

Academic Achievement of Socially Disadvantaged Secondary School Students In Relation To Mental Health

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Abstract

The present study entitled, **Academic Achievement of Socially Disadvantaged Secondary School Students in Relation to Mental Health** was an attempt to find out the effect of mental health on academic achievements of students so that their achievement can be improved. The descriptive survey method was used in the present investigation. The sample consisted of 200 socially disadvantaged students. Amongst them 100 were boys and 100 were girls from 10 schools of districts Panchkula. There is one independent variable i.e. mental health and one dependent variable i.e., academic achievement. Mental health Battery by Singh & Sen (2009) was used as tool to collect data required for the study. The marks of the previous class were considered as academic achievement of respondents. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Mean, Standard Deviation and t test were the statistics used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that mental health plays a significant role in academic achievement. The study also found that there is a significant difference in the mental health of boys and girls, urban and rural secondary school disadvantaged students. The study suggested that the teacher should guide the students to overcome serious conflicts and frustrations. The students should be helped to understand their own potentials, capabilities, aptitudes, interests and the environmental conditions so that they can work in a harmonious manner to achieve an optimum level of functioning.

KEYWORDS: Mental health, academic achievement, socially disadvantaged

INTRODUCTION:

Education has been identified as the most potent means for empowering the socially disadvantaged groups. The ninth plan of government committed to achieve this through universalization of primary education by 2005 with a special focus on the low-literacy pockets and on the educationally backward communities like scheduled castes, other backward classes and minorities. Though significant improvements have been obtained in the overall living conditions through various welfare and developmental efforts made so far, but the disadvantaged groups still remain backward due to some persistent problems that they have been facing.

Besides constitutional protection, various programmes were launched for their upliftment but the condition as it stands today cannot be said to be satisfactory. The socially disadvantaged population still remain much lower than the general population. They show poor academic performance. There can be many reasons for such backwardness. It has been found that the parents of these children are mostly illiterate. They are not well versed with the various facilities given to them by the government. Large families, scarcities of funds, meagre means of living make it nearly impossible for these children to look further their day-to-day problems. Due to poverty many socially disadvantaged students are sick and do not have congenial environment at home. They are not encouraged to attend school and participate in co-curricular activities. These students do not have a clear concept of their future. The

teachers usually tend to neglect these students in the class resulting to further backwardness. All these factors affect the mental health of these children.

Mental health is a positive concept related to the social and economic well-being of the individuals and communities. The concept generally relates to the enjoyment of various aspects of life, comfortable feelings about one's self, feeling 'right' about the other people, ability to meet the demands of life, ability to cope with stresses and vagaries of life and the sense of fulfilment of goals and potentials. According to Healthy People (2010), "Mental health is a state of successful mental functioning, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships and the ability to adopt to change and cope with adversity. Mental health is indispensable to personal well-being, family and interpersonal relationships and one's contribution to society".

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

Today mental health issue in adolescents is a growing concern in the schools and for the community counsellors and educators. Young people go through a transition in the teenage years and face the biggest issues affecting their mental health and social identity. They experience all sorts of stresses, difficulties and circumstances such as peer pressure due to competition, moving to a new school environment, breaking relationships with friends, arguments with parents, struggle for autonomy, exams and fear of failures. The mental health problem of adolescents' can't be left unattended, as it can affect their overall development, social performance & relationships and can also lead to failure at school, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence and suicide at the extreme level.

Though a large number of studies have been conducted to see the impact of mental health on the academic performance of the students like studies of Sharma (1981), Sween (1984) Anand (1989), Gall et al. (2000), Rani (2001), Stoep et al. (2003), Kashinath (2003), Perumal (2008), Rajani & Radhakarte (2012), Verma (2013), Kaur & Arora (2014), Talwar & Anindita (2014), but most of these investigations have been done with the general population. Also in the sixth survey of educational research, it has been mentioned that very little work has been done to find the relationship between academic achievement and mental health of adolescents in our country. There is a need of emphasizing mental health through concerted practices aimed at helping students before serious problems emerge. So a need was felt to study academic achievement in relation to mental health in socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula in Haryana.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED:

(i) Socially Disadvantaged Students: Socially disadvantaged students are those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. For the purpose of this study scheduled castes (SC) students were taken as sample.

(ii) Mental Health: It is an attribute of human personality which includes understanding and assessment of the self, positive feeling, Attitude towards self and others, emotional stability, overall adjustment, autonomy, security-insecurity, self-concept and intelligence as perceived by mental health inventory by Singh & Sen (2009).

(v) Academic Achievement: In the present study, academic achievement means the percentage of total marks obtained in the previous annual examination of student.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To find out the relationship between mental health and academic achievement of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula.
- To find out the significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged boys and girls of Panchkula.
- To find out the significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged urban and rural students of Panchkula.

HYPOTHESES:

- There is no significant relationship between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged boys and girls of Panchkula.
- There is no significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of urban and rural socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula.

METHOD:

Descriptive survey method was applied by the investigator.

SAMPLE:

A total of 200 secondary socially disadvantaged students studying in class VIII and IX standard were selected, out of which 100 were girls and 100 boys from 10 schools of Panchkula.

TOOL:

To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, the investigator used Mental health Battery by Singh & Sen (2009).For academic achievement of students, their marks were collected from office record.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

The statistical technique used for the analysis of data were ‘t’ test to find out the significance of the mean difference between two groups and the Pearson’s coefficient of correlation method to find out the relationship between mental health and academic achievement of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES:

- The first objective of the study was to find out the relationship between mental health and academic achievement of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula. To test this objective the hypothesis “There is no significant relationship between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula” was made.

Table-1: Showing correlation between mental health and academic achievement (N=200)

Sl. No.	Variable	No. of Students	df (n-2)	r-value	p-value	Level of Significance
1.	Academic achievement	200	198	0.363	0.000	0.01

2.	Mental health	200	198			
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The above table shows that the obtained r ($r=0.363$, Table -1), value is greater than the table value at 0.01 level and hence the null hypothesis may not be accepted. The rejection of the null hypothesis shows that there is a significant correlation between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula.

- The second objective of the study was to find out the significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged boys and girls of Panchkula. To test this objective the hypothesis “There is no significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged boys and girls of Panchkula” was made.

Table-2: Result of Mean, SD, t-value of boys and girls tribal secondary school students with respect to mental health

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Students	Mean	S.D	S.E.M	t-value	p-value	Level of Significance
1.	Boys	100	401.89	102.11	10.21	5.47	5.931	0.01
2.	Girls	100	330.55	80.83	8.08			

The above table shows that the obtained ‘t’ value ($t=5.47$) is greater than the table value at 0.01 level and hence the null hypothesis may not be accepted. The rejection of the null hypothesis shows that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged boys and girls of Panchkula.

- The third objective of the study was to find out the significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged urban and rural students of Panchkula. To test this objective, the hypotheses, “There is no significant difference in the mean scores of mental health of urban and rural socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula” was made.

Table-3: Result of Mean, SD, t -value of urban and rural socially deprived secondary school students with respect to mental health

Sl. No.	Locality	No. of Students	Mean	S.D	S.E.M.	t-value	p-value	Level of Significance
1.	Rural	100	325.23	97.28	9.72	6.451	0.000	0.01
2.	Urban	100	407.21	81.76	8.71			

The above table shows that the obtained ‘t’ value is greater than the table value at 0.01 level and hence the null hypothesis may not be accepted. The rejection of the null hypothesis shows that there is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula with respect to their mental health.

FINDINGS:

- There is a significant relationship between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula.
- There is a significant difference between boys and girls of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula with respect of their mental health. Mental health of Socially disadvantaged boys is greater than the socially disadvantaged girls.
- There is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula with respect to their mental health. Mental Health of urban socially disadvantaged students is greater than the rural socially disadvantaged students.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS:

From the above results, it has been concluded that there is a positive correlation between academic achievement and mental health of tribal secondary school students (National Center for Mental Health Check-ups at Colombia University, 1999). There are numerous studies which show that the mental has a strong impact on the academic performance of a student (Gall et al, 2000, Rani, 2001, Stoep et al., 2003, Kashinath, 2003, Perumal, 2008, Verma, 2013, Kaur & Arora, 2014, Talwar & Anindita, 2014). Hypothesis has also proved that there is a significant difference between boys and girls of secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula. The probable reason for this could be that girls are getting less educational opportunities. Even the attitude of Parents and teachers towards girls are different than the boys at home and school (Jarraniya, 1996) depicts that there was significant variation seen between boys and girls in the matter of mental health. At last, hypothesis proves that there is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary school socially disadvantaged students of Panchkula. The probable reason for this could be that the urban students get better facilities in the schools. They are encouraged to participate in the co-curricular activities of the school. In urban areas, teachers are more aware of the needs, interests and problems of these students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

Mental health is considered as one of the major factor in the process of education for efficient learning. So, school has an important role to play in development of sound mental health. Teacher should create a healthy and friendly environment in the class where students feel free to ask their doubts. Teacher should not be biased. He should treat the students equally. Proper guidance and counselling by the teacher is required to protect the child from mental illness or behavioural problems. There should be a mental health service in school to provide necessary help to these children. The school should also arrange various co-curricular activities to channelize the energy of the students in the right direction. Work related to real life should be organized so that they can think positively towards the real life and accept the failures in positive manner. From the study, it has been found that the mental health of girl students is poor than the boys. So it is the duty of the teachers to provide guidance to the parents so that they can provide healthy environment at home. Moreover the study also concluded that the mental health of urban students is better than the rural students. So it is the duty of those concerned with the education to provide same educational opportunities to rural students as their urban counterparts get.

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