

# Low self Esteem and Psychopathology in Children with Subnormal Intelligence

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**Abstract:** In stressful and competitive social life people try to live fit in all possible ways. Their effort to live physically as well as mentally fit gives success and happiness in the life. With objective to see the effect of psychosocial stressors on children and adolescents of ages between 8 years to 14 years from middle and low socio-economic family. The major criteria to qualify as a sample was that the sample should be with subnormal intelligence (IQ >70 & <90) and with low self-esteem. A group of total 32 children and adolescents could be taken as a sample for this research which was found with help of administering Binet- Kamat Test of intelligence and Rosenberg self-esteem Scale. Developmental psychopathology Checklist was applied on each 32 children and adolescents. The data was analysed using product moment correlation method with help of statistical software, named Python panda. The research finding shows that psycho-social stressors affect the children and adolescents negatively irrespective to their age, gender and socio-economic conditions. The children and adolescents having low self-esteem with the intellectually subnormal condition may develop psychopathic symptoms. This research also reveals that males are more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms. Similarly, children are found more sensitive toward psychosocial stressor to develop psychopathology and middle-class children and adolescents are more prone to develop psychopathology than the low socio-economic status.

**Keywords:** Psychosocial stressors, Low self-esteem, Psychopathology, Intellectually- subnormal.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In current stressful and competitive social life people tries to live fit in all way at their different levels. Their effort to live physically as well as mentally fit sometimes gives success and happiness but at the same time it is very common in current scenario and life style that due to improper guidance and/or expectations from family, financial or social support, our state of psychological well-being gets disturbed. Without any significant alarm it starts capturing the entire areas of the person's life and directly attacks on motivation to do something better by accepting the common challenges – big or small in minimized way. The way to live a happy life with all hurdles, taking it positively, it improves self-esteem level of a person. Similarly, life challenges become more critical due to person's own negativity or negative thinking pattern which always de motivates in starting new things or accepting the challenges to get a successful and happy life. In their study Brodski & Hutz, 2012 found negative correlations between emotional abuse and self-esteem, positive affect, and life satisfaction. Positive correlations were found between emotional abuse, age and negative affect. Memories of emotional abuse were significantly more frequent in students who reported being raised under negligent and authoritarian parenting styles than in those who were raised under the other parenting styles. Continues failure or result bellow the expectations create different emotional disturbance in person which can be convert in psychopathic personality.

In his research done in USA, Zeigler-Hill, 2011 found that high self-esteem appears to act as a resource that buffers people from negative experiences; while those with low self-esteem, in contrast, may be more likely to experience various forms of psychopathology because they lack these resources. Similarly Lehmann, Havik, Havik, & Heiervang, 2013 in their research done on foster home children of Norway, found high prevalence of mental disorders in school- aged foster children, as well as a high rate of co-morbidity. The findings also indicated strong association between indicators of early deficits in care, placement history, and mental disorders.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Objectives:

- 1- To find out the relationship between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among male participants.
- 2- To find out the relationship between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among male participants.
- 3- To find out the relationship between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among female participants.
- 4- To find out the relationship between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among female participants.
- 5- To find out the relationship between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among participants of age group of 8 years to 11 years.
- 6- To find out the relationship between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among participants of age group of 11 years to 14 years.
- 7- To find out the relationship between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among participants of middle socio-economic status.
- 8- To find out the relationship between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among participants of lower socio-economic status.

### Hypotheses:

1. There will be no significant correlation between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among male participants.
2. There will be no significant correlation psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among male participants.
3. There will be no significant correlation between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among female participants.
4. There will be no significant correlation between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among female participants.
5. There will be no significant correlation between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among participants of age group of 8 years to 11 years.
6. There will be no significant correlation between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among participants of age group of 11 years to 14 years.
7. There will be no significant correlation between low self-esteem and psychopathic symptoms among participants of middle socio-economic status.
8. There will be no significant correlation between psychosocial stressors and psychopathic symptoms among participants of lower socio-economic status.

### Research Variables:

#### Independent Variable-

- 1- Psycho-social stressors
- 2- Age
- 3- Gender
- 4- Socio-economic status

#### Dependent Variables-

1. Psychopathic symptoms

#### Control Variables-

- 1- Intellectual sub normality
- 2- Low self esteem

### **Sample:**

In present research total 32 participants were taken purpose fully from a Mental Health institute's OPD and a Govt. Primary school, in Ahmedabad.

### **Tool:**

Total three testing tools were administered on each sample step by step. It was first to confirm their suitability as a sample for this research. These are the-

1. Binet-Kamat Test of Intelligence (BKT) developed by Stanford Binet and Indian adaptation was done by Dr. V.V. Kamat (1967). This test covers- Language, Memory, Reasoning, Numerical ability and socialization etc.
2. Rosenberg Self Esteem Questionnaire- It is four-point rating scale which was developed by Rosenberg M. in 1965.
3. Developmental Psychopathology Checklist (DPCL) Developed by Dr. Malvika Kapur, NIMHANS, Bangalore.

This test covers 6 different areas which are-

1. Developmental History
2. Developmental Problem including Autism
3. Psychopathology –(it covers- ADHD, CD, Learning Problems, Emotion Disorder, OCD, Somatic symptoms, Psychoses)
4. Psycho-social stressors
5. Temperamental Profile
6. Helpful factors for Management

### **Procedure for data collection:**

The prior consent was taken from B.M. Institute of Mental Health and also from a Govt. Primary School, Ahmadabad, for the data collection. The consent was also taken from the parents of the children those were falling under the research criteria to take as a sample. These criteria are-

1. Children and adolescents with sub-normal Intelligence (IQ between the ages of 70 to 89).
2. Children and adolescents having low self-esteem.
3. Age between 8 years to 14 years- both male and female (not necessary in equal number)

Binet-Kamat Test of Intelligence was administered very first on children and adolescents to collect the number of samples with subnormal intelligence as per the research criteria. Total 53 children and adolescents were found as with subnormal intelligence.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Questionnaire was administered on the same 53 children and adolescents diagnosed as under subnormal intelligence to see the level of self-esteem in them. Total 32 children and adolescents were falling under the range of low self-esteem. Only these 32 children and adolescents were considered as sample for this research.

Developmental Psychopathology Checklist was administered on 32 samples (children and adolescents having subnormal intelligence with low self-esteem) in individual sitting to see possibility of psychopathic symptoms in the developmental age.

The scoring was done as per the manual of each tool.

### **Data analysis:**

To analyse the data product moment correlation method was done using python panda statistical package. Correlation was seen between all variables group wise and also correlation between each unit of the sample based on the pre-decided variables.

### 3. RESULT

The results received based on the data collected from the group of samples are as follows-

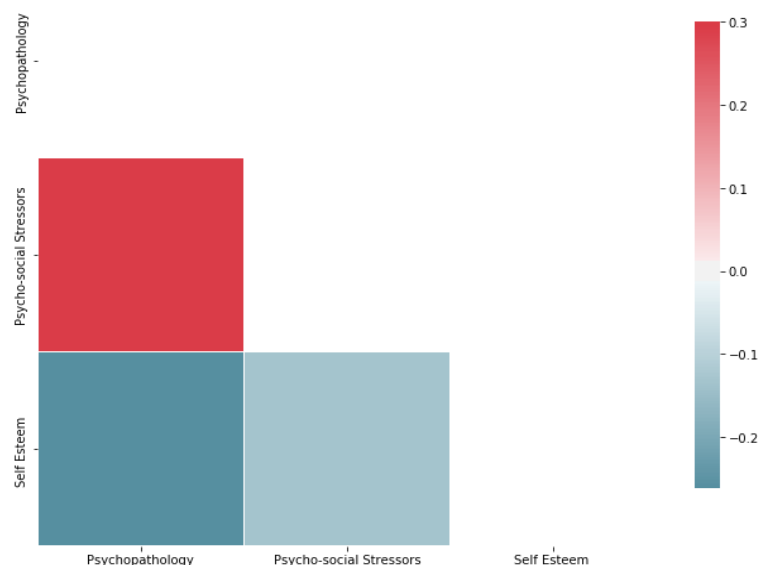
**Table 1: Correlation between Low self-esteem and psychosocial stressors (overall)**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Self esteem	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000000	-0.133	3.534	0.00078
Self esteem	-0.133	1.000000		

Table 1 data shows a negative correlation between psycho-social stressors and self esteem. The calculated p value is 0.0007, which is significant at 0.001 level. It depicts that if psycho-social stressors increases in children and adolescents belongs to any gender (male/ female), age (8 to 14 yrs) or from any socio-economic status (middle/ low) may decrease their self esteem level which may affect their psychological wellbeing, negatively.

**Table 2: Psychological stressors and Psychopathology (overall)**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.294	6.251	0.00000001
Psychopathology	0.294	1.000		

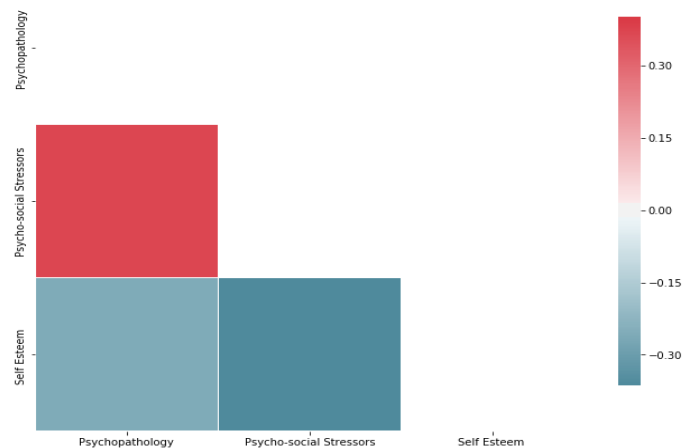


**Fig 1: is based on the data mentioned in table 1 and table 2.**

Table 2 and fig.1 shows a positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology. The calculated p value is 0.00000001, which is highly significant at 0.001 level. It is depicting that if psycho-social stressors increases in children and adolescents belongs to any gender (male/ female), age (8 to 14 yrs) or from any socio-economic status (middle/ low) may develop psychopathic symptoms in them. They may have very low self esteem as it is highly correlated with psychopathology which leads to the habit of wrong/poor lifestyle in children and adolescents irrespect to their age gender etc.

**Table 3: Psychosocial stressors and Psychopathology in male**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.370	4.360	0.0002
Psychopathology	0.370	1.000		

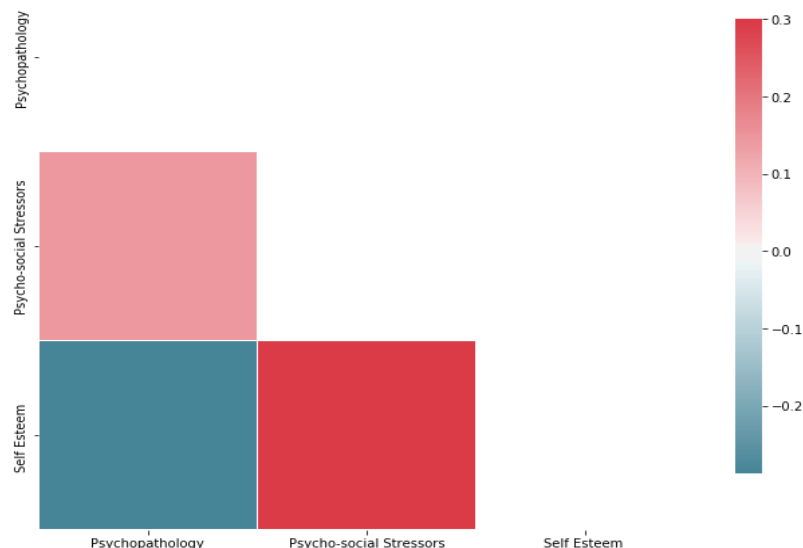


**Fig 2: showing Correlation between Psycho-social factors and Psychopathology in male.**

Table 3 and Figure 2 is showing positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology in male children and adolescents. The calculated p value is 0.0002, which is significant at 0.001 level. It is depicting that psycho-social stressors in male children and adolescents irrespective to their age and socio-economical condition may lead to psychopathic symptoms. Figure 2 also shows that level of self-esteem is high and negatively correlated with psycho-social stressor followed by psychopathic symptoms.

**Table 4: Psychosocial stressors and Psychopathology in female**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.144	5.092	0.000004
Psychopathology	0.144	1.000		



**Fig 3: Showing Psychosocial stressors and Psychopathology in female**

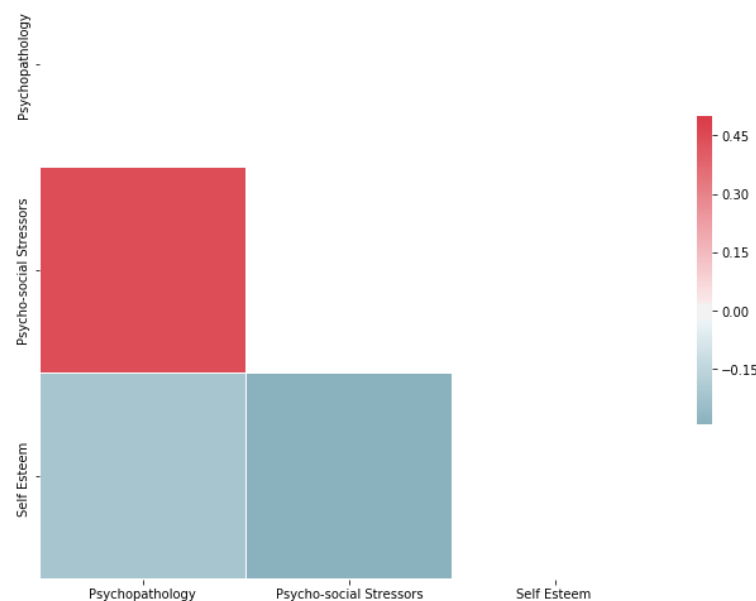
Table 4 and Figure 3 shows a positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology in female children and adolescents. The calculated p value is 0.000004, which is significant at 0.001 level. This result shows that psycho-social stressors in female children and adolescents are prone to develop psychopathic symptoms irrespective to their age and socio-economic condition. Figure 3 also shows that level of self-esteem is high and negatively correlated with psychopathology; low self-esteem may lead to develop psychopathic symptoms in female also as male.

### Comparison between male and female group scores

Comparison between male and female participant's correlation scores shows that even though psycho-social stressors and psychopathology is found as positively correlated in both male and female groups but it also can be seen that the level of correlation (0.370) in male is more than the level of correlation (0.144) in female group. It depicts that despite of having positive correlation between the psycho-social stressors and psychopathology; males are more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms as compare to female. Moffitt et al., 2009 analysed data from a large epidemiological sample and concluded that the lower rates of antisocial behaviour in women were primarily attributable to women experiencing lower levels of the risk factors for antisocial behaviour (at least at the population level).

**Table 5: Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in age group-1 (8 years to 11 years)**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.447	5.361	0.0000006
Psychopathology	0.447	1.000		

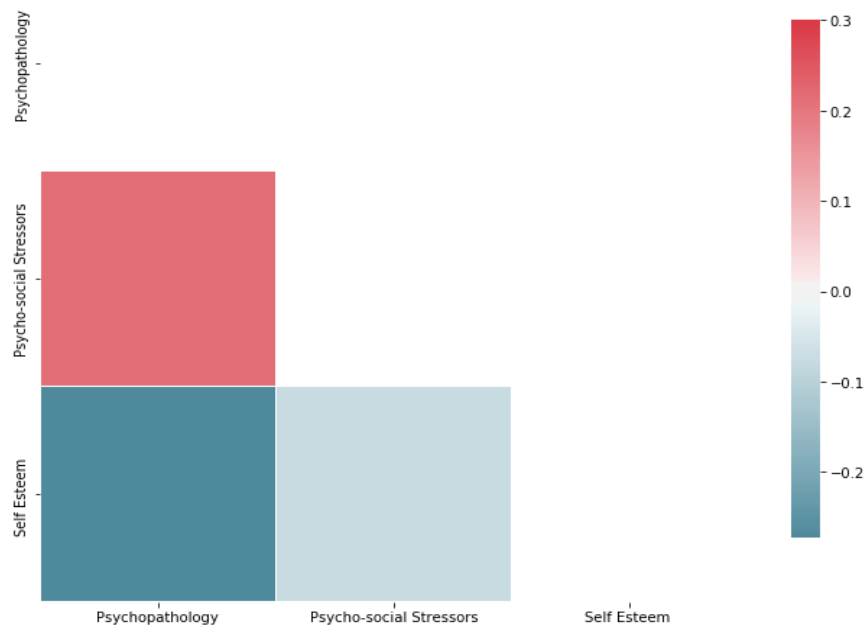


**Fig 4: showing Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in age group-1**

Table 5 and Figure 4 shows a positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology in children with age between 8 years to 11 years. The calculated p value is 0.0000006, which is highly significant at 0.001 level. This result shows that psycho-social stressors in children between age of 8 years to 11 years may get affected with the psycho-social stressors which is also highly correlated with self esteem and affects negatively. It depicts that psycho-social stressors may lead to develop psychopathic symptoms in children also irrespective to their gender and socio-economic condition. Figure 4 is the pictorial presentation of the same where it can be seen that psychosocial stressors and psychopathology in children are positively correlated.

**Table 6: Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in age group- 2 (12 years to 14 years).**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.215	3.093	0.004
Psychopathology	0.215	1.000		



**Fig 5: is showing Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in age group- 2.**

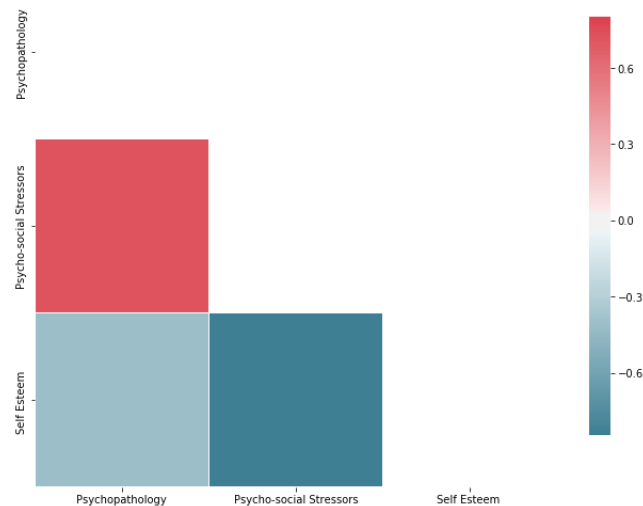
Table 6 and Figure 5 also shows a positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology in adolescents with age between 12 years to 14 years. The calculated p value is 0.004, which is significant at 0.001 level. This result depicts that psycho-social stressors in adolescents between age of 12 years to 14 years may develop psychopathic symptoms by getting affected by psycho-social stressors. Level of self esteem also gets affected badly by the psychosocial stressors and leads to psychopathic symptoms in adolescents. It depicts that psycho-social stressors may lead to develop psychopathic symptoms in adolescents irrespective to their gender and socio-economic condition. Figure 5 is showing a high negative correlation in psychopathology and level of self-esteem also with positive correlation between psychopathology and psychosocial stressors.

#### Comparison between the ages groups scores

Comparison between the group-1 and group-2 of ages between 8 years to 11 years and 12 years to 14 years, the correlation scores shows that even though psycho-social stressors and psychopathology is found as positively correlated in both the groups but it is also can be seen that the level of correlation (0.447) in group-1 is more than the level of correlation (0.215) in group-2. It depicts that despite of having positive correlation between the psycho-social stressors and psychopathology; children are more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms as compare to adolescents. Stressors remain a construct of central importance in the field of developmental psychopathology (Grant et al., 2004). In a study it found that, children and adolescents experienced increased symptoms of emotional and behavioural problems following exposure to stressors, above and beyond baseline levels of symptoms at initial data collection (Grant et al., 2004).

**Table 7: Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in middle socio-economic status**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.726	4.628	0.0002
Psychopathology	0.726	1.000		

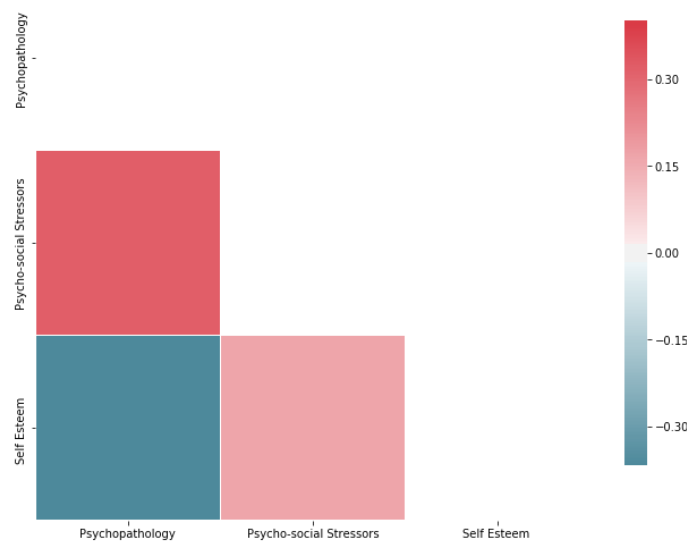


**Fig 6: is showing relationship between Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in Middle socio-economic status**

Table 7 and Figure 6 shows a high positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology with respect to their socio-economic condition irrespective to their gender and age. The calculated p value is 0.0002, which is highly significant at 0.001 level. This result depicts that psycho-social stressors in children and adolescents from middle socio-economic status may develop psychopathic symptoms. Level of self esteem also gets affected by the psychosocial stressors and lead to psychopathic symptoms in adolescents. Figure 6 is showing the same.

**Table 8: Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in Low socio-economic status**

	Psycho-social Stressors	Psychopathology	t-test	p value
Psycho-social Stressors	1.000	0.319	4.942	0.000001
Psychopathology	0.319	1.000		



**Fig 7: is showing relationship between Psycho-social stressors and Psychopathology in Low socio-economic status**

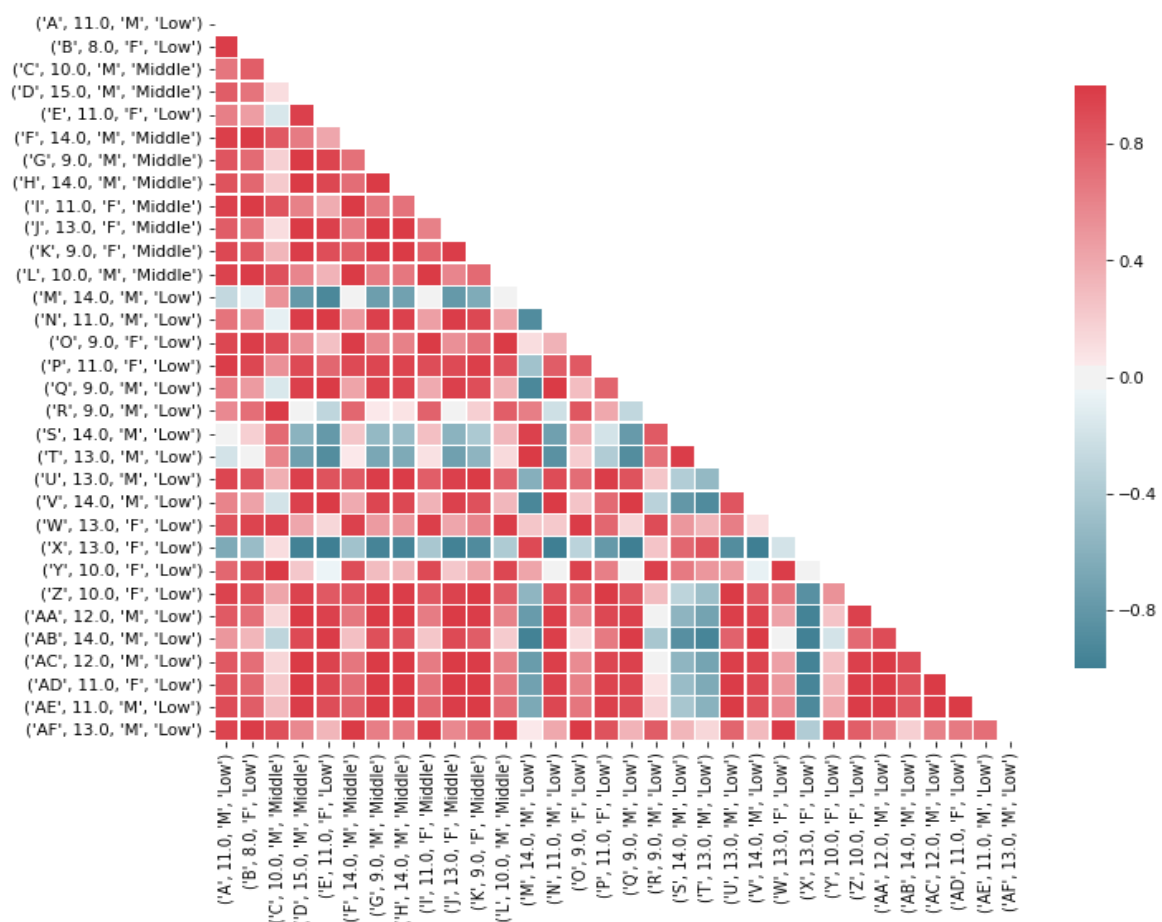
Table 8 and Figure 7 shows a positive correlation between Psycho-social stressors and psychopathology with respect to their socio-economic condition irrespective to their gender and age. The calculated p value is 0.000001, which is highly significant at 0.001 level. This result is also depicting that psycho-social stressors in children and adolescents from low



socio-economic status may develop psychopathic symptoms. Level of self esteem also gets affected by the psychosocial stressors and lead to psychopathic symptoms in childrn and adolescents. Figure 7 is showing the same.

### Comparison between middle and low Socio-economic groups

Comparison between the middle and low socio-economic groups correlation scores shows that even though psycho-social stressors and psychopathology is found as positively correlated in both the groups but it also can be seen that the level of correlation (0.726) within the middle socio-economic status children and adolescents is higher than the level of correlation (0.319) within the group of low socio-economic status children and adolescents. It depicts that despite of having positive correlation between the psycho-social stressors and psychopathology; children and adolescents from middle class family are more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms as compare to children and adolescents from the low socio-economic class family. In a study, tested relations between SES and the course of psychopathology over 9 years. The study result strongly support SES effects on somatic complaints, anxious / depressed , thought problems, delinquent behaviour and aggressive behaviour, in addition, the analysis revealed disproportionate accumulations of clinically elevated scores for individuals from the low-SES group on these syndromes (Wadsworth & Achenbach, 2005).



**Figure 8: is showing Correlation between each unit**

Figure 8 shows correlation between each 32 units taken as sample to see the correlation between them at different per-defined variables which are gender, age and socio-economic status. It is clearly being depicted through this plot that sample 'x' which is a 13 years old female from a low socio-economic family is having negative correlation with the most of the other units of the same sample group. Similarly, 'M' a 14 years male from low socio-economic family has negative correlation with the most of the units of the sample group. It also can be seen in this plot that these two unit's 'X' and 'M' are showing very high positive correlation with each other. The unit 'S' 14 years male from Low socio-economic family and also 'T' a 13 years male from the same background, both are showing mostly negative correlation with other units of the sample group. While all the other units of the sample group which are independent in self but despite of their independent existence as a unit in this research it found that most of them are high positively correlated with each other. It

depicts that despite of their different characteristics and family background most of the children and adolescents negatively get affected from Psycho-social stressors and may have tendency to develop psychopathic symptoms as well with their low self-esteem.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research is directly relating with the research done by Lehmann, Havik, Havik, & Heiervang, 2013 where the researcher found high prevalence of mental disorders in school- aged foster children, as well as a high rate of co-morbidity. Similarly in his research done in USA, Zeigler-Hill, 2011 also found that high self-esteem appears to act as a resource that buffers people from negative experiences; while those with low self-esteem, in contrast, may be more likely to experience various forms of psychopathology because they lack these resources.

In conclusion the research finding shows that other than low self-esteem, psycho-social stressors also work as a big factor in developing psychopathic symptoms in the children and adolescents and it negatively affects to them irrespective to their gender, age or socio-economic background; we can relate psycho-social stressors with the 'lack of resources' said by Zeigler-Hill, 2011, in his research. It also found in this research that males are more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms as compare to female. Similarly, children found more prone to develop psychopathic symptoms than adolescents which is also found by Lehmann, Havik, Havik, & Heiervang, 2013 in their research.

This research will be helpful for the mental health professional to understand the child's psyche as a whole, especially during psychotherapy and counselling. Further research is suggested at a larger group with ages from 5 years to 18 years to understand some more related possible factors supporting in development of psychopathology. As this research is only on children and adolescents with subnormal intelligence, in future it can be comparative study with other groups also, such as with average intelligence or with Intellectual disability groups.

Note: This research work is a part of my PhD program. It will come with more elaborated and detailed form of research in future.

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