

**PERSONALITY PROFILE AND PREVALENCE OF  
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AMONG INSTITUTIONALISED YOUTH OF  
MAOIST CONFLICT REGIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** 16 out of 27 districts in Chhattisgarh state are in the grip of maoist insurgencies, due to which schooling of children is severely hampered, especially in dense forest areas. As a solution to this problem children are institutionalised under Nishthha welfare scheme where they get education along with all other essential amenities.

**Aim:** Present study aimed at comparison of personality profile and prevalence of psychopathology of Nishthha students with students who are residing with their families.

**Method:** All 36 high school students of Nishthha scheme and randomly selected 36 high school students of state school aged 16-18 years were taken as sample. Clinical Analysis Questionnaire by Cattell was employed as assessment tool.

**Results:** t-test results show that experimental group is significantly high on Sensitivity, Shrewdness, Insecurity, Radicalism, Agitation, Anxious Depression, Guilt, Psychopathic deviation, Schizophrenia and Psychesthesia and low on Emotional stability.

**Conclusion:** Institutionalised students have more behavioural and emotional problems than non institutionalised students. Prevalence of psychopathology is also higher in these students.

**INTRODUCTION**

Armed conflict can be defined as, the use of armed violence to resolve local, countrywide or global differences between people and groups that have a political, financial, cultural or public cause (Mir et al., 2016). According to the data released by Govt of India in Feb 2016, 106 districts of 10 states in the country are affected by maoists insurgencies. Chhattisgarh is one of the most fatally affected states by maoist violence. 16 out of 27 districts of the state are officially declared as Maoist violence hit districts. According to ministry of home affairs, maoists desire to grab the residents in their tough holds and to disconnect them from the mainstream environment. To fulfil this intention, civilians are threatened, kidnapped and killed. The school buildings are

ruined by maoists to hamper education because education creates a spirit of investigation among the local population and also prepare children with ability for unconventional sources of living. These improvements are considered as the impression of potential threats by maoists for their very survival and their ideology. The maoists also demolish roads, railways and telecom network to keep inhabitants cut off from mainstream.

The 2009 Machel report for Unicef believes that in conflict-affected countries 19 million among 60 million out of school children are from India (Machel, 2009). As far as Chhattisgarh state is concerned maoist violence is one of the major reasons, children are deprived of schooling. In 2010, State government proposed a solution to this severe crisis of academic scarcity in affected districts due to maoist activities and started a scheme called Mukhyamantri Bal Bhavishya Suraksha Yojna (MMBBSY) based on the concept of institutionalisation of children. Institutional care has been defined by Browne (2009) as “an arrangement for more than ten children to live in cluster, without parents or substitute parents, in which care is provided by a much lesser number of salaried mature carers”. In such type of unconventional care the responsibility of the children resides with the institution and there are persons hired to act as caretakers of the children residing in the institution itself. MMBBSY scheme has four sub schemes named as Prayas, Astha, Nishhthha and Sahyog. Under Nishhthha set-up, children from maoism hit districts get admission in the schools of Rajnandgaon and Dongargarh districts and gain advantage of hostel, education and all other basic facilities in safe environment.

Though this scheme was an effective initiative to eradicate the problem of educational deprivation in maoism affected regions but harmful effects on the growing minds of youth due to experience of violence and destruction in surroundings in their budding years of life and then, living away from homes in institutional care cannot be neglected. Documentation of previous studies suggests that mental health of those children is adversely affected who are institutionalized for any reason (Zeanah et al., 2009). Research on institutionalized children firmly proclaims the harmful effect of institutional care on the physiological, psychological and social health of the children (Nelson et al., 2007; Zeanah et al., 2005; Ford, Vostanis et al., 2007). Several harmful factors are very common in institutional care for example, lack of resources, one care taker for many students, lack of individual care and support, least social interaction etc. (Zeanah et al., 2003). Children are at risk of developing psychiatric disorders in such disadvantaged environment (Chisholm, 1998; Roy P, 2004; Hoksbergen, 2003). In his study on Turkish adolescents Erol et al found (2009) that adolescents in institutional care services had

experienced significantly greater emotional and behavioural problems than those living in the community.

However, there have been numerous studies conducted on the direct and indirect effects of institutionalisation on personality and psychopathology of children and youth, there is no research available on impact of institutionalisation on maoist conflict affected youth of Chhattisgarh state. Present study aims firstly to assess the personality profile and prevalence of psychopathology among students who are institutionalised under Nishhthha scheme but basically they are from maoism affected districts and secondly to compare the personality profile and status of psychopathology to students who study in normal state schools and reside with their parents, leading a typical, normal life.

## **RESEARCH ELABORATIONS**

### **OBJECTIVE**

To compare the personality profile and status of psychopathology of Nishhthha students and State school students.

### **HYPOTHESES**

- There exists significant difference between personality profile of Nishhthha students and State school students.
- There exists significant difference between status of psychopathology of Nishhthha students and State school students.

### **SAMPLE**

Though only 36 high school students (11 girls, 25 boys) are registered in Nishhthha scheme, total population was taken as research sample. To match with this, randomly selected 36 high school students (13 girls, 23 boys) of State schools of Rajnandgaon and Dongargarh districts of Chhattisgarh state were taken as subjects in control group. The age range is 16 to 18 years.

### **DESIGN**

This research employed a between group design.

### **TOOLS USED**

Clinical Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ): CAQ is self reporting questionnaire developed by Cattell and Sells (1974). It includes 272 items, part I contains 128 items which assess normal

personality profile and in part II there are 144 items to measure the depression and pathological traits. This multidimensional instrument has 28 scales, 16 for normal personality traits, an extension of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire and an extra 12 pathological trait factors. Norms used by the CAQ are called stens (Standard ten scores). 'High score' is generally for the 8-10 sten range which places individual in the upper 15% with respect to the reference population and low score for 1-3 sten range which represent significant, interpretable departures from the norm placing individual at bottom 15% with respect to reference population.

### **PROCEDURE**

After taking written permission from District Commissioner and consent letter from all the respective principals of the schools, the participation of students was taken. The purpose of the study was explained to participants followed by the completion of the demographic details and questionnaire. Data was then statistically analyzed using the Microsoft excel.

### **STATISTICS**

Descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Firstly, mean and standard deviation of all the factors of personality and psychopathology were calculated followed by t-test to find out the differences among Nishhthha and state school participants in the study.

### **RESULTS**

Present study observes the personality factors and prevalence of psychopathology among Nishhthha students and then comparison of the same with Normal state school students. There are 16 personality factors and 12 scales for psychopathology which have been estimated through CAQ. Mean, SD and t scores are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Shows Mean ( $\pm$ SD), 't' scores on Clinical Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ) in Nishhthha students and for state school students**

Factors	Nishhthha Group Mean ( $\pm$ SD)	Control Group Mean ( $\pm$ SD)	't'	'p'
A (Warmth)	4.28(1.38)	4.0(1.26)	.89	>.05
B (Intelligence)	1.44(.69)	1.61(.96)	.84	>.05
C (Emotional Stability)	<b>2.72(1.46)</b>	<b>3.78(1.49)</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
E (Dominance)	5.44(1.27)	5.28(.94)	.63	>.05
F (Impulsivity)	3.39(1.27)	3.61(1.51)	.67	>.05
G (Conformity)	4.94(1.37)	4.56(1.13)	1.31	>.05
H (Boldness)	<b>4.1(.88)</b>	<b>5.06(1.09)</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
I (Sensitivity)	<b>5.38(1.39)</b>	<b>4.66(1.06)</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
L (Suspiciousness)	4.5(1.85)	5.17(2.44)	1.3	>.05
M (Imagination)	4.78(1.41)	4.22(1.83)	1.44	>.05
N (Shrewdness)	<b>6.50(1.45)</b>	<b>5.83(1.73)</b>	<b>2.06</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
O (Insecurity)	<b>6.28(.88)</b>	<b>4.50(1.63)</b>	<b>5.76</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
Q1 (Radicalism)	<b>4.0(1.30)</b>	<b>3.17(1.40)</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
Q2 (Self-sufficiency)	4.88(1.58)	4.2(1.26)	.08	>.05
Q3 (Self-discipline)	5.56(1.27)	5.78(1.60)	.65	>.05
Q4 (Tension)	5.44(1.62)	5.78(1.53)	.89	>.05
D1(Hypochondriasis)	7.0(1.43)	7.17(1.55)	.47	>.05
D2 (Suicidal Depression)	7.22(.77)	7.50(1.28)	1.11	>.05
D3 (Agitation)	<b>5.94(1.28)</b>	<b>4.89(1.42)</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
D4 (Anxious Depression)	<b>7.50(1.18)</b>	<b>6.39(1.31)</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
D5 (Low Energy Depression)	6.28(.88)	6.42(1.38)	.51	>.05
D6 (Guilt & Resentment)	<b>7.39(.83)</b>	<b>6.89(1.16)</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
D7 (Boredom & Withdrawal)	7.44(1.13)	7.61(1.17)	.57	>.05
Pa (Paranoia)	7.22(1.28)	7.17(1.02)	.20	>.05
Pp (Psychopathic Deviation)	<b>4.67(1.06)</b>	<b>3.72(1.20)</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
Sc (Schizophrenia)	<b>7.58(1.55)</b>	<b>7.0(.75)</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
As (Psychasthenia)	<b>7.33(1.39)</b>	<b>6.44(1.66)</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>&lt;.05</b>
Ps (Psychological Inadequacy)	7.44(.69)	7.56(.60)	.72	>.05

Personality Factors-

Table 1 indicates that among 16 personality factors there are 6 factors on which significant difference is found between the two groups. Nishhthha students are lower on mean sten scores on the factors Emotional Stability ( $t=3.02$ ,  $p<.05$ ), Boldness ( $t=4.02$ ,  $p<.05$ ), than State school students while on Shrewdness ( $t=2.06$ ,  $p<.05$ ), Sensitivity ( $t=2.46$ ,  $p<.05$ ), Radicalism ( $t=2.6$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and Insecurity ( $t=5.76$ ,  $p<.05$ ) they are higher.

#### Psychopathological Factors-

Among 12 psychopathological factors there are 6 factors on which significant difference is found between the two groups. Nishhthha students are higher on anxious depression ( $t=3.77$ ,  $p<.05$ ), guilt and resentment ( $t=2.09$ ,  $p<.05$ ), psychopathic deviation ( $t=3.51$ ,  $p<.05$ ), schizophrenia ( $t=2.36$ ,  $p<.05$ ), psychasthenia ( $t=2.46$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and agitation ( $t=3.29$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

Children from Maoist affected districts of Chhattisgarh state are brought to residential institutes to provide them academic facilities though previous studies suggest that children and adolescents in child welfare are characterized by a high rate of psychopathology (Ford, 2007; Garland, 2001; Mount, 2004). Findings of present research as shown in Table 1 indicate that Nishhthha students are low on emotional stability and boldness. At the same time they are at higher scores on Sensitivity, Radicalism, shrewdness and insecurity. All the participants of the study are in their adolescent years of age. These are the most important and crucial years of their life span because in this period normally, youngsters face several issues related to their identity, self esteem, and physiology, hormonal and emotional upheavals but for Nishhthha students this period becomes more challenging because of additional factors like discrimination in institute from higher authorities, uncertainty about future, absence of parental figures and insufficient guidance. These may be possible reasons for lower scores on Emotional Stability and Boldness. On the contrary adolescents who live with their families have acceptance, guidance and support too. Findings

indicate that adolescents in institutional care facilities had experienced significantly greater emotional and behavioral problems than those living in the community. They experience multiple emotional problems including loneliness (Han and Choi 2006; Ptacek et al. 2011). Ford et.al. (2007) drew same results in his study. They found more emotional problems in institutionalised children and they have insufficient assets to deal with them effectively mostly resulting in psychopathology (Padmaja et al., 2014).

Rescorla et al. (2007) classified the psychopathology into two broad categories: internalizing and externalizing. The first category, internalizing problems, is focused on the emotions and the more inner psychological environment, such as anxiety and depression, while the externalizing problems category includes negative behavioural characteristics, such as hyperactivity, aggressive and antisocial behaviours, related to the external world (Liu, 2004). Nishhthha students are found higher on anxiety, depression and guilt and resentment factors ie internalising problems. Alvares and Lobato (2013) suggest that the development of depressive symptoms in children and young people in care would be related to periods of longer than two years in the institution. Nishhthha students are living in government or private school hostels from last 4-5 years away from their families, parents and native places. There may be several responsible factors for incidence of internalising problems in Nishhthha students including strict attitude of supervisors, fear of punishment and unavoidable terror of getting expelled from school.

Higher scores on schizophrenia, psychasthenia and psychopathic deviation in the students of Nishhthha are alarming. Individuals higher on schizophrenia scale normally report having difficulty to get their ideas into words, have strange impulses, and feel that world is unsympathetic and that they are rejected and pushed around by people. Similarly, high score on psychasthenia leads to obsession type of behaviour and little self control. Whether students institutionalised in Nishhthha scheme have similar complaints or not, must be checked by

intensive interviews. High scoring individuals on Psychopathic deviation are generally less inhibited by physical danger or by criticism of society. Excitement or sensation seeking is common characteristic of this dimension as well as of Agitation on which Nishhthha group scored high again. A very common dilemma of people living in Maoism affected areas is between informing security forces about maoists and helping maoists. At both the ends they have to sacrifice their lives. Children grow up with this basic idea of compulsive encounter with violence. Potential cause of high score on psychopathic deviation may be unhealthy pattern of conflict resolution.

An international review study on the prevalence of mental disorders in children living away from their homes showed that this population presents between a 24% to 40% greater chance of having problems related to mental health when compared to children living with their families (Bassuk et al., 2015).

## **CONCLUSION**

It is clear from this research study that personality profile of institutionalised students from maoist affected regions is different from that of students of state school and second, prevalence of psychopathology is also greater in these students. It can be concluded here that institutionalisation is not the exact solution to the problem of academic insufficiency for children of maoism affected districts. On one hand children are getting knowledge about subjects but on the other hand they are heading towards terrible mental health. It is essential to search some effective options so that children are not uprooted from their own land and at the same time they may get acquainted with education too. In some circumstances if institutionalisation is the only option than it must be aimed at human values and not apparently to get certificates. Along with supervisors, mental health professionals and psychotherapists must be appointed for these students. A regular evaluation program for children's counseling needs must be provided by the

institution. Their requirements must be a shift in basic purpose of the institutional care in not just providing necessary facilities to children but also lend a hand for well-being and enhancement in quality of life. A new constructive psychological outlook has to be implementing to make sure that the child is happy, at ease and optimistic about his future.

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