

Research Paper

The Impact of Socio-Economic Conditions and School Types on Adolescent Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

Despite notable improvements in literacy rates and educational enrolment in recent decades, India still encounters significant obstacles preventing many from accessing quality education. Academic institutes and socio-economic conditions play important roles; this also teaches us to cope with stress and helps to develop well-being. The present study compared the socioeconomic condition and mental health status of the respondents. This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design. The current study findings indicate that socioeconomic status influences adolescents' mental health. The study findings show that private school respondents have significantly higher psychological well-being since they have good socioeconomic conditions. More importantly, it is observed that the public-school respondents have low socioeconomic conditions, reported low scores in psychological wellbeing, and significantly high psychological distress. It clearly shows that socioeconomic conditions affect the mental health of individuals in society. The current study aims to understand the socio-economic conditions, to assess psychological well-being, psychological distress, association between socio-economic conditions and mental health among private and government school going adolescents.

Keywords: *Adolescent, psychological well-being, psychological distress, socio-economic condition*

Adolescents, who account for 21% of India's population (census 2011), experience rapid psychological, sexual, and physical growth. It is a joyful moment, and it is widely recognized as a healthy demographic. Even though they are no longer in the vulnerable stages of infancy and childhood, they are nonetheless at high risk for health problems, and a considerable number of them die prematurely from illnesses, accidents, violence, suicide, and pregnancy-related disorders (Chandrashekarappa et.al, 2016). The mental health of school-aged adolescents has arisen as a key problem in modern education systems around the world. Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, or human development (Crisp, 2014), serves as a core framework for understanding the significance of mental well-being in education. According to Belfer (2008), Current global epidemiology data indicates that up to 20% of children and adolescents have a debilitating mental illness; suicide ranks as the third highest cause of mortality among adolescents; and up to 50% of all adult mental problems originate during adolescence, with considerable differences across socioeconomic groups

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and educational backgrounds. This data emphasizes the importance of investigating how various school kinds and socioeconomic factors affect adolescents' mental health outcomes.

The relationship between educational institutions and the mental health of adolescents is critical and increasingly recognized as a significant concern in contemporary society. While schools are intended to foster learning, social development, and personal growth, they can also impact children's mental well-being positively and negatively.

For school-aged children, socioeconomic factors often shape their access to resources, opportunities, and emotional well-being. Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to face more significant challenges that can affect their mental health. In comparison, those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have better access to support systems but may still experience pressure or stress from different sources.

Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being involves a positive self-view, warm relationships, autonomy, competence in handling life's challenges, a sense of purpose, and continuous personal growth. It is commonly understood as a combination of happiness (hedonic perspective) and effective functioning in personal and social life (Eudaimonic perspective) (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Research also shows that psychological well-being is linked to better physical health, potentially through brain activity, neurochemical processes, and genetic influences.

Psychological Distress: Psychological distress (PD) is defined as unpleasant emotions that impair an individual's functioning. It is a subjective experience that differs from person to person, because people react differently to the same events. Traumatic circumstances, such as the death of a loved one, can trigger Parkinson's disease. It is frequently manifested as worry, depression, anger, self-consciousness, and emotional vulnerability, and it is linked to physical sickness, a lower quality of life, and increased use of health services (Lahey 2009).

Power Structures and Mental Health

Michel Foucault's examination of power dynamics in institutional contexts, particularly in "Discipline and Punish" (1975), provides a crucial basis for understanding how school structures effect mental health. His concept of "disciplinary power" explains how educational institutions can either support or hinder students' mental health through organizational structures and practices (Larochelle, 2007).

Karl Marx's analysis of class conflict and alienation offers important insights into how socioeconomic variables affect mental health in educational settings. According to Marx's theory of alienation, teenage students may feel alienated from their education if they perceive their studies only as a way to meet external goals, like grades, rather than as a way to develop their own knowledge and potential.

Recent scholars (Willis & Thompson, 2023) have expanded this paradigm to investigate the manifestation of economic disparities in psychological stress among the adolescents across various educational environments.

It is necessary to study the socioeconomic conditions of the study population, which may influence acquiring mental health. Even though this group of population is living in the same geographical area, similar age group, and going through the same life stage, they have

differences too, like their socioeconomic background, the type of schools, having different administrative bodies, infrastructure, and facilities are different in both the schools.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the mental health status of adolescents. MHI-38 was used to assess the mental health status of the adolescent. A semi-structured questionnaire was also used to collect the respondents' socioeconomic information. Samples were drawn from Kalaburagi city, an urban setting in north Karnataka, India. Simple random sampling was adopted, and 200 school-going adolescents were interviewed, equally distributed among public and private schools.

Sampling Procedure

Kalaburagi City is divided into four municipal zones. Considering this city's division, a list of public and private schools is made separately. One public and private school is selected from each zone, making up eight schools to be included in the study. From each school, 25 high school students (adolescents falling under inclusion criteria) were randomly chosen through simple random sampling, comprising 200 respondents (100 public and 100 private schools).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Schools that were not permitted were excluded, incomplete forms were discarded, adolescents who were not attending schools were excluded, and adolescents placed in schools other than formal educational institutions were excluded in this study. The students who are non-residents of the city were excluded from the study. Irregular students were also excluded from the study.

The data collection was done by using a self-administered tool (MHI-38). The researcher read and explained the questions one by one, and after the end of the explanation of each question, the respondents were asked to mark their options in the questionnaire.

Ethical Consideration

Even though the study doesn't involve any intrusive elements that could physically hurt participants, some ethical guidelines were adhered to. The survey's primary sample consists of teenagers under the age of 18 who are between the ages of 13 and 16, which raises the issue of informed consent. In order to meet these requirements, the researcher obtained authorization from the school administration and gave them an explanation of the study's specifics. After talking about the scale, further data was gathered. The following step involved the researcher explaining the study to the participants and getting each respondent's written agreement.

The analysis was made by applying statistical tests using SPSS (IBM-20) software; the results were represented in tabular and graphs.

RESULTS

Table 1

Age	Private school	Government school
13 years	9%	10%
14 years	26%	37%
15 years	49%	36%
16 years	16%	17%
Sex		
Male	57%	
Female	43%	
Religion		
Hindu	75%	94%
Muslim	20%	3%
Christian	3%	2%
Other	2%	1%
Caste		
GM	48%	35%
OBC	30	7%
SC	14%	26%
ST	1%	32%
Monthly income of parents		
<10000	10%	86%
11000-20000	30%	12%
21000-30000	29%	2%
31000-40000	14%	00
>41000	17%	00

N= 200

The findings of the study show that, 9% & 10% of them were 13 years, 26% & 37% from 14 years, 49% & 36% from 15 years, and 16% & 17% of them from 16-year age group respectively. Which indicates that the study population falls under 13-16 years.

57% and 52% of the male respondents in private and public schools. 43% and 48% of the respondents are female from private and public schools. These schools have more boys than girls.

The religion of the Respondents: 75% and 94% of the respondents belong to Hindus in private and public schools, respectively. 20% are Muslims in private schools, whereas only 3% are in public schools. When we see the Christian religion, it is 3% in private schools and only 2% in public schools. Hence, it clearly shows that most of the respondents are Hindu.

Caste of the Respondents: Most respondents belong to the general category, 48% and 35% in private and public schools, respectively. 30% and 7% belong to OBC (Other Backward Classes). 14% and 26% belong to SC (Scheduled Caste). Only 1% of the private school respondents belong to scheduled tribes, 32% of public-school respondents belong to ST (Schedule Tribes), and 7% from private schools belong to others.

The study findings indicate that most private school respondents belong to the general category. In contrast, in public schools, most respondents belong to the SC, ST, and OBC categories.

Profile of the parent's

Most private school respondents have graduated, whereas, in public schools, most of their fathers studied <10th std. It shows that private school respondents' parents are more educated than in public schools. There is no one illiterate father in private schools, whereas in public schools, 27% are illiterate. Among the public school respondents, only one respondent's father was post-graduated. It shows that educational qualification is significantly high among private school respondents, whereas most public school respondents' fathers are illiterate and below the 10th standard educational qualification. Parents' education matters a lot in children's lives, since as the fathers are educated, their children also get greater exposure to education, better living conditions, modern lifestyle, etc.

Mother's educational qualification of the respondents: out of the total respondents, 46% of them educated up to 10th standard, and 25 % of them are graduated from private schools, whereas in public schools, 46% of them are illiterate, and 51% of them are studied below 10th std. Most private school respondents have good educational qualifications, whereas public school respondents' mothers are illiterate and attend primary education.

It is also seen that not a single mother graduated or post-graduated among the respondents in public schools. When seeing both the parent's educational qualifications, the father is more educated than the mother.

This also indicates that the female literacy rate is still comparatively lower, and the women who are more educated and their children are getting better education and a better lifestyle. Also, they have more opportunities.

Table 2 Fathers Occupation

Father's Occupation	Private schools	Public schools
Government	46%	6%
Private	00	13%
Self-employed	36%	21%
Labor	1%	52%
Farmer	8%	6%
Other	9%	2%
Total	100	100

Table 2 shows that most private school respondents' fathers have government jobs. In contrast, only 6% of the public school respondents have a government job (group D work) in public schools. 52% of the respondent's fathers are laborers. The Exciting point is that 8% of the private school respondents said their fathers are farmers, where they own more land for

cultivation. Whereas in public schools, respondents, 6% of them are farmers with significantly less land, and a few are working on someone's land as daily wage labor.

Table 3 Working Status of Mother's

Particulars	Private schools	Public schools
Working	24%	51%
Housewife	76%	49%
Total	100%	100%

Table 3 indicates that 24% of the mothers work in the private school-going respondents' category, whereas a significantly higher number is 51% of the public school-going respondents' mothers work. 75% of the private school respondents' mothers are homemakers, and 49% of the public schools' mothers are homemakers. It shows that homemakers are more private school respondents' mothers, whereas working mothers are more public-school respondents who work as laborers.

Among the study respondents, 13% of private school-going respondents recorded that their mothers were government employees. Out of a total (of 49) respondents from the public school, 35 respondents' mothers are wage labor/daily wage. Self-employment is also seen more among private school respondents than among public school respondents' mothers. In public schools, around 18% of respondents work in private hospitals and colleges as cleaners, helpers in schools, etc.

Table 4 Monthly Income of Parents

Particulars	Private schools	Public schools
<10000	10%	86%
11000-20000	30%	12%
21000-30000	29%	2%
31000-40000	14%	00
>41000	17%	00
Total	100%	100%

Table 4 displays that most (86%) public school respondents' parents have a monthly income of less than 10000, whereas, in private school respondents, only 8% have less than 10000 as their monthly income. In contrast, the incomes of the respondents' parents are 31000-40000 and more than 41000 monthly, and they are seen only in private schools.

Hence, it shows that most of the public schools' respondent parents' monthly income is less than 10,000, indicating they are economically weak.

Family size: Most respondents' family size includes 5-6 members in both the school respondents. Also, public school respondents have seen more prominent families of different sizes.

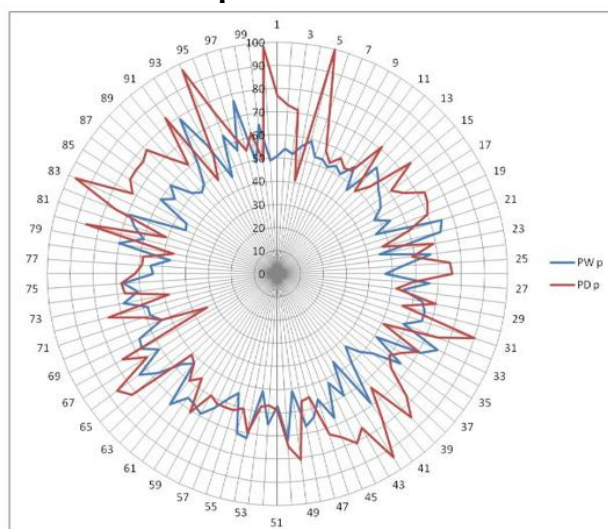
Type of school

There is a large gap in educational opportunities; public health schools in the study area had inadequate classrooms, drinking water, restroom facilities, and learning equipment, as well as inadequate access to digital learning opportunities. The infrastructure is satisfactory, according to the survey participants, but the absence of creative teaching methods makes students pay less attention in class and deters them from going to school.

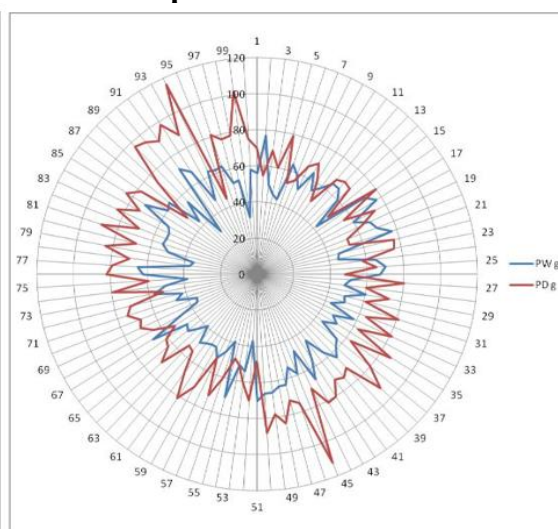
Private schools, on the other hand, feature first-rate facilities, like digital classrooms, state-of-the-art teaching tools, a sports advisor, a counsellor, and access to science labs and libraries. According to the survey participants, they are thrilled with the educational setting and resources for learning and development.

Mental Health Inventory Scores of Private Schools Respondents

Spider Gram: 1



Spider Gram: 2



The above Spider gram (1) displays the scoring of the private school's respondents. As psychological well-being increases, psychological distress decreases and reveals that when psychological well-being decreases, then psychological distress increases in private schools. The average score is 58.95 in psychological well-being, and 66.61 is the average psychological distress score among private school respondents. Furthermore, it is also observed that few of the cases scored significantly high in psychological distress and very low in psychological wellbeing.

The above spider gram (2) displays the scoring of public-school respondents. As psychological well-being increases, psychological distress decreases and reverses of that. When psychological well-being decreases, then psychological distress increases in public schools. The average score is 54.52 in psychological well-being, and .70.91 is the average psychological distress score among public school respondents. Also observed, few respondents scored significantly high in psychological distress and low in psychological well-being.

Correlation of Psychological Well-being and psychological distress among Public and private school respondents

Particulars	Total PW	Total PD
Private schools	-.312	-.312
Public schools	-.093	-.093

p=<0.005

The correlation table shows that the variables are negatively correlated, which means that when psychological well-being increases, then psychological distress decreases, and reverse that when psychological well-being decreases, then psychological distress increases in both public and private school respondents; hence the p-value is $p = <0.005$ it shows that correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The majority belong to 14-15 years in private and public schools. Both male and female adolescents participated in this study, but male respondents were comparatively high. All religious and caste groups participated in this study. However, most of the private school respondents belong to the upper caste. In contrast, most public school respondents belong to other backward classes, scheduled classes, and tribes. This indicates significant bifurcation and demonstrates that the upper caste group is accessing excellent education by enrolling in private schools.

It clearly shows that the lower caste people are still vulnerable and have barriers to accessing resources.

The study findings show that the private school respondents' parents have a good education, good occupation, and high monthly income. In contrast, most public-school respondents' parents are illiterate and below 10th-class education. Also, most of them belong to the labor class and have a low monthly income. Additionally, census 2011 of Kalaburagi district shows that the literacy rate in males is 74.38%. In females, 54.09% show a low literacy rate among women. The study findings show that parents' education status is where the literacy rate is high among males and low among females.

Hence, the findings show that private school respondents have an excellent socioeconomic background, whereas public school respondents have a low socioeconomic background.

Findings for the Mental health inventory, the negative correlation exists between psychological well-being and psychological distress, and the values are public school ($p = -0.093$), private ($p = -0.312$), school, and respondents. Hence, a difference in mental health exists between these two groups.

Findings of both groups were compared, and it was found that private school respondents have good psychological well-being, whereas psychological distress is comparatively high in public school respondents.

When we observe the mental health among males and females, the test found a negative correlation between sub-scales, that is, psychological well-being and psychological distress, which shows that psychological well-being increases, and psychological distress decreases in both males and females. The values are $p = -0.239$ in males, which shows correlation is significant at the 0.005 level. Among females, $p = -0.210$ shows that the correlation is significant at the 0.005 level.

Further, a t-test was also used to test the significant mean difference between psychological well-being and psychological distress among males and females. It shows a substantial difference in the mental health of males and females, and the p-value is <0.005 with a 95% confidence interval.

Parents' monthly income correlation is significant at 0.001 levels. It shows that parents' monthly income is associated with the respondents' mental health. Also, the systematic review of the studies which are conducted around the world indicates that independent household income, parents' education level, and occupation status have an impact on children's mental health (Reiss F 2013)

The Impact of Socio-Economic Conditions and School Types on Adolescent Mental Health

The current study findings indicate that socioeconomic status influences adolescents' mental health. The study findings show that private school respondents have significantly higher psychological well-being since they have good socioeconomic conditions. More importantly, it is observed that the public-school respondents have low socioeconomic conditions, low wellbeing scores, and significantly high psychological distress.

Recent research conducted by Duggal and Bagasrawala (2019) suggests that there is a significant correlation between the socio-economic status of an adolescent and the mental health issues that they may experience. This suggests that individuals who come from backgrounds with lower socio-economic status are more likely to experience poor mental health. Also, factors such as parental education level, household income, and living conditions. Access to healthcare, living conditions, and social support networks significantly influence students' psychological well-being (Duggal & Bagasrawala, 2019).

It clearly shows that socioeconomic conditions affect the mental health of individuals in society. This has been concluded in some of the studies (Davis, Sawyer, et al., 2001; Green, 2005; Priest and Wake, 2010), and the systematic review paper carried out by Reiss F in 2013 also found the same.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is a complicated and intricate interaction between school kids, socioeconomic circumstances, and adolescent mental health. Modern data shows both enduring problems and possible remedies, even though philosophical viewpoints offer useful frameworks for comprehending these relationships. The necessity for all-encompassing strategies that address both acute mental health assistance needs and systemic injustices is particularly evident in the Indian setting.

Addressing the mental health needs of children requires a holistic approach that includes 1) structural reforms, such as integrating mental health services into schools and the development of culturally sensitive interventions. 2) Socio-economic support: targeted programs for disadvantaged communities, enhanced access to mental health resources, better facilities in the public sector, and family support. 3) School-based initiatives: regular mental health screening, stress reduction programs, and anti-discrimination policies. By addressing the root causes of socioeconomic disparities, society can help ensure that all children have the opportunity to flourish emotionally and academically.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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