

Exam Phobia and Gender - A Case Study on Government High School Students, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

Phobias are common in human life. Exam phobia is the most common phobia among the school students. The present study was carried out to know the level of the exam phobia among 8th to 10th Government high school students in. The response was taken from 2981 students (Male: 1589. Female: 1392). The study found that out of the total male students, 38.45% students expressed the phobia. In the case of female it is 45.26. Researchers reported that phobia of examination affects the academic performance of the students in the examination and they could not perform according to their knowledge due to a phobia of examination as they forget the answers to some questions during examination due to nervousness and a phobia of examination. Homeopathy, Exposure based therapy, Cognitive therapy and Relaxation techniques are some of the useful treatment methods. The authors suggested to follow the exam preparation tips to reduce exam phobia.

Keywords : Exam Phobia, Anxiety, Treatment, Tips For Exam Preparation, Male And Female, High School Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Exam phobia is one type of specific phobia. When people talk about having a phobia of a specific object, they are referring to a specific phobia (<https://www.verywellmind.com>).

A Phobia can have a serious impact on well-being. de Oliveira-Souza (2018) felt that phobia is Supernatural and distinct, but poorly recognized specific phobia with an adverse impact on daily living. The incidence of exam anxiety has risen from 27% in 2009 to almost 40% in 2010 (Mohapatra et al., 2012). Sufiana and Farhat (2015) identified problems and causes of examination phobia among female students of secondary level. The students have an excessive and unreasonable phobia due to exam or the presence or

anticipation of a horrible situation causes an anxiety (Javed and Khan, 2011).

The students feel uneasiness, helplessness and severe stress (Watson and Friend, 1969). Some students become so frightened that they cannot perform well in the examination, even they forget the answers of the questions as they enter in the examination hall (Stellar, 2009). According to Shashank (2008), more than 50 per cent of students suffer from an examination phobia. Almost all the students worry about forgetting in an exam, not being able to recall essential information during solving paper.

The present study was carried out to know the level of the exam phobia among the male and female students, studying 8th to 10 classes in Government high schools.

II. METHODOLOGY

8th to 10th class students were chosen as subjects. A total of 2981 students from 11 Government high schools was participated out of them 1589 are male and 1392 were female. The details are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Students were assembled in a

classroom of the respective schools and asked them to give their response to a single question-“Do you have an exam phobia?” The purpose of the study and the details regarding the phobia were explained in their mother tongue. The response was analyzed using statistical analysis. Percent variation was observed and presented under results and discussion.

TABLE 1 - SCHOOL WISE, CLASS WISE AND GENDER WISE STUDENT'S STRENGTH

Classes →	8th			9th			10th		
	Schools	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Ponnekallu	52	40	92	36	42	78	49	40	89
Takkellapadu	27	37	64	25	22	47	24	23	47
Venigalla	33	52	85	31	37	68	48	55	103
Koppuravuru	40	36	76	39	28	67	30	23	53
SK	104	75	179	106	54	160	118	70	188
SGNKR	0	68	68	0	89	89	0	81	81
SJRR	80	53	133	78	47	125	48	45	93
SKS	55	45	100	46	48	94	67	51	118
P	75	17	92	62	21	83	57	20	77
KSR	26	26	52	62	17	79	30	26	56
SCMP	54	39	93	40	36	76	47	29	76

SK-Smt. Kasturiba; SGNKR -Smt. Golusu Nancharamma Kondal Rao Girls; SJRR- Sri Jalagam Rama Rao; SKS- Smt. Kasu Sayamma; P- Pattabhipuram; KSR- Kaveti Sankar Rao; SCMP- Smt. Chebrolu Mahalakshmi Pullaiah

TABLE 2 SCHOOL WISE AND GENDER WISE STUDENT'S WITH EXAM PHOBIA

Classes →	8th		9th		10th	
	Schools	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Ponnekallu	15	10	10	16	43	54
Takkellapadu	13	16	13	15	20	18
Venigalla	1	7	3	5	21	24
Koppuravuru	12	7	14	14	16	12
SK	28	33	44	33	61	50
SGNKR	0	22	0	27	0	29
SJRR	21	13	13	22	19	21
SKS	18	18	24	31	32	20
P	22	5	26	14	26	8
KSR	10	8	26	5	12	19
SCMP	20	27	16	15	12	12
Total	160	166	189	197	262	267

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A percent variation of the male and female students, those suffering from exam phobia was shown in table 3 and figures 1 and 2.

Male

8th class

Highest percent of P school students (23.91) were marked the exam phobia (Figure 1A), followed by SCMP (21.51%), Takkellapadu (20.31%) and KSR (19.23%). The lowest percent was noticed with Venigalla (1.18%).

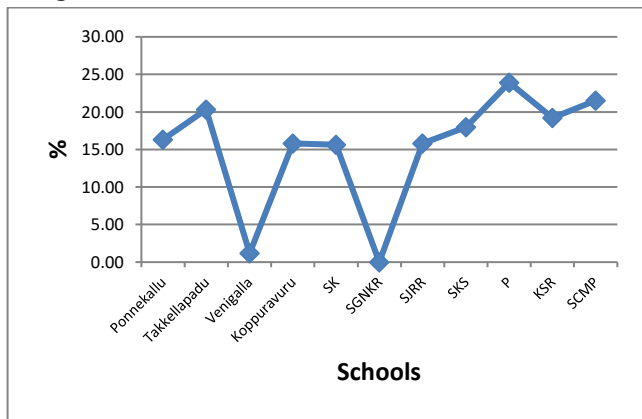


Figure 1A - Male 8th Students with Exam Phobia

9th Class

32.91% of KSR school students had expressed the exam phobia (Figure 1B), followed by P school

students (31.33%) and Takkellapadu (27.66%). Comparatively, the problem is low in Venigalla (4.41%).

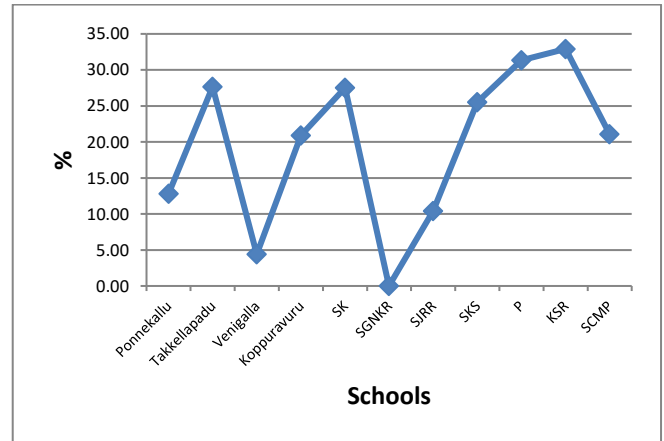


Figure 1B- Male 9th Students with Exam Phobia

10th Class

Highest percent of Ponnekallu students (48.31) were marked the of exam phobia (Figure 1C), followed by Takkellapadu (42.55%) and P (33.77%). The problem is low in SCMP (15.79%).

As the 10th class marks/grades are important for future studies, the comparatively higher percentage with phobia were recorded with most of the schools for male students.

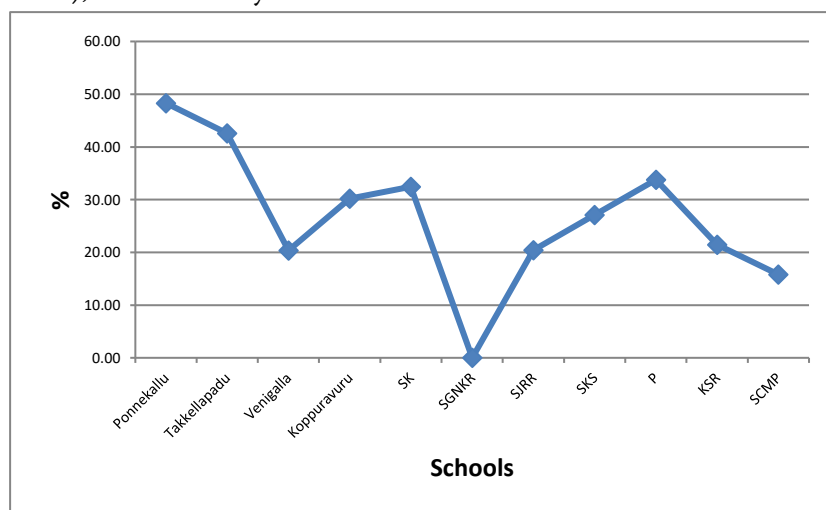


Figure 1C- Male 10th Students with Exam Phobia

TABLE 3 PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS WITH EXAM PHOBIA

Classes →	8th		9th		10th	
Schools	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ponnekallu	16.30	10.87	12.82	20.51	48.31	60.67
Takkellapadu	20.31	25.00	27.66	31.91	42.55	38.30
Venigalla	1.18	8.24	4.41	7.35	20.39	23.30
Koppuravuru	15.79	9.21	20.90	20.90	30.19	22.64
SK	15.64	18.44	27.50	20.63	32.45	26.60
SGNKR	0.00	32.35	0.00	30.34	0.00	35.80
SJRR	15.79	9.77	10.40	17.60	20.43	22.58
SKS	18.00	18.00	25.53	32.98	27.12	16.95
P	23.91	5.43	31.33	16.87	33.77	10.39
KSR	19.23	15.38	32.91	6.33	21.43	33.93
SCMP	21.51	29.03	21.05	19.74	15.79	15.79

Female

8th Class

32.35% of SGNKR students were pointed exam phobia (Figure 2A), followed by SCMP (29.03%) and Takkellapadu (25.00%). The lowest percent was observed with P (5.43%).

9th Class

Highest percent of SKS (32.98) school students had an exam phobia (Figure 2B), followed by Takkellapadu (31.91%) and Koppuravuru (20.90%). The lowest percent was observed in KSR students (6.33%).

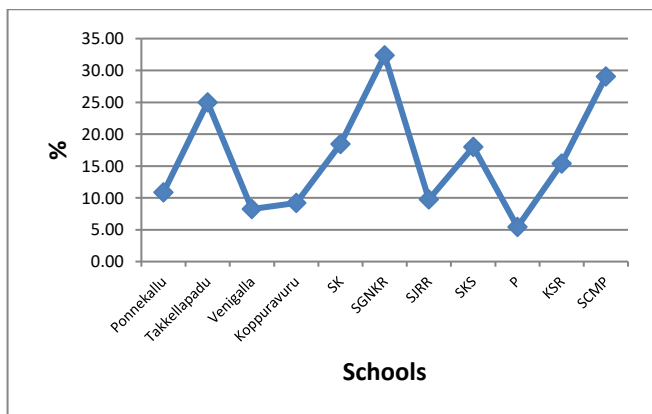


Figure 2A- Female 8th Students with Exam Phobia

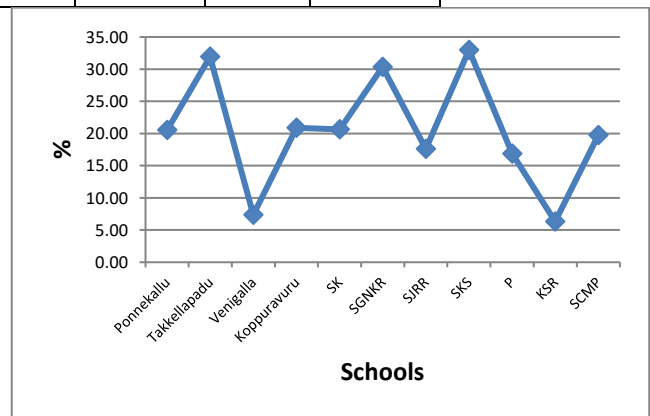


Figure 2B- 9th Female Students with Exam Phobia

10th Class

60.67% of Ponnekallu students were suffering from exam phobia (Figure 2C), followed by Takkellapadu (38.30%) and SGNKR (35.80%). The lowest percent was observed in P (10.39%).

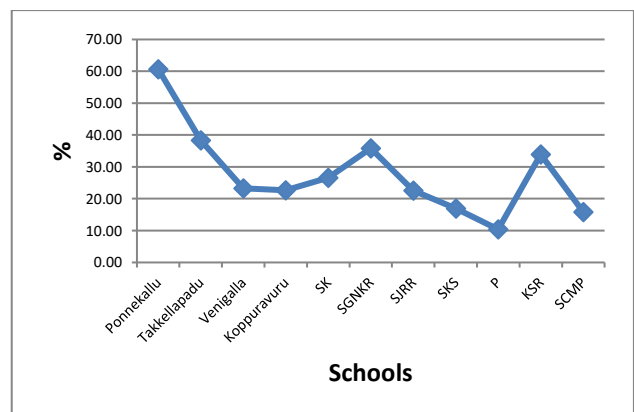


Figure 2C-10th Female Students with Exam Phobia

Comparative study

Male (8th to 10th)

Comparison of exam phobia among 8th to 10th class of male students was shown in table 3 and figure 3). Among the male students, high percent of Ponnekallu 10th students (48.31%) had exam phobia followed by Takkellapadu (42.55%), and P (33.77%). The lowest percent was observed by Venigalla 8th class students (1.18%).

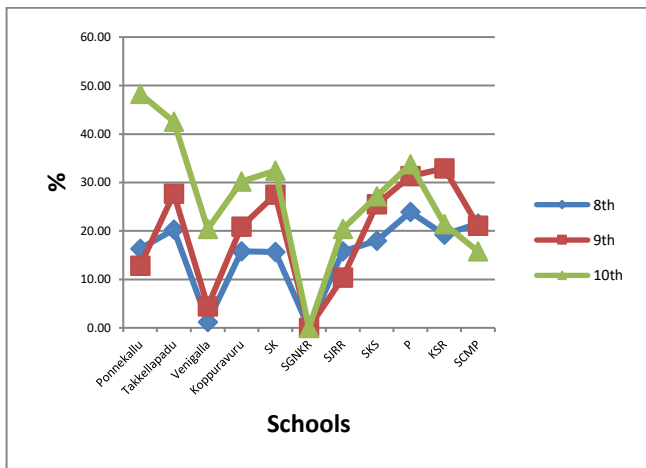


Figure 3. 8th to 10th male students with Exam Phobia

Female (8th to 10th)

In the case of female students, high percent of Ponnekallu students (60.67) had an exam phobia (Table 3 and Figure 4), followed by Takkellapadu (38.30%), SGNKR (35.80%). The lowest percent was observed with P (5.43%).

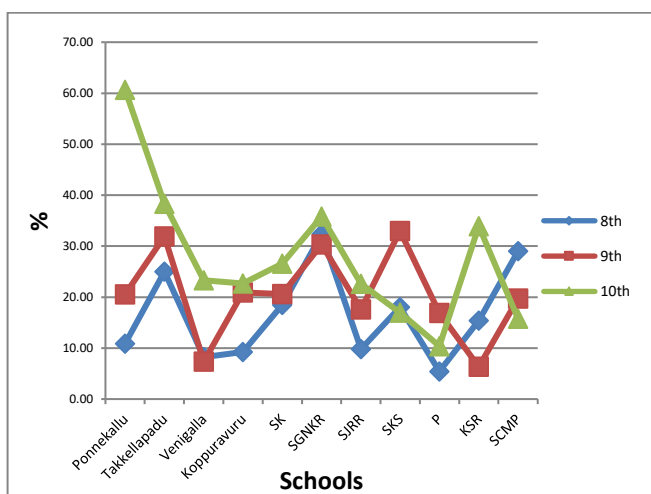


Figure 4. 8th to 10th Female students with Exam Phobia

Comparison of Exam Phobia between Male and Female

Comparison of Exam phobia among 8th to 10th class male students was shown in (table 4 and figure 5). Highest percent of P (29.37) had expressed exam phobia, followed by Takkellapadu (29.11%) and Ponnekallu (26.25%). The lowest percent was observed with Venigalla (9.77%). In the case of female students, highest percent of SGNKR (32.77) had chosen, followed by Takkellapadu (31.01%) and Ponnekallu (30.89%). The lowest percentage was observed with P (10.71%).

TABLE 4 COMPARISON BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENT'S (%)

Schools	Male	Female
Ponnekallu	26.25	30.89
Takkellapadu	29.11	31.01
Venigalla	9.77	14.06
Koppuravuru	21.43	16.84
SK	25.24	22.01
SGNKR	0.00	32.77
SJRR	15.10	15.95
SKS	23.72	22.12
P	29.37	10.71
KSR	25.67	17.11
SCMP	19.59	22.04

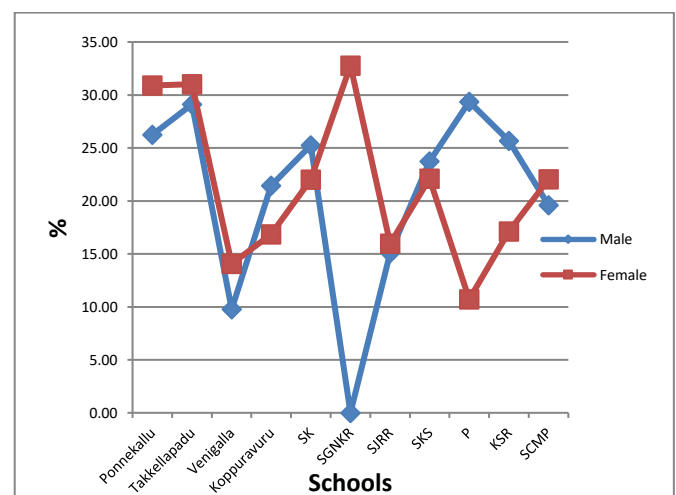


Figure 5 Exam phobia among 8th to 10th class male and female students

Cassady (2001) found that phobia and anxiety affect the mind and threat physically or psychologically. Güneri (2003) investigated the effect of school level and gender on the total test anxiety, worry and emotionality sub-scale scores of students. Results indicated a significant main effect of school level, gender and interaction effects of school level, gender on total test anxiety and emotionality sub-scale scores. The significant main effect of school level and interaction effects of gender and school level was also found in the worry sub-scale scores. Fiore (2003) finding can be perceived as an indication that it is not gender alone that causes significant differences in general test anxiety. Chandler(2006) compared male and female students in the 4th, 6th, and 10th grades to see which sex had more test anxiety. The results were analyzed using T tests. The results showed there was a significant difference between the 6th grade males and females during the pretest administration, with the males showing more anxiety.

Rezazadeh and Tavakoli (2009) designed to investigate the relationship between gender, academic achievement, years of study and levels of test anxiety. The findings revealed that female students have a higher level of test anxiety in contrast to male students. The average of test anxiety score among female students was higher. Also a statistically significant negative correlation was observed between test anxiety and academic achievement. There was no meaningful relationship between test anxiety and years of study.

Sufiana and Farhat (2015) reported that a significant number of students answered their mind go blank before the start of the examination and they could not depict their knowledge on paper due to limited time pressure allowed for paper. Isabel et al., (2016) studied on gender differences in test anxiety and their impact on higher education students' academic achievement. The study showed that although reported levels of test anxiety were higher for female university students than for their male peers, this does not seem

to affect their academic achievement, since their final grades were comparable with those of their male classmates. This result is consistent with the findings of previous research showing that greater test anxiety among females did not result in poorer academic performance (Hembree, 1988), and it suggests that female students may have developed effective strategies for coping with anxiety in test situations. Ahmad et al., (2018) investigated undergraduate students' test anxiety and correlated with their academic achievement in relation to gender. Moderately high test anxiety was found in undergraduate university students, which was similar in both male and female students. Female students showed better performance as compared to male students.

Treatment Methods

Examination stress is better prevented than treated. Chawla et al., (2013) felt that the phobia of the examination affects the efficiency and feelings of the students.

A systematic, persistent, organized, planned and regular effort from the beginning of the academic session is the best method for any student to prevent exam phobia. Hence, it is necessary that parents should always encourage their children and keep them busy with other extracurricular activities like music, dance, sports, etc. and also help as stress busters (Mohapatra et al., 2012).

Phobias are common, but also treatable. Students may be given frequent tests so that they may take the examination as routine work. A healthy competitive environment among their students within the class may be promoted, in order to minimize the phobia of failing in the final examination. Parents should encourage their children to better performance in the exams (Sufiana and Farhat, 2015).

According to Hanies et al., (2007), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been found to

significantly decrease phobic symptoms by helping the phobia sufferer change his or her way of thinking. A variety of treatment options are available, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Exposure Therapy, Anxiety Management and Relaxation Techniques. Hoffman and Weghorst (1997) stated that one or a combination of these may be recommended according to the situation and intensity. Smita (2009) expressed that the most important technique to remove or minimize the exam phobia is to study well. Most of the students don't prepare well enough for the exams. The best strategy is to start preparations early keeping in mind a general idea of the course and the major points of all the subjects before starting exams, They should not awake up all night before the exam even if they have lots of studying left to do.

Some of the useful methods

Exposure-based therapy - (Singh and Singh, 2016)

Cognitive therapy (CT)- (Specific phobia. <http://www.med.upenn.edu>).

Progressive desensitization (Specific phobia. <http://www.med.upenn.edu>).

Relaxation- (Specific phobia. <http://www.med.upenn.edu>).

Hypnosis (hypnotherapy)- (Natural treatment for phobia and anxiety. <http://www.phobicssociety.org>)

Homeopathy- (<http://www.phobicssociety.org>).

Herbal remedies- (Natural treatment for phobia and anxiety. <http://www.phobicssociety.org>).

Pharmacotherapy-(Specific phobia. <http://www.med.upenn.edu>).

Tips for exam preparation

The authors suggested some tips for exam preparation and the precautions to be taken at various stages. These tips will help the students to reduce the exam phobia (Sankara Pitchaiah and Anjani,2019).

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study made a comparison of exam phobia among 8th to 10th male and female students. The class wise, highest percentage of exam phobia recorded was as follows; 10th, 60.67 (female), 48.31(male), 9th, 32.98(female) 32.91 (male) and 8th, 32.98 (female) 23.91 (male). Comparatively, more percent of female students(45.26) expressed exam phobia to male (38.45). The best strategy is to start preparations early and it is suggested to take an appropriate treatment and to adapt exam preparation tips to reduce exam phobia.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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