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Status of Mental Health among the Students of Tribal Schools: A Review

Debmita Pati¹ Dr. Ashis Kumar Debnath²

¹Research Scholar, ²Assistant Professor

^{1,2}Department of Education, Diamond Harbour Women's University South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

ABSTRACT

Mental health refers to an individual's psychological, emotional and social well-being. It is a mental state that helps people to cope with their pressures of life, realize their abilities and contribute to their communities. The students belonging to tribal communities generally study in tribal schools. Nowadays, mental health among tribal students is found to be poorer compared to non-tribal students. Research means searching a topic again and again in various new dimensions. Different researchers had worked on mental health of tribal students in various ways. Here, the present researcher conducted the study to find out the research trends in mental health among tribal students. For this purpose, the researcher decided to include historical research design.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an individual's ability to enjoy life and to develop coping resilience. Nowadays, mental health is a global issue affecting the majority of people especially children. Due to modernization, family economic conditions, social pressures, several school related problems create both physical and mental health challenges for students. Mental health problems affect physical health and quality of life. Tribal people generally live in remote regions such as forests, islands, hilly areas and often lack basic facilities such as schools, colleges, hospitals and other services. This creates socio-economic backwardness in them and they suffer from mental health problems. Students of these communities, who are better in their mental health, also better in their creative works and academic achievement. Very few reliable information is available on mental health among the students who are studying in tribal schools. Several types of mental disorders can be prevented if early detection can be done.

Objective

The specific objective of the present research was to investigate the research trends of mental health among the students of tribal schools.

Methodology

The researcher had followed the historical method for the present research.

Delimitation

The researcher had chosen those research works which were available in online sources. The researcher could not take into account offline or printed resources.

Review of Related Literature

- 1. Talawar & Das (2014)** conducted a research on "Relationship between Academic Achievement and Mental Health of Secondary School Tribal Students of Assam" among 200 secondary school students with respect to their gender and locality. The objectives of their study were to find out the relationship between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school tribal students in Assam and to find out the significant differences of mental health of secondary school tribal students of Assam when they were classified according to their gender and locality. The researchers used simple random sampling method for data collection. The result of the research showed that there was a significant relationship between academic achievement and mental health of secondary school tribal students in Assam, and there was a significant difference between boys and girls of secondary school tribal students of Assam with respect to their mental health. Mental health of tribal boys was found to be better than the tribal girls.
- 2. Ali & Eqbal (2016)** "Mental health status of tribal school going adolescents: a study from rural community of Ranchi, Jharkhand", the purpose of the study was to investigate the mental health status among school going tribal students. The authors chose cross sectional descriptive study for their study. Total 780 male students were selected from secondary schools of rural area. The authors found that 5.12% of the tribal students had emotional symptoms, 9.61% of the tribal students had conduct problems, 4.23% of the students had hyperactivity and 1.41% of the students had peer problems. The authors came into conclusion that mental health problems of tribal students were greatly neglected. Families, schools could help to promote betterment of mental and emotional health of the tribal school going adolescents.
- 3. Satyanarayana, Prakash & Kulkarni (2017)** studied "A comparative study of prevalence of mental abnormalities among high school children in tribal, rural and urban Mysuru district, Karnataka, India." The study was community based cross sectional comparative study. The researchers collected data from 9 tribal high schools, 8 rural high schools, 13 urban high schools for sampling procedure. It was found that anxiety disorders were observed more in 26.3% urban participants, major depressive disorders were observed more in 4.1% urban participants and suicidality were more in 6.5% rural participants. The

researchers suggested school based specific diagnostic screenings were important to reduce such types of mental disorders.

4. **Tomy, Joseph, Vinayaraj (2017)** studied on “Influence of Mental Health on Academic Performance of Paniya Tribal Students” among 200 students of Paniya tribal community. The objectives of their study were to analyze the academic performance, the level of socio-economic and educational backwardness of Paniya tribal community and to assess the socio-cultural context and mental health of Paniya students. The researchers used mixed methodology for their study. They found that language, low self-esteem, slavery mentality and imbalanced food habit cause backwardness in education. According to the researcher’s appropriate measures such as balanced diet, culture friendly educational activities, etc. were required to be taken for the development of their condition.
5. **Pramanik (2018)** investigated “Mental Health of Tribal School Going Adolescents in comparison to Their Non-Tribal Counterparts”. For the study, the researcher chose descriptive survey design which was quantitative in nature. The 757 sample of his research was the Govt. sponsored schools of the 16 different districts of West Bengal. The result explored that as tribal students belonged to lower socio-economic group they had poor mental health as compared to non-tribal counterparts.
6. **Yadav & Sengar (2019)** studied “Prevalence of mental health problems among school going tribal and non-tribal adolescents.” The objective of the study was to assess the prevalence of mental health problems among school going tribal and non-tribal adolescents of Gumla district of Jharkhand state. The researchers adopted cross-sectional descriptive survey method. They collected data from 500 tribal and 500 non-tribal students of Gumla district. After completion of their analysis they explored that mental health problems were more in tribal adolescents than non-tribal adolescents.
7. **Patel & Suvera (2020)** studied “A study on mental health among 10th and 12th class tribal students”. Their research was about tribal students on mental health. To fulfil their objectives, they took 60 students of class X and 60 students of class XII. They used mental health scale developed by Bhatt and Geenda. Data collected from the sample were analyzed by using t-test. The researchers found that there was significant difference between students of class X and class XII in mental health. It was also found that there was significant difference of mental health between boys and girls of 10th and 12th class tribal school students.
8. **Roshni, Huq, Khan & Hasan (2020)** studied “Mental health of the tribal students in Bangladesh.” The objectives of their study were to measure and compare mental health status of the tribal students and general (non-tribal) students in Bangladesh specially in Rajshahi University, to investigate if there any difference in mental health between male and female tribal students and to investigate if there any difference in mental health among students of different tribal groups. For conducting their study, they had chosen 180 tribal students as well as 180 non-tribal students. The result of the study revealed that the mental health of the tribal students was significantly poor than that of the non-tribal students and the mental health of the male tribal students was much better than that of the female tribal students.
9. **Surender (2020)** conducted a research on “Analysis of Mental Health on Academic Achievement of Tribal School Boys.” The objectives of his study were to measure the degree of relationship between mental health and academic achievement of tribal school boys and to examine the impact of mental health on academic achievement of tribal school boys. The researcher randomly selected 600 tribal school boys from Rajanna Sircilla District. He adopted simple random sampling technique for data collection. He explored that mental health was a very common characteristic which could greatly predict the academic achievement of tribal school boys.
10. **Rajeshwar & Ramchandram (2024)** conducted a research on “Stress, depression among tribal students of Warangal district.” The objectives of their study were to find out whether any significant difference between male and female students in their stress, depression, well-being and coping styles and to investigate whether educational level had any significant effect on stress, depression among tribal

students. For this purpose, they collected data from 400 tribal boys and girls from Warangal district in Telangana. The researchers adopted descriptive survey method. After statistical analysis, the researchers explored that tribal boys were more depressed and had high levels of stress as compared to tribal girls. They also found that level of education reduced stress level among tribal students.

Findings

The researcher could find the following information after reviewing the above mentioned research works:

- Mental health of tribal boys was better than the tribal girls (Talawar, & Das, 2014; Roshni, Huq, Khan, Hasan 2020).
- Mental health problems were more in tribal adolescents than non-tribal adolescents (Pramanik, 2018; Yadav & Sengar, 2019; Roshni, Huq, Khan, Hasan 2020).
- There was significant difference of mental health between boys and girls of 10th and 12th class tribal school students (Patel & Suvera, 2020).
- School based specific diagnostic screenings were important to reduce different types of mental disorders (Satyanarayana, Prakash, & Kulkarni, 2017).
- Mental health problems of tribal students were greatly neglected. Families, schools could help to promote betterment of mental and emotional health of the tribal school going adolescents (Ali & Eqbal, 2016).
- Appropriate measures such as balanced diet, culture friendly educational activities, etc. were required to be taken for the betterment of mental health (Tomy, Joseph, Vinayaraj 2017).
- Tribal boys were more depressed and had high levels of stress as compared to tribal girls. Level of education reduced stress level among tribal students (Rajeshwar & Ramchandram, 2024).

Recommendation

The researcher discussed following recommendations for parents and schools both for improvement of the mental health among the students of tribal schools.

For the parents:

1. Parents should share the songs, stories, languages of their own community at home to reduce stress, depression etc.
2. Parents should visit with their children to their community events such as craft fairs, religious places and display tribal art, symbols, photos etc.
3. To build trust parents should ask their children of their daily life problems as they could tell it early.
4. Parents should teach to follow a healthy daily routine to stabilize their mood.
5. They should join local tribal parent groups for betterment of school-based mental health.
6. They should keep regular contacts with schools, counsellors to remove any hurdles of their children.

For the schools:

1. Teachers in tribal schools must be trained on mental health awareness.
2. School must maintain a daily routine and curriculum based on tribal languages, stories, art, craft to learn their ancestral culture and traditions.
3. Schools should have a regular session on deep breathing, movement, nature walk, play with peers for stress relief of tribal students.
4. Schools should arrange health fairs, family workshops on diet, sleep, coping skills and outreach by tribal NGOs on a regular basis.

5. Schools should form peer support groups where tribal students can share their emotions, problems etc.

Conclusion

Good mental health is very essential for every individual. From the above discussion it could be said that mental health was poor among the students of tribal schools. Non-tribal students demonstrated better mental health than tribal students. It was also found that mental health of tribal boys was better than the tribal girls. Parents and teachers both had to take responsibilities for good mental health among the students of tribal schools. Good mental health could enhance overall well-being, improve social connections, and boost academic achievement among tribal students.

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