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## Parental separation and anxiety among adolescent girls

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**Abstract**

This study endeavored to find out the level of anxiety among adolescent girls of separated parents. Students between the age group of 11 to 16 were the samples for this study. They were all doing their schooling in the government girl's higher secondary school, Bargur, Krishnagiri Dist. Tamilnadu. By using convenience sampling 31 samples were selected. Children of widows, orphans and semi orphans were freed from the study. To measure the level of anxiety of adolescent girls of separated parents, Christian R. Komor's Anxiety self-rating scale was administered. The research software SPSS 20.0 was used to analyze the data. It was found out in this study that the parental separation causes anxiety in the adolescent girl's lives.

**Keywords:** Parental separation, adolescents, anxiety

**Introduction**

Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and psychological development. During this period the adolescent starts to rationalize everything, they want to mingle with peers and desire to prove their physical power. They don't want to be jailed with rules and regulations rather they prefer freedom and independence. At the same time adolescence is the age when a person really chaotic about their role and identity. Since they doubt everything during this age they become totally confused of each and everything. Michael Cera would say "I may not have gone to high school every day, but I spent whole a lot of my adolescence feeling vulnerable and confused and alone... just like everybody else."

The love of a family is life's greatest blessing, it makes once life vibrant and meaningful. Development in human life is a part and parcel of family life. The first transition takes place after childhood and before adulthood is adolescence. The most important and crucial stage when family has a major role is during adolescents, but "Adolescents perceive their parents as people rather than simply as parenting figures" (John. W. Santrock) because of this nature often they have misunderstanding with their parents.

According to the culture both adolescent boys and girls get freedom of choice to express themselves. In most of the culture girls get deprived of their freedom. Mary Pipher says, "Adolescence is when girls experience social pressure to put aside their authentic selves and to display only a small portion of their gifts". The situations are worst in the families where the adolescent girls live with single parent, there it is even very difficult to express their authentic selves and to display even a small portion of their gifts. The adolescent girls living with the separated mother are forced to depend on their mother for each and everything.

In India the number of separation among the couples are growing. "In Mumbai 1,667 cases of divorce were filed in 2014 (till November 30), up from 5245 cases in 2010 and 8347 Divorce cases were filed in Kolkata in 2014 (till November 30), a 350% increase from the 2,388 divorce cases in 2003."

"About 2000 Divorce Cases were filed in the Lucknow family court in 2014. Of these about 900 were filed by young couples married less than a year. In 2009, the number of the cases filed by young couples married less than a year was 300. In Bengaluru 3 more family courts were opened in 2013, to cater to demand to the total number increasing to six. There are 8,600 cases pending in the courts and 500 new cases are added every year."

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As per the census 2011 in India the percentage of separation and divorce rate in Tamilnadu is 1.22 percentage. Tamil Nadu is one among the ten states and holds eighth place. In 2010 in Madurai family court alone 635 cases were filed for divorce. And in 2011, 657 cases were filed among which 149 cases were filed with mutual consent. In the year 2012, 717 cases were filed and among that 136 cases were with mutual consent. In the year 2013 as on September 14, 692 cases were filed and 143 cases with mutual consent. We can be sure that in India unfilled cases will be more on this problem. At this juncture this study attempted to find out the levels of anxiety among the adolescent school girls of separated parents.

**Results and Discussion**

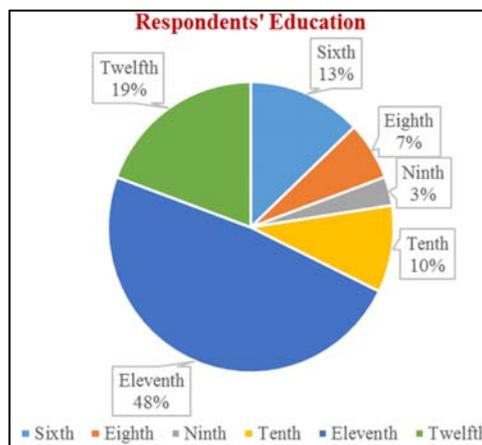
**Demographic Details of the Respondent**

Table 1 projects majority 21 (67.7%) of the study respondents belonged to the age group of 16-18 years, 6(19.4%) belonged to the age group of 13-15 years and 4 (12.9%) were from the age group of 10-12 years respectively.

**Table 1:** Age of the Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
10-12	4	12.9
13-15	6	19.4
16-18	21	67.7
Total	31	100

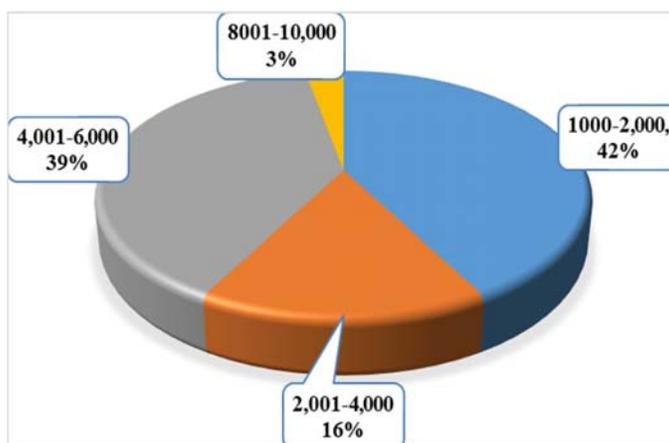
**Respondents' Education**



**Fig 1:** Education of the Respondents

Figure 1 says the respondents who are studying eleventh are 48%, twelfth are 19%, sixth are 13% and tenth, eighth and ninth are 10%, 7%, 3% respectively. This shows that they are all in their adolescent period.

**Monthly Income of the Family**



**Fig 2:** Monthly Income of the Family

Figure 2 describes about the monthly income of the adolescent girls' families and it shows majority (42%) of the families had a monthly income of 1,000-2,000 rupees, (39%) of families earned 4,001-6,000 rupees per month, a few (16%) earned 2,001-4,000 and 3% earned 8,001-10,000 rupees per month. It is evident that most of the adolescent girls are below the poverty line.

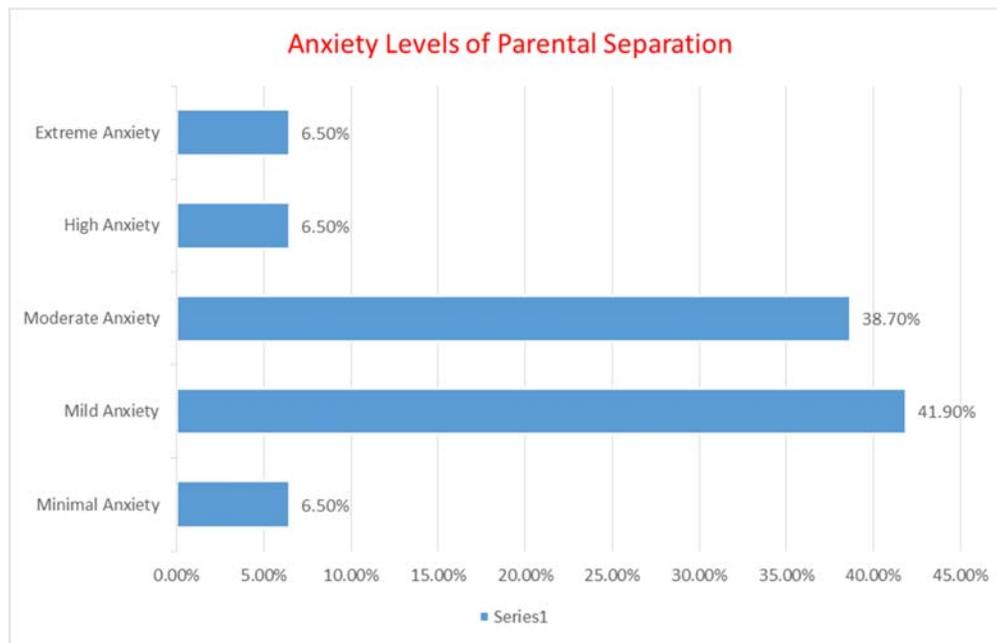
**Other Demographic Details**

Table 2 reveals, out of 31 adolescent girls majority 29(93.5%) were Hindus and the rest were Muslims. Majority of adolescents girls were from B.C 14 (45.2) and 10 (32.3%) were from M.B.C. Majority of the adolescent girls were living in rural area 19 (61.3%) and the rest in urban area 12 (38.7%). Half of the adolescent girls 16 (51.6%) had own house and the other half 15 (48.4%) didn't have own house. 14 (45.2%) of adolescent girls had terraced house and 10 (32.3%) had thatched house.

**Table 2:** Demographic Profiles

S. No	Questions	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Religion	Hindu	29	93.5
		Muslim	2	6.5
2	Caste	O.C	1	3.2
		B.C	14	45.2
		M.B.C	10	32.3
		S.C	6	19.4
3	Area	Rural	19	61.3
		Urban	12	38.7
4	Owning House	Yes	16	51.6
		No	15	48.4
5	Type of House	Thatched	4	12.9
		Tiled	14	45.2
		Terraced	10	32.3
		Government Built	3	9.7

## Anxiety Levels of Parental Separation



**Fig 6:** Anxiety levels of Parental Separation

Figure 6 gives a picture about the anxiety levels of the adolescent girls of separated parents. Among the respondents 6.50% have extreme anxiety, 6.50% have high anxiety, 38.70% are having moderate anxiety, and 41.90% are having mild anxiety. There are only few (6.50%) are having minimal anxiety. So from this figure it is evident that parental separation causes anxiety in the adolescent girl's lives.

Pryor and Rodgers (2001) says, Children with many problematic beliefs were found to be anxious. Issar Daryanani, Jessica L. Hamilton, Lyn. Y. Abramson, Lauren B. Alloy (2016) says more adolescents from single-mother families met criteria for a depressive disorder (16%) than adolescents from two-parent families (10%). Furthermore the study says that since the single-mothers were psychologically controlling their adolescents it makes them to experience more depressive symptoms. Anna C. Mary (2014) pointed out in her study that, "50% of the children reported experiencing clinically significant symptoms of anxiety. Vassiliki S Pappa (2013) has done a study and the result of this study was, the adolescents of divorced parents report higher scores on the Anxious/ Depression scale,  $F(1,316)=9.61$ ,  $p<0.01$ . Kovacs' Children's Depression Inventory (1982) and Cooper smith & Gilberts' Behavioral Academic Self-Esteem (1982) also indicated that "Children with higher indications of irrational beliefs and feelings about divorce revealed more behavioral and psychological problems". Hildur Mist L. Palmarsdottir (2015) conducted a study on and said "When adolescents experienced parental divorce their anxiety scores increased by 0.12 units". The study done by Sakineh Mofrad, Rohani Abdullah and LkechukwuUba (2010)<sup>[8]</sup> says 35% of the children displayed symptoms of separation anxiety. Moreover, 59.5% of the children who showed separation anxiety symptom were ambivalent, 26.5% were avoidant, and 14% were securely attached.

The reasons may be, the adolescents becoming very insecure about the nature or their relationship with their parents and feeling isolated or anxious and they are being required to

take up extra adult responsibilities around the home due to loss of a parent, many adolescents blame themselves for their parent's behavior because it is emotionally easier to deal with, since the single parent has to work for hours both in the house and outside she may not find enough time to be with the adolescents which may increase the stress levels.

The parents of adolescents, whose parents have separated, if behave as a parent of frequent conflicts around custody and visitations, hostile relationship then it will completely affect the well-being of the adolescents.

### Conclusion

Concentrating the life of adolescent girls is the need of the hour. The counsellors of the school can help the adolescent girls to develop the attitude of accepting the separation of their parents, understanding the struggle of their mother in handling their stress, depression and the challenges they face in upbringing their children. If the children avoid being lonely in school, home and with relatives they can easily cope up with the situation. The single parent can make the adolescent girls to know how they are handling this separation. The parents have to give space to the adolescent girls to express their feelings. The adolescents should be taught that, she or he is not responsible for the separation. The parents can talk to the teachers of their adolescents and the school counsellors. If the government and NGO's focus on these girls, providing programs, giving life-skill trainings, work to obtain interest free loans for studies and for the families interest free loans for small scale industry, will give tremendous change in the life style of these adolescent girls which will result in their well-being.

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