



International Journal of Research in Academic World



Received: 15/June/2024

IJRAW: 2024; 3(7):140-144

Accepted: 20/July/2024

Mental Health Problems among Adolescents in Schools: Knowledge, Perception and Responses of Parents and Teachers

*¹Giresha CR and ²Dr. Susmitha B

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Government First Grade College, Bellare, Karnataka, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, JSS College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Mysuru, India.

Abstract

Adolescence is a very crucial and critical stage of human development where an individual transits from the stage of childhood to adulthood. At this stage, Adolescents are vulnerable to mental health problems especially emotional issues because of Physiopsychological changes. Hence the period requires proper understanding by the individuals themselves and the parents and teachers. However in the Indian society less attention is paid to this area. Apart from this the unaddressed issues during the adolescence may leave a lasting negative impact on the lives of the individuals. Hence it is important that we address the issue of adolescence during that phase so that the individuals can transit to the next stage with confidence. In this backdrop the present study has been conducted in the sullia taluk. This study explores the mental health problems among adolescents and the perception of parents and teachers about the same.

In this study, data were collected through the stratified random sampling method using three different questionnaires prepared for students, parents and teachers separately. The percentage calculation method is used to analyze the data. The research findings show that the majority of adolescents face different emotional issues and most of them are unnoticed and untreated by their parents and teachers. Most parents are unable to identify and understand the emotional problems of their children as they don't have knowledge about the mental health and mental health problems of adolescents. Many teachers suspect emotional problems among the students but they don't take adequate measures as they are only trained for teaching subjects, not mental health issues. The study highlights the need for professional/specialized/trained persons in educational institutions to identify, understand and treat the emotional problems among adolescents so that they become better adults and serve their community best.

Keywords: Mental health, adolescents, knowledge, perception, responses, parents, teachers

Introduction

Adolescence is an important developmental stage of every human being. Adolescent hood spreads between 10-19 years of age where significant changes in physical, cognitive, social and psychological aspects take place. During this period adolescents come across various psycho-social and emotional issues. They experience dilemmas about their roles and responsibilities.

According to World Health Organization (2005), Mental Health is "A State of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, copes with normal stresses of life, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contributions to her or his community". Fourth stage of Psycho-social theory of Erik Erikson provides evidence for psycho-emotional issues among adolescents. In Psychodynamic theory, Freud's assumption that personality forms during the first few years of life and that the ways in which parents or other caregivers interact with children have a long-lasting impact on children's emotional states have guided parents, educators, clinicians, and policy-makers for

many years. Expectations and emotional instability are ruling adolescents because of physical, social, sexual, cognitive and emotional development during this stage.

The adolescent students face many unexpressed emotional problems due to complexities in the family and surroundings. The schools play a significant role as it is the key developmental setting. Emotional instability, substance use and school dropout is at a high rate and adolescents with mental health difficulties tend to exhibit problem in adjustment, concentration, social relationships and scholastic achievement. The schools provide a safe and conducive social and academic environment for students to gain knowledge, but emotional problems are neglected. It is the responsibility of parents to take care their children's behaviors and attitudes during adolescence stage to make them adjust and cope better at the time of facing emotional problems.

The adolescent students need guidance and counseling for minor mental health problems and psychotherapeutic interventions to serious psychological problems. The understanding of the unexpressed problems of the adolescents

is very crucial at this stage as they are considered to be among the most vulnerable groups with respect to psychosocial issues. (G Gajalakshmi and S Meenakshi, 2024) [2]. The professionally trained teachers/professionals can find them and treat better.

Unfortunately, no social workers in public school in India but the prevalence of mental health problems is also more and not addressed by anyone. Even the private schools are also not recognizing the importance of social workers, hardly very few private schools where elite people send their children only have the social workers. (Lakshmi, 2014) [6].

The prevention and intervention measures have been conducted under the title "Mental Health Program or Promotion," in schools worldwide, with the entire school, at class level, or with risk groups, at different levels in order to strengthen children and adolescents' mental health in general and in the school setting in particular. (Pietsch *et al*, 2011) [10].

Review of Literature

The significant number of adolescents is suffering due to emotional problems because of the family and school environment alarming for the urgency for providing school-based mental health services. (Pathak *et al*, 2011) [9]. The parents must be advised to respect their children and create a positive and conducive environment when their children need emotional support. (Mohanty, 2021) [8]. The knowledge of high school teachers regarding adolescents' behavioral problems is good. The training can improve the knowledge of emotional problems as they are unexpressed most of the time. (Singh *et al*, 2018) [13]. The quality of adolescents' school relations, life satisfaction and mental health are strongly associated, where life satisfaction is positively associated with mental health. The quality of school relations and mental health is deteriorated the adolescents growing with age. To gain life satisfaction one must be possess emotional stability also. (Cavioni *et al*, 2021) [1].

Physicians, school social workers and psychologists should help in collaboration with teachers to recognize and solve mental health problems among children and adolescents, so that they enabled in timely detection of stress factors at school and the initiation of the necessary interventions and aid (Schulte-Körne, 2016) [12]. Student-teacher-parent relationship and family-school relationship need to be strengthened for the healthy development of students. There is a need to develop an interventional package for better student-parent relationship for adolescent development. Periodical assessment, intervention and follow up among school going adolescents is required along with active participation and cooperation of teachers and parents.

There is a need of strengthening the student-teacher-parent relationship and family-school relationship for the healthy development of adolescents. An interventional package with active participation of parents-teachers having periodical assessment, guidance and follow-up among adolescents is required. (Harikrishnan *et al*, 2020) [4]. Therefore, there is a great need for social workers in school setting and they only can address all the adolescents issue better than the teachers. (Lakshmi, 2014) [6]. It is of crucial importance that school-based training programs can provide students with effective intervention programs to improve adolescents' social functioning and well-being and prevent the mental health problems and positively increases school performance. (Loon *et al*, 2019) [7]. The teachers who never paid attention to the behavioral problems of their students are significant. The higher degree alone is not sufficient to treat mental health

rather special education and counseling techniques is required to help school children's in psychosocial wellbeing. (Pokharel *et al*, 2020) [11].

There is evidence of a decrease in disruptive behaviors, depression and anxiety with an increase in social skills, as well as improvement in mental well-being. Interaction with parents, teachers and the community will be a better intervention strategy for promoting better mental health among adolescents. (García-Carrion *et al*, 2019) [3]. There is a strong relationship between emotions and academic achievements among adolescents; they need guidance and support for making decisions as they are immature and sensitive. (Hashmi *et al*, 2022) [5].

Methodology

Descriptive research design is used to describe the knowledge, perception and responses of parents and teachers regarding mental health problems among adolescent children. This research study is based on the primary data collected through three different questionnaires prepared for students, parents and teachers separately.

Population and Sample

Population of the study is all the students studying in 10th standard in sullia taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, their parents and teachers. 160 students from eight government schools have been selected as sample.

Ten boys and ten girls studying 10th standard in each selected schools and sixteen teachers (one male and one female from each selected school) were randomly selected as sample for the study. Twenty parents of selected school children (10 mothers and 10 fathers) were selected.

Tool for Data Collection

A Self-prepared questionnaire designed for students, parents and teachers separately is used. The questionnaire for students consisted two parts containing demographic details and questions regarding negative emotional feelings that they felt often. The questionnaire for teachers and parents consisted two parts containing demographic details and questions regarding knowledge, perception and responses about mental health problems of their students.

Method of Data Collection

The cluster sampling method is used to collect the data. Sullia taluk is divided into eight clusters and researcher randomly selected two clusters for data collection. The interview schedule tool is used to collect the data from adolescent students and parents. The teachers and students were met in their respective schools. Questionnaire tool is used to collect data from the teachers.

Objectives of the Study

- i). To know the prevalence of emotional problems among adolescent students.
- ii). To compare the status of Mental Health issues between boys and girls.
- iii). To test the knowledge, perception and responses of parents regarding mental health of their adolescent children.
- iv). To test the knowledge, perception and responses of teachers regarding mental health of their adolescent students.
- v). To assess the need of trained/professional/school social workers in the schools.

Results of the Study

Table 1: Negative emotions among adolescent students of 10th standard.

Sl. No	Emotion	Responses						Total
		Respondents	Always	Most of the Time	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	
01	Depressed	Boys	6	12	25	14	23	80
		Girls	7	15	26	11	21	80
02	Sad	Boys	11	18	34	11	6	80
		Girls	11	25	30	11	3	80
03	Lonely	Boys	18	16	24	13	9	80
		Girls	19	18	25	10	8	80
04	Angry	Boys	7	15	27	18	13	80
		Girls	7	16	31	15	11	80
05	Upset	Boys	10	17	28	17	8	80
		Girls	10	15	33	15	7	80
06	Distressed	Boys	11	16	31	20	2	80
		Girls	12	19	35	19	5	80
07	Disappointed	Boys	16	20	30	8	6	80
		Girls	17	20	34	7	2	80
08	Unloved	Boys	17	16	30	13	4	80
		Girls	18	18	31	8	5	80
09	Helpless	Boys	14	18	28	13	7	80
		Girls	16	20	34	8	2	80
10	Hopeless	Boys	12	16	26	14	12	80
		Girls	10	17	31	13	9	80
11	Unable to concentrate in classes and other activities	Boys	34	24	9	9	4	80
		Girls	35	28	8	7	2	80
12	Irritable	Boys	25	15	24	12	4	80
		Girls	27	15	27	8	3	80
13	Sleeplessness	Boys	22	12	13	19	14	80
		Girls	23	15	9	19	14	80
14	Anxious	Boys	14	17	18	18	13	80
		Girls	12	15	19	19	15	80
15	Suicidal	Boys	2	9	19	16	34	80
		Girls	4	11	32	11	22	80

Table 1 reflects that the majority (43.12) of the adolescent students felt they are always unable to concentrate in the classes and other activities. 32.5% students say most of the time, 10.62% occasionally, 10% rarely and 3.75% never. This problem is more or less equal between boys (42.5%) and girls (43.75%).

The highest number of respondents (32.5%) are always felt irritability, (28.12%) sleeplessness, (23.12%) loneliness, (21.87%) unloved, (20.62%) Disappointed, (20.62%) Distressed, (18.75%) helpless, (16.25%) anxiety, (13.75%) sad and (13.75%) hopeless, (12.5%) upset, (8.75%) angry, (8.12%) depressed and (3.75%) suicidal tendency.

Table 2: The overall experiences of negative emotions among adolescents.

Respondents	Always	Most of the Time	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total Responses
Boys	219 (48.99%)	241 (47.72%)	366 (47.47%)	215 (54.29%)	159 (55.21%)	1200
Girls	228 (51.01%)	267 (52.28%)	405 (52.53%)	181 (45.71%)	129 (44.79%)	1200
Total	447 (18.62%)	508 (21.16%)	771 (32.12%)	396 (16.5%)	288 (12%)	2400

Table 2 indicating that the most (32.12%) of the adolescent students faces emotional issues occasionally with prevalence is more (52.52%) among girls than (47.47%) boys. Notable 21.16% of adolescent students experience emotional problems most of the time with girls having more prevalence (52.28%) than boys (47.72%). The significant number (18.62%) of adolescents always suffer from one or another emotional problem with 51.01% among girls and 48.99% among boys. 16.5% of adolescents stated that they rarely experience

emotional problems where 54.29% boys and 45.71% constitute. Only 12% of adolescents say they never under any emotional problems having boys (55.21%) majority and girls 44.79%.

The majority (45.62%) of the adolescent says they never felt to share their emotional problems, (21.25%) likes to share most of the time, (13.75%) rarely, (12.5%) occasionally and (6.87%) always. Among those who likes to share their emotional problems, most of them (51.72%) would like to

share with their friends, (29.88%) with parents and (18.39%) with teachers. The majority (39.08%) of the adolescents received positive response rarely, (22.98%) occasionally, (20.68%) most of the time, (10.34%) always and (6.89%) never responded when they shared. The majority (50.57%) of the adolescents are unsatisfied with the responses by their friends, parents and teachers, (25.28%) highly unsatisfied, (11.49%) satisfied, (8.04%) highly satisfied and (4.59%) neutral. Most of the adolescents (38.75%) always have an intimate relationship with their parents, (35%) most of the time, (13.75%) occasionally, (9.37%) rarely, (3.12%) never. The majority of the students (26.25%) always have an intimate relationship with their teachers, (24.37%) occasionally, (23.75%) most of the time, (13.12%) rarely and (12.5%) never.

The significant number of adolescents (28.12%) always felt that they need a trained professionals/school social worker to listen to their emotional problems, (25.62%) felt always, (24.37%) most of the time, (17.5%) rarely and (4.37%) never.

Knowledge, Perception and Responses of Teachers

The majority of the teachers (62.5%) agree that adolescents face mental health problems, (31.25%) strongly agree, (6.25%) disagree, none neutral and none strongly disagree. The majority of the teachers (62.5%) are aware of the mental health problems like depression, anxiety, loneliness, sadness, unable to concentrate in classes and other activities and anger. Most of the teachers (31.25%) find some mental health problems occasionally, (25%) never, (18.75%) most of the time, (12.5%) always and (12.5%) rarely. The majority of the teachers (50%) always find anxiety among adolescents, (25%) unable to concentrate in classes and other activities, (12.5%) loneliness, (12.5%) sadness and (12.5%) anger. None of the teachers found suicidal tendencies among adolescents. Most of the teachers (31.25%) show concerns about mental health problems occasionally, (25%) most of the time, (18.75%) rarely and (12.5%) said always and (12.5%) never.

The majority of the teachers (100%) help students by talking with them and consulting with parents. None of them visit homes, conduct professional counseling or referred to professional counselors as none of the teachers underwent training in the management of mental health problems among adolescents. The majority of the teachers (75%) say they don't have sufficient time to help the students as they are engaging more with the teaching and learning process and (25%) say they have time but no proper knowledge.

Most of the teachers (50%) opine that it is the joint responsibility of both parents and teachers to help the adolescents facing mental health problems, (25%) opine its parents' responsibility and (25%) say its teachers' responsibility. The majority (50%) of the teachers agree, 31.25% strongly agree and 18.75% neutral about the need for appointing trained professionals/school social workers to manage mental health problems among adolescents in schools.

Knowledge, Perception and Responses of Parents

The majority of the parents (40%) strongly disagree that children face mental health problems, (30%) Disagree, (10%) Neutral, (10%) agree and (10%) strongly agree. The majority of the parents (80%) not aware about mental health/psychological problems in adolescents, only (20%) aware very few mental health problems of children. Only (20%) parents opine that angry, disappointment, disobedience and sadness are some of the mental health problems they find

and these problems are never noticed by 35% of parents, occasionally noticed by 25%, most of the time by 15%, rarely by 15% and always by 10% of parents.

The majority of the parents (40%) show concern about their children's mental health problem rarely, (25%) occasionally, (20%) most of the time, (15%) always. The majority of the parents (40%) never discussed with teachers of their children regarding mental health problems, (25%) rarely, (20%) occasionally, (10%) most of the time and (5%) always. Most of the parents (60%) don't have time to treat the mental health problem of their children as they are engaged in their bread winning task and only 40% parents have time to treat.

The majority (50%) of the parents opine that it is the responsibility of teachers to take care of the mental health problems of the children, (25%) joint responsibility and (25%) parents' responsibility. The majority (55%) of the parents agrees and 45% strongly agree about the need for appointing of trained professionals/school social workers to manage mental health problems among adolescents in schools.

Major Findings of the Study

- Most of the adolescent students are suffering from one or another mental health problem and they don't express and share with others. The prevalence of mental health problems is more among girls than in boys.
- The prevalence of emotional problems among adolescent girls is more compared to boys.
- The majority of the teachers are unable to identify and treat problems as they are not trained in the management of adolescents' mental health problems. The majority of the teachers don't have time to pay attention to the mental health problems of the children as they have heavy workload in teaching and non-teaching tasks.
- Most of the parents believe that children never experience mental health problems. Parents having graduation and above have good knowledge and positive response to mental health problems. The majority of the parents believe that teachers should look after all the problems of the children at school.
- The majority of the students, teachers and parents strongly recommend the need for appointing of trained professionals/school social workers in the schools for the management of mental health problems of adolescent students.

Conclusion

Adolescence is very crucial and critical stage of human development and mental health at this stage plays a vital role in shaping individual's personality. Mental health problems are most prevalent among people across the world including adolescents in significant numbers. Unfortunately, appropriate attention is not paid in India. Parents are not aware and the teachers are untrained in identifying and managing these issues. In this regard, trained professionals/school social workers should be appointed to give special attention, guidance and psychological support to adolescents in becoming better adults.

References

1. Cavioni V, Grazzani I, Ornaghi V, Agliati A, Pepe A. Adolescents' Mental Health at School: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2021; 12:720628.

2. Gajalakshmi G, and Meenakshi S. Understanding the psycho-social problems of vulnerable adolescent girls and effect of intervention through life skill training. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*. 2024; 12:429.
3. García-Carión R, Villarejo-Carballido B, & Villardón-Gallego L. Children and Adolescents Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Interaction-Based Interventions in Schools and Communities. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2019; 10:918.
4. Harikrishnan U, & Sailo GL. Challenges of school going adolescents: Perception of Parents and Teachers. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Multidisciplinary Studies*. 2020; 6(11):12-15.
5. Hashmi K, Fayyaz HN. Adolescence and Academic Well-being: Parents, Teachers, and Students' Perceptions. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*. 2022; 9(1):27-47.
6. Lakshmi J. Role of School Social Workers in Dealing with Problems of Adolescents: A Mental Health Perspective. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 2014, 4(12).
7. Loon AWG, Creemers HE, Vogelaar S, Saab N, Miers AC, Westenberg PM, Asscher JJ. The effectiveness of school-based skills training programs promoting mental health in adolescents: a study protocol for a randomized controlled study. *BMC Public Health*, 2019, 19, 712.
8. Mohanty SR. A Study on Adolescents' Educational Problems and Their Influence on Selected Variables (Gender, Medium of Instruction and Home Environment and Economic Background. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*. 2021; 2(8):83-95.
9. Pathak R, Sharma RC, Parvan UC, Gupta BP, Ojha RK, Goel NK. Behavioral and emotional problems in school going adolescents. *Australasian Medical Journal*. 2011; 4(1):15-21.
10. Pietsch K, Allgaier AK, Frühe B, Rohde S, Hosie S, Heinrich M, Körne GS. Screening for depression in adolescent pediatric patients: validity of the new Depression Screener for Teenagers (DesTeen). *Journal of Affective Disorders*. 2011; 133:69-75.
11. Pokharel SD, Adhikari R. Teachers' Awareness toward Students' Psychosocial Wellbeing. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 2020; 14:22-27.
12. Schulte-Körne G. Mental Health Problems in a School Setting in Children and Adolescents. *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International*. 2016; 113:183-90.
13. Singh J, Vijay Kumar C, Choudhary V, Gaur K. Assessment of knowledge of high school teachers regarding adolescent behavioral problems: A cross sectional survey in selected schools of Jaipur city. *International Multispecialty Journal of Health*, 2018, 4(9).