

PERCEPTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mr. Guruprasad Acharya¹, Dr. Rajendra Baikady², Dr. Lakshmana G³ and Dr. Gurumoorthy⁴
¹ Post Graduate Student, Department of Social Work, Central University of Karnataka, India.
^{2, 3 & 4} Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Central University of Karnataka, India.

Abstract: The 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.’ The present study examines high school student’s perception of mental health and mental well-being. This study examine: (i) the perception of students on mental health and well-being, (ii) to understand the awareness of students about mental health problems. The data was collected from 8th and 9th grade students from two schools in Gulbarga District through semi structured questionnaire. The results will be discussed.

Keywords: Mental health; mental well-being; Mental illness.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health refers to cognitive and emotional wellbeing, it is all about how we think, feel or behave. A mentally health person stays away from mental disorder. A mental disorder is defined by experts as “a clinically significant behaviour or psychological syndrome or psychological pattern that occurs in an individual that is associated or with present or disability or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain or disability or an important loss of freedom”(Masel, 2013). The mental health education in the school level is very important because it is the stage of many transitions and challenges in students’ lives. Most of the time, students stay away from the family. They spend considerable amount of time in society. The society includes different kind of people. So mental health helps them to learn how to deal with independence, forming more adult relationships, making financial decisions, etc.

Adolescence is also a crucial period of psychological and biological change within an individual when many new health behaviours are being adopted or discontinued. Additionally, most psychological disorders present during the school age period and this period key to the development of coping or help-seeking strategies for mental health and well-being difficulties. The levels of mental health and well-being difficulties have been found to be high amongst students, but half of the students reporting clinical levels of distress about the mental health and wellbeing.

The 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’. (WHO, 2004)

The perception of mental health and wellbeing of school children attention is required. We can help to the children

through the life skill education, mental health education and school based intervention for the children. Now a days the young people facing the significant of stresses is very common.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is titled as “High School Students Perception of Mental Health and Well-Being”. The researcher has planned to want to know the knowledge and understands about perception on mental health and wellbeing of the rural high schools students.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

High School Students

“The students studying the classes 8th, 9th and 10th are considered as high school or Secondary school students”. These students are also labelled as Adolescents.

Mental Health

Mental health refers to our cognitive and emotional wellbeing, it is all about how we think, feel or behave. Mental health if somebody has it, can also mean an absence of mental disorder. As defined by experts a mental disorder is “A clinically significant behaviour or psychological syndrome or psychological pattern that occurs in an individual that is associated or with present or disability or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain or disability or an important loss of freedom”.

According to world health organisation (WHO), mental health is “A state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work contribution to his or her community”. WHO stresses that mental health is not first absence of mental disorder.

Mental Illness

A mental condition marked primarily by sufficient disorganization of personality, mind, and emotions to seriously impair the normal psychological and often social functioning of the individual — called also mental disorder.

A condition which causes serious disorder in a person's behaviour or thinking
Wellbeing.

Objectives of the Study

The Researcher has framed the following objectives for the present study:

1. To understand the perception of students on mental health and well-being,
2. To understand the awareness of students about mental health problems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lot of studies were undergone based on the mental health and mental wellbeing in students. Those studies are addressed the need and importance of the study in high school levels. Here some articles are reviewed from previous researches conducted the study based on the student’s mental health and wellbeing in deferent countries and deferent places like South London, USA, Iran, China and India.

Neeru Roami Aggarwal (2011) conducted a study on “Attitudes of students towards people with mental ill health and impact on learning and well-beings” in South London. The researchers used the methodology for this study was combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were employed to elicit the required information for this study. A survey that aimed to reduce feelings about people with mental ill health, was completed by 76 mature students, enrolled on an Access to Health Studies Diploma Course, within a further education college in South London. In this study result shows that results varied from individual to individual, the mean score was 29.98 out of 50, which, as a percentage, works out as 59.96%: almost 60%. However, given that the minimum score obtainable was 10 (not zero) and the highest score 50, this score reflects an overall positive or negative attitude of 50% towards people with mental illness.

Lawrence T Lam (2014) has conducted a study on “Mental health literacy and mental health status in adolescents: a population-based survey” at Nanning city of the Guangxi Province in the South Western region of China. The methods this study was a population-based cross-sectional health survey utilising a two-stage random cluster sampling design. The study was conducted in Nanning city of the Guangxi Province in the South Western region of China in October 2013. In this study the sample consisted of high school students aged between 13–17 years with the total student population attending high schools in the designated region as the sample frame. The results were summarised in Table 3. As shown, MHL was significantly associated with depression without adjusting for other variables. In this study the researcher major finding on the relationship between mental health literacy and the mental health status, among younger adolescents is important both in theoretical and practical senses. Here the researcher suggested that an inadequate mental health literacy level is associated with a higher level of depression symptoms.

Haleh Heizomi et al., (2015) has conducted a study on “Happiness and its relation to psychological well-being of adolescents” in Tabriz, Iran. The main goal of the study was to provide required knowledge for designing and implementing of mental health promotion program in the target high schools. In this study the researcher used the sample for this study consisted of 403 students enrolled in the grades of 9–12. Four schools were randomly selected and using quota sampling method students were recruited in each class. The age range of the students was between 15 and 19 and 200 (49.6%) of them were girls and 203 (50.4%) boys. In this study the researcher major findings indicated that the majority of the studied students were unable to manage their stress, it seems that stress management skills along with mental health promotion programs could be helpful in developing happiness in communities through school health programs that cover a sizable part of populations.

Anita Laidlaw et al., (2016) conducted a study on “Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of mental health, mental well-being and help-seeking behaviour” in USA. The researchers collected the data through primary method, through a semi-structured interview for the 20 undergraduates joined in either medicine, psychology, biology, physics or English undergraduate degree programmes at the University of St Andrews during the period April–May 2012. In this study the researcher were mainly concerned in finding out their perceptions of the experiences of the

general student population and also interested in finding out how students initiate help-seeking for mental health or well-being issues. In this study the researcher finding suggests that encouraging active participation in extracurricular activities can be powerful tools to achieve resilience, this may not be the solution for all students. Here they suggested that the ways a student views the relationship between mental health and mental well-being do not necessarily inform help-seeking behaviour for mental well-being difficulties.

Sandesh Samudre et al., (2016) conducted a study on “Service user involvement for mental health system strengthening in India: a qualitative study” in India. The researcher used the methods a qualitative study using in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion was conducted amongst key informants from the total of 27 in-depth interviews. In this research the researcher’s findings indicate a need for a stepwise action model to achieve sustainable SU-CG involvement. They suggests that involvement is not a onetime activity but a dynamic process to bridge the aforementioned gaps.

METHODOLOGY

The study designed with qualitative and quantitative interview was selected to examine the contented and importance of mental health and wellbeing. The students learn about mental health and wellbeing in the school education and also through the society they were more understand the concept of mental health and wellbeing of the people who were living in the society. Through the local observational the students gathered the knowledge about the mental health and wellbeing. Seeing television and reading newspapers, books and being aware of news about mental health issues were sources of knowledge and information.

The aims of the study to improve our understating about the students perception of mental health and wellbeing. The present study examines high school student’s perception of mental health and mental well-being. This study examine: (i) the perception of students on mental health and well-being, (ii) to understand the awareness of students about mental health problems. In view of the literature based on the topic and its research nature, the qualitative research method accompanied with quantitative method was chosen because it enables the researcher to understand the perception of mental health and wellbeing among the high school students.

Data Collection

The data was collected from four schools in Gulbarga District in Semi-structured questionnaire and checklist were used to collect data from the respondents were administered to grade 8th and 9th students. Before that we explained to the students about our study. After that we distributed the questionnaires for the students. The participants of the study (n=31) comprised of two different schools of students studying in 8 and 9th standards schools in Gulbarga district. Interview method was followed to collect data from the respondents in two different schools (n=31; Boys=18; Girls=13).

Description of Mental Health Questionnaire

The existing study has been showed by using the Questionnaire about student’s perception on mental health and wellbeing prepared by the Researcher. It measures the mental health of the students. This tool is of Likert type and

aimed to understand the student’s mental health and wellbeing. It involves of 20 statements. Respectively statement has been given the following four weightages:

Strongly agree =1:

Agree =2:

Strongly disagree =3:

Disagree =4:

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analysed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to analyse the data.

Inferential Statistics

One-way analysis of variance (T Test) was used in order to compare the means between and within the groups. Reliability of the tools mental health by using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and Pearson correlation methods were used to establish the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Class	16.263	30	.000	1.484	1.30	1.67
Caste	15.959	30	.000	3.355	2.93	3.78
Age	16.263	30	.000	1.484	1.30	1.67
Gender	15.755	30	.000	1.419	1.24	1.60
School	15.755	30	.000	1.419	1.24	1.60

Data Interpretation:

Levels of mental health and wellbeing among the students

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-39, low	11	35.5	35.5	35.5
Valid 40-60, medium	20	64.5	64.5	100.0
Total	31	100.0	100.0	

The above the table explained the levels of students perception on mental health and wellbeing in the school of Gola and Kadaganchi Govt. High Schools. It is found that less than two third of the students (64.5%) opined that mental health awareness is medium and less than one third of the students have low level of the awareness about mental health and wellbeing.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study results shows that half of the respondents are well known about the concept of mental health and well-being. They understand the root causes of the illness and they know that mental health and wellbeing is very important; the students felt secured and comfortable in the school. Nearly half of the respondents are not aware of the concept of mental health, mental illness and even they are not aware of the signs and symptoms of mental illness. Thus, there is need to conduct some awareness programs in the schools related to mental health and well-being. The students learn about mental health and wellbeing in the school education and also through the society they understood the concept of mental health and wellbeing of the people who were living in the society. Seeing television, reading newspapers and books and being aware of news about mental health issues were sources of knowledge and information. From this study, it is found that half of the respondents are aware of the mental health and well-being and its various components. Their perception level also was found to be high.

REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, N. R. (2011). Attitudes of students towards people with mental ill. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*.
- Anita Laidlaw, J. M. (2015). Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of mental health, mental well-being and help-seeking behaviour. *Routledge Taylor & Francis Groups*.
- Haleh Heizomi, H. A. (2015). Happiness and its relation to psychological well-being of adolescents. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*.
- Lam, L. T. (2014). Mental health literacy and mental health status in Child and Adolescent *Psychiatry and Mental Health*.
- R. Hendren, R. B. (1994). *Mental Healths Programmes In Schools*. Geneva: Division of Mental Health, World Health Organisation, Geneva.
- Samudre, S. (2016). Service user involvement for mental health. *BCM Psychiatry*.
- Anita Laidlaw, J. M. (2016). Understanding undergraduate student perceptions of mental health, mental well-being and help-seeking behaviour. *Studies in Higher Education*, 14.
- World Health Organization. (2004). *Promoting Mental Health*. Geneva: WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication.
- Masel, E. (2013, July 23). *The New Definition of a Mental Disorder*. Retrieved from The New Definition of a Mental Disorder: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/rethinking-mental-health/201307/the-new-definition-mental-disorder>