

A Study on Mental Health Among Adolescent School Students

Ms.Nikhitha C S¹, Dr.I.Maria Yesuraja²

¹Ph.d. Scholar cum Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Sree Narayana Guru College, Coimbatore – 641105, Tamilnadu, India.

²Professor & Head, Department of Social Work, Sree Narayana Guru College, Coimbatore – 641105, Tamilnadu, India.

Email ID: nikishylam@gmail.com¹ yesuraja24@gmail.com²

Abstract

Adolescence is an exceptional period of human development, not just physically but also emotionally and cognitively. Adolescents are endowed with special ways of thinking during this period. Adolescent development is affected by the historical era. Today, children living in isolated, culturally homogenous communities are exposed to broader worlds via television, newspapers and computers and can interact with this world through Internet. Mental well-being is important in the life of all people as man lives in a world of hot-line communication, scientific miracles and knowledge explosion, etc. Mental health relates to positive attitudes and experiences that bring enrichment and enjoyment of people. Various researchers and scholars have marked adolescence as a critical period, if not the most critical period in human development—the fork in the road, which forever shapes an individual and mankind's destiny. The Researcher is used descriptive research for the research. In this research study the researcher adapted the Convenient Sampling Method.

Keywords: Adolescence; Critical period; Mental well-being;

1. Introduction

Adolescence marks the crucial developmental phase between childhood and adulthood, characterized by a shift from dependence on parents to self-reliance. Historically, this transition has varied across cultures and time periods. In some societies, the change is marked by pubertal rites, swiftly conferring adult responsibilities like marriage and governance. However, in Western cultures, the process is more gradual and less clearly defined. Despite these differences, adolescence has always been a significant phase, shaped by social, educational, and technological factors, extending the period of dependence before full adulthood is achieved.

1.1. Meaning of Adolescence

The word adolescence from the Latin verb “Adolescere” which means ‘to grow to maturity’ or in other words we can say that when an individual becomes capable of begetting offspring. Sociologically, ‘adolescence’ is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood; when a child moves from dependency to independency in his behaviors. Psychologically, an adolescent maybe viewed as a young person in transition between a period of rapid development as an individual and a

period in which the individual learns to make adjustment to the needs of self, others and the community. One can say that adolescence is a developmental stage in human life, which begins with puberty - the period when sexual maturity and attainment of the emotional, social and other aspects of adult maturity occurs. It is a bridge between childhood and adulthood and is a period of rapid changes in almost all developmental dimensions: of growing to sexual maturity, discovering one's real self, defining personality values and finding one's vocational and social direction or is also a time of testing of pushing against one's capabilities and limitations as posed by adults. [1-3]

1.2. Importance of Adolescent Mental Health

Adolescent mental health is crucial as this period involves intense physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Good mental health during adolescence lays the foundation for a productive and fulfilling adulthood, while unresolved mental issues can lead to long-term problems such as poor academic performance, substance abuse, and social difficulties. Globally, up to 20% of adolescents experience mental illnesses, with suicide being the

third leading cause of death in this age group. Early intervention is vital to prevent these issues from escalating and to ensure healthy development into adulthood.

1.3. Factors Influencing Adolescent Mental Health

- **Prevalence of Disorders:** 1% of adolescents suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder; 1% from eating disorders. Depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse are also increasing (Kurtz et al., 1996; Zubrick et al., 2000). [4]
- **Key Risk Factors:** Biological maturity, unstable relationships with parents or caregivers, inadequate parenting, family conflict, mental illness in parents, and social disadvantages (Zubrick et al., 2000).
- **Social and Environmental Influences:**

Poverty, lack of peer support, psychological trauma, and exposure to violence can contribute to mental health problems.

- **Protective Factors:** Positive relationships with parents or other adults, supportive school environments, peer group involvement, and personal achievements (Mabey and Sorensen, 1995).
- **Long-Term Impact:** Untreated mental health issues can continue into adulthood, affecting employment, relationships, and overall well-being, and may impact future generations (Quinton and Rutter, 1988).
- **Global Statistics:** Up to 20% of adolescents experience mental illness, with suicide as the third leading cause of death (World Health Report, 2000). Figure 1 Shows Dimensions of Mental Health. [5]

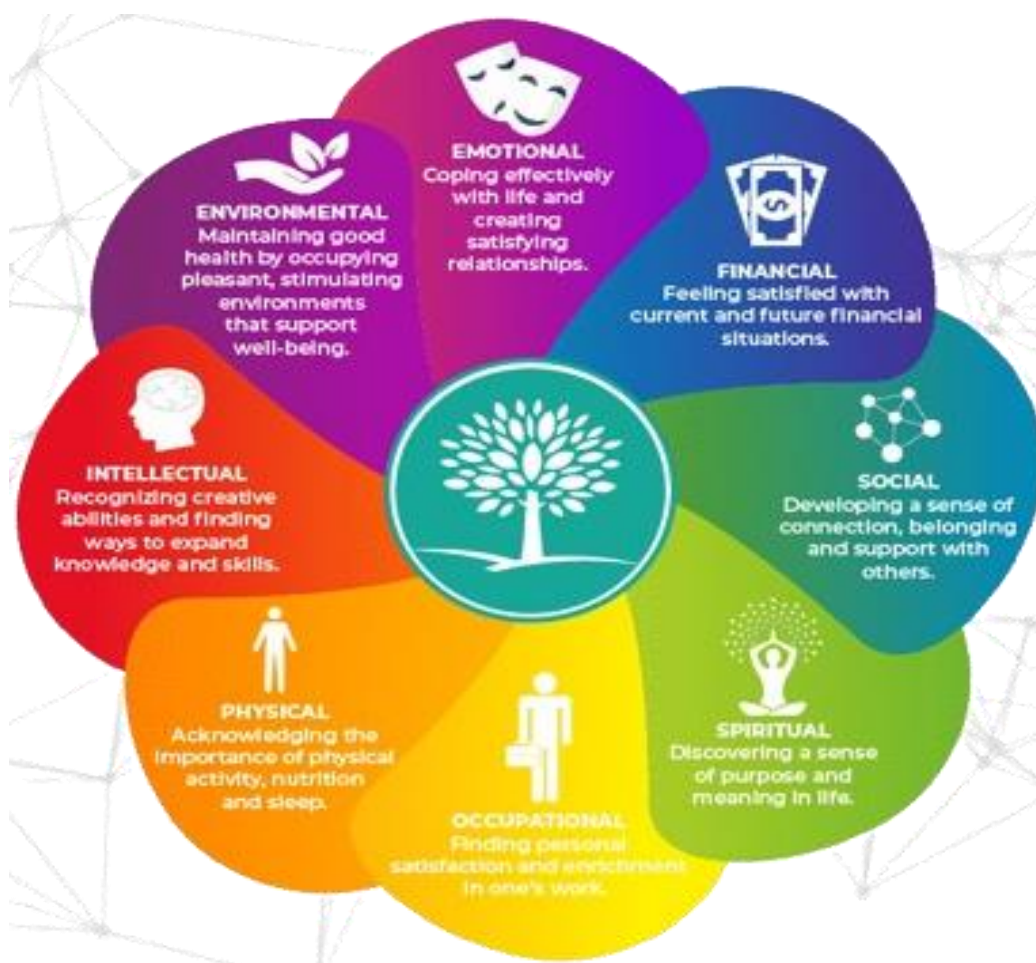


Figure 1 Dimensions of Mental Health

2. Reviews of Literature

Adolescents' Mental Health at School: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction (2021) Valeria Cavioni, * Ilaria Grazzani, Veronica Ornaghi, Alessia Agliati et al. In this study, we further developed prior research on risk and protective factors in adolescents' mental health. More specifically, we used structural equation modelling to assess whether relationships at school with teachers and peers, and life satisfaction predicted mental health in a large sample of adolescents, while also testing for age and gender invariance. The sample comprised 3,895 adolescents (Mage = 16.7, SD = 1.5, 41.3% girls), who completed self-report instruments assessing their perceived life satisfaction, student-teacher relationship, school connectedness and mental health. The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review (2023) Alexander Muacevic and John R Adler, Abderrahman M Khalaf, 1 Abdullah A Alubied, 1 Adolescents increasingly find it difficult to picture their lives without social media. Practitioners need to be able to assess risk, and social media may be a new component to consider. Although there is limited empirical evidence to support the claim, the perception of the link between social media and mental health is heavily influenced by teenage and professional perspectives. Privacy concerns, cyberbullying, and bad effects on schooling and mental health are all risks associated with this population's usage of social media. However, ethical social media use can expand opportunities for connection and conversation, as well as boost self-esteem, promote health, and gain access to critical medical information.

3. Methodology & Analysis

The population universe and samples for the study is confined to the mental health problems among adolescents. The Research design used for the study is Descriptive research design. Samples selected using Probability sampling procedure under which Simple Random Sampling was used. The research was based on selecting a sample consisting of 120 adolescents in Government Higher Secondary School, Chittur, Palakkad. The sample size is 60. The primary data was collected by Questionnaire method.

3.1. Research Objectives

- To study the personal profile of the respondents
- To study the assertiveness among the adolescents in schools.
- To study the level of mental health among adolescents in schools.
- To assess the social adjustment of the adolescents in areas of school, spare time activities, and home. [6]

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

A significant majority of the respondents, 86.8%, were from an urban background. Most of the respondents, 73.9%, came from nuclear families. Nearly half of the adolescents, 48.7%, were the first-born in their families. About 49.6% of the respondents' mothers had completed education up to the tenth standard. A higher proportion of third-born adolescents (66.7%) exhibited high assertive behavior, compared to other birth orders, while approximately 59% of second-born adolescents showed low assertive behavior patterns. The majority of respondents, 72.8%, displayed a moderate level of mental health. The F value for social adjustment is 4.35, significant at the 0.01 level, indicating differences between early, middle, and late adolescents. The F value for assertive behavior is 3.21, significant at the 0.05 level, showing improvement in assertive behavior as adolescents age.

4.2. Discussion

Teaching adolescents to express their needs confidently helps build self-esteem and improve communication, leading to healthier relationships. Providing knowledge about mental health issues and coping strategies reduces stigma and encourages adolescents to seek help when needed. Involving families in mental health initiatives strengthens support systems for adolescents through workshops and open communication. Educated families can better understand and address their children's mental health needs, fostering resilience and connection. Participation in sports and clubs enhances social skills, self-esteem, and provides constructive outlets for stress. Volunteering fosters a sense of purpose and belonging, helping adolescents build connections and



support networks.

Conclusion

This study explores the connection between positive self-concept and good mental health in adolescents. A positive self-concept is built through feelings of belonging, achievement, and participation in peer activities, fostering mastery, confidence, and self-esteem—key elements of mental well-being. Supportive friendships and social interactions further enhance acceptance and reduce isolation. Factors like a nurturing home environment and a sense of personal worth are critical for social adjustment. Participation in community and extracurricular activities strengthens a sense of belonging and achievement, promoting resilience. The study highlights the importance of supportive environments in fostering positive self-concept, which contributes to better mental health during adolescence.

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