

Mental Health of Senior Secondary School Students in Relation to Some Personal Variables

Samten Tamang

M.A. (Education), Department of Education, Visva Bharati (Santiniketan)

Abstract:

Mental Health delineates either emotional or cognitive well-being of an individual. When it is absent it becomes a mental disorder. From the disciplinary viewpoint of positive psychology, mental health is all about the ability of an individual to enjoy life to the fullest and maintain a balance between the life efforts and life activities. Mental ill health causes the feeling of shame, guilt, rejection, isolation and tension etc. and makes the man perceive the world and life as dangerous. Common mental health problems arise from life events as well as the pressure of study-and this is true for students as it is for anyone else. The objectives of the study are to find out significant difference if any in the mental health of students in relation to personal variables like-gender, locale, Socio-Economic Status and type of family. The descriptive method of survey was adopted. The sample of this study consisted of higher secondary students of Murshidabad district. Mental Health Inventory of Talesara and Bano (2011) was used for data collection. The findings of the study were that there was significant difference in mental health of students in relation to gender, locale, Socio-Economic Status and type of family variations.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Socio-Economic Status, Personal Variables.*

Introduction:

Mental Health in its practical implication embraces personality, character and behavior all in one mental health in its interactive analysis views an individual from his style of life, perception of self and adjustment in his life space. Mental health symbolizes one's state of mind. It reflects his integration of personality while living in rough as well as fair weather in his day –to –day life. According to Jghod (1959) "a mentally healthy individual is he who actively masters his environment, demonstrates a considerable unity or consistency of personality and is able to perceive self and the world realistically. Such a person is also able to function effectively without making undue demands upon other." Roger's (1957), Bernand (1961), Torrence (1965) have viewed mental health as a behavioral characteristic of the personality having homogeneous structure of desirable attitudes, healthy values, Righteous self-concept and scientific perception of the world as a whole. The characteristic features of mental health include environmental mastery, perception of reality integration, autonomy growth and attitude towards self, Jahoda (1958). The aim of education is to bring about an all-round development of personality of the child is possible only when

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the child is mentally and physically healthy. Therefore, the aim of mental health is development of healthy mind in a healthy body. A good mental health is a necessary condition for education and development of a sound personality. From educational standpoint the problem of promoting mental health in a developing country like India occupies a high priority on the agenda for human development. The slogan of 'Health for all' by 2000 A.D is critically related to planning and implementing educational programme.

Mental Health delineates either emotional or cognitive well-being of an individual. When it is absent it becomes a mental disorder. From the disciplinary viewpoint of positive psychology, mental health is all about the ability of an individual to enjoy life to the fullest and maintain a balance between the life efforts and life activities. Good mental health helps in successful adaptation in the surroundings. The major concern these days is the mental health among adolescents who are just leaving secondary classes and entering into higher secondary classes. It is an imperative concept. The major factor affecting their mental health is the socio-economic status. There is a high level of inferiority amongst them regarding this factor. It is believed that low socio-economic status is a risk factor for mental illness.

It is well known that the adolescence is an imperative stage where major changes of one's life take place. Either it will lead towards success, happiness and stronger mental well-being or vice versa. Situations vary from one to another and so the reasons. The modern era is well featured by the quickness in all life spheres like never before. On one side, technology and economic growth is at rise and on the other hand individual mental health is at stake. There are so many mental illnesses, dissatisfactions, and confusions around. So many young ages, school going and college going students are at the risk of serious mental imbalance. Adolescence is an important time of life which is present between childhood and young hood. The actual maturity of the young individuals may not always correspond to their chronological age. Adolescents have new, fresh and budding thoughts, viewpoints, ideas and beliefs. They want everything to be easy and also want to get every wish satisfied.

Mental health is not just the absence of the mental disorders and the mental illness, but it is also defined as the capability to tackle the life challenges with ease and positive approach. In order to live both physical and mental health has to be strong and perfect. Adolescents generally experiment with behaviors, appearances and attitudes. In order to look the best and have the best among friends and their circle, they can experience mental health problems like anxiety, stress, learning disability, depression, family issues, harassment, and so on. If the mental health is not well maintained it can result in suicide and self-injurious acts.

Review of Related Literature:

Lal, Sharma and Kumar (2013) conducted a study on Mental Health and Socio-Economic Status among Youth. They found that there are significant differences between the SES groups in two dimensions of mental health that are GOA and EM. Furthermore, the two socio economic groups did not differ on PSE, PR, IP, and AUT dimensions. The t-values of these 4 dimensions are insignificant.

Singh (2015) studied on "Mental health and Academic achievement of college students" and found that male group have better mental health than female group and high achiever group was mentally healthy than low achiever group. The study further revealed that mental health is positively and significantly co-related with academic achievement.

Bhat, Joshi and Wani (2016) examined "The effect of socio- economic status on academic-performance of secondary school students.". The result of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of high socioeconomic status of students in comparison to low socioeconomic status of students. Further examined those significant differences were found between the students with (high and

low) and (high and middle) socio-economic status. On the other hand, insignificant difference was found between the students with middle and low socio-economic status in respect to academic achievement.

Islam and Khan (2017) conducted a study on “Impact of socio-economic status on Academic achievement among the senior secondary school teachers” and found that there is a positive correlation exist between socio-economic status and academic achievement of senior secondary school teachers, it is also highlight that significant difference is present among different SES group in their academic achievement. It further revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their academic achievement.

Hyun (2018) examined the Impact of Low Socioeconomic Status on the Mental Health and Self-Efficacy of College Students and the researcher reported that lower rates of mental disorders in minority races, minority individuals who suffer from mental illness are more likely to have severe, chronic, and disabling experiences, and are less likely to have their illnesses treated.

Zada et.al (2021) investigated “Effect of Mental health problems on academic performance among university students in Pakistan” and found that some students in the universities are capable of dealing with the increase in stress or difficulties and can maintain their academic performance. But certain students cannot handle the increase in stress, which can directly affect their academic performance and runoff from the educational institution without receiving degree. This study recognized that mental health problems negatively affect the university students’ academic performance. They further found that mental health problems influence students’ professional and personal life negatively. From the results of gender effect on academic performance, it is evident that the female students are better than their male counterparts. At the same time, male students are prone to mental health problems than female students.

Rationale of the study:

One of the major factors affecting the mental health is the socio-economic status. Low socio-economic status mostly limits the wishes and wills of a youth. This can result in inferiority complex, life confusion, embarrassment, smaller friend circle, low confidence level and ultimately imbalance in the mental health. Thus, a good mental health is very important for a good life. World Health Organization defines mental health as- “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. It is a crucial life changing stage where the chances are high that the adolescents may get diagnosed with a mental illness.

Socio Economic Status (SES) plays a major role in the life of an adolescent. They try to make one’s impact over others through high economic status, more money and high standard of living. If anything, out of these 3 things is lacking, most of them feel low in the surrounding crowd. High/ low socio-economic status can neither make or break an individual, especially a young individual. There have so many researches in this field which indicate that SES is the most imperative factor influencing the quality of life.

Research questions

- Is there exist any significant difference in mental health of students in relation to gender variation?
- Is there exist any significant difference in mental health of students in relation to locale variation?
- Is there exist any significant difference in mental health of students in relation to socio-economic status variation?

- Is there exist any significant difference in mental health of students in relation to type of family variation?

In an attempt to give answer to these questions, the researcher has undertaken the study and stated the problem as follows.

Statement of the problem:

Keeping in view of the above, the problem is stated as: “**Mental Health of Senior Secondary School Students in relation to some personal variables**”.

Objectives of study:

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To find out significant difference if any in the mental health of students in relation to personal variables like-gender, locale, socio-economic status and type of family variations.

Hypothesis:

The following hypotheses were formulated keeping in view the above objectives.

HO₁: There does not exist significant difference in mental health of students in relation to gender variation.

HO₂: There does not exist significant difference in mental health of students in relation to locale variation.

HO₃: There does not exist significant difference in mental health of higher secondary school students in relation to socio-economic status variation.

HO₄: There does not exist significant difference in mental health of highersecondary school students in relation to type of family variation.

Scope and Delimitation:

Scope of the study covers assessment of mental health of students in relation to gender, locale, socio-economic status and type of family variations. The study was delimited to higher secondary school students controlled by WBCHSE in Murshidabad district only. The study was delimited to 50 boys and 50 girls studying in class XI selected by random sampling.

Operational definitions of the study:

Mental Health: Mental Health refers to the perceptions, feelings and behavior that determine 77 person’s overall level of personal level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and personal thinks, feels and acts when faced with life’s situation (Shalala 1996). Here the mental health status of adolescents is decided as per the standardized tool developed by Talesara and Bano (2011) which consists of 54 items with three dimensions (School related, home related and Peers related).

Personal variables: It includes gender, locale, socio-economic status and type of family variations.

Gender: It refers to boys’ and girls’ students.

Locale: It refers to students from rural and urban areas.

Socio Economic Status: Parents of different occupational status have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reacting to their children. Hence socio-economic status here refers to the levels of education, parental occupation, and annual household income of parents.

Type of family: It refers to students from nuclear family and joint family.

Senior Secondary school students are here the students reading in class XI of Senior secondary schools of Murshidabad District.

Methodology

Design: The design of the study was a descriptive study design. But the method is correlational study of ex-post facto in nature.

Population: The class XI students of higher secondary schools of Murshidabad, West Bengal.

Sampling Technique: Simple random sampling technique was taken for the selection of the students.

Sample: 100 students reading in four senior secondary schools in Murshidabad area of which two were from rural area and two from urban area selected from simple random sampling method.

Tools used:

Mental Health Scale of Talesara and Bano (2011): For measuring Mental Health, the scale developed and standardized by Talesara and Bano (2011) which consists of 54 items with three dimensions (School related, home related and Peers related) were used. The reliability of the scale was 0.72. Concurrent validity was 0.69. Z-score Norms for each dimension i.e., school related causes, home related causes and peer group related causes was calculated and ranged from -2.01 to +2.01.

Socio-Economic Status Scale (Basunia 2022): This scale was developed and standardized by the investigator in the three dimensions through check list (i) Education of parents (ii) occupation of parents and (iii) Annual Household income of parents. The reliability of the scale was 0.75 and validity was 0.65.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

Distribution of Mental Health scores of students:

The descriptive statistics procedures were then followed for analyzing the scores. The variable was expressed in interval scale wise, the distance between two points of the scale was equal at all parts along the scale and the normality of distribution was checked with the help of description statistics along with normal probability curve. Homogeneity of variance implied that the sample had nearly equal variance, 't' test was calculated to find out significant difference between means of two contrasts in the present study for verification of hypotheses.

From the frequency table measures like mean, median, mode and standard deviation were calculated for interpretation. The results are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Calculation of mean, median, mode and standard deviation for the total sample on Mental Health

Mean	Median	Mode	SD
154.30	159.30	169.30	16.67

From the above given table, it was inferred that the sample mean, median, mode are found to be 154.30, 159.30, 169.30 respectively. If the sum and difference between median and semi-interquartile range becomes the same with the third and first quartile respectively, then it gives evidences towards normality in the distribution scores of Mental Health. It was inferred that the distribution is normal distribution. Here the normal distributions of scores were studied by plotting the scores but the result indicated that mean, median, mode of the distribution do not coincide. With regard to its Skewness and kurtosis further verification were made. The Skewness of the curve was found to be 0.17 against 0 and kurtosis was 0.236 against 0.263. Thus, the investigator concluded that the scores obtained by students on their mental health deviates slightly from normality. This indicates that the distribution of scores from normality stand point was positively skewed but the magnitude of difference was very small. Considering the result investigation was mentioned to conclude that the result obtained due to the investigation was almost normal. On the whole the distribution was positively skewed and tending to leptokurtic.

Descriptive measures on Mental Health Scores:

The calculated mean and standard deviation of total sample and sub-samples according to the variables were grouped together and presented in the table below.

Table 2: Sub-sample Analysis

Sample/Sub-Sample	N	Mean	SD	SED	't'	Remark
Gender /Boys VS Girls	50	157.90	16.20	3.29	2.00	Significant
	50	151.30	16.78			
Locale/ Rural VS Urban	50	158.50	16.61	3.23	2.60	Significant
	50	150.10	15.65			
SES High SES VS Low SES	50	159.10	15.97	3.18	2.45	Significant
	50	151.30	15.93			
Type of Family/ Nuclear Family VS Joint Family	50	150.70	16.36	3.24	2.53	Significant
	50	158.90	16.02			

P value of 't' at 0.05 = 1.96, 0.01 = 2.63

Findings of the Study

Based on the results of the study made, the following findings have been interpreted. Each point has been referred to the hypothesis that was formulated which has been expressed in null form for easy interpretation of results.

- There was significant difference in mental health of boys and girls' students.
- There was significant difference in mental health of students in relation to locale variation.
- There was significant difference in mental health of students in relation to socio-economic status variation.
- There was significant difference in mental health of students in relation to Type of family variation.

Recommendations:

Since the experience of stress happens to be natural to all situations asking for some standard in performance, it will continue to affect adolescents, young adults and teachers in schools and colleges. The system thus has to make some provision, in addition to taking steps to include a module in early training to initiate every person into stress management options, which may be individually geared to help them discover what matches their temperament and preferences, involve minimum costs both physical and psychological and are socially acceptable. The findings suggest us that there is a need for periodical stress management programs for reducing the levels of stress among the students which in turn will improve their functional skills and lead to effective learning.

- **Making the institution environment more attractive**

It has become important for all of us to try and help prepare our mental health better by modifying the environment to a greater extent so that the external danger is eliminated. The institution environment should be a place of joy and happiness for the learners for effective learning. Institution environment should be developed as a center of meaningful engagement and creativity.

- **Consulting Doctor**

Consultation with doctor remains an integral part in order to diagnose the mental health of students. Consequently, by counseling and through treatment, individual's ill mental health can be improved.

- **Self-Help**

Learning how to maintain a good mental health will help a student to stay calm and focused. Talking with trusted friends can also be very helpful. By utilizing the leisure time in fruitful events such as games, sports, gardening, music, attending social functions, field trips etc, can break the monotony of routine life and leads to sound mental health.

- **Literary Therapy**

By gathering variety of information from the books, articles and other research materials one can acquire in-depth ideas and knowledge about his or her problems, as a result this knowledge provides essential tools for controlling and resolving one's issues and problems. Many books can be checked out from a local library and many of the information can be viewed through internet.

- **Counseling**

Counseling (professional) and co-counseling (between peers) may be used. Psycho education programs may provide people with the information to understand and manage their problems. Creative therapies are sometimes used, including music therapy, art therapy or drama therapy. Lifestyle adjustments and supportive measures are often used, including peer support, self-help groups for mental health and supported housing or supported employment (including social firms). Some advocate dietary supplements.

- **Diet and Mental Health**

Scientists, psychiatrists, and other health care professionals know that the brain is made up large part of essential fatty acids, water and other nutrients. It is an accepted fact that food affects how people feel, think and behave. Most experts accept that dietary interventions could have an impact on a number of the mental health challenges society faces today. So, why is it that governments and public health authorities in

developed economies invest so little in developing this knowledge?The evidence is growing and becoming more compelling that diet can play a significant role in the care and treatment of people with mental health problems, including depression, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) to name but a few. If experts are talking about an integrated approach which recognizes the interplay of biological, psychological, social and environmental factors - with diet in the middle of it as being key - and challenging the growing burden of mental health problems in developed nations, surely individuals can speed things up and do something about their diet themselves and improve their mental health.

- **Reducing Worry and Emotionality**

Very often it is observed that the students worry about their academic performance and progress leading to stress and depression. It may be due to workload left for last minute to be completed. Students should avoid it and update the work timely so that sound mental health will not get disturbed.

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