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## Assessment and comparison of psychological counselling needs of rural and urban adolescents

Manisha Dhama and Seema Sharma

### Abstract

High psychological distress among adolescents leads to need of high psychological counselling among adolescents. Psychological counselling in the present era have become rising needs because of diversity of problems that the individual faces in important domains of life. To assess the Psychological counselling needs of male and female adolescents in urban and rural areas. The study was conducted on 200 adolescents (100 urban and 100 rural) of Government Senior Secondary Schools of Ludhiana district. The sample was further equally distributed over two genders (100 males and 100 females). Psychological counselling needs scale (Chouhan & Arora, 2009) was used to assess the psychological counselling needs of adolescents. The results revealed that significant locale differences were found in the adolescents perception of total psychological counselling needs. Rural adolescents had more psychological counselling needs. No significant difference was found between males and female. Significant correlation was found between psychological counselling needs and academic achievements of both the locale and gender. It means those students who get academic failure were in more mental health problems than who are academically high. Good mental health is a very important determinant of academic growth of the student. It is vital to have a counselor in each school for guiding the students as going to psychiatrist is still a social stigma in Indian culture.

**Keywords:** Psychological counselling needs, adolescents, academic achievement

### Introduction

Psychological counselling in the present era have become rising needs because of diversity of problems that the individual faces in important domains of life. It means help or advice to deal with the complex problems linked with your work, education, personal relationship and making into easier ones. Anagbogu (2002) <sup>[1]</sup> defines counselling as dynamic and purposeful relationship between two people in which procedures differ with the nature of the children's needs, but in this there is always mutual participation by the counsellor and the client with the focus of self-actualization and self-determination by the client. Counselling is complex helping process in which the counsellor set up a trusting and confidential working relationship, where the focal point is on problem solving, decisions making and discovering personal meaning related to learning and development.

Adolescence is generally considered as a turbulent period and is often portrayed as a negative phase of life—a phase of storm and stress to be survived or endured (Arnett 1999). Adolescence initiated from later childhood and amalgamate into adulthood with sexual maturity, rise in hormone levels, desire for more independence (Youniss & Smollar 1985) <sup>[18]</sup> During this period a variety of physiological, cognitive, emotional and social changes take place. Adolescence means 'to emerge' to attain 'identity' and this way of attaining identity has to go long facing up with challenges as well as changes. This stage is best defined as a critical period in relation to puberty and also considered as revolution of person's life which starts with biological transformation and finished in adjusting with those challenges in the society (Petersen 1988.) <sup>[12]</sup>, the capacity to think abstractly, escalating interest in peers, distancing from parents due to relationship with peers or outside (Steinberg 1988) and the inauguration of romantic relationship are characteristics of adolescence. These characteristics are like shifting from child like to being adult like (Lerner & Spanier 1980) <sup>[9]</sup>. *Adolescence period has a special importance because this period marks multi developmental changes in an individual.*

Teenagers have significant role in society. Today's young people are the hope, future citizens and leaders of tomorrow, therefore it is essential to build aptitude, behavior and action according to democratic ideals (Chuabe 2002) <sup>[7]</sup>. In India, youngs have good hold on population. They will be controlling and running the world tomorrow. Undoubtedly, we need to better understand these challenges and find appropriate solutions. Braddock (2001) <sup>[4]</sup>

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confirmed that, the principle counseling in schools is to make improvement in academic achievement, enlarge acquisitions and application of conflict resolution, endorse affirmative study attitudes and behavior and condense school dropouts of the children. Even at schools adolescents have stress of academic performance, selecting fields of specialization and career as well. Teachers as well as parents choose academic achievement as sole criteria to judge students' performance. However, it can be a very hard period during which a great deal of understanding, patience and support is required. Modernization has given many optimistic effects as it is providing so many opportunities and making life easy and comfortable, but at the same time, it has dispatched multiple stressors in adolescents' life. These stress leads to massive mental health problems. It is therefore, very significant that students' psychological counselling needs must be known, so that, steps can be taken to make available required support services in this regard to them at adequate level.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had made efforts in the direction of strengthening guidance and counselling services and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) endeavours at providing the state personnel with skills and competencies to aid educational, personal, social as well as career development of students. Guidance and counselling services are provided via a number of channels like State level guidance agencies in the form of State Bureaus of Educational and Vocational guidance or Guidance and counselling cells/ units in State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) or sometimes in District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs) (NCERT 2015) [11]. Same as other educational programme, the guidance and counselling programme also need cautious and consistent development and ensure that programme must satisfy needs of the client.

In most of the schools in Punjab, particularly in Government funded schools, there is no provision for professional counselling services. However, some of the teachers who hold an interest in guiding the students to solve their personal, psychological, social and academic problems, help them in this direction. Although, some of the private schools (those affiliated to CBSE) follow the board regulation and appoint school counsellor, but these counsellors in most of the schools are often asked to perform other duties like teaching classes, supervising, office work and class scheduling instead of their real job. As a result, adolescents confront problems which they cannot readily cope with in the absence of assistance from their parents, teachers or professionals such as school counsellors. The academic achievement may be one of the determinants of adolescent mental health and as a result can

be associated with the adolescents' need for psychological counselling. A school counsellor's role also becomes sensitive when the ultimate aim is students academic achievement. (Shechtman 2002) [14] Psychological counselling role is not only to make smooth and easy progress on academic performance but other than that it also helps to take major steps before the crises occurs and increase remedial inputs to the clients as well as to its surroundings like school or family environment.

**Objectives**

1. To identify and compare the psychological counselling needs of rural and urban adolescents of both gender groups.
2. To explore the correlation between academic achievement of adolescents and their psychological counselling needs.

**Methodology:** The Psychological Counselling Needs scale developed by Chouhan & Arora (2009) [6] was used to assess the magnitude of psychological counselling needs among adolescents. This tool is important to identify and study the problem areas and needs of psychological counselling.

**Scoring**

The scale consists of 5 point 25 Likert-type structured items for collecting the information. From total 25 statements 21 statements were positive and 4 statements were negative. The items were scored as following: always, often, sometimes, rarely and never.

Statement type	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Positive statements	5	4	3	2	1
Negative statements	1	2	3	4	5

Higher score indicate higher degree of psychological counselling needs and low scores indicate less psychological counselling needs among adolescents.

**The following criteria of selection were used to select the sample from urban and rural localities:**

- Age range of 16-18 years.
- Students going to Government Schools

**Result and discussion**

**Table 1:** Locale differences in distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs

Levels of psychological counselling needs	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)		Z value	Overall (n = 200)	
	f	%	f	%		f	%
High	58	58.00	37	37.00	2.97***	95	47.50
Average	21	21.00	37	37.00	2.49**	58	29.00
Low	21	21.00	26	26.00	0.83 <sup>NS</sup>	47	23.50

\*\*p≤0.05 \*\*\*p≤0.01

**1. Locale differences in distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs.**

The overall sample of 200 respondents brings to light that majority of total population were at high level psychological counselling needs (47.50%) followed by average level of

psychological counselling needs (29 per cent) and low level of psychological counselling needs (23.50%). A similar study was conducted by Sati and Vig (2016) [13] using the psychological counselling needs scale and was found that majority of population lied at high level of psychological counselling needs followed by average and low level. As in

Indian context psychological Counselling needs became known against the background of explicit change (Arulmani 2007) [3] and this change showed the way to loneliness of people, stress and others psychological problems. More than half (58%) of the rural sample was clustered at high level of psychological counselling need whereas 37 per cent of urban population were at high psychological counselling needs (z value- 2.97;  $p \leq 0.01$ ) On the other hand 21 percent of rural sample and 37 per cent of urban sample lied at average level of psychological needs. (Z value-2.49;  $p \leq 0.01$ ), whereas, urban population reported more per cent (26%) at low level of psychological counselling need than

rural population (21%) with non significant difference. Lack of openness to discuss their concerns in their surroundings, less access to technology and less exposure to the environment may be the reason for high psychological counselling needs among rural adolescents. Williams and Polaha (2015) [17] concluded that seeking counselling for mental health is associated with stigma of the society. Another study by Kumar (2011) [8] stated that with rise of population, unemployment, changing way of living, lack of social support, rising insecurities had lead to mental health problems in rural areas. Therefore, psychological counselling needs rises among rural adolescents than urban adolescents.

**Table 2:** Gender differences in distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs

Levels of psychological counselling needs	Female (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)		Male (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)		Z value
	f	%	f	%	
High	46	46.00	49	49.00	0.42 <sup>NS</sup>
Average	30	30.00	28	28.00	0.31 <sup>NS</sup>
Low	24	24.00	23	23.00	0.16 <sup>NS</sup>

**2. Gender differences in distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs**

A look into the gender distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling need revealed that 46 per cent females and 49 per cent males were found at high level of psychological counselling need followed by 30 per cent of females and 28 per cent of males were at average level of psychological counselling need, whereas, as compared to high and average level of psychological counselling needs adolescents falling in low psychological counselling needs

were found to be less (24% females and 23% males). Both the gender showed non-significant difference in various levels of psychological counselling needs which means both the gender were almost proportionately same for seeking help for psychological wellbeing. As a world is changing in fraction of time with tremendous technological development, it has lead to fragmentation of societies and people found no adequate support system at right time. So, the result showed that they need such help where there problems could be resolved and they can be listened what they feel.

**Table 3:** Locale wise gender distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs.

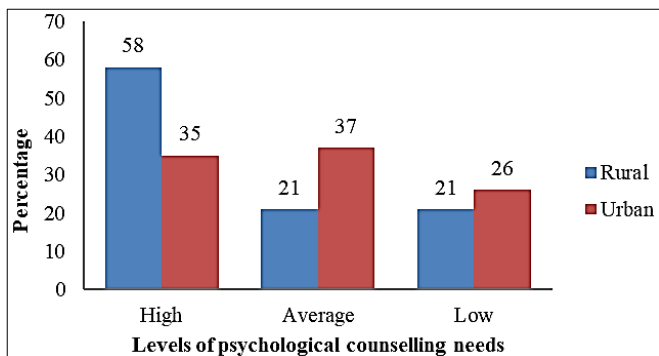
Levels of psychological counselling needs	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)				Z value	Urban (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)				Z value
	Female (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)		Male (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)			Female (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)		Male (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)		
	f	%	f	%		f	%	f	%	
High	33	66.00	25	50.00	1.62 <sup>NS</sup>	13	26.00	24	48.00	2.27**
Average	6	12.00	15	30.00	2.20**	24	48.00	13	26.00	2.27**
Low	11	22.00	10	20.00	0.24 <sup>NS</sup>	13	26.00	13	26.00	0 <sup>NS</sup>

\*\* $p \leq 0.05$

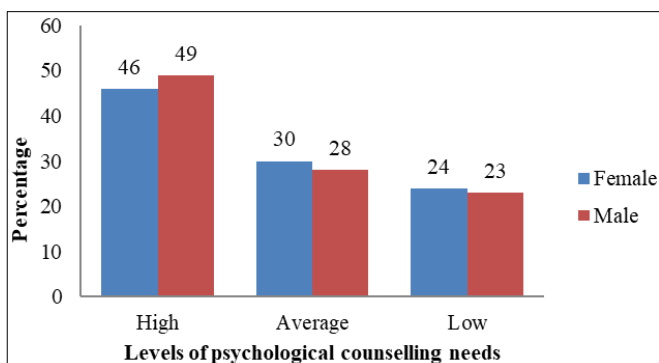
**3. Locale wise gender distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs**

The data presented in Table 3 elucidates locale wise gender differences in the distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs. In rural sample, 66 per cent females and 50 per cent males were found at high level of psychological counselling needs with non significant difference whereas contradictory result was seen in urban locale as 48 per cent of males were at high level of psychological counselling needs which were more than females (26%) (Z= 2.27;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). In rural area, females (12%) were found to be proportionately less than males (30%) at average level of psychological counselling needs with a significant difference (Z=2.20;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). On the other hand, a different trend was seen on urban sample where females (48%) were found more than males (26%) at average level of psychological counselling needs. 22 per cent females, 20 per cent males living in rural area and 13 per cent of females and 13 per cent of males living in urban area were at low level of psychological counselling needs with non-significant difference.

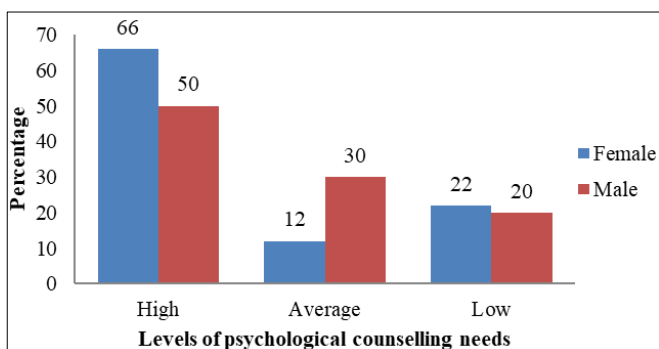
Though, the result showed non-significant gender differences in rural area but proportionately more females were found at the high level of psychological counselling. As gender is regarded critical determinant of mental health as women differ in physical characteristics as well as in their psychological makeup. Findings of Malhotra and Shah (2015) [10] revealed that though psychological problems are common in both the gender but women predominate more than males and have a higher level of psychological disorders. In urban locale, males were found more than females at high level of psychological counselling needs whereas at average level of psychological counselling females were more than males with high significant difference. It may be because sample male population at high level of psychological counselling tends to be less expressive to show their feelings than females which resulted in more psychological counselling needs.



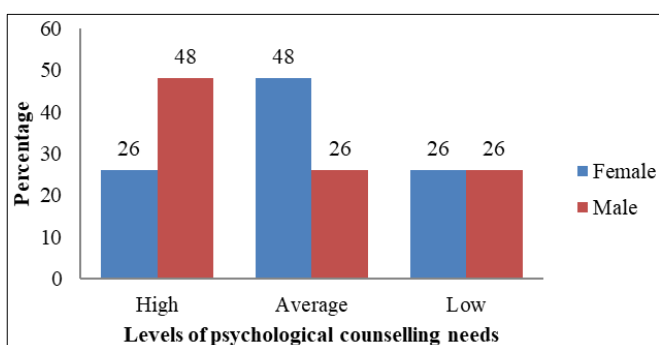
**Fig 2:** Locale-wise per cent distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs



**Fig 3:** Gender-wise per cent distribution of respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs



**Fig 4:** Gender-wise per cent distribution of rural respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs



**Fig 5:** Gender-wise per cent distribution of urban respondents across various levels of psychological counselling needs.

**4. Locale wise correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement.**

Perusal of table 4 revealed that academic achievement has

significant negative correlation with psychological counselling need of both the locale. It means those students who get academic failure were in more mental health problems than who are academically high.

In this stage of life Students’ main duty is supposed to be academically good, those who are not able to achieve that it lead them to various mental health problem like anxiety, depression etc. Thus, for improving student academic level there is high need to assist them with psychological counselling which is lacking among adolescents.

**Table 4:** Locale wise correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement

Psychological counselling needs	(n=200)	
	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)	Urban (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)
Academic achievement	-0.4788**	-0.47467**

\*\*p≤0.01

**5. Gender wise correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement**

In table 4.3.7 result were similar between both the gender group indicating a strong negative correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement (female r=-0.5118; p≤0.01 and male r=-0.44513; p≤0.01) which means to focus on studies and to get higher achievement in academics psychological problem must be resolved.

**Table 5:** Gender wise correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement

Psychological counselling needs	(n=200)	
	Female (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)	Male (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)
Academic achievement	-0.51108**	-0.44513**

\*\*p≤0.01

Similar findings were stated by Turashvii and Japaridze (2012) [16] that students psychologically well-being has relation to academic performance, they revealed that who have medium and high level of academic performance they are at good level of psychological well-being.

Thus, academic achievement is influential and imperative factor for psychological counselling need.

**6. Locale wise gender correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement.**

In table 6 result showed significant negative correlation between academic achievement and psychological counselling need in males (r= -.028535; p≤0.01) and females (r=-0.64437; p≤0.01) living in rural area. Similar findings were noted at urban area academic achievement of males (r=-0.58087; p≤0.01) and females (r=-0.64437; p≤0.01) was significantly negatively correlated with need of psychological counselling. It means that the students perform better in academics if they get good psychological counselling services. Study revealed that academic achievement is important domain for psychological counselling need.

**Table 6:** Locale wise gender correlation between psychological counselling needs and academic achievement.

Psychological counselling needs	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> = 100)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> = 100)	
	Female (n <sub>3</sub> = 50)	Male (n <sub>4</sub> = 50)	Female (n <sub>5</sub> = 50)	Male (n <sub>6</sub> = 50)
	Academic achievement	Academic achievement	Academic achievement	Academic achievement
	-0.64437**	-.028535**	-0.37076**	-0.58087**

\*\*p&lt;0.01

Similar findings were revealed by Chamundeswari and Saila (2013) [5] that with increase in academic achievement psychological counselling need decreases or vice versa. Good mental health is a very important determinant of academic growth of the student. It is vital to have a counselor in each school for guiding the students as and going to psychiatrist is still a social stigma in Indian culture.

### Conclusion

Mental illness has a lengthy past of being stigmatized in societies around the world. From the prejudices to the sense of shame. Psychological counselling role is not only to make smooth and easy progress on academic performance but other than that it also helps to take major steps before the crises occurs and increase remedial inputs to the clients as well as to its surroundings like school or family environment. It is the need of the hour to have a counselor in each school for guiding the students as going to psychiatrist is still a social stigma in Indian culture.

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