



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695  
ISSN (P): 2349-8242  
NAAS Rating: 5.23  
TPI 2022; SP-11(3): 1679-1685  
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[www.thepharmajournal.com](http://www.thepharmajournal.com)  
Received: 07-01-2022  
Accepted: 09-02-2022

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## Influence of anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students

**Mukta G Sthavarmath and Manjula Patil**

### Abstract

Anxiety is the common psychological problem which were adversely affecting the high school students academic performance and socio-emotional behavior. A study was made on influence of anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students to study the anxiety among urban and rural high school students and to examine the influence of anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students. The population for the study comprised of Kannada medium government and private aided high school students, where 240 students from each urban and rural areas were drawn from Dharwad taluk of Karnataka. For the present study, the permission was sought from Block Education Officer and the Heads of the schools were contacted and permission was taken for conducting the study. From each class, 20 students were taken for the study randomly. Study anxiety questionnaire (Vitasari *et al.* 2010) and academic anxiety questionnaire (Andreson 2007) were used to know the stress, study anxiety and academic anxiety of students. Scholastic performance of the children-Rutter proforma-A (1967) and child behavior checklist-teacher report form (Achenbach, 2001) were used to know the scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of students. Result revealed that, higher the level of anxiety lower the scholastic performance of high school students and majority of students with high level anxiety were in clinical range of behavior problems and low level of anxiety among students were in normal behavior. This indicates the immediate need for counseling programmes for high school students to reduce the anxiety during study period as well as during exams and to increase the scholastic performance and to reduce behavior problems of students.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, high school students, scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior

### Introduction

Adolescence is a transition stage between childhood and adulthood and characterized by rapid physical changes and mental development. According to Ablard and Parker (2010) <sup>[1]</sup> adolescence stage is defined as the time when individuals begin to function independently of their parents. It is the period of life when a child develops into an adult and generally seen from the age of 12 to 19 years.

Anxiety is the most common psychological turmoil facing school adolescent function in everyday life. In school life, every school adolescent in one way or another is a victim of anxiety disorders. The young people/students with anxiety disorder are so afraid, worried and cannot function normally. Anxiety has been defined as a future oriented mood or feelings characterized of negative affective state accompanied by self-focused, psychological and self-preoccupation within the controllability of future threat or potentially negative situation (Figuroa, 2013) <sup>[10]</sup>. It is estimated that 13 to 25 per cent of the world adolescents in schools face anxiety (Walsh *et al.*, 2010) <sup>[24]</sup>. In India, the prominent documented effect of anxiety among school children and adolescents is decreased scholastic performance and behavioural problems. This is amplified in secondary school where all 16-year old children attempt the class X first board examination, known as the secondary examination. Results of the secondary examination are vital for individuals since this is the main determining criteria for future admission to a high quality senior secondary school and a preferred academic stream.

Anxiety is a normal part of life. It can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or anxious. A low level of anxiety could be good. It can motivate and help a person to become more productive. It provides the means to express talents and energies and pursue happiness. However, too much anxiety or a strong response to anxiety can be harmful. A high level of anxiety may have negative effect on cognitive functioning and learning of

students. It can affect student's grades, health and socio-emotional behavior. Young adults today are engaging in a variety of risky behaviors that are increasing their chances of involvement in destructive and even deadly situations.

Additionally students have to face many academic demands, for example, school examination, answering questions in the class, showing progress in school subjects, understanding what the teacher is teaching, competing with other class mates, fulfilling teachers and parent's academic expectations. These demands may tax or exceed available resources of the students. As a consequence, they can be under anxiety, since the demand is related to achievement of an academic goal. So, stress is related to the achievement of an academic goal.

In view of the challenges associated with the stress and anxiety, it is important to study influence of stress, anxiety among high school students and its effect on their scholastic performance and socio-emotional behaviour. In this context, the present study was conducted with the following objectives.

### Objectives

1. To study the anxiety among urban and rural high school students
2. To examine the influence of anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students

### Methodology

#### Research Design

The differential design was used to know the difference between urban and rural high school student's anxiety and 'chi square' analysis was employed to know the influence of personal characteristics on anxiety among urban and rural high school students.

#### Population and Sample

There were total 98 high schools in urban locality and 188 high schools in rural locality of Dharwad taluk. Twelve schools were randomly selected, within twelve schools, about 4 per cent of 98 urban schools (four schools: 2 govt, 2 private aided) and 2 per cent of 188 rural schools (four schools: 2 govt, 2 private aided) were randomly selected for the study who were willing to participate and had co-operation for the study. In the present study, the sample comprised of 480 high school students (240 boys and 240 girls) studying in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> classes of schools (government and private aided) situated in urban and rural localities of Dharwad taluk.

#### Tools used for assessment

The following tools were used to collect different information of the school children for the study.

#### Study anxiety questionnaire

Study anxiety questionnaire which was developed by Vitasari *et al.* (2010) [23] - The questionnaire contains 40 items, each of item has five scale that ask respondents to answer of questions base on student experiences, feeling, and thought about anxiety felt along study in campus. The scale format uses answering ranging from 1 being an answer of never, 2 for an answer almost never, 3 for an answer rare, 4 for an answer fairly often and 5 being an answer of very often. The total scores of respondent ranges from 1 to 200. Based on these total scores respondents are divided into 3 categories as follows.

Category	Score range
High anxiety	133-200
Average anxiety	65 – 132
Low anxiety	< 65

#### Academic anxiety questionnaire

Academic anxiety questionnaire developed by Andreson (2007) the questionnaire contains 16 items, each question has either true or false response, for each true response 1 score and for false response 0 score is given and for false items (10 and 13), reverse score is given. Total scores ranges from 0-16 and the scores above 12 or more indicative of test anxiety.

#### Scholastic performance of the children-Rutter proforma (1967)

The Performa consists of qualitative information about scholastic performance, consistency in academic work, school attendance, leadership qualities, sports and extracurricular activities, reading and writing difficulties, presence of any illness, physical handicappedness and the teacher's opinion about the need for psychological help. All together the Performa has 9 items consisting of sub items, for each item a score of one was given. So child can score a minimum of '9' scores and maximum of '22' scores. Based on obtained scores, respondents will be classified under 3 categories as follows:

Level	Scores
Low	9-13
Average	14-18
High	19-22

#### Child behavior checklist-teacher report form (Achenbach, 2001)

The child behavior was measured through the teacher report form developed by Achenbach (2001) [2] which is a component in the Achenbach system of Empirical Based Assessment (ACEBA). The tool is used to identify the problem behavior in children given by the teacher who knows the child very well.

The checklist consists of 113 statements about the child's behavior, e.g. acts too young for his/her age where the responses are recorded on like RT scale: 0= not true, 1= sometimes true, 2= very true or often true. The questions are grouped into a number of syndromes. There are eight syndrome subscales namely anxious/depressed, withdrawn/depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, rule breaking behavior and aggressive behavior. Among these, the subscales withdrawn, somatic complaints and anxious/depressed are grouped as externalizing problems.

The total behavior problem is also obtained by summing up the scores of all the items. For each syndrome, problem scale and the total score, tables are given that determine whether, the score represents normal, borderline and clinical behavior. The raw scores are then converted into T scores based on age and gender.

The classification of internalizing, externalizing and total behavior problems on the basis of T-scores are as follows

Levels	T-scores
Clinical range	>64
Borderline	60-63
Normal	<59

**Data collection procedures**

For the present study, high schools were randomly selected and the Heads of the of the schools were contacted and permission was taken for conducting the study. Twenty students (both boys and girls) from each class were selected randomly. The concerned class students were approached and explained about the study so as to seek their honest answers. The questionnaires were distributed to respective class students with right instructions. It took nearly one hour of 4 visits for the completion of all questionnaires for all selected classes. The filled questionnaires were collected and the doubts were cleared on the spot by the interviewer.

**Statistical analysis**

Frequency and percentages were used to interpret the personal characteristics and anxiety among high school students. T-test was used to know the differences in selected independent variables and Chi-square was used to know the influence of personal characteristics on anxiety among urban and rural high school students.

**Results and Discussion**

**Study anxiety among urban and rural high school students**

**Table 1:** Association and difference between study anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Locality	Levels of study anxiety						χ <sup>2</sup> Value	Mean ± sd	T-value		
	Low		Average		High					Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%				N	%
Urban	45	18.75	93	38.75	102	42.50	240	100	1.23	113.29 ± 23.29	0.72
Rural	41	17.08	86	35.83	113	47.08	240	100		109.32 ± 20.12	
Total	86	17.91	179	37.29	215	44.79	480	100		110.98 ± 20.18	

Study anxiety among high school students in urban and rural localities is presented in Table 1. It was found that, in urban locality, majority (42.5%) of students had high study anxiety followed by average (38.75%) study anxiety 18.75 per cent of students were belonged to low study anxiety group. In rural locality also followed the same trends that, majority (47.08%) of students were under high anxiety followed by 35.83 per cent of students were in average anxiety and 17.08 per cent of students were in low level of study anxiety. In total students, majority had high anxiety (44.79%) followed by average level and low level (37.29% and 17.91% respectively) of study anxiety. On statistical analysis, the ‘chi square’ value not found be significant indicated that, there is no association between study anxiety and locality. The mean score of urban locality students (113.29) slightly higher than rural locality

students (110.32) and ‘t’ value not found to be significant indicated that there was no difference found between locality and study anxiety of high school students. Similar results have been reported by Banga and Sharma (2016) [7] who found no significant difference in the study anxiety among rural and urban secondary school students. However, students coming from urban locality had slightly higher study anxiety than students coming from rural locality but this difference was not significant statistically. Sharma *et al.*, (2016) [20] also reported that, non-significant difference in the study anxiety among rural and urban secondary school students.

**Academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students**

**Table 2:** Association and difference between academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Locality	Levels of academic anxiety					χ <sup>2</sup> Value	Mean ± SD	t-value	
	Presence of academic anxiety		Absence of academic anxiety		Total				
	N	%	N	%	n				%
Urban	159	66.25	81	33.75	240	100	8.31**	8.59 ± 2.59	2.19**
Rural	138	57.5	102	42.5	240	100		6.71 ± 1.39	
Total	297	61.87	183	38.12	480	100		7.79 ± 1.28	

\*\* Significant at 0.0 1 level

It was found that, in urban locality, majority (66.25%) of students were under presence of academic anxiety followed by absence of academic anxiety (33.75%). In rural locality also same trend was followed that, 57.5 per cent of students were in presence of academic anxiety and 42.5 per cent of students were in absence of academic anxiety. In total sample, 61.87 per cent of students had academic anxiety and 38.12 per cent of students had not academic anxiety. On statistical analysis the ‘chi square’ value found to be significant at 1 per cent level indicated that, there was association found between academic anxiety and locality. The mean of urban locality

students (8.59) higher than rural locality students (6.71%) and ‘t’ value found to be highly significant. Kumar *et al.* (2015) [13] reported similar result that, there was significant difference found between rural and urban adolescents on the variable of academic anxiety. Banga and Sharma (2016) [7] reported that, there was significant difference in the academic anxiety among rural and urban secondary school students. However, students coming from urban locality had slightly higher academic anxiety than their counterparts coming from rural locality but this difference was not significant statistically.

**Table 3:** Differences in mean score of academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Sl. No.	Statements	Urban (240)		Rural (240)		Range
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1	While taking an important exam, I perspire a great deal	0.97	0.50	0.57	0.49	0-1
2	I feel very panicky when I have to take a surprise test.	0.71	0.45	0.73	0.44	0-1
3	During tests, I find myself thinking of the consequences of failing.	0.35	0.47	0.61	0.48	0-1
4	After important tests, I am frequently so tense that my stomach gets upset.	0.18	0.39	1.00	0.49	0-1
5	While taking an important exam, I find myself thinking of how much brighter the other students are rather than how bright I am.	0.71	0.45	0.65	0.47	0-1
6	I freeze up on final examinations.	0.43	0.49	0.61	0.48	0-1
7	If I were to take a difficult course I would worry a great deal before taking it.	0.72	0.44	0.74	0.43	0-1
8	During exams I find myself thinking of things unrelated to the course material.	0.15	0.35	0.24	0.42	0-1
9	During exams I frequently get so nervous that I forget facts that I already know.	1.00	0.49	0.70	0.45	0-1
10	If I knew I was going to take a very difficult course, I would feel confident and relaxed beforehand.	0.12	0.32	0.11	0.31	0-1
11	I usually get depressed after taking a test.	0.46	0.49	0.63	0.48	0-1
12	I have an uneasy, upset feeling before taking a final.	0.77	0.41	0.93	0.44	0-1
13	When taking at test, I always feel I have done better than I actually did.	0.21	0.40	0.10	0.31	0-1
14	Getting a good grade on one test doesn't seem to increase my confidence on the second test.	0.28	0.45	0.24	0.42	0-1
15	After taking a test, I always feel I have done better than I actually did.	0.15	0.35	0.38	0.32	0-1
16	I sometimes feel my heart beating very fast during important exams.	0.716	0.451	0.79	0.40	0-1

The difference in mean scores of academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students is presented in table 3. It was noticed that, in urban locality, highest mean (1.00) belonged to 9<sup>th</sup> statement that, during exams I frequently get so nervous that I forget facts that I already know followed by first statement that, while taking an important exam, I perspire a great deal (0.98). The lowest mean (0.15) belonged to 15<sup>th</sup> statement that, after taking a test, I always feel I have done better than I actually did. In rural locality, highest mean (1.00) belonged to 4<sup>th</sup> statement that, after important tests, I am

frequently so tense that my stomach gets upset followed by 12<sup>th</sup> statement that, I have an uneasy, upset feeling before taking a final (0.93). The lowest mean (0.15) belonged to 15<sup>th</sup> statement that, after taking a test, I always feel I have done better than I actually did.

#### **Influence of study anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students**

**Table 4:** Association between scholastic performance and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of study anxiety	Levels of scholastic performance												$\chi^2$ value	
	Urban (240)						Rural (240)							
	High (112)		Average (97)		Low (31)		High (89)		Average (108)		Low (43)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
High	20	17.85	26	26.80	15	48.38	15	16.85	21	19.44	31	72.09	12.39*	1.23
Average	41	36.60	32	32.98	8	25.80	28	31.46	24	22.22	5	11.62		
Low	51	45.53	39	40.20	8	25.80	46	51.68	63	58.33	9	20.93		

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Result of Table 4 shows, association between study anxiety and scholastic performance of urban and rural high school students. In urban locality, majority (45.53%) of students with high scholastic performance were in low level of study anxiety followed by average level of study anxiety (36.60%) and 17.85 per cent of students were in high level of study anxiety. With regard to average achieved students, 40.20 per cent of students were in low level of study anxiety followed by average level and high level of study anxiety (32.98% and 26.80% respectively). In case of low performed students, 48.38 per cent of students were in high level of study anxiety and 25.8 per cent of students were equally distributed between average level and low level of study anxiety. The 'chi square' analysis showed significance association between the levels

of scholastic achievement and levels of stress among students at 0.05 level of significance. These results are in line with the study by Erlina *et al.*, (2012) [8] who also reported that, students who were high achievers had lower levels of study anxiety, while low achieving students had high levels of study anxiety. This was because high achievers had a strong understanding of subjects and had more confidence than low achievers. Lawrence (2014) [14] also reported that, there was significant association found between the study anxiety and scholastic performance of secondary school students. In rural locality, the 'chi square' value showed non-significant association between scholastic achievement and study anxiety among high school students.

**Table 5:** Association between internalizing problems and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students N =480

Levels of study anxiety	Levels of internalizing problems													
	Urban (240)						$\chi^2$ value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (123)		Borderline (85)		Clinical (32)			Normal (147)		Borderline (65)		Clinical (28)		$\chi^2$ Value
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
High	34	27.64	32	37.64	16	50.00	3.25	32	21.76	28	43.07	15	53.57	2.87
Average	36	29.26	27	31.76	10	31.25		52	35.37	32	49.23	3	10.71	
Low	53	43.08	26	30.58	6	18.75		63	42.85	5	7.69	10	35.71	

Table 5 depicts the association between internalizing problem behavior and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students. The ‘chi square’ analysis showed non-

significance association between the internalizing problems and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students.

**Table 5.1:** Association between externalizing problems and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of study anxiety	Levels of externalizing problems													
	Urban (240)						$\chi^2$ value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (80)		Borderline (119)		Clinical (41)			Normal (117)		Borderline (98)		Clinical (25)		$\chi^2$ Value
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
High	19	23.75	45	37.81	18	43.90	5.23	27	23.07	38	38.77	17	68.00	3.69
Average	19	23.75	63	52.94	16	39.02		41	35.04	43	43.87	8	32.00	
Low	42	52.50	11	9.24	7	17.07		49	41.88	17	17.34			

Table 5.1 depicts the association between externalizing problem behavior and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students. The ‘chi square’ analysis showed non-

significance association between the externalizing problems and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students.

**Table 5.2:** Association between socio-emotional behavior and study anxiety among urban and rural high school student N=480

Levels of study anxiety	Levels of socio-emotional behavior													
	Urban (240)						$\chi^2$ Value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (153)		Borderline (59)		Clinical (28)			Normal (123)		Borderline (84)		Clinical (33)		$\chi^2$ Value
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
High	34	22.22	17	28.81	17	60.71	0.74	28	22.76	19	22.61	21	63.63	3.58
Average	46	30.06	19	32.20	5	17.85		33	26.82	33	39.28	3	9.09	
Low	73	47.71	23	38.98	6	21.42		62	50.40	32	38.09	9	27.27	

Table 5.2 depicts the association between socio-emotional behavior and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students. The ‘chi square’ analysis showed non-significance association between the socio-emotional behavior and study anxiety among urban and rural high school students. Ammara (2016) [5] found that, construct of bullying and behaviour problems demonstrated positive correlation and bully as significant positive predictor of

anxiety. Victim behaviour was also found to be significant predictor of anxiety. However, the association between study anxiety and behaviour not found to be significant.

**Influence of academic anxiety on scholastic performance and socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students**

**Table 6:** Association between scholastic performance and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of academic anxiety	Levels of scholastic performance													
	Urban (240)						$\chi^2$ value	Rural (240)						
	High (112)		Average (97)		Low (31)			High (89)		Average (108)		Low (43)		$\chi^2$ Value
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Presence of academic anxiety	27	24.10	32	32.98	23	74.19	4.36**	17	19.10	19	17.59	33	76.74	6.58**
Absence of academic anxiety	85	75.89	65	67.01	8	25.80		72	80.89	89	82.40	10	23.25	

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 indicates that, association between academic anxiety and scholastic achievement of urban and rural high school students. In urban locality, it was clear that, majorities (75.89%) of high achievers were in absence of academic anxiety and 24.10 per cent of students were in presence of academic anxiety. With regard to average achievers 67.01 per cent and 32.98 per cent of students were in absence of academic anxiety and presence of academic anxiety respectively. Among low achievers majority (74.19%) of students had academic anxiety and 25.80 per cent had not academic anxiety.

In rural locality, 80.89 per cent and 82.4 per cent of students were in absence of academic anxiety that students were high achievers and average achievers respectively. 19.10 per cent and 17.59 per cent of students were in absence of academic anxiety that students were high achievers and average achievers respectively. 76.74 per cent of low achievers had academic anxiety and 23.25 per cent had not academic anxiety. The statistical analysis showed significance association between the scholastic achievement and study anxiety in urban and rural locality at 0.01 level of significance. Norgate *et al.* (2012) [15] found that, higher

levels of academic anxiety was significantly related to lower academic performance and also associated with higher levels of worry which in turn was related to lower academic performance. Higher levels academic anxiety was

significantly related to lower academic performance. Xiao (2013) [25] reported that, there was significant association was found between scholastic performance and academic anxiety of secondary school students.

**Table 7:** Association between internalizing problems and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of academic anxiety	Levels of internalizing problems														
	Urban (240)							$\chi^2$ Value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (123)		Borderline (85)		Clinical (32)		Normal (147)		Borderline (65)		Clinical (28)		$\chi^2$ Value		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		%	N	%	N		%	
Presence of academic anxiety	42	34.14	52	61.18	21	65.62	1.12	46	31.29	46	70.76	28	100	3.58*	
Absence of academic anxiety	81	65.85	33	38.82	11	34.37		101	68.70	19	29.23	-	-		

\*Significant at 0.05 level

In urban locality, non-significance association was found between internalizing problems and academic anxiety among urban high school students. In rural locality, among normal behavior students, majority (68.7%) were in absence of academic anxiety category followed by presence of academic anxiety (31.29%). Among borderline behavior students, majority (70.76%) were in presence of academic anxiety

category followed by absence of academic anxiety (29.23 %). With regard to clinical range behavior, all students (100%) were in presence of academic anxiety category. On statistical analysis significant association was found between internalizing problem behavior and academic anxiety among rural high school students.

**Table 8:** Association between externalizing problems and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of academic anxiety	Levels of externalizing problems														
	Urban (240)							$\chi^2$ Value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (80)		Borderline (119)		Clinical (41)		Normal (117)		Borderline (98)		Clinical (25)		$\chi^2$ Value		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		%	N	%	N		%	
Presence of academic anxiety	27	33.75	49	41.17	38	92.68	1.26	39	33.33	53	54.08	21	84.00	4.87	
Absence of academic anxiety	53	66.25	70	58.82	3	7.31		78	66.66	45	45.91	4	16.00		

Table 8 depicts the association between externalizing problems and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students. The ‘chi square’ analysis showed non-

significance association between the externalizing problems and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students.

**Table 8.1:** Association between socio-emotional behavior and academic anxiety among urban and rural high school students N=480

Levels of academic anxiety	Levels of socio-emotional behavior														
	Urban (240)							$\chi^2$ Value	Rural (240)						
	Normal (153)		Borderline (59)		Clinical (28)		Normal (123)		Borderline (84)		Clinical (33)		$\chi^2$ Value		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		%	n	%	N		%	
Presence of academic anxiety	47	30.71	59	100	28	100	0.36	23	18.69	74	88.09	33	100	17.84**	
Absence of academic anxiety	106	69.28	-	-	-	-		100	81.30	10	11.90	-	-		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 8.1 shows the association between academic anxiety and socio-emotional behaviour of urban and rural high school students. In urban locality, the ‘chi-square’ value showed no association between the socio-emotional behaviour and academic anxiety among urban high school students. In rural locality, it was found that 81.30 per of students were in absence of academic anxiety and 18.69 per cent of students were in presence of academic anxiety that all were under normal behaviour. With regard to borderline behavior, majority (88.09%) of students had academic anxiety and 11.90 per cent of students had not academic anxiety. Among clinical behaviour students, all were under presence of academic anxiety category (100%). The ‘chi square’ value showed significance association between the socio-emotional behaviour and academic anxiety among rural high school students.

well as socio-emotional behavior of urban and rural high school students. High level of anxiety was found among rural among urban students. It was noticed that, high level of anxiety led to decreased scholastic performance and increased behaviour problems of urban and rural high school students.

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**Conclusion**

Anxiety is adversely affecting the scholastic performance as

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