

Research Article

A Study on Depression of Bereaved Students Affected by Natural Disaster

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Abstract

In this study an attempt has been made to study the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster. Depression scale standardized by the investigator has been used for the present study to measure the depression of bereaved students. The sample includes 300 bereaved students affected by natural disaster studying in various schools at Nagappattinam and Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. The present study reveals that the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster is high. There is a significant inverse relationship between depression and academic achievement. The bereaved students who lost their mother are highly depressive than the students who lost their father and close relatives. The bereaved students who live with their guardian are highly depressive than the students who live with their parents. The bereaved students whose parents are uneducated are highly depressive than the students whose parents are educated.

Keywords: *Depression, Bereaved Students, Natural Disaster, Academic Achievement, Parental Loss, Guardian Care, Parental Education, Psychological Impact, Secondary Education, Emotional Well-Being.*

INTRODUCTION

Coastal Tamil Nadu is a disaster-prone area. The maximum loss of life was reported in the Nagappattinam and Cuddalore district. The students affected by the natural disaster are facing psychological problems, social problems, financial problems, and legal problems. They are overwhelmed with the following symptoms like misery, despair, extreme confusion, anger, bereavement, guilt, depression, loneliness, anxiety, hyperactivity, disorganized behaviors, difficulty in making decision and loss of interest in education etc.

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Depression is a very real and serious problem for both children and teens. Negative life events especially failure in the achievement domain and actual and threatened loss in the interpersonal domain have been found to be particularly the cause of depression (Beck, 1987). Natural disaster is a negative life event. Depressed individuals express lack of energy, low self esteem, and loss of interest, loneliness, hopelessness, powerlessness and thoughts of death. Research has shown that childhood depression often persists, recurs and continues into adulthood, especially if it goes untreated. The presence of childhood depression also tends to be a predictor of more severe illnesses in adulthood. For the present study the investigators are interested to study the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives:

1. To find out the level of depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster.
2. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between depression and academic achievement of bereaved students affected by natural disaster.
3. To find out whether there is a significant difference in the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster with respect to different sub-samples of the study.

METHOD OF STUDY

The normative survey method was used to find out the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster. Depression scale standardized by the investigators has been used to find out the level of depression. It consists of 23 statements. The statements in this scale are related to depression symptoms such as hopelessness and irritability, cognitions such as guilt or feelings of being punishment, as well as physical symptoms such as fatigue, weight loss and lack of interest in study. Each item (statement) has five alternative responses namely 'Strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree'. The subject is asked to indicate his or her choice. Each item is to be awarded the score of '5,4,3,2,1' respectively from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Academic achievement is determined by the marks secured by the bereaved students at the half yearly examination. It is taken from the school register.

The tool was administered to a 300 bereaved students affected by natural disaster studying in various schools at Nagappattinam and Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. The purposive sampling technique has been followed for the present study. The data has been

subjected to statistical techniques like descriptive analysis, differential analysis and correlational analysis.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Table -1

Comparison of Mean Depression Scores of Male and Female Bereaved Students

Sub-samples	N	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Male	151	77.72	16.21	1.39	Not Significant
Female	149	74.79	19.99		

Table - 4

Comparison of Mean Depression Scores of Bereaved Students who have Live with their Parents and Guardian

Source of variation	d.f	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Between groups	2	12262.65	6131.32	20.93	Significant
Between groups	297	86966	292.81		

Table 3

Comparison of Mean Depression Scores of Bereaved Students who have Lost Their Mother, Father and Other Relatives

Sub-samples	N	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Students who lost their Mother	44	91.63	10.95	6.08	Significant
Students who lost their Father	90	72.85	18.94		

Students who lost their Mother	44	91.63	10.95	6.38	Significant
Students who lost their relatives	166	74.04	17.38		
Students who lost their father	90	72.85	18.94	0.50	Not Significant
Students who lost their relatives	166	74.04	17.38		

Table -4

Comparison of Mean Depression Scores of Bereaved Students who have Live with their Parents and Guardian

Sub-samples	N	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Students who live their parents	188	68.52	17.75	11.42	Significant
Students who live with their guardian	112	89.25	9.54		

Table -5

Comparison of Mean Depression Scores of Bereaved Students whose Parents are Educated and Uneducated

Sub-samples	N	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Students whose parents are educated	130	72.55	20.00	3.13	Significant
Students whose parents are uneducated	170	79.10	16.21		

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The mean and standard deviation for the depression scores of total group are found to be 76.26 and 18.21 respectively. It may be remembered that a student can get a maximum score of 115. Hence, it indicates that the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster is high. The mean value for all the samples of the study indicates that the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster is high with respect to all the sub-samples:

The co-efficient of correlation has been determined to find out the relationship between depression and academic achievement of bereaved students. It is found to be -0.90 and it is significant at 0.01 level. Hence, it indicates that there is a significant inverse relationship between depression and academic achievement of bereaved students affected by natural disaster.

The 't' value has been calculated to find out the significant difference between the male and female bereaved students in their level of depression (Table- I). There is conclusive evidence in the study to show that there is no significant difference between the male and female bereaved students in their depression as 't' value ($t=1.39$) is not significant at 0.05 level.

The depression of bereaved students who have lost their mother, father and other close relatives are subjected to analysis of variance. The details of the analysis of variance are given in the (Table 2). The 'F' value ($F=20.93$) is found to be significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that the bereaved students who have lost their mother, father and close relatives significantly differ in their level of depression. The mean scores of sub groups are compared for significance of difference and 't' test is applied. It is presented in Table 3.

The result of the Table-3 reveals that the bereaved students who have lost their mother and those who have lost their father differ significantly in their depression as 't' value ($t=6.08$) is significant at 0.01 level and the bereaved students who have lost their mother and those who have lost their relatives differ significantly in their depression as 't' value ($t=6.38$) is significant at 0.01 level. It further reveals that the bereaved students who have lost their father and those who have lost their relatives do not differ significantly in their depression as 't' value ($t=0.50$) is not significant at 0.01 level. The mean value indicates that the students who have lost their mother (mean=91.63) are highly depressed than the students who have lost their father (mean=72.85) and close relatives (mean=72.85).

The 't' value has been calculated to find out the significant difference between the bereaved students who live with their parents and those who live with their guardians in their level of depression (Table-4). The result of the Table-4 reveals that the bereaved students who live with their parents and those who live with their guardian differ significantly in their depression as 't' value ($t=11.42$) is significant at 0.01 level. The mean value indicates that the students who live with their guardian (mean=89.25) are highly depressed than the students who live with their parents (mean=68.52).

The 't' value has been calculated to find out the significant difference between the bereaved students having educated and uneducated parents in their level of depression (Table-5). The result of the Table-5 reveals that the bereaved students having educated and uneducated parents differ significantly in their depression as 't' value ($t=3.13$) is significant at 0.01 level. The mean value indicates that the students whose parents are uneducated (mean=79.10) are highly depressed than the students whose parents are educated (mean=72.55).

CONCLUSION

The present study reveals that the depression of bereaved students affected by natural disaster is high. There is a significant inverse relationship between depression and academic achievement of bereaved students affected by natural disaster. The students who have lost their mother are highly depressed than the students who have lost their father and close relatives. The students who live with their guardian are highly depressed than the students who live with their parents. The bereaved students whose parents are uneducated are highly depressed than the students whose parents are educated.

A child with depression may pretend to be sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent, or worry that a parent may die. Older children may sulk, get into trouble at school, be negative and irritable, and feel misunderstood. Because these signs may be viewed as normal mood swings typical of children as they move through developmental stages, it is essential to accept the grief and grieving people and treat them with utmost sensitivity, respect and enable them to cope physically, psychologically and spiritually.

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