

MENTAL HEALTH OF B.Ed. AND M.Ed. STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Mental Health and stability of the pupil teachers is a foremost requirement in order to have them self directed, balanced and providers to society. It is seen that they are aware that besides technical qualifications, sound 'Mental Health' is a prerequisite in their profession. This is also because they have to deal with stress, physical changes, adjustments and pressures. The present study aims to unravel the mental health of the pupil teacher and factors affecting it. Variables such as gender, SES, locality and stream do not appear to be affecting their knowledge and understanding of 'mental health'. The pupil teachers seem aware of the concept of mental health. The study also suggests ways to improve upon mental health through intake of a nutritive diet, self help methods such as yoga, meditation, personal care and hygiene as they add to ones self concept. However the need for a positive outlook from the attached agencies such as the institution, staff, society and government is felt.

Key words :health, mental health ,stress, pupil teacher

MENTAL HEALTH OF B.Ed. AND M.Ed. STUDENTS

Health is a state of well being of the body and mind and its relation with others. Various dimensions of health are -

1. **Physical Health :**

How well the body functions, diet, exercise and sleep.

2. **Social Health :**

Getting along with others, performing social roles within society.

3. **Mental Health :**

How a person perceives his own self, recognizes achievements and learns from mistakes, stress management for self.

4. **Emotional Health :**

Ability to handle emotions of fear, anger, jealousy, love in socially approved manner.

5. **Spiritual Health :**

The ability to understand spiritual wellness and to transcend oneself in order to question the meaning and purpose of life.

6. Environmental Health :

When an individual is respectful of ones surroundings and promotes interaction with nature.

All aspects of health share equal mention. However, mental health is one aspect which is of utmost importance to a pupil teacher i.e teacher being trained to handle academics as well as students going through stress of vocational choices, physical changes, familial issues, adjustments with peers, family, academics, sports, extracurricular activities etc.

A number of studies have been done on mental health in India as well as abroad, although the studies done abroad are much more in number by far and suggest that the awareness and interest regarding mental health is felt more outside India. The study of mental health has been associated with adjustment ,self concept, personality development, academic achievement etc.

Thus, mental health appears to be of much importance and could be affected by factors such as (Fixsen DL, Naom SF, 2005)

- (a) Physical health
- (b) Intelligence
- (c) Parents and home help in ones development
- (d) Habit training during childhood
- (e) Ethical and moral upbringing
- (f) Personal efforts to practice mental health

Here we can infer that mental illness is an element which affects mental health. It could be of any of the following forms ,namely, anxiety disorders, stress ,psychotic disorder, mood disorder, eating disorder, sexual and gender disorder, adjustment disorder ,addiction problems, lack of impulse control and many more similar related problems. Therefore the mental health of the pupil teacher is of much concern.

As stated by Sanjoy Kumar (2015) a teacher needs to be in sound mental health to deal with stressful work situations. Besides handling problematic situations given by students a teacher also plays the role of inculcating good health habits and boosting the natural capabilities of student (Gawande, S.M. 2016) for which again a sound mental health condition of the teacher is of importance. Thus, we can say that a pupil teacher is with good mental health if-

- (1) He/she is self directed and productive.
- (2) He/she can take own decisions and stand by them.
- (3) The pupil teacher shows effective self esteem, acceptance and control of behavior.
- (4) If he/she is adaptive to changes.
- (5) If pupil teacher believes in sustaining relationships and giving affection.
- (6) If he/she shows a sense of responsibility.
- (7) If can strike a balance in different aspects of life.
- (8) If he/she does not over or under estimate his/her own self.
- (9) If, does not get overwhelmed by his/her own emotions.
- (10) Most importantly can deal with stress.

Thus a pupil teacher with all the above qualities along with technical qualifications seems equipped enough to handle students dealing with stress, physical changes, adjustments and pressures. Studies reveal that in the present day scenario, pupil teachers are well aware of the need for a sound and positive health. In fact, they work on intrinsic and personal power, so that they can handle ambiguity and a better understanding. (Davis, J. Wilson S.M, 2010). It is further seen that pupil teachers appear to be aware of lifestyle management techniques, such as, intake of healthy foodstuff, stress relieving foods (Sharma, Shikha, 2015) yoga, meditation, religious camps, self help skills of relaxation etc. to bring about a state of good mental health, which is a major requirement in their profession. Keeping this in focus, a study was carried out to assess the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to their Gender, Locality, Stream, Economical Status and Society.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the mean differences between mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to gender.
2. To study the mean difference between the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to their locality.
3. To study the mean difference between the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to their stream.
4. To study the mean difference between the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to their socio economic status.
5. To study the mean difference between the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students in relation to their society.

Hypotheses of the study

To fulfill the objective of the present study the investigator formulated the following hypotheses :

1. Gender does not affect mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students.
2. Locality does not affect mental health of the male M.Ed. and B.Ed. students.
3. Stream does not affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students.
4. Socio economic status does not affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students .
5. Society does not affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students.

Methodology

Descriptive survey method was used to include a sample of 400 B.Ed. and M.Ed. students studying in various colleges across Rohilkhand region. 'Mental Health Inventory'(MHI) by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastav was administered on the sample of 600 students. The tool consists of 56 items on six components of mental health namely, positive self evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery.

In order to study the effect of the five variables on mental health of the students, the sample was distributed into groups as follows: Gender was divided into male and female categories; Locality was grouped as urban or rural; Stream of subject was either arts or science subjects, Economical status was bifurcated as low, middle or high income groups and finally Society was divided as unreserved or reserved. Mean scores, standard deviations and t tests were conducted to find the effect of the above mentioned variables on mental health of the pupils.

Findings

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of the results, the main findings of the study are presented here.

(i) The mean mental health scores of the M.Ed. and B.Ed. students were found to be 157.34 and 155.75 respectively. This highlights the fact that students were found in a condition of positive mental health, and turned out the least on the 'autonomy' component. 'Positive self evaluation' and 'group oriented attitudes' were represented well by the students.

(ii) The t-tests revealed no significant difference between mental health of male and female M.Ed. and B.Ed. students, in relation to 'gender'. This confirmed the hypothesis formulated in the study. The mean scores of mental health of male M.Ed. and B.Ed. students was found to be 162.91 and 154.27. The mental health scores of female M.Ed. and B.Ed. students were 156.16 and 156.27. This also highlighted and supported the fact that the students were in a condition of positive mental health and on an average, the male sample showed better mental health than the female sample.

Thus the hypothesis that 'Gender does not affect mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students' stands accepted.

(iii) It was hypothesized in the study that in terms of 'locality', no significant difference existed in the mental health scores of urban and rural sample. However, the t-test results contradicted the hypothesis, as significant difference in mental health was noted between urban and rural sample. The mental health scores were analyzed as 148.25 and 161.48 for M.Ed. and B.Ed. students of urban locality and 162.46 and 150.56 for M.Ed. and B.Ed. students of rural locality. This finding indicates the fact that urban B.Ed. and rural M.Ed. students enjoyed better mental health as compared to their counterparts.

Thus the hypothesis that 'Locality' does not affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students' stands rejected.

(iv) Taking the variable 'stream' into consideration, the t-test results indicated no significant differences between mental health scores of arts and science students pursuing M.Ed. and B.Ed. courses. However the mental health scores of M.Ed. students was 157.29 for arts stream sample and 157.41 for science stream sample; while 155.03 for arts stream B.Ed. sample and 157.11 for science stream B.Ed. sample. This depicts that students pursuing science reflected slightly better mental health than students pursuing arts stream. Therefore the hypothesis that 'stream does not affect mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students' stands accepted'.

(v) The variable 'socio economic strata' was categorized in the three income groups i.e. high middle and low socioeconomic groups. The hypothesis formulated stated that SES would have no impact on the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students. However, the results of t-tests revealed that there was a significant difference in the mental health score between students of different SES, with students belonging to low SES from both M.Ed. and B.Ed. students showing low mental health scores. Thus the hypothesis 'SES does not affect mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students stands rejected.

(vi) When taking the variable 'society' into consideration, it was hypothesized the society does not affect the mental health scores of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students. The t-test results indicated that no difference existed between the mental health scores of unreserved and reserved categories. The scores were calculated as 156.48 and 155.62 for unreserved sample belonging to M.Ed. students; and 160.49 and 156.70 for reserved sample belonging to B.Ed. students. This also indicated that the student from reserved category of the society showed better mental health scores.

Therefore the hypothesis that 'society does not affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students,' stands accepted.

Conclusions

On the basis of the results of the study on mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students, the following can be concluded :

- a) The students showed a positive mental health when checked on the six component namely, positive self evaluation, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy, group oriented attitude and environmental mastery.
- b) Out of the five variables undertaken in the study, it was revealed that gender stream of subject and society to which the students belonged, did not have an impact on the mental health of the students. However, 2 variables namely locality and SES emerged as the once affect the mental health of M.Ed. and B.Ed. students.
- c) Looking further into the variables; it was seen that,
 - within 'gender' male students showed better mental health condition as compared to female students. Dual responsibility and familial tasks and pressures could be attributed to female students showing lesser mental health scores.
 - Results on the variable 'locality' showed that M.Ed. students from rural areas were in a better mental health condition as compared to urban sample. This could be attributed to the fact that they saw a better perception of self as well as self evaluation, as they were pursuing a post graduate degree inspite of the rural background, where lesser higher education facilities existed.
 - B.Ed. students from urban areas showed better mental health scores owing to the fact that they were investing their time and energy in a professional course which would lead them to suitable jobs at the earliest.
 - Looking at the variable 'stream of study' students with science subjects as major showed better mental health scores than arts students. This could be attributed to the fact that these students viewed better employment, salaries and openings for themselves in the job market in the future.

- The variable 'SES' categorized the sample into high, middle and low socioeconomic strata. It was seen that the sample belonging to low SES showed the least mental health scores on comparison with the two groups i.e. middle and high income groups. This would be attributed to the fact that financial insecurity anxiety and frustration in today's times led to lesser mental health scores for this group.
- The variable 'society' showed no difference amongst the unreserved and reserved category of the student sample. However, it was seen that unreserved category of students showed slightly lesser mental health scores as compared to their reserved counterparts. This finding could be attributed to the fact that the employment market showed a bright future to the reserved section with lesser insecurities and tensions. Thus they viewed themselves in better conditions in the near future, resulting to better mental health scores.

These findings support the view that awareness regarding mental health has reached all pockets of society. Meaningful discussions on various media channels, views from experts, interactive sessions, newspaper columns, books on self help, meditation camps etc. have played a significant role in creating awareness regarding mental health. Focus is being made on leading the path to improved life. The role of family doctor, counselor, religious advisors can be seen nowadays. Teachings are given regarding leading a balanced life and on reducing negative feelings. Students are taught to develop resilience as a stress fighting mechanism. Meditation and healing music are also suggested by counselors. Here a special mention is required regarding the role of government, local bodies and voluntary organizations in creating mass awareness on issues such as de-stressing oneself through yoga, performing yoga in groups, celebrating it world over, lifestyle management awareness etc. All of this has created a positive impact on youth in today's times and so the study has found mental health awareness amongst pupil teachers with no difference with regard to gender, locality socioeconomic background, society or stream. A few tips to maintain and improve the mental health have also been suggested in the study such as:

1. Eating healthy food including omega 3 fatty acids, minerals such as iron, magnesium and potassium, carbohydrates, folic acid, vitamin C, E and B12 as they are stress relieving nutrients. Avoiding sugar, artificial sweeteners, alcohol, caffeine, hydrogenated oils as all of these induce stress and anxiety.
2. Practicing good hygiene as it reduces risk of illness and improves self concept.
3. Managing daily routine with a balance between heavy and light activities, work and sleep routines, and inclusion of yoga, pranayam, prayers, meditation and massage in order to relax the mind and body.

4. Going for regular health check ups to ensure overall health.

5. Indulging in activities that one enjoys the most in order to relieve stress. These could be dancing, singing, pet care, gardening, watching television, reading etc.

Thus working on improving good physical, mental, and spiritual health shall help in improving mental health of the pupil teacher. This also renders him as an asset to his family, students, colleagues, institution and the society at large.

However, a need is felt regarding –

- Creating and maintaining of a stress free environment by the training institution as well as work place.
- Pupil teachers expecting academic environment to be more peaceful calm and helpful.
- Also, the attitude of college staff, society and government towards people linked to teaching profession needs to go through a positive change.

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