self esteem., recurrent thought of death and suicide. (DSMV IV-TR, American psychiatric association, 2000)

4. Study objective

There are certain objectives of this study

1. To examine the prevalence of depression among college and university students.
2. To find out the social factors associated with depression
3. What is the effect of depression among students?
4. Trend of treatment seeking for this mental problem.

5. Data analysis

1. Prevalence of depression among students

Prevalence of depression	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	15	75%
No	5	25%
Total	20	100%

2. Depression among sex

Sex	Depressed	percentage	Not depressed	Percentage
Male	8	80%	2	20%
Female	7	70%	3	30%
Total	15			

3. Depression according age group

Age group	Number of students	Percentage
19-21	7	46%
22-24	8	53%
Total	15	100%

4.

Enjoying subject	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	9	45%
No	11	55%
Total	20	100%

5.

Parents hold high expectation from the student	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	14	70%
No	6	30%
Total	20	100%

6.

Excessive academic pressure	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	14	70%
No	6	30%
Total	20	100%

7. Pressure of being single child

Single child	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

8. Getting support from family

Getting support from family	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%
Total	20	100%

9. Relationship problem

Relationship problem	Number students	Percentage
Yes	17	85%
No	3	15%
Total	20	100%

10. Taking drug and alcohol

Taking drug and alcohol	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
	20	100%

11. Trends in treatment seeking

Getting medical help	Number of student	Percentage
Yes	1	6.67%
No	14	93.33%
Total	15	100%

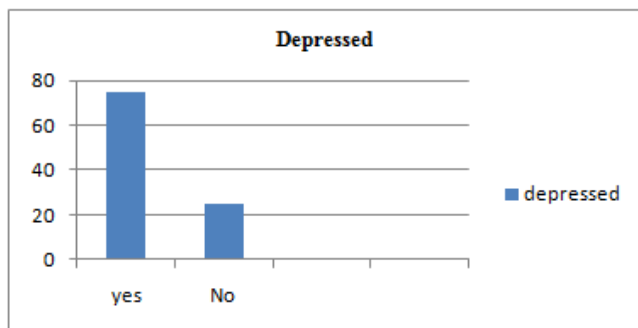


Fig-1

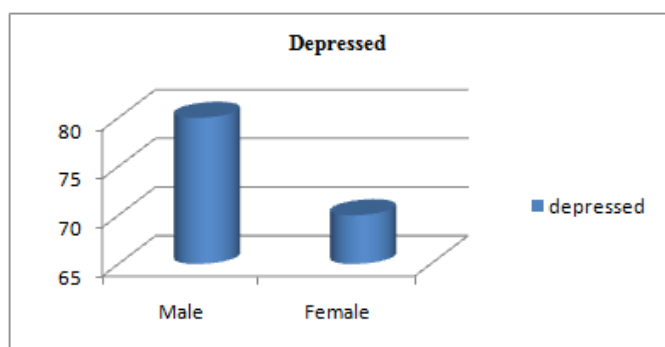


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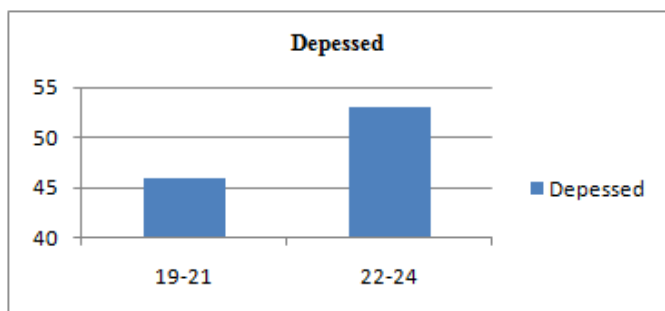


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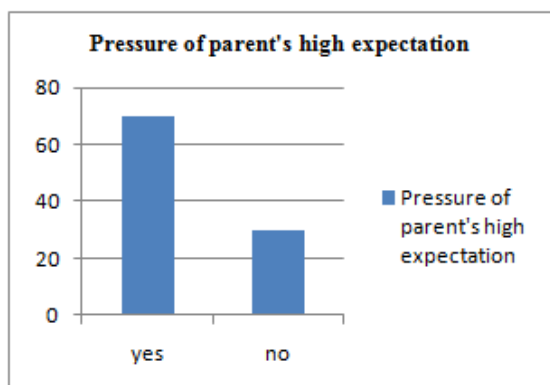


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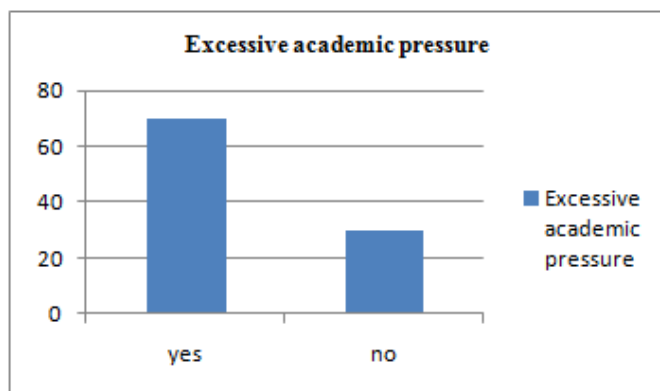


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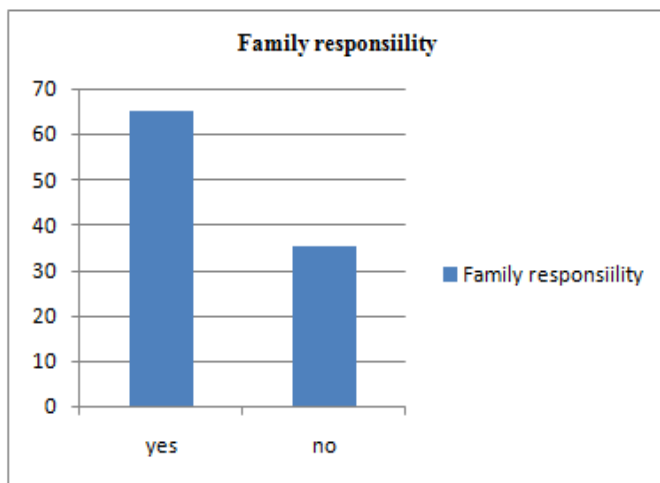


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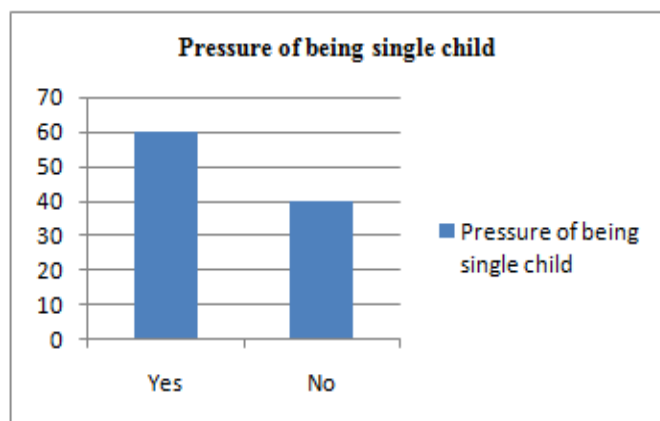


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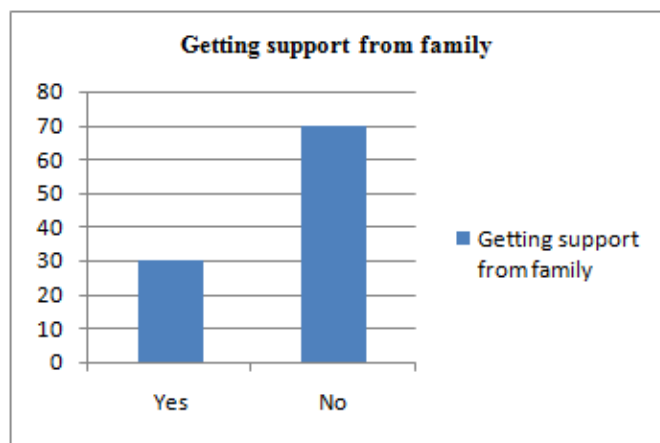


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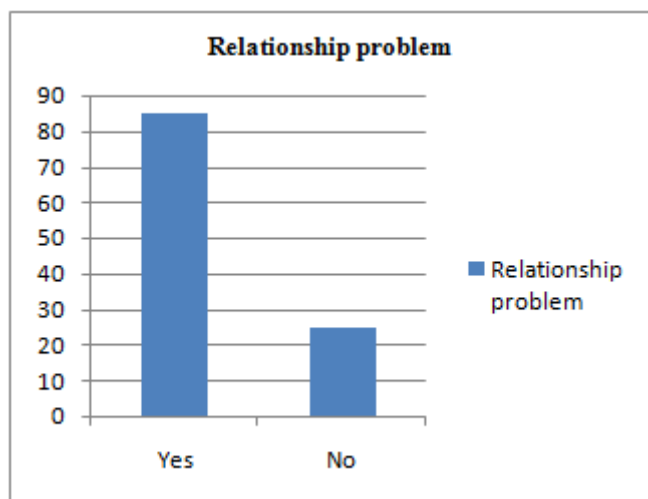


Fig-9

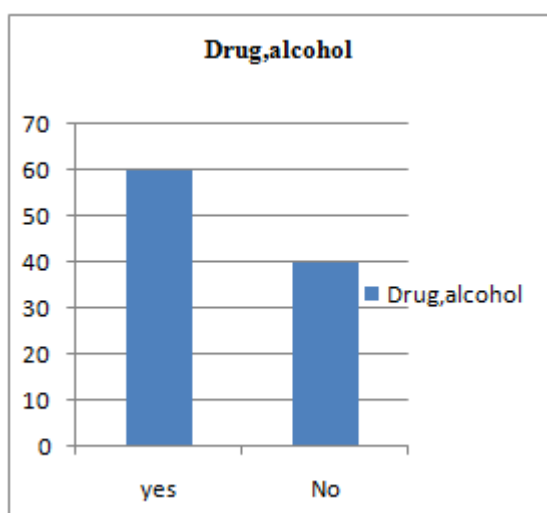


Fig-10

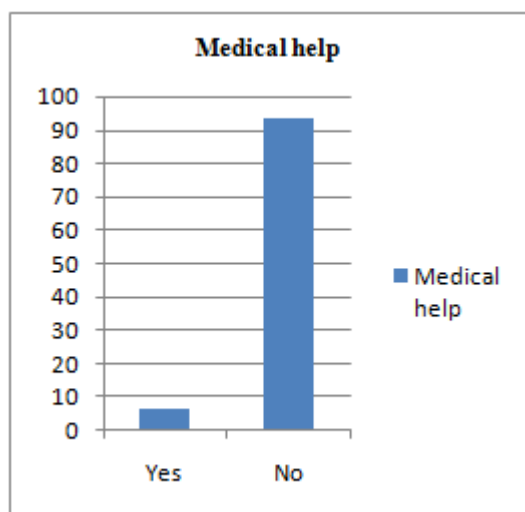


Fig-11

6. Discussion

Based on the symptoms 20 people are chosen from study and it is evident that among them 75% are suffering from mild to severe depression. It is also evident that depression is more prevalent to male rather than female. 80% of male students are depressed where 70% of female students are found to be depressed. So, we can say that there is gender difference of

depression. Depression is more prevalent in post graduate students rather than the under graduate students, among them the final year students seems to be more vulnerable towards depression. Among 75% of the total population does not have any income of their own and this economic situation making them more upset, and this eventually leads towards depression. Around 70% of the students stated that their parents hold high expectation from them which create pressure on them. Some of the student also stated the burden of education loan which they have to bear very soon. As they are right now unemployed payment of this loan creates pressure on them. Around 80% of the student population stated that they face excessive academic pressure which makes them very upset and worrisome about the future. 60% of the student population gets stressed out because they are concerned with the issue that they have to take family responsibility. Many of them getting stressed because of this. This study is conducted on a sample of students who mainly come from middle class and lower middle class family. The students who came from low income family even from the moderately income family are prone to depressed because of their financial situation. It has considerable impact on their mental well being. Now a days family becoming nuclear. In my study I found maximum students who are single child of their parents. And being a single child it creates enormous pressure on them as they are the only ones whom their parent's expect and also they are the only ones who have to take care their parents no matter what. This fact makes the students more stressful and making them depressed. Hence forth we can say that the family size and pattern is somehow link with the depression of young generation. Getting support from the family also generates mental well being. Majority of the respondents, 70% of them complaining that they are not getting enough support from their family. Where only 30% gets familial support. Those who are getting support from the family claim that it helps them to cope up with the stressful situation of their life. As we know that family is a centre of emotional relaxation, hence it is evident from the study that familial support has a major role in a mental well being of the student.

According to many psychological journal depression affects the daily social activity of a person. It is found in this study that about 60% of them becoming less interested in their daily activities. In this age group relationship mainly with the opposite sex is a major issue of concern. Many of my respondents complaint to have emotional problem and getting depressed because of the upheaval in their relationship. About 85% of them complaint to have relationship problem. As they told it is the major reason making them feeling depressed. Studies showed that when people get depressed they choose drugs and alcohol for their support. In my study my respondents reported to choose these things whenever they feel low. In fact it is also the case for the people who are very minimum depressed. We can relate depression with drug abuse by considering this trend. Previous study showed that significant number of college students suffering from depression only a few seek medical help. In my study I too found that only 1 student out of the 20 which is 6.67% seek medical help.

7. Conclusion

Though college and university students' depression is mainly moderate but it still needs attention because it can

create a much greater problem in the near future. In my study I found male student to be more depressed than female though previous studies showed that females are more depressed. The result is different because males sometimes do not express their feelings openly as it seems to be weakness which is very incompatible for men in terms of social standards of our society. Family always creates a sphere which can give support to the individual coping with his problems. The result found in this study indicates decreased family function and unstable family life create very negative impact in one's mental well being. So, therefore family function needs to be improved so that people get better mental support and in a whole create a positive impact in a student's mental well being. Thus we can see that there are so many social factor associated with depression, we can control this mental problem not only by treatment but by controlling this social factor also. Like this social factor

contributed towards depression but at the same time it can be very helpful towards coping with depression. The research does not say that depression occurs only because of the social factor but social factors are one of the important factors in this scenario. The family needs to get sympathetic and understandable towards students, family needs to improve its function effectively. Also In the academic sphere the authorities should consider student's mental condition and general well being. Universities and colleges should provide mental health care team to work jointly and so that they contribute greatly in the development process of the students. And so, by examining the gender roles, social factor associated with depression we can get the complete picture and work towards elevating these problems in near future.

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