The Study Of The Anxiety Level Of Secondary School Students In Siliguri, West Bengal

Dr. Pawan Kumar Ray Assistant Professor, Department of education, Sikkim University.

Prof. Lokanath Mishra Department of Education, Mizoram University.

Abstract
The emergence of globalization and liberalization has heightened the sense of competition in the quest for excellence. Automation and sophistication, rather than mitigating anxiety, have increased it. The promotion of quality consciousness and the striving for excellence have thus become essential characteristics of workforce potential. The desire to "be the best" inherently reflects high achievement motivation, while a challenging attitude embodies the spirit of competitiveness. Anxiety stimulates task continuity and accelerates goal attainment, leading to task accomplishment. Anxiety is a natural human reaction involving both mind and body and serves a basic survival function. It acts as an alarm system that is activated whenever a person perceives danger or threat.

Every individual experience moment of anxiety. For example, students may feel anxious about their results, job candidates may worry about securing employment, and parents may be concerned about the future of their children. Anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state characterized by a complex combination of emotions, including fear, apprehension, and worry. It is often accompanied by physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, nausea, chest pain, shortness of breath, or tension headaches.

The purpose of this paper is to study the anxiety levels of secondary school students in Siliguri, West Bengal. It addresses the concept of anxiety, its various causes, symptoms, types, and components, as well as the objectives of the study. A normative survey design with a descriptive method was adopted for this study. The paper also provides suggestions and recommendations for reducing anxiety levels among secondary school students.

Key Words: Anxiety, Students, Secondary school, Quality.

Introduction
The term "anxiety" has been used in different contexts with varying interpretations. Modern civilization, with its highly developed technology, has rightly been termed the "age of anxiety." There is hardly an individual who has not experienced moments of

anxiety in their life. Test anxiety is a combination of physiological over-arousal, tension, somatic symptoms, and psychological factors such as worry, dread, fear of failure, and catastrophizing that occur before or during test situations. It is a condition in which people experience extreme stress, anxiety, and discomfort during and/or before taking a test. This anxiety creates significant barriers to learning and performance. Research suggests that high levels of emotional distress correlate directly with reduced academic performance and higher student drop-out rates. Test anxiety can also have broader consequences, negatively affecting a student's social, emotional, and behavioral development, as well as their self-perception and attitudes toward school.

Consequently, examination stress and test anxiety have become pervasive problems in modern society. This perspective was echoed by the well-known researcher in the field of test anxiety, Sarason (1959), who commented: "We live in a test-conscious, test-giving culture in which the lives of people are, in part, determined by their test performance." It is important to emphasize that even though tests are highly valid and reliable, one cannot always be certain that the results truly reflect students' understanding or their actual abilities. An important factor to consider is test anxiety. As Cizek and Burg (2006) point out, there is a common misunderstanding about test anxiety. Test anxiety is not the same as the normal nervousness experienced in testing situations. That feeling of nervousness is a perfectly normal response to any challenging task. The present study focuses specifically on test anxiety and its impact on students' performance and learning.

Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health conditions in children and adolescents. While everyone may experience occasional moments of anxiety or worry, an anxiety disorder is a medical condition that causes persistent, uncontrollable worry over an extended period. This disorder can result in significant distress across various settings, such as school, peer relationships, and home life, and may dramatically affect individuals' lives by limiting their ability to engage in various activities.

Anxiety is a multisystem response to a perceived threat or danger. It involves a combination of biochemical changes in the body, personal history, memory, and the social situation. As far as we know, anxiety is a uniquely human experience. While other animals experience fear, human anxiety involves the ability to use memory and imagination to move backward and forward in time—an ability that animals do not appear to possess. The anxiety observed in post-traumatic syndromes indicates that human memory is a much more complex mental function than animal memory. Furthermore, a significant portion of human anxiety is generated by the anticipation of future events. Without a sense of personal continuity over time, people would not have the "raw materials" for anxiety.

Conceptual Framework
 It is a framework, a structure, and a model for the operation of all types of variables. Gender, management, and socio-economic status are independent variables, while test

anxiety is the dependent variable. This framework forms the basis of the research plan, encompassing all relevant elements, such as defining objectives, data collection, and concluding analysis for effective results. Researchers will base their investigations on this framework, which should be specific and detailed. Indeed, tactics are more precise than the plan. They should include methods to be employed and analyze the data.

The main goal of this study is to understand how test anxiety levels are influenced by gender, management, and socio-economic status. This comprehensive study focuses on secondary school students in Siliguri, West Bengal.

Examinations have long been a source of stress and anxiety for students. In addition to meeting their own expectations, today's students face the added pressure of satisfying parental and societal demands, which contributes further to their stress. The need to prevent aggression and disruptive behavior is a daily concern for teachers striving to maintain order. However, recognizing the necessity to identify and address anxiety-related issues in educational settings is becoming increasingly important. An important practical challenge is raising awareness among policymakers, college officials, and parents about the need for such screenings, as well as ensuring that programs are both practical and sustainable.

Causes of Anxiety
There are many factors contribute to a person's chances of developing anxiety. Scientists have divided into three groups- genetics and early learning, brain biochemistry, and the fight or flight mechanism.

Symptoms of Anxiety:
The biggest symptom of anxiety is constant worry. Physical symptoms can also happen. Research suggests that anxiety symptoms can become worse when a person is under stress.

Types of Anxiety
Anxiety may be classified into the three types: -

1. **Signal Anxiety:** Signal anxiety is considered as anxiety to an anticipated event.
2. **Anxiety trait:** Anxiety trait is component of personality and it is present over a time period.
3. **Free floating Anxiety:** Free floating anxiety is that which is always present and accompanied by a feeling of dread.

Components of Anxiety
Anxiety and fear - Anxiety and fear both appear to be the same but they are different. Anxiety has internal object whereas fear has as external objects. Fear is an avoidance reaction directly related to a specific object, even or object whereas anxiety is not. In fear

individual reacts to threats in immediate situation whereas in anxiety the emotional reaction manifest itself a dread of some future danger.

Phobia: A specific phobia is an intense fear of something that poses little or no actual danger.

Worry: worry may be defined as anxiety experienced by an individual thinking about a difficult personal problem with no immediate solution to the problem.

Stress: Stress and anxiety are also termed as synonymous with each other.

Shame and guilt: Shame refers to the anxiety that is experienced when individual feels that other people will disapprove of his behavior whereas guilt is the anxiety that is experienced when one disapproves of his own behavior.

Review of related literature

Kashani and et.al (2009) conducted a study on a community study of anxiety in children and adolescents and found out that the anxious children had more problems with family, friends and school than the non-anxious children. The anxious and non-anxious children showed similar rates depression, acting out, and conduct disorder, with the anxious group exhibiting a greater total number of symptoms.

Mazzone and et.al (2007) conducted study on the role of anxiety symptoms in school performance in a community sample of children and adolescents. Prevalence of anxiety and the relationship between anxiety and school performance were examined among elementary middle and high school students. In this community sample of children and adolescents attending elementary through high school, the prevalence of abnormally high self-reported levels of anxiety increased in frequency with age and was negatively associated with school performance.

Abu (2004) Studied on 'academic outcomes of test anxiety'. She found that children with test anxiety perform worse on examinations than their non-test-anxious counterparts Additionally, it has been found that test anxiety negatively impacts on performance during many types of evaluative situations but even more so when the external evaluative pressure is high. Research has demonstrated that test anxiety may impact performance in a number of different ways. Test anxiety has been found to reduce working memory capacity slow processing speed and impact reading comprehension as well. Additionally, research has revealed that test anxiety impacts the learning process. Test anxious students experiencing more difficulty encoding, organizing and storing information in their memory for later retrieval.

Davis (2004) conducted a study on statistics anxiety among female African American graduate-level social work students and found that statistics anxiety among female and minority graduate students is higher than that of their Caucasian counterparts.

Devi (2004) conducted a study on anxiety level among college going students. There was significant sex difference in anxiety level, with girls obtaining more mean anxiety score than boys.

Sinha and Sharma (2003) conducted a study on anxiety task complexity and gender as factor of interestingness rating in problem solving behavior among the adolescent students. The major finding of the study was high anxiety subject rated the task as slightly more interesting as compared to low anxiety subjects.

Johnson and et.al (2000) conducted a study on association between cigarette smoking and anxiety disorders during adolescence and Early Adulthood. The study found out that heavy cigarette smoking during early adulthood. Anxiety disorders during adolescence were not significantly associated with chronic cigarette smoking during early adulthood. The results suggest that cigarette smoking may increase risk of certain anxiety disorders during late adolescence and early adulthood.

Robian and et.al (1999) conducted a study on behavioral validation of Childhood Anxiety Sensitivity Index (CASI) in children and demonstrated that CASI was a significant predictor of the degree of state anxiety and subjective fear reported in response to the challenge task, even after controlling for pre-task levels of state anxiety and fear respectively. The CASI predicted changes in fear experienced in response to the challenge task. The findings tend to support to the validity of the CASI in pre-adolescent pupils. As such, the CASI possesses unique clinical utility relative to measure of Trait Anxiety.

Kabico (1995) conducted a study on the motivational effects of anxiety and aspiration, and found out that the high anxious students have been reported to perform at lower level on anagram solution task. Anxiety and aspiration were negatively related among the college students. The younger generation is quite optimistic.

Kashani and et.al (1990) conducted a study on correlated of anxiety in psychiatrically hospitalized children and their parents and found out that the severely anxious children has higher rates of negative life events and depression, and significant relationships were found between parents' and children's anxiety levels.

Objective of the study

To study the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students.

To study the significant differences in the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students.

To study the significant difference in the level of test anxiety of secondary school students in relation to management variation.

To study significant difference in the level of test anxiety of secondary school students in relation to Socio-Economic status variation.

Methodology of the Study
The Researcher used Normative survey design of descriptive method was adopted as the design of the study to find the to study the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students. This Study conducted by researcher in secondary schools which is run by Government and private of west Bengal which is situated at Siliguri.

Population and Sample of study
All secondary schools' students appearing for examinations were population of the study. A sample of 100 school students from four private & government schools.

Procedure of data collection
Test Anxiety Scale (Sharma, 2000) was used for data collection. It consists of 25 items, each having 5 response opinions, ranging from minimum to maximum Test Anxiety. It is based on five-point scale (Extremely High, High, Average, Low & Extremely Low). Scoring was 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively based on selection of alternatives. Reliability of this test is o.92 and validity of this test is o.74. Socio-Economic status scale of Nayak (2005) was also used for data collection. The validity and reliability of the scale is 0.61 and 0.97 respectively.

First of all, researcher has taken permission for data collection, from the principal of government and private schools of Siliguri. There were 50 samples from government school and 50 from private school. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data for the present study. Questionnaire technique was adopted for data collection, scoring according to manual was made through inferential statistics. 't' test was computed to find the significant difference between the intervening variables of gender, management, and Socio-Economic status.

Table No. 1:test of significant difference between means of boys and girls of secondary school students of Test Anxiety.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S_{ED}	t	Remark
Male	50	66.20	9.55	2.1	1.86	**Not Significant at 0.05 level**
Female	50	70.10	11.35			

above table No. 1 shows the value of 't' is 1.86 of boys and girls of secondary school students which is less than the table value 1.97 at 0.05 of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there exists significant difference between boys and girls of secondary

school students was not rejected. It means that null hypothesis is accepted. It shows that Anxiety level of secondary school students does not differ significantly. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not have much effect on Anxiety level of secondary school students.

Table No. 2: test of significant difference between means of government and private of secondary school students of Test Anxiety.

Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S_{ED}	t	Remark
Government	50	71.70	9.95	2.03	3.00	Significant at 0.05 level
Private	50	65.60	10.35			

above table No. 2 shows the value of 't' is 3.00 of government and private of secondary school students which is more than the table value 1.97 at 0.05 of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference between government and private of secondary school students was rejected. It means that null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that Anxiety level of secondary school students does differ significantly. Therefore, it can be concluded that management does have much effect on Anxiety level of secondary school students.

Table No. 3: test of significant difference between means of Low SES(Socio-Economic status) and high SES(Socio-Economic status) of secondary school students of Test Anxiety.

Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	S_{ED}	t	Remark
LOW SES	50	14.75	1.96	0.52	10.44	Significant at 0.05 level
HIGH SES	50	20.18	1.02			

Above table No. 3 shows the value of 't' is 3.00 of Low SES (Socio-Economic status) and high SES(Socio-Economic status) of secondary school students which is more than the table value 1.97 at 0.05 of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference between of Low SES(Socio-Economic status) and high SES(Socio-Economic status) of secondary school students was rejected. It means that null hypothesis is not accepted. It shows that Anxiety level of secondary school students does differ significantly. Therefore, it can be concluded that Socio-Economic status does have much effect on Anxiety level of secondary school students.

Finding of study

Related to objective one: To study the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students. Researcher has done the content analysis of the questionnaire on the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students through physical mode. Researcher also found the value of mean of boys and girls are 66.20 and 70.10 respectively which means girls have more test anxiety level compare to boys.

Related to objective Two: To study the significant differences in the level of test anxiety of boys & girls of secondary school students. Researcher done the test of significant difference between means of boys & girls of secondary school students and calculated the value of t which is 1.86 and it is not significant.

Related to objective Third: To study the significant difference in the level of test anxiety of secondary school students in relation to management variation. Test of significant difference between means of government and private of secondary school students and calculated value of t which is 3.00 and it is significant.

Related to objective Four: To study significant difference in the level of test anxiety of secondary school students in relation to Socio-Economic status variation. Test of significant difference between means of Low SES(Socio-Economic status) and high SES(Socio-Economic status) of secondary school students and calculated the value of t which is 10.44 and it is significant.

Major Findings of the Study

- The study found that the level of test anxiety is slightly more in girls compare to boys of secondary school students.
- The study found that the level of test anxiety does not influence by gender.
- The study found that the level of test anxiety gets influenced by management and Socio-Economic status (high SES and low SES).

Recommendations

Test anxiety is quite common. Millions of people worldwide experience it due to stressful lifestyles and increasing daily demands. Non-cognitive factors like mental health, anxiety, self-concept, and societal pressures have put a strain on students, teachers, and colleges, affecting the entire education system.

- Students should feel comfortable asking teachers questions in class to improve their understanding and reduce test anxiety.
- Girl students must be given extra support from schools and teachers.
- Government institution should focus on lowering students' test anxiety levels.

- Government officials should visit both public and private schools to create a positive learning environment.
- Schools need better facilities, including updated buildings, activity spaces, technology, libraries, and learning materials.
- Teachers should use new teaching methods to help students learn and regularly conduct test and assess their progress in class.
- High SES families should monitor their children closely and set limits.

Conclusion

Education is seen as the primary means for individuals and nations to address the ever-increasing economic, technological, social, and personal challenges. The rise of globalization and liberalization has heightened the sense of competition in the pursuit of excellence. Meanwhile, automation and sophistication have tended to increase individuals' test anxiety rather than alleviate it. Consequently, the promotion of quality consciousness and the striving for excellence have become essential characteristics of the workforce's potential.

In this competitive society, where performance quality is considered the key to personal advancement, significant emphasis is placed on non-cognitive factors such as mental health, anxiety, self-concept, adjustment, creativity, and parental encouragement. This societal demand has placed a burden on students, teachers, and colleges, as well as on the educational system as a whole. This hierarchical focus suggests that the entire educational system revolves around students' scholastic and non-scholastic achievements. The pursuit of comprehensive and personality development creates considerable pressure on students, teachers, and educational institutions. As a result, substantial time and effort are expended by schools to help students excel in both academic and extracurricular areas, raising several important issues for educational research.

Sound mental health, as a crucial non-cognitive factor, is essential for individuals to function effectively. Only a mentally healthy person can make a significant contribution to their field of work. In contrast, a mentally unhealthy person may direct all their energies toward dealing with imaginary threats and fears, making it difficult to perform behaviors necessary for achieving goals. Anxiety is a particularly significant and pervasive state of apprehension and fear that impacts students' achievements. The roles of teachers, parents, the community, school management, and government agencies are crucial in providing a supportive environment for learners to succeed and lead fulfilling lives.

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