

## Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Relation to their Gender

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### Abstract

The present study is an attempt to find out the difference in mental health of male and female secondary school students. A descriptive survey method was used. The population consisted of all secondary school students who are studying in various schools of district Rohtak of Haryana. A sample of 100 students was randomly selected. Mental Health Battery by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpna Sen Gupta was used to assess the mental health of students. Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test was used to analyse the data. No significant difference was found in 'Emotional Stability' 'Overall Adjustment' 'Intelligence' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. But female students were found better in 'Autonomy' 'Security-Insecurity' and 'Self-Concept' components of mental health. The total mental health of female students was found better in comparison to their male counterparts.

**KEYWORDS:** Mental health, secondary school students.

### MENTAL HEALTH

The concept of mental health is as old as human beings. In recent years clinical psychologists as well as educationists have started giving proper attention to the study of mental health, however, in India, relatively very few work has been conducted. Mental health as defined by **Kornhauser (1965)** connotes those behaviors, perceptions and feelings that determine a person's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and retention of goals that are neither too high nor too low to permit realistic successful maintenance of belief in one's self as a worthy, effective human-being. So a mentally healthy person is firm in his intentions and is least disturbed by strains and stresses of day-to-day life.

#### Factors of good mental health:-

1. Feeling loved - children who feel loved, trusted and accepted by their parents and others are far more likely to have good mental health.
2. Confidence - children who are brought up to have confidence in themselves are more likely to have a positive attitude.
3. *Self-esteem* – people with high self-esteem generally have a positive outlook and are satisfied with themselves most of the time.

Conceptualizing 'health' unequivocally and in a way acceptable to everybody has proved to be a great challenge for the students of health. The complexity of this issue is revealed in an interesting recent analysis of health and illness as represented in different segments of the population. It was noted that differences in language, attitudes and expectations result due to differences in the perspectives of the social and community groups (popular arena), non-professional helpers (folk arena) and scientific medicine (professional arena). Often doctor-patient relationships happen to be transactions between disease (medical) and illness (social) models of sickness. The

layman's definitions are important as they moderate the want of health and the subjective view of the people. Srinivasa Murthy (1992) has noted that there is considerable variety in the views on mental health and illness across lay people, medical practitioners and social scientists. However, following WHO's proposition, health is increasingly being treated as not merely absence of illness but a positive state of well-being.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Bandhana and Sharma (2012)** revealed that the mean value of mental health of girls is more in comparison to boys. **Saleem and Mahmood (2013)** show that 31% of the participants fall in the "severe" category, whereas 16% fall in the "very severe" category. As far as the individual dimensions are concerned, 17% respondents comprising sample of the present study fall in very severe category Sense of Being Dysfunctional, followed by Loss of Confidence (16%), Lack of Self Regulation (14%) and Anxiety Proneness (12%).

**Bostani, Nadri & Nasab (2014)** showed that general health and some of its components, such as depression and anxiety, had a significant relation with educational performance, while no significant relation was observed between academic performance and other components such as physical symptoms and social performance disorders. **Sanchla (2014) revealed** no significant difference in mental health of boy and girl secondary school students.

**Kumar (2015)** revealed that there exists significant difference in 'Autonomy' 'Security-insecurity' and Self- concept' component of mental health of adolescent girls and boys. No significant difference has been found in 'Emotional stability', 'Overall adjustment' and 'Intelligence' component of mental health of adolescent girls and boys. It was evident that adolescent girls were better than boys in all six components of mental health, means adolescent girls tend to be mentally healthier. **Singh (2015)** revealed that there were significant difference exists between science and art students at .05 level of significance. Art students have had better mental health status and better adjustment level in comparison with science students.

After reviewing the literature in this field (**Jahoda, 1959; Maslow & Mittleman, 1951; Rogers, 1961; Whittaker, 1970**), following six popular indices of mental health were finally selected for inclusion in the present battery:

- Emotional Stability
- Over-all Adjustment
- Autonomy
- Security-Insecurity
- Self-concept
- Intelligence

A brief description of each of these indices are as under:

### 1. Emotional Stability

It refers to experiencing subjective stable feelings which have positive or negative values for the individual.

### 2. Adjustment

It refers to individual's achieving an overall harmonious balance between the demands of various aspects of environment, such as home, health, social, emotional and school on the one hand and cognition on the other.

### 3. Autonomy

It refers to a stage of independence and self-determination in thinking.

### 4. Security-Insecurity

It refers to a high (or low) sense of safety, confidence, freedom from fear, apprehension or anxiety particularly with respect to fulfilling the person's present or future needs.

**5. Self-Concept**

It refers to the sum total of the person's attitudes and knowledge towards himself and evaluation of his achievements.

**6. Intelligence**

It refers to general mental ability which helps the person in thinking rationally, and in behaving purposefully in his environment.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

Mental health is also concerned with the harmonious development of personality. Mental health and education are closely related with each other. For any type of education, sound mental health is the first condition. If children are not in sound mental health, they can't concentrate in learning and retain the knowledge received in the classroom learning is dependent on sound information and skill that will give them better control over their environment. Recent research studies have proved that learning is not the activity of single function but is bound up with total personality of the learner. Mental health is as essential to the learning process as intelligence. It is an important component of learner's personality. It has direct bearing on his development process. The individual, who is adaptable to the changing conditions of his environment receptive and not rigid in his behavior, can be said mentally healthy. A mentally healthy student is socially awakened. He participates in social activities and his personality functions properly under strain and stress of emotional disturbance. He does not indulge in antisocial activities. His goal of life is in accordance with social norms. He fulfills his objectives in harmony with other students. He can improve his behavior on the basis of his self-examination. Therefore, a humble attempt has been done by the investigator to know the mental health of secondary school students in relation to their gender.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

**Mental health of secondary school students in relation to their gender.**

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS USED**

**Mental Health**

Mental Health as the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness. It is the ability to maintain an even temper, an alert intelligence, socially considerate behavior and a happy disposition.

**Secondary School Students**

The students studying in secondary schools classes are secondary school students.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the mental health of male and female secondary school students.

**HYPOTHESIS**

1. There will be no significant difference in mental health of male and female secondary school students.

**METHOD OF THE STUDY**

Descriptive Survey Method was used to conduct the study.

**SAMPLE**

A sample of 100 students was selected randomly. For this two high schools were selected out of the list of secondary schools of Rohtak city by purposive sampling techniques.

**TOOLS USED**

1. Mental Health Battery by Arun Kumar Singh and Alpana Sen Gupta

**STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED**

Mean, Standard Deviation and 't'-test were used to obtain the results.

**RESULTS**

The analysis of mental health between male and female secondary school students is given in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation and 't'-value of different components of mental health of male and female secondary school students**

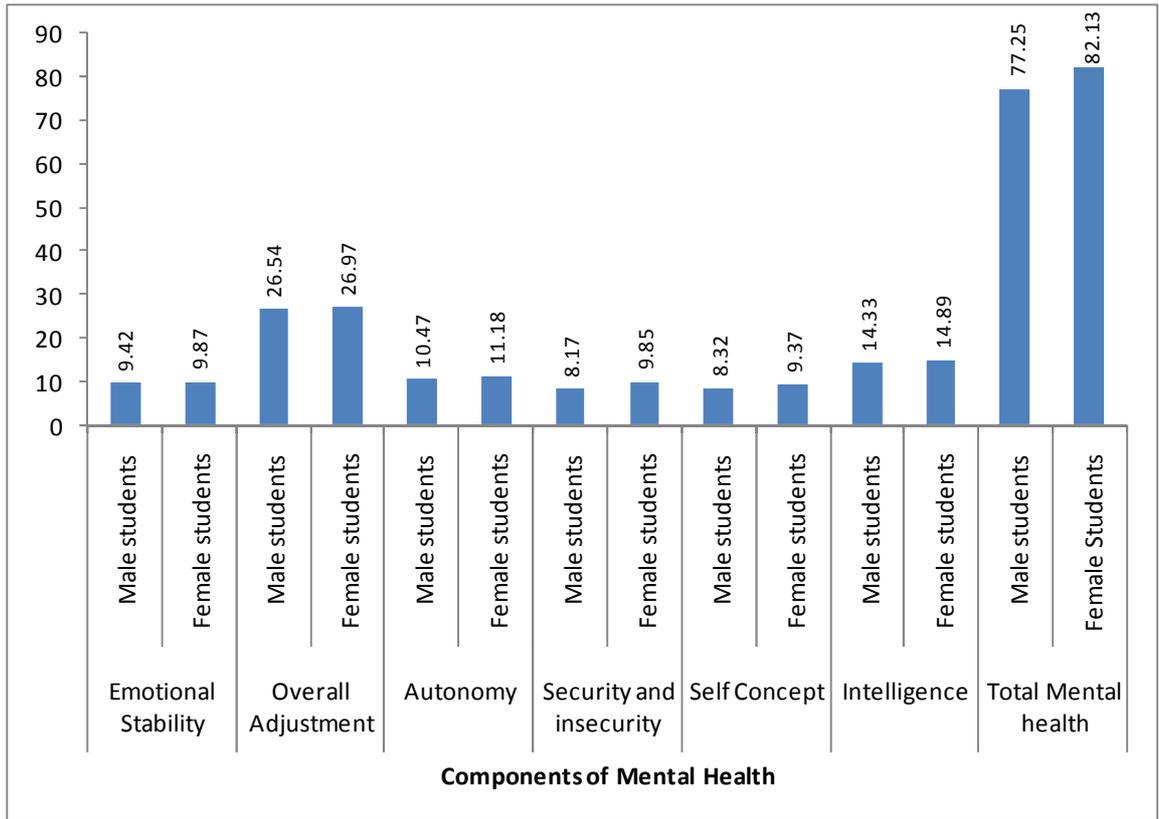
Sr. No.	Components of Mental Health	Group	N	Mean Scores	S.D's	t-value
1.	Emotional Stability	Male students	50	9.42	2.12	0.271 <sup>NS</sup>
		Female students	50	9.87	2.35	
2.	Overall Adjustment	Male students	50	26.54	4.81	0.872 <sup>NS</sup>
		Female students	50	26.97	4.92	
3.	Autonomy	Male students	50	10.47	1.96	2.234*
		Female students	50	11.18	1.51	
4.	Security and insecurity	Male students	50	8.17	2.13	3.256**
		Female students	50	9.85	2.37	
5.	Self Concept	Male students	50	8.32	1.89	2.132*
		Female students	50	9.37	2.93	
6.	Intelligence	Male students	50	14.33	2.78	1.341 <sup>NS</sup>
		Female students	50	14.89	2.97	
7.	Total Mental health	Male students	50	77.25	15.69	3.173**
		Female Students	50	82.13	17.05	

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level; \* Significant at 0.05 level

NS=Not significant

Table Value at 0.01 level 2.58

0.05 level 1.96



**Fig. 1: Showing mean score of mental health of male and female secondary students**

The Table 1 shows that ‘t’ value (0.271) of ‘emotional stability’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students is not significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level. It means no significant difference has been found in ‘emotional stability’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.

The next part of the table shows that the ‘t’ value (0.872) of ‘overall adjustment’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students is not significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 and 0.01 level. It means no significant difference has been found in ‘overall adjustment’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.

The table further shows that t- value (2.234) is significant at 0.05 level. This shows that significant difference has been found in ‘Autonomy’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in the ‘autonomy’ component of mental health.

The next section of table shows that ‘t’ value (3.256) of ‘security-insecurity’ components of mental health which is significant at both levels at 0.05 level and 0.01 level. This shows that there exists a significant difference in the ‘security-insecurity’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students tend to be better than girl students in ‘security-insecurity’ component of mental health.

The table further shows ‘t’ value (2.132) of ‘self-concept’ component of mental health of secondary school male and female students is significant at both levels i.e. 0.05 level. It means significant difference has been found in the ‘self –

concept' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in the 'self concept' component of mental health.

The table further shows that 't' value (1.341) of 'intelligence' component of mental health is not significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level which indicates that no significant difference has been found in 'intelligence' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.

The last section of the table shows that 't' value (3.173) of total mental health is significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level. It means significant difference has been found in the total mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in the total mental health.

Hence, the null hypothesis framed earlier, "There is no significant difference in mental health of male and female secondary school students" is partially accepted and partially rejected.

## FINDINGS

1. There is no significant difference in the 'emotional stability' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.
2. There is no significant difference in the 'overall adjustment' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.
3. There is a significant difference in the 'autonomy' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in the 'autonomy' component of mental health.
4. There is a significant difference in the 'security-insecurity' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students tend to be better than male students in 'security-insecurity' component of mental health.
5. There is a significant difference in the 'self concept' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in the 'self concept' component of mental health.
6. There is no significant difference in the 'intelligence' component of mental health of secondary school male and female students.
7. There is a significant difference in the total mental health of secondary school male and female students. Female students are better than male students in mental health.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of the study revealed that significant difference between male and female secondary school students regarding mental health regarding 'autonomy', 'security-concept' 'self-concept' components of mental health and total mental health. Female students have good mental health in three components of mental health as compared to male students. The finding of the presented study are supported by the findings of **Bandhana and Sharma (2012)**, **Sanchla (2014)** and **Kumar (2015)**, they also found that female students have good mental health as compared to male students.

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