

## Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students

Prin. L. K. Shitole<sup>1\*</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Education is a progressive process which helps an individual to develop his psycho-physical capacities fully. In the year 1982 the Indian government opened up its higher education system exclusively to the private sector as a result of which the whole set up of the higher educational flora has been considerably changed. Number of colleges especially in the interior parts have been opened up which gave rise to the flow of rural based students to the higher education. Mental health encompasses fulfilling relationships, adaptive thinking and behaviours, high self-esteem and coping strategies (Santor, Short & Ferguson, 2009). Today, the life has become so dynamic that getting required peace of mind has become difficult. The tension has become a buzz word all over. This has necessitated observance of the World Mental Health Day is celebrated on October 10 every year and in a bid to create awareness on mental illness. The teachers should specifically take out time to spend with the family so that their stress gets reduced. Therefore, today some of the colleges have also started Yoga classes in the colleges which enable the teachers to defuse the tension and get rid of the physical illness. Teachers are also attending S.S.Y. Siddha Sadhak Yoga and Meditation classes to have mental peace. Mental health is an important occupational health issue in schoolteachers as work stress is a major risk factor for anxiety and depression. Mental health problems are a frequently highlighted concern in the teaching profession. This paper has discussed the causes of tensions amongst the teachers and students and has also provided some tips to overcome the tensions that they have. In order to have delivery of good quality education by the teachers their mental wellbeing is of utmost importance.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health Wellbeing, Stress, Insecurity Of Job, Heavy Work Load, Need For Physical Fitness,*

**M**ental Health is an important occupational health issue, in school teachers as work stress is a major risk factor for anxiety and depression. World Health Organization celebrates Mental Health Day on 10<sup>th</sup> Oct. every year and creates an atmosphere of awareness on mental illness.

Many people experience stress as they combine busy life style and demands of study and work. While trying to save time for friends and family good health is important for students'

<sup>1</sup> E.S.Divekar College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Tal. Daund, Dist. Pune, India

\*Responding Author

Received: March 25, 2018; Revision Received: May 15, 2018; Accepted: May 17, 2018

## Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students

overall development. What we need is a balance of physical, spiritual, emotional and mental health. Good health helps enjoy life and cope with problems. It results in getting feeling of wellbeing which ultimately develops confidence amongst the people. Educational process focuses to develop cognitive and effective abilities. Teacher education development focuses in developing the habitual intention to be truth-seeking, open minded, systematic, emotional balanced confidence in reasoning and prudent judgment making ability.

Education is a progressive process which helps an individual to develop his psycho-physical capacities fully. In the year 1982 the Indian government opened up its higher education system exclusively to the private sector as a result of which the whole set up of the higher educational flora has been considerably changed. Number of colleges especially in the interior parts have been opened up which gave rise to the flow of rural based students to the higher education. The major change that we see is that the girl students, who were outside the purview of the college education because of the non-availability of the higher education facility nearby, are not brought under the higher education fold.

Over the past two decades the Indian higher education system has undergone a sea change. More particularly after the adoption of the policies of globalization, privatization and liberalization by the Indian government the whole economic canvas has broaden considerably. Number of overseas universities has entered on the Indian educational horizon. This has resulted in a fierce competition amongst the Indian colleges.

Undoubtedly these colleges have generated lots of employment opportunities for the rural youths. All these colleges are opened by the private entrepreneurs whose ultimate objective is to generate surplus from the college activity. This is possible only when the management resort to exploitation of the situation. This exploitation starts from the college teachers. The exploitation takes the form of paying meager salary, irregular payment of salary, continuing the temporary character of the employment, expecting extra hours of work. This is beside the additional assignments given by the higher education department of the state government to the teaching staff e.g. election work, census work, etc. As a result the college teaching staff is overburdened. As against this the compensation that they get does not commensurate with the work they have to attend. All this leads to mental health problems of the college teaching staff which in turn adversely affects the quality of education imparted. On this back drop let us discuss about the mental health problems of the college teachers and its impact on their work.

Firstly let us try to understand what the mental health problem is. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (2009, para. 2)

Mental health encompasses fulfilling relationships, adaptive thinking and behaviours, high self-esteem and coping strategies (Santor, Short & Ferguson, 2009).

## Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students

The first and foremost problem that these college teachers of the private colleges face is the low compensation as compared to the workload that they have to handle. Here it will be worth recalling that late Vinayak Damodar Savarkar had on achieving independence written a letter to the then Prime Minister of India – Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru wherein he had urged him to ensure that in the independent India let Scientists and the Teachers be paid highest salary, because they are going to shape the destiny of the nation. The teachers develop the future generation who are going to be the future of the country.

In some colleges salary payment is also not regular due to which the teachers find it difficult to make both ends meet. From the press reports it is observed that there are some colleges where the salary payment is delayed for months together. There is one more area which adds to the tension/anxiety of the college teachers and that is there is no guarantee of the continuity of the job. Another area which adds to the tension of the teachers is that in an institution which has several branches spread over, there is possibility of job transfer. These tensions are reflected not only on the teaching quality but also interpersonal relations in the family; mounting blood pressure, heart problems etc. Quality education cannot be possible unless the teacher himself is mentally healthy. Mental health is the full and harmonious functioning of the whole personality.

Today, the life has become so dynamic that getting required peace of mind has become difficult. The tension has become a buzz word all over.

The teachers should specifically take out time to spend with the family so that their stress gets reduced. Therefore, today some of the colleges have also started Yoga classes in the colleges which enable the teachers to defuse the tension and get rid of the physical illness. Teachers are also attending S.S.Y. Siddha Sadhak Yoga and Meditation classes to have mental peace. Mental health is an important occupational health issue in schoolteachers as work stress is a major risk factor for anxiety and depression. Mental health problems are a frequently highlighted concern in the teaching profession.

On the one side the college teachers are not maintaining good mental health and on the other side even the college students irrespective of gender are also sailing in the same boat. They too are victims of stress. In 2015, Maharashtra reported most student suicides of any state: 1,230 of 8,934 (14%) nationwide, followed by Tamil Nadu (955) and Chhattisgarh (625). Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are among India's most advanced states, and their high rate of suicides could reflect the pressures of economic growth. This is a serious cause of concern to all of us. The problem needs to be addressed with all its seriousness. The University Grants Commission has also been seized with this issue. The University Grants Commission (UGC) swung into action last year, ordering the setting up of student counseling systems across the country's colleges. Teachers opened their doors and psychologists were brought in to deal with the crisis. Depression among the students is also a mental health issue. According to a study published in Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 37.7%, 13.1%, and 2.4% of the students were suffering from moderate, severe, and extremely severe depression in Indian Universities.

## Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students

A research in this regard has revealed that unduly high expectations of the parents from their child. Fierce competition in every field whether it is admission to the college or for job is to be faced by the youth. The students find very little time to go to the ground and participate in games to maintain sound physical and mental health. The dialogue between the parents and the child has been drastically reduced. The students are becoming lonely. There is no much socialization of the students.

Following are the few tips for both Teachers and Students to enjoy tension free life:

### *Teachers:*

- The Teachers should cultivate habit of taking daily exercises of their choice and ensure that they maintain sound physical health. They should always remember that healthy mind in healthy body.
- Teachers may also practice Yoga and Pranayam exercise.
- Teachers may get themselves trained in Meditation.
- They should spend reasonable time with their families in various ways.
- They should prepare their daily lectures with adequate notes and include relative references in their teaching.
- The teachers should always try to be updated in their specialized subject and should also share it appropriately with the students so that the students will also learn the importance of being update.
- The teachers should consciously try to be computer savvy and learn operating internet facility which will enable them to be aware of what is happening in the world about education in general and their subject in special.
- The teachers should always keep in mind that the students with them are of modern age and they should imbibe in the students' mind to be update and that the students should be choosy in the use of the internet sites. The teachers should identify websites which are useful to the students and they should create awareness among the students about these sites.

### *Students:*

- Building confidence: The students should concentrate on their studies which will generate confidence in them about the subject knowledge.
- The students should always try to strike a balance between the study and the games. Concentrating in one area may result imbalanced personality which is also not desirable.
- They should consciously cultivate good habits such as reading newspapers and updating themselves with what is happening in the outside world. This is the time when they should put in efforts for equipping themselves with the general knowledge.
- The students should inculcate decision making ability in their own sphere of issues.
- They should cultivate time sense which is very much essential in their future life.
- The students should try to learn organize themselves in such a manner that they learn planning, organizing, decision making, and reviewing their achievements with the plans formulated.

## Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students

- The students should develop ability of taking positive approach in dealing with various issues that they come across.

Here it will be worth mentioning that at Pune there is one institution named 'Disha' which is trying its best to address this situation. Disha is "speak out" platform for students, which was started to create a space for students to speak, share, learn from each other, and evolve. While loneliness among students is rampant, suicidal tendencies, depression, the feeling of alienation etc. is also on the rise. At Disha the students are given counseling by the expert counselors.

Conversations with counselors revealed that young people find it difficult to cope with failure in examinations and careers and neither families nor other social institutions offer adequate support or solace. Professional help is difficult to find because India endures an 87% shortage of mental-health professionals. The situation is exacerbated by low public spending on mental health — India spends less than Bangladesh on mental-health services.

In order to remedy the situation it is necessary to create awareness about mental health in schools and colleges, said experts. Satyakant Trivedi – a psychiatrist observed that “Mental health and wellness should be added to school curriculum. Only when children know about these disorders in their formative years will they be able to seek help,” He further stated that, "if we can create awareness and sensitize teachers, then they will share a better relationship with students who suffer from mental illness,"

The parents should tame down their expectations and also pay attention to the student's physical and psychological fitness. They should not harp only on their expectations. They should increase their dialogue with the child. They should not force their son/daughter to pursue a particular irrespective of their wishes.

There is also need to impart proper training to the college teaching staff about the various steps that can reduce the stress amongst themselves as well as the students. Cordial rapport between these two will certainly improve the situation.

### REFERENCES

1. Dr. L. K. Shitole, "Personality Development" published Roni Publisher 2017.
2. <https://academic.oup.com/ocmed/article/64/7/530/2750741>
3. <http://www.hindustantimes.com/health-and-fitness/every-hour-one-student-commits-suicide>

**How to cite this article:** Shitole L K (2018). Mental Health & Well-being of College Teachers and Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Vol. 6, (2), DIP: 18.01.211/20180602, DOI: 10.25215/0602.211