

Psychological Aspects and Coping Strategies Among Children of Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang

Shalini Mehta^{1*}, Basant Kumar Karn², Ramananda Chaudhary³, Sami Lama⁴

¹Matron, Nursing Service Administrator, Golden Hospital Pvt. Ltd

²Department of Pediatric Nursing, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal

³Prof. & Head, Department of Pediatric Nursing, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal

⁴Prof. & Head, Department of Psychiatric Nursing, BPKIHS, Dharan, Nepal

Corresponding Author: Shalinimehta428@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Child development incorporates physical growth as well as intellectual, language, emotional and social development. During Juvenile home stay they are unable to fulfill their need and requirements of children over the duration of sentences, so many children are compromising their childhood as well as mental health. Assessment of psychological aspects and coping strategies of the children to identify their mental health and their measures to cope or overcome ups and down, also to identify the root causes of offending behavior and measures to prevent such behavior. Assessment of psychological aspects and ability to cope among children of Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang was the objective.

Methods: Descriptive cross sectional study was adopted. At present 152 children residing at Baal Sudhar Griha of Morang were included by population enumerate sampling method. To assess socio-demographic variables semi-constructed structured questionnaire was used. To assess psychological aspects and coping strategies DASS-21 and Brief Cope was used. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

Results: Most of the children (46%) were facing severe form of psychological challenges like stress, anxiety, depression. Similarly majority (67.1%) of the respondents were found to have emotion focused coping strategies used by the children of Baal Sudhar Griha.

Conclusion: Study result reveals that majority of the children were facing severe form of stress, anxiety and depression. Around half of children used emotion focused coping strategies to cope such psychological distress in their day today life.

Keyword: Baal Sudhar Griha, Children, Coping strategies, Psychological aspects

INTRODUCTION

Childhood is the most important and delicate period of human life, requiring love, affection, play, a welcoming environment, and equitable development opportunities from parent, guardian, peer, school, community, state, and even the worldwide level.¹ According to Section 2(a) of the Children's Act, 2048 (1992), a "child" in Nepal is "a minor who has not reached the age of sixteen." Despite the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, of which Nepal is a member state due to

ratification on September 14, 1990, appears to have defined "child" as "every human being under the age of eighteen years."

The juvenile justice system is a specialized system created to provide justice to juvenile criminals known as juvenile delinquents or, in a more liberal expression, "children in conflict with the law" these days. The optimal development of children is considered vital to society, so the juvenile justice system attempts to understand their social, cognitive, emotional, and educational development as they

progress through various stages of development, namely (i) neonate or newborn (birth to 1 month), (ii) infant (1 month to 1 year), (iii) toddler (1-3 years), (iv) play age or pre-puberty age, also known as pre-school and school aged stage (3-years), and (v) adolescent. The study of various developmental perspectives in a child's life aids in identifying the cause of delinquency and recommending the best way to address delinquency. The system examines different social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that influence children's minds and behaviours as they grow from the prenatal stage to adolescence and until the age of majority.¹

A Psychological Assessment is an evaluation of a person's mental health, social standing, and community functional capacity. A Psychological to get a picture of a person's mental health, an evaluation will encompass all facets of his or her life. Common questions include asking a client to identify his or her stressors, symptoms, and whether the client has suicidal or violent ideas.

Coping strategies might be thought of as "survival skills." They are coping mechanisms that people employ to deal with the stresses, pain, and natural changes that we all face in life. Coping mechanisms are behavioural patterns that are learned and used to cope. Coping is defined as an individual's attempt to control demands that are deemed to exceed or tax his resources (Carr, 2013). Healthy Coping mechanisms promote self-care, self-awareness, and healthy relationships. Unhealthy coping mechanisms may provide momentary relief, but they often result in negative consequences such as increased distress, physical harm, strained relationships, and worsening mental health. According to Endler and Parker (1990), there are three fundamental coping styles: task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented. The tactics adopted by inmates to cope with the prison environment are likely to have an impact on their psychological adjustment.⁵

In the jail environment, some coping methods are more beneficial and vital than others. The efficiency of coping styles is heavily dependent on the situation (Frenk, Joop, Liesbeth, & Wilco 2007). Coping scales or measurements that are focused on gauging coping methods for specific situations or stresses have been

proven to be more valid and reliable (Daniels and Harris, 2005; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).⁶

That is why children are given particular human rights to safeguard them during their minority, in addition to the fundamental general human rights provided by the constitution to all citizens, including adults, despite the fact that some of these rights, such as the freedom to marry or vote, are not guaranteed to them. Continue to be contingent until they reach the age of majority.⁷

Research on this sensitive area is also one of the helpful duties to advocate the need for a distinct specialized system known as the juvenile justice system, which can efficiently handle issues relating to juveniles who may be or are in confrontation with the law. This study is conducted for the assessment of psychological aspects and ability to cope among children of Baal Sudhar Griha and to evaluate the association between psychological aspects and coping mechanisms among children of Baal Sudhar Griha and also to discover the relationship between psychological characteristics and chosen socio-demographic factors among children of Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang, Nepal.

To discover the relationship between coping mechanisms and chosen socio-demographic factors among children of Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang.

METHODS

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research and was conducted in the Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang. All the children who were residing in Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang was included as the study population. The children who were admitted to the Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang and meeting the selection criteria were the sample of the study. Population Enumerate sampling technique was adopted. In this study, total population present at the time of data collection was taken as research sample. Researcher has adopted Population enumeration technique. As per the present status there are total 152 numbers of male children for their completion of sentence in the Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang. So the total samples were 152 delinquent children.

Children in between age 12-18 years of age. Those children giving assent. Those who were available

during the period of data collection was included in the study whereas Children with known mental illness were excluded from the study.

Semi-structured questionnaire was used to obtain socio-demographic data; DASS-21 was used to measure psychological aspects similarly Brief cope scale from COPE Inventory by Carver, C. S. (1997) was used to measure coping strategies. The tool was converted to Nepali language. It consists of three sections; first part Demographic profile containing demographic variables as Age, Religion, Parent's Occupation, educational status, type of crime, duration of sentenced, Age at Crime and Sentenced. In second part Psychological aspects, for this a standard tool i.e. DASS-21 was used to assess common psychological conditions like Depression, Anxiety and Stress and last part consist of Brief Cope scale .

The Literature review was done to construct the socio-demographic and psychological aspects and coping strategies related valid tool by consulting different experts. Feasibility and practicability was ascertained by pretesting done in 10% of total sample. Data were collected only after the review of the thesis protocol by the Institutional review committee, BPKIHS and receiving ethical clearance, permission was taken from the Director of Baal Sudhar Griha, Morang .

The procedure and purpose of the study was explained and the participants were recruited on the basis of inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. Those willing to participate and giving assent was enrolled in the study. The DASS-21 scale was used to collect the data for assessing psychological aspects and Brief cope scale was used for assessing coping strategies. Data were collected from 152 participants. It took 20-25 minutes for both scales to fill up the questionnaires related to psychological aspects and coping strategies.

After collection of data, the questionnaire was checked for completeness, organized, coded and filled format was handled with great care for further analysis. SPSS 11.5 Version was used for statistical analysis after data was loaded into Microsoft Excel 2010. Descriptive and Inferential analysis was done.

RESULTS

One hundred Fifty two children were enrolled in the study. Among which (73%) of respondents were age ≥ 17 Years and only (6.6%) were age group ≤ 14 Years. The mean and standard deviation of respondent's age was 16.88 ± 1.38 . The majority of respondents (70%) followed Hinduism. Most of the respondents (61.8%) had received secondary education and above. More than half of the respondent's Parents (63.2%) were involved in agriculture and only (10.5%) were involved in other occupation which includes Teacher, Army, Engineer, Driver and Labor. The study also shows that most of the respondent's parents (44.7%) were Illiterate. Similarly majority of respondents (55.3%) were accused by Rape followed by Murder (28.9%) and only (15.8%) were accused for other reason i.e. Theft, Human trafficking and drug abuse. More than half of the respondents (61.8%) had stayed ≤ 12 Month at Baal Sudhar Griha. The mean duration of stay Baal Sudhar Griha was 16.03 ± 14.57 . Around (32.9%) of respondents were ≥ 17 Years of age at the time of sentenced.

Almost half of the respondents (43.1%) were in between 15-16 Years of age when they performed the Crime. Likewise (38.8%) of respondents had severe stress followed by (25%) had moderate stress. Similarly (60.5%) of respondents had severe Anxiety followed by (23%) had Moderate. In the same way (38.2%) of respondents had severe depression followed by (34.2%) had Moderate Depression. However only (15%) of the respondents were not facing any kind of psychological challenges. Likewise (46%) of the respondents reported severe level of psychological challenges i.e. Depression, Anxiety and Stress. While (27%) of the respondents reported moderate level of psychological challenges, (12%) of them reported mild level of psychological challenges. The majority (73%) of the participants were experienced moderate to severe level of psychological challenges. In this study Majority of respondents (67.1%) used Emotion focused Coping followed by (19.7%) Problem focused Coping and only (13.2%) of the respondents used Avoidant Coping strategies in Baal Sudhar Griha. In addition to this the types of emotion Focused coping used by children in Baal Sudhar Griha were seeking Emotional support, Venting, Self-blaming, Humor, Acceptance, Religion Acceptance.

Table 1. Association Between Psychological Aspects and Coping Strategies (n=152)

Psychological aspects	Severity	Emotion focused coping	Problem focused coping	Avoidant coping	P-value
Stress	No stress	23(63.9)	7(19.4)	16(16.7)	0.52
	Stress	79(68.1)	23(19.8)	14(12.1)	
Anxiety	No anxiety	14(82.4)	2(11.8)	1(5.9)	0.17
	Anxiety	88(65.2)	26(19)	19(14.1)	
Depression	No depression	8(53.3)	4(26.7)	3(20)	0.24
	Depression	94(68.6)	26(190)	17(12.4)	

Values are expressed in number and percentage. Chi-square test (Linear by Linear) was used to find out the association.

Table 2: Association between Stress and Selected variables (n=152)

Selected variables	Category	No stress	Stress	P-value
Age	≤15 year	6(25)	18(75)	0.86
	>15years	30(23.4)	98(76.6)	
Religion	Hindu	25(21.4)	92(78.6)	0.21
	Others	11(31.4)	24(68.6)	
Education	Primary	14(24.1)	44(75.9)	0.91
	Secondary	22(23.4)	72(76.6)	
Type of Crime	Rape	18(21.4)	66(78.6)	0.46
	Others	18(26.5)	50(73.5)	
Duration of stay at Baal Sudhar Griha	≤12Month	23(24.5)	71(75.5)	0.77
	>12 Month	13(22.4)	45(77.6)	
Parent's Occupation	Agriculture	27(28.1)	69(71.9)	0.09
	Others	9(16.1)	47(83.9)	
Parent's Education	Illiterate	16(23.5)	52(76.5)	0.96
	Literate	20(23.8)	64(76.2)	
Age at sentenced	Sentenced not declared	14(33.3)	28(66.7)	0.08
	Sentenced declared	22(20)	88(80)	
Age at Crime	≤15 year	11(20)	44(80)	0.42
	>15years	25(25.8)	72(74.2)	

Values are expressed in number and percentage. Chi-square test (Pearson’s) was used to find out the association.

Table 3. Association between Anxiety and Selected Variables**(n=152)**

Selected Variables	Category	No Anxiety	Anxiety	P-Value
Age	≤15 year	5 (20.8)	19(79.2)	0.14
	>15years	12(9.4)	116(90.6)	
Religion	Hindu	12(10.3)	105(89.7)	0.54
	Others	5(14.3)	30(85.7)	
Education	Primary	4(6.9)	54(93.1)	0.18
	Secondary	13(13.8)	81(86.2)	
Type of Crime	Rape	4(4.8)	80(95.2)	0.01
	Others	13(19.1)	55(80.9)	
Duration of stay at Baal Sudhar Griha	≤12Month	10(10.6)	84(89.4)	0.78
	>12 Month	7(12.1)	51(87.9)	
Parent's Occupation	Agriculture	13(13.5)	83(86.5)	0.22
	Others	4(7.1)	52(92.9)	
Parent's Education	Illiterate	6(8.8)	62(91.2)	0.40
	Literate	11(13.1)	73(86.9)	
Age at sentenced	Sentenced not declared	5(11.9)	37(88.1)	0.53
	Sentenced declared	12(10.9)	98(89.1)	
Age at Crime	≤15 year	4(7.3)	51(92.7)	0.24
	>15years	13(13.4)	84(86.6)	

Values are expressed in number and percentage. Chi-square test (Pearson's) was used to find out the association.

Table 4. Association between Categorization of Depression and Selected Variables (n=152)

Selected variables	Category	No Depression	Depression	P-Value
Age	≤15 year	1(4.2)	23(95.8)	0.46
	>15years	14(10.9)	114(89.1)	
Religion	Hindu	13(11.1)	104(88.9)	0.52
	Others	2(5.7)	33(94.3)	
Education	Primary	6(10.3)	52(89.7)	0.87
	Secondary	9(9.6)	85(90.4)	
Type of Crime	Rape	4(4.8)	80(95.2)	0.01
	Others	11(16.2)	57(83.8)	
Duration of stay at Baal Sudhar Griha	≤12Month	9(9.6)	85(90.4)	0.87
	>12 Month	6(10.3)	52(89.7)	
Parent's Occupation	Agriculture	11(11.5)	85(88.5)	0.38
	Others	4(7.1)	52(92.9)	
Parent's Education	Illiterate	7(10.3)	61(89.7)	0.87
	Literate	8(9.5)	76(90.5)	
Age at sentenced	Sentenced not declared	4(9.5)	38(90.5)	0.59
	Sentenced declared	11(10)	99(90)	
Age at Crime	≤15 year	4(7.3)	51(92.7)	0.41
	>15years	11(11.3)	86(88.7)	

Values are expressed in number and percentage. Chi-square test (Pearson’s) was used to find out the association.

Table 5. Relationship between Coping Strategies and Selected variables**(n=152)**

Selected Variables	Category	Emotion focused coping	Problem focused coping	Avoidant coping	P-Value
Age	≤15 year	6(66.7)	6(25)	2(8.3)	0.74
	>15years	86(67.2)	24(18.8)	18(14.1)	
Religion	Hindu	80(68.4)	24(20.5)	13(11.1)	0.38
	Others	22(62.9)	6(17.1)	7(20)	
Education	Primary	38(65.5)	10(17.2)	10(17.2)	0.44
	Secondary	64(68.1)	20(21.3)	10(10.6)	
Type of Crime	Rape	54(64.3)	22(26.2)	8(9.5)	0.87
	Others	48(70.6)	8(11.8)	12(17.6)	
Duration of stay at Baal Sudhar Griha	≤12Month	66(70.2)	16(17)	12(12.8)	0.44
	>12 Month	36(62.1)	14(24.1)	8(13.8)	
Parent's Occupation	Agriculture	58(60.4)	21(21.9)	17(17.7)	0.01
	Others	44(78.6)	9(16.1)	3(5.4)	
Parent's Education	Illiterate	42(61.8)	16(23.5)	10(14.7)	0.28
	Literate	60(71.4)	14(16.7)	10(11.9)	
Age at sentenced	Sentenced not declared	28(66.7)	6(14.3)	8(19)	0.50
	Sentenced declared	74(67.3)	24(21.8)	12(10.9)	
Age at Crime	≤15 year	38(69.1)	11(20)	6(10.9)	0.58
	>15years	64(66)	19(19.6)	14(14.4)	

Values are expressed in number and percentage. Chi-square test (Linear by Linear) was used to find out the association.

DISCUSSION

All of the respondents in this study were male, which is identical to the study conducted by Elizabeth P. et al. where all of the respondents were male juvenile offenders. As Baal Sudhar Griha of Morang is the only place to keep male juvenile offenders for security purpose as well as space limitation is another reason for it. Likewise study done by Gullone E. et. al also support this findings.¹² However study

done by Mihret B. findings does not support this findings as their respondents were only female inmates. In present study majority of respondents (73%) belong to the age group ≥ 17 Years with the mean age 16.88 ± 1.38 . This findings is similar to the study conducted by Elizabeth P. et al. in which respondent's Mean age 16.42. Another study done by Jacob J. et al¹¹ also reported similar findings i.e. (36.66%) belongs to age group 15-18 years. Recent research has identified some elements that are likely to increase the likelihood of kids becoming involved in criminal activity. Some risk factors enhance the likelihood of young individuals committing crimes.

Peer pressure, a high proportion of unsupervised time spent with peers, poor parental discipline and supervision, low family income, disruptive behaviour such as violence, hyperactivity, bullying, school disorganisation, school exclusion, deprivation such as inadequate housing, homelessness, are all factors. Lack of social commitment, opportunities for criminality, and easy access to drugs.

Like other authors^{9,11} (Jacob J. and Nigam R.) this study also shows that more than half respondents follow Hindu religion. As per survey, Nepal is the most religious Hindu-majority country throughout the world. It was found that Most of the children had received secondary education and above which is also supported by the study conducted by Mihret B. in which majority of the respondents (67%) had received secondary education and above.

This study findings also reveals that majority (63.2%) respondent's parent occupation was Agriculture followed by (26%) were involved in agriculture as Nepal is an agricultural country, with 66 percent of the population directly involved in farming. Farming is a subsistence activity, and crops are generally linked with cattle.

This study depicts that majority (44.7%) of respondent's parent were illiterate followed by (34%) of them had received primary education and only (20.4%) had received secondary education and above. This study findings illustrates that most common type of crime were Rape and Murder followed by others include Theft, Drug abuse, Human trafficking. While another study done by Findik O. et. al contradict this; as majority (98%) of juveniles were under probation due to substance related offences. This study findings showed that majority (61.8%) of respondents had stayed less than or equal to 12 months at Baal Sudhar Griha. Data was collected immediately after the second wave of COVID19 so during this one year period from first wave to second. It suggests that juvenile's crime rate has been increased. This study findings also suggests that majority (43.1%) of respondents were in between 15 to 16 years of age. This study findings reveals that majority (32.9%) of respondents were more than or equal to 17 years of age at the time of sentence declaration followed by (28.9%) of respondents were 15-16 years of age

and around (27.6%) of respondents sentence was not declared yet.

The findings of this study revealed that individuals experienced moderate to severe levels of sadness, anxiety, and stress. These findings are comparable with those of prior studies by Gullone E. 12 Male convicts suffered moderate to severe psychological issues, including low self-esteem, despair, and anxiety. Another study done by Mihret B. et. al findings summarizes that majority of the prison inmates suffering from psychological challenges like depression, anxiety and stress, loneliness ranging in Moderate to severe form along with frustration, loss of interest, hopelessness, physical weakness, self-hate, angry and instability.

Similarly, Saraswat A. (2017) 14 concludes that the majority of children suffer from psychological issues such as sadness and melancholy, longing for love and affection, low self-esteem and lack of purpose, loneliness and helplessness, which supports the findings of this study. Similarly, Findik O. et al. (2018) found that several psychological issues faced by juvenile delinquents, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depressed mood disorders, low level of linguistic performance, low IQ (Intelligent Quotient), and conduct disorder.

On the other hand majority (67.1%) of the participants were adopting emotion focused coping strategies more over seeking emotional support, Venting, self-blame, humor, acceptance, religious coping were most commonly coping strategies used by children. was consistent with a study by (Konaszewski (2021), Thulstrup S., Elizabeth P. Bose C. Blood W.G.) which revealed that active coping, seeking support from others, Faith, emotion oriented coping strategies, spending time with friends, Distraction and acceptance were commonly used coping Measures.¹³ However, another study done by (Clarke A. et al and Hayat I. et al.) varies from this finding in that most individuals utilised problem focused coping and avoidance coping to regulate stresses.¹⁶

The study finding reveals that depression is significantly associated with coping. A study done by Konaszewki K.et.al supports this finding as it concludes mental well being was significantly associated with coping. Similarly another study¹¹

conducted by Jacob J. et al. supports this finding as it concludes high negative correlation between psychosocial problem and coping strategies.

This study reveals that Type of crime were significantly associated Anxiety and depression. In the same way it also suggests that parent's occupation was associated with coping strategies adopted by children at Baal Sudhar Griha. While a study conducted by Bose C. et al. does not confirm these findings, it does reveal a link between time spent in jail, sentence duration, and psychological well-being and coping mechanisms. Similarly, another study conducted by Hayat I. did not confirm this finding, concluding that age was substantially connected with psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this survey, the majority of youngsters (70%) are dealing with severe psychological issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Emotion-focused coping methods were employed by more than half of the youngsters (67.1%). Coping techniques were found to be substantially related to depression. Anxiety and despair were substantially related to the type of crime. Similarly, the occupation of the parent was substantially related to the coping mechanisms used.

LIMITATION

Since children are less likely to share their Psychological aspects and coping strategies, thus some might not have disclosed information out of shame. Small sample may not be appropriate to generalize the result. Mixed age group may have interfere the result.

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