

# Temperament and character of adolescent institutionalized orphans

Suhail Ahmad Choh<sup>1\*</sup>, Mudassir Hassan<sup>1</sup>, Mohd Irshad<sup>1</sup>, Rifat Sarosh<sup>2</sup>

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Violence in Kashmir started in 1989 and as a result of long term chronic violence, the number of orphans have increased markedly from last 15 years. According to UNICEF there are over 100,000 orphans in Kashmir but surveys conducted by Save the Children (NGO) in December 2006 mentioned that about 120,000 orphans in Jammu and Kashmir in which most of these children's are institutionalized. This study was planned to understand institutionalized group of orphans, for that 30 orphans were taken from district Srinagar and district Baramulla of J & K. They were compared with control group taken from same district with same age

and education. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ12) and Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI) were used as a tool. Results of present study shows that significant difference was found between orphans and non-orphans in novelty seeking harm avoidance, reward dependence. Novelty seeking was found higher in orphans, which means orphans are apprehension, nervous, timid, doubtful, insecure, passive, negativistic or pessimistic even in situation that do not worry other people. Orphans were found inhibited and shy in most social situations; their energy level tends to be low and they feel chronically tried or easily fatigued. Reward dependence was found higher in orphans indicating that they are loving & warm, sensitive, dedicated and sociable.

**Keywords:** Temperament; Character; Orphan; Kashmir Valley

## INTRODUCTION

Personality characteristic and behavioral patterns of an adult are shaped and moulded by the events occurring during the early years of life [1]. Study by Strelau and Angleitner (1991) reported that most temperament researchers agree that temperament, whatever the traits and structure to which this concept refers, has a strong biological determination. This assumption has its roots in the facts that temperament characteristics can be observed from the first weeks of life and individual differences in temperamental traits have a strong genetic determination. Studies on Adult orphans began in 18th century and it has been reported that orphan children and adolescents develop a number of negative characteristic like emotional and regulatory disorders instable and inadequate self-esteem anxiety and hostility poor skills of self-control and socially acceptable behavior identity and family image [2-7]. Most of studies revealed that orphans suffer higher level of psychosocial problems than non-orphans. It has been reported the type of care received after becoming an orphan has significant impact on the development of the orphan.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, an orphan is a child deprived by death of one or usually both parents. UNICEF and numerous international organizations adopted the broader definition of orphan in the mid 1990's and UNICEF statistic showing there are currently 148 million orphans in the world and report by same organization says there are over 100,000 orphans in Jammu and Kashmir. The absence of parents certainly increases possibilities of psychiatric issues in child. And to understand that this study was planned to understand temperament and character of institutionalized orphans living without family and to understand that following methodology was used.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Sample

30 orphans were taken from two district of Kashmir valley (Including Srinagar and Baramulla) and they were compared with control group taken from same district with same age and education.

### Tool's used

#### General health questionnaire (GHQ-5)

Developed by [8]. This was used to screen any psychiatric morbidity in non-orphan group. GHQ is a short version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). The original GHQ contains 80 items and is effective tool for detection of nonpsychotic illness.

#### Temperament Character Inventory (TCI)

Inventory developed by is used for assessing the dimension of personality. It contains seven dimensions which includes reward dependence, harm avoidance, novelty seeking, cooperative, persistence, self directedness, and self transcendence. A total questionnaire contains 240 items, which are scored on a two point scale.

### Procedure

Sample of 30 orphans was selected from institutional orphan center after taking proper permission from institutional heads. And non-orphans were selected after comparing with age and education. They were selected after screening by GHQ-5, then their temperament and character were assessed after using of temperament and character inventory [9].

### Statistical Analyses

Analyses were done through statistical package for social science (SPSS 23.0) . Descriptive statistic and t test were applied.

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Mean, SD, SEM and t-value of orphans and control group on the measures temperament and its dimensions (df =58).

Dimens ions	Group	N	Mean	S.D	SEM	t-value	Sig. value
Novelty Seeking	Orphan s	30	24.8	5.26	0.96	6.03	0.001***
	Control Group	30	17.3	4.35	0.79		

<sup>1</sup> Department of Paediatric, Baramulla, University of Kashmir, India

<sup>2</sup> Department of Paediatric, Secondary School, University of Kashmir, India

**Correspondence to:** Suhail Ahmad Choh, Department of Paediatric, Baramulla, University of Kashmir, India, Tel: 7006759325; Email: suhilchoh@rediffmail.com

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Excitability v/s rigidity	Orphan s	30	7.13	2.01	0.36	2.98	0.004*
	Control group	30	5.63	1.88	0.34		
Impulsiveness v/s reflection	Orphan s	30	6.6	1.9	0.34	6.41	0.001***
	Control group	30	3.53	1.79	0.32		
Extravagant v/s reserve	Orphan s	30	5.23	1.4	0.25	0.75	0.45
	Control group	30	4.9	1.98	0.36		
Disorderliness v/s regimentation	Orphan s	30	5.86	2.14	0.39	5.3	0.001***
	Control group	30	3.26	1.61	0.29		
Harm avoidance	Orphan s	30	19.5	3.62	0.66	4.2	0.001***
	Control group	30	15	4.49	0.81		
Pessimism v/s optimism	Orphan s	30	6.56	1.81	0.33	3.75	0.001***
	Control group	30	4.8	1.82	0.33		
Fear of uncertainty	Orphan s	30	3.96	1.35	0.24	0.56	0.57
	Control group	30	3.76	1.38	0.25		
Shyness	Orphan s	30	4.26	1.04	0.19	3.28	0.002**
	Control group	30	2.83	2.15	0.39		
Fatigability	Orphan s	30	4.66	1.51	0.27	2.31	0.024*
	Control group	30	3.63	1.92	0.35		
Reward dependence	Orphan s	30	15.5	3.03	0.55	3.26	0.002**
	Control group	30	13.1	2.55	0.46		
Sentimentality	Orphan s	30	7.16	1.26	0.23	0.8	0.42
	Control group	30	6.86	1.61	0.29		
Attachment	Orphan s	30	4.96	1.62	0.29	1.91	0.06
	Control group	30	4.2	1.47	0.26		
Dependence	Orphan s	30	3.36	1.06	0.19	4.62	0.001***
	Control group	30	2.06	1.11	0.2		
Persistence	Orphan s	30	4.73	1.31	0.23	0.55	0.058*

Control group	30	4.53	1.47	0.27
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Table 1 shows significant difference between orphans and non-orphans in novelty seeking, Harm avoidance, reward dependence and persistence.

**Table 2**

Mean, SD, SEM and t-value of orphans and control group on the measures character and its dimensions (df=58).

Dimen sions	Group	N	Mean	S.D	S.E.M	t-value	Sig. value
Self directedness	Orphan s	30	27.33	5.07	0.92	0.53	0.598
	Control group	30	26.6	5.61	1.02		
Responsibility v/s Blaming	Orphan s	30	4.56	1.79	0.32	0.67	0.5
	Control group	30	4.26	1.65	0.3		
Purpos efulness v/s lack of goal-directio n	Orphan s	30	5.1	0.92	0.16	0.18	0.85
	Control group	30	5.16	1.76	0.32		
Resour cefulne ss	Orphan s	30	3.56	1.25	0.22	1.62	0.11
	Control group	30	3.1	0.96	0.17		
Self-accepta nce v/s Self Striving	Orphan s	30	5.933	2.25	0.41	0.79	0.43
	Control group	30	6.43	2.6	0.47		
Enlighte ned	Orphan s	30	8.16	1.41	0.25	0.98	0.32
	Control group	30	7.73	1.94	0.35		
Cooper ativene ss	Orphan s	30	25.8	5.14	0.94	0.96	0.34
	Control group	30	26.96	4.2	0.76		
Accepta nce v/s Intolera nce	Orphan s	30	4.9	1.62	0.29	1.84	0.07
	Control group	30	5.6	1.3	0.23		
Empath y v/s Disinter est	Orphan s	30	4.1	1.42	0.25	1.29	0.2
	Control group	30	3.66	1.15	0.21		
Helpfuln ess v/s unhelpf ulness	Orphan s	30	5.16	1.62	0.29	0.08	0.93
	Control group	30	5.2	1.58	0.28		

Compassion v/s Revengefulness	Orphans	30	6.13	1.85	0.33	0.2	0.83
	Control group	30	6.23	1.88	0.34		
Pure hearted v/s Self-serving	Orphans	30	5.6	1.19	0.21	1.56	0.12
	Control group	30	6.2	1.73	0.31		
Self-transcendence	Orphans	30	21.66	3.43	0.62	1.23	0.22
	Control group	30	22.83	3.85	0.7		
Forgetfulness v/s Consciousness	Orphans	30	6.86	1.61	0.29	0.43	0.66
	Control group	30	7.06	1.91	0.34		
Transpersonal identification v/s Self-differentiation	Orphans	30	6	1.43	0.26	1.13	0.26
	Control group	30	6.43	1.52	0.27		
Spiritual acceptance v/s Rational materialism	Orphans	30	8.8	2.2	0.4	0.28	0.77
	Control group	30	8.96	2.26	0.41		

## DISCUSSION

Orphans were found high in novelty seeking and harm avoidance dimensions as compared to non-orphans. This explains that they have approach-avoidance conflicts, manifested by neurotic behavior with second thought checking initial impulses and by depressed mood because of difficulty in satisfying their simultaneous needs for stimulation and security. On sub dimension of excitability v/s stoic rigidity, orphans mean scores were greater than those of non-orphans. This means orphans explored unfamiliar places and situations even if most people think it is a waste of time. Thus, they are sometimes described as sensation seeking. They get excited about new ideas and activities easily, for they tend to seek thrills, excitement and adventures. It was also found on the dimension of Impulsiveness v/s reflection (which is sub dimension of novelty seeking) that orphans are more impulsive than non-orphan, reported that high scores on this sub dimension tend to be excitable, dramatic impressionistic and temperamental individuals who make decisions quickly on incomplete information and control their impulses poorly. They are often distractible and have short spans of attention that is they have difficulties staying focused for a long time so prefer to make quick decisions on incomplete facts.

Higher levels of harm avoidance were found in orphans, which means that they are cautious, careful, fearful, tense, apprehensive, nervous, timid, doubtful, discouraged, insecure, passive, negative or pessimistic even in situations that do not worry other people [10]. Their energy level tends to be low and they feel chronically tired or easily fatigued. As a consequence, they need more reassurance and encouragement than most people and are unusually sensitive to criticism and punishment [11]. Mean of orphans is more as compared to non-orphans on sub dimension of anticipatory worry

and pessimism v/s uninhibited. This means orphans are pessimistic worriers who tend to anticipate harm and failure. This tendency is especially pronounced in hazardous, unfamiliar or realistically difficult situations in sub dimension of shyness, orphans showed low mean scores as compared to non-orphans. This means orphans are bold, forward and outgoing. They tend to speak without hesitation and readily engaged in social activities.

Orphans are loving, warm, sensitive, dedicated, dependent and sociable, because mean of reward dependence is greater in orphans as compared to control group. A study by reported that individuals high in reward dependence tend to be loving and warm, sensitive, dedicated, dependent and sociable. They seek social contact and are open to communication with other people. Typically they find people they like everywhere they go. A major advantage of high reward dependence is the sensitivity to social cues, which facilitates warm social relations and understanding of others feelings [12,13]. A major disadvantage of high reward dependence involves the ease with which other people can influence the dependent person's views and feelings, possibly leading to loss of objectivity.

High score on the sentimentality sub dimension are described as sympathetic, understanding individuals who tend to be deeply moved by sentimental appeals. Consequently, they tend to show their emotions easily in front of others. They report that they experience vicarious emotions intensely, that is, they personally experience what others around them are feeling. Whereas high in persistence tend to be industrious, hardworking, persistence and stable despite fatigue Cloninger, Przybeck, Svakic, Wetzel, (2004). They are ready to volunteer when there is something to be done and are eager to start work on any assigned duty. Persistent persons tend to perceive frustration and fatigue as a personal challenge. They do not give up easily and in fact, tend to work extra hard.

**Limitation:** Our study should be viewed with the following limitations in mind:

- Sample size was small.
- Sample was taken from two district only
- In addition to the quantitative analyses, use of qualitative method would have added more meaningful information.
- The selection of variables under study was limited to temperament and character. However, the more covert aspects of behavior such as emotions, cognition and mindset etc. may provide a dynamic understanding of personality.

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