

Research Paper

## A Study on Mental Health among Secondary Schools Students in Andhra Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

Mental health is one of the important issues in psychology and psychiatry, with a large volume of research allocated to it each year. Factors affecting mental health have always been considered by critical psychologists. Mental health is a state of being conducive to harmonious and effective living. Generally, mental status has two possibilities: either health or illness. Mental health is more than the absence of mental illness (World Health Organization [WHO], 2006). Adolescence brings hormonal changes, social challenges, and identity formation, making mental health support essential. A positive environment fosters both academic excellence and emotional stability. This study examines the mental health and academic performance of secondary school students in Andhra Pradesh, involving 600 ninth-grade students selected through stratified random sampling. The result shows that the secondary school students are fall at average level in Mental Health. The findings reveal that the majority of the students fall within the moderate level and there is a significant difference between students from joint and nuclear families in their mental health.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Secondary School Students*

Mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community (World Health Organization). The concept of mental health takes a ‘Gestalt’ view of a person. It embraces the concepts of peer nullity, character, and behavior. An individual’s mental health involves his outlook towards life, perceptions of his achievements, and his physical, mental, and emotional style of adjustment.

A human being is basically a mind-body unit and these two aspects virtually influence one another. For efficient functioning of an individual, he/she should possess a sound body and mind. Recent advancements in the field of preventive medicine ensure improvement in standard of living. Medical advancements, to a large extent, have enabled us to eradicate most of the diseases of the body and ensured longevity of life with sufficient fitness. A sound body is now a possibility for everyone. But mental health has become a major

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problem affecting almost every person. Individuals who do not possess good mental health pick up bad habits like smoking, drinking and narcotic addiction. Over the years, mental health disabilities have significantly increased in number and complexity. They have also affected the physical efficiency of an individual, causing a range of psychosomatic disorders. As a result, mental health has now come to be regarded as an important aspect of an individual's wholesome development mental hygiene is accepted as an integral part of the higher secondary school programme. (Aggarwal J.C, 1999).

Adolescence is a time of heightened social dynamics, and bullying or peer pressure can have a significant impact on a student's mental health. Fear of judgment or rejection can lead to isolation, anxiety, and depression. Some students may not have strong emotional or mental health support from family, friends, or teachers. Without open communication channels, students may find it difficult to express their emotions and deal with mental health struggles. Teenagers often face uncertainty regarding their future career, education, and life decisions. This can create stress and anxiety as they struggle with figuring out their identity and long-term goals. Secondary school students often sacrifice sleep due to heavy academic workloads, extracurricular activities, or screen time. Lack of sleep can negatively affect cognitive function, mood regulation, and overall mental health. Adolescence is a time of significant hormonal and brain development. The emotional regulation system is still maturing, which can make students more vulnerable to mood swings, emotional distress, and mental health struggles. Students may be dealing with family problems, such as divorce, financial stress, or trauma, that affect their mental well-being. These external stresses can manifest in academic difficulties and emotional struggles. There is often a stigma surrounding mental health issues, especially among teenagers. Some students may not seek help due to fear of being judged or misunderstood, which can worsen their condition. Many schools don't provide enough mental health education or resources, leaving students unaware of how to manage their mental health or recognize signs of mental distress.

### ***Mental Health of Secondary School Students***

The following paragraphs will deal with mental health and its characteristics that are unique to school students. It is possible to ensure mental well-being of school students by helping them to overcome mental conflicts and frustration. They should be guided properly to understand their strengths, weaknesses, abilities and deficiencies. The environment in which they operate should facilitate optimum level of functioning.

In some cases, they may require continuous counselling and medication. Apart from counselling children, counselling parents and teachers will help to resolve mental health issues quickly and smoothly. School counsellor is one who has the appropriate psychological instruments and techniques to assess the needy students. The role of student counsellors is inevitable in the present scenario. Counselling helps in fine-tuning the mental health of students and aids them in working in harmony with school and society.

The need for mental health support in secondary schools cannot be overstated. 'Mental Health and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students' is essential in our efforts to ensure high-quality education for our young generation and schools that invest in the mental well-being of their students are more likely to see improvements in academic outcomes. By recognizing the importance of both, educators, parents, and policymakers can create environments that support the overall development of students, setting them up for success in their academic and personal lives.

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### Objectives

1. To find out the level of Mental Health of the secondary school students.
2. To find out the influencing variables on the Mental Health of the secondary school students.

### Research design

The study was chosen the students studying in government and private institutions in both urban and rural regions of Andhra Pradesh. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure a balanced representation of students from different backgrounds. The selected sample consisted of 600 ninth-grade students from Guntur district, aged between 14 and 15 years. Mental health was measured using the Mental Health Inventory, a standardized tool developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1993). This inventory consists of 55 statements categorized under six dimensions of mental health, including emotional stability, self- confidence, and social adaptability. This tool helped in assessing the overall psychological well-being of students.

### Hypothesis

1. There would be no significant difference between secondary school students from rural and urban areas in their mental health.
2. There would be no significant difference between secondary school students from joint and nuclear families in their mental health.

### Variables of the Study

In research, variables are essential components that help in understanding the relationship between different factors. A variable represents a measurable characteristic or attribute that can be observed, controlled, or altered in a study. For this study, variables have been categorized into three major types: Independent Variables, Dependent Variables, and Demographic Variables. By examining these variables, the study aims to explore the mental health and demographic variables among secondary school students.

### Independent Variables

- Mental Health

### The following demographic variables on the mental health of secondary school students:

- a. Gender: Boys / Girls
- b. Residence: Rural / Urban
- c. Type of Family: (Joint family/ Nuclear family)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Objective – 1:** To find out the level of Mental Health of the secondary school students

S.No	Mental Health - Area wise Analysis Areas	Mean	SD	% of Mean	Order
1	Positive Self-Evaluation	10.34	2.23	7.10	VII
2	Perception of Reality	23.42	2.04	16.08	II
3	Integration of Personality	28.34	2.97	19.46	I
4	Autonomy	13.80	2.44	9.48	VI
5	Group Oriented Attitude	16.85	2.19	10.90	V
6	Environmental Competence	17.35	2.94	11.91	IV
	Overall Mental Health	18.46	2.35	11.96	III

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- Positive Self-Evaluation: -The mean value is 10.34, the standard deviation is 2.23, the percentage of the mean is 7.10%.
- Perception of Reality: -The mean value is 23.42, the standard deviation is 2.04, the percentage of the mean is 16.08%.
- Integration of Personality - The mean value is 28.34 and the standard deviation is 2.97, the percentage of the mean value is 19.46%.
- Autonomy -The mean value is 13.80 and the standard deviation is 2.44, the percentage of the mean value is 9.48%.
- Group Oriented Attitude - The mean value is 16.85 and the standard deviation is 2.19, the percentage of the mean value is 10.90%.
- Environmental Competence -The mean value is 17.35 and the standard deviation is 2.94, the percentage of the mean value is 11.91%.
- Overall Mental Health- The mean value is 18.46 and the standard deviation is 2.35, the percentage of the mean value is 11.96%.

The findings reveal that within the realm of mental health, the "Integration of Personality" ranks highest, followed by "Perception of Reality" in second place. "Overall Mental Health" secures the third position among secondary school students. At the opposite end, "Positive Self- Evaluation" occupies the lowest rank in the mental health profile of secondary school students.

**Objective: 2** To find out the influencing variables on the Mental Health of the secondary school students:

Locality	Sample Size	Mean	% of mean	SD	SED	't' Value
Rural	300	144.46	65.66	17.04	0.77	0.33NS
Urban	300	143.94	65.42	17.80		

From the above table, the following observations have been made: The total number of students is 600; the number of urban secondary school students is 300, and the number of rural secondary school students is 300. The mean of urban pupils is 144.46 and the SD value is 17.04, the percentage of the mean in urban students is 65.42. The mean of rural pupils is 143.94 and the percentage of mean value in rural students is 65.66. The standard deviation value in rural students' is 17.80. The S.Ed value is 0.77. The t-value is 0.33 which is not significant in both areas. The calculated "t" value is 0.33 lower than the critical value of 1.96 at the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the result is not statistically significant. As a result, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for the variable "Locality." The findings suggest that there is no significant difference in the mental health levels of rural and urban secondary school students. Therefore, locality does not appear to have an impact on the mental health of these students.

**Table: 3 Mental Health and Type of family**

Type of family	Sample Size	Mean	% of mean	SD	SED	't' Value
Joint	150	145.97	66.35	17.65	0.92	4.25*
Nuclear	450	142.06	64.57	17.34		

The following observations have been made from the above table. The total number of students is 600, with 150 students belonging to joint families and 450 students belonging to nuclear families. The mean value for students from joint families is 145.97, with a standard

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deviation of 17.65 and a percentage of the mean value of 66.35%. The mean value for students from nuclear families is 32.06, with a standard deviation of 17.34 and a percentage of the mean value of 64.57%. The SED value is 0.92, and the “t” value is 4.25, which is significant at the 0.05 level. The above table indicates that the obtained “t” value of 4.25 is greater than the table value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it is significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for the variable “Type of family” at the 0.05 level. The results show that there is a significant difference between students from joint families and nuclear families in their mental health. Students from joint families exhibit better mental health compared to those from nuclear families.

### CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reinforce mental well-being plays a crucial role in determining a student's ability to focus, retain information, and excel academically. Poor mental health, characterized by anxiety, stress, or emotional instability, can negatively impact academic performance, leading to decreased motivation, lower grades, and disengagement from school activities. Conversely, students with strong mental health are more likely to be confident, engaged, and capable of achieving academic success. The result shows that the secondary school students are fall at average level in their Mental Health. The findings reveal that the majority of secondary school students fall within the moderate level of mental health. The study found that there is a significant difference between students from joint families and nuclear families in their mental health. Students from joint families exhibit better mental health compared to those from nuclear families and there is no significant difference in the mental health levels of rural and urban secondary school students.

These differences emphasize the need for targeted interventions that address the specific needs of each group. Providing students with mental health support, counseling services, and stress management strategies can enhance their overall well-being, improving their ability to perform well in academics.

Educational institutions, parents, and policymakers must work collaboratively to create an environment that promotes both mental health and academic excellence. Schools should incorporate mental health programs into the curriculum, train teachers to identify and support students with emotional difficulties, and provide access to professional counseling services. Additionally, parents should encourage open discussions about mental well-being, helping students manage academic pressure effectively.

In conclusion, addressing mental health concerns among secondary school students is essential for improving their academic outcomes and overall development. By recognizing the critical role mental health plays in education, we can foster a learning environment that supports students' emotional well-being, enabling them to achieve their full potential academically and personally. Future research should explore additional factors influencing student well-being and examine the effectiveness of mental health interventions in school settings.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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