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Chapter – I

Introduction

1.3 Preface

The core concept of mental health is consistent with its wide and varied interpretation across cultures. The scale developed to assess the mental health of adolescents covers a variety of strategies, all aimed at having a positive impact on mental health. As a further step towards remedy, this diagnosis tool (scale) indicates actions that can create living conditions and environments to support mental health and allow adolescents to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. To take future curative action, this scale includes a range of components that increase the chances of more adolescent to experience in a better way their mental health.

Mental health concerns everyone. The concept of mental health is as old as human beings. Mental health commutates those behaviors, perceptions and feelings that determine a person’s overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of functioning as a person. It affects our ability to cope with and manage change, life events and transitions such as sadness or retirement. All human beings have mental health needs, no matter what the state of their psyche. Enhancing the value and visibility of mental health recognize the broader issues which promote mental health.

Looking at the current social, psychological situations of this complex world, it has become quite essential to study mental health. Within the context of the educational system, the issues related to health may be conceptualized in terms of three elements, like students, teachers and
the immediate school context within which instruction is imparted. The functioning of the educational process itself may become a source of stress and strain and ill health for its participants.

The students come to an educational institution with certain explicit and implicit expectations from the school, the same way our society expects to have the students as the mentally healthy future citizens. But the complex human life and current changes at global level bring diverse mental illness to students’ psyche. Mental health problems may arise due to incompatibility between the demands of the educational system and the characteristics of learners, or between learner’s expectations and the educational processes, or both. The age of adolescence is considered to be the most vulnerable in developing different mental illness. Adolescence is considered as the most important transition period of life. Adolescents face an intense confusion because of the cognitive, biological and social changes taking place in this period. Furthermore, adolescence is a period of heightened risk with high rates of depression, conduct disorders, suicides, drug and alcohol addiction and antisocial behavior. Adolescent could steer this transitional period with much success, happiness and confidence without much uncertainty and distress, but it could be possible, in only with sound mental health.

Assessing mental health/illness can initiate research for the betterments of the students’ mental health. Development of adequate tools to assess various aspects of health/illness is a prerequisite for scientific analysis of various related issues. Also, it is important for diagnosis, follow-up and evaluation of the impact of any health program and some studies deal with this problem. Anand, S.P. (1988) has developed a mental health scale (neuroticism) for adults (teachers). Pradhan, S.L. (1988) has tried to develop psychological
tests for differential diagnosis of mental disorders. On the basis of comparison of performance of psychiatric referrals and normals, he noted that the Mosaic Test is a very powerful tool to tap the behavioral patterns involved in different mental disorders. In contrast, the insecurity and inferiority Questionnaire and the Tennessee Self-Concept Rating Scale were less powerful (but useful) in differentiating the response patterns across different mental disorders. Mental Health Scale can measure mental orders-disorders of students multi-dimensionally.

Mental health is the state of psychological well-being that includes both subjective comfort and the capacity to function effectively with others. Definitions of mental health invariably include some value statement about how an individual should live his or her life; thus, there are almost as many definitions as there are psychological theories. Sigmund Freud's famous view that health is the capacity "to work and to love" is still widely accepted.

It is not sufficient to say mental health means the absence of identifiable disorder or mental illness. Positive mental health includes the ability to experience joy or to have “peak experiences”. Attempts have been made to relate mental health not only to specific acts – which are dependent on cultural norms, but to patterns or styles of acting, such as flexibility in meeting new situations, ability to perceive reality without distortion based on individual need, and the capacity to understand someone else's point of view. Some psychiatrists, such as R. D. LAING and Thomas SZASZ, argued that the terms mental health and mental illness should be dropped altogether because issues regarding how people have to live are moral and legal rather than psychological or scientific.
Life is full of emotional ups and downs. But when the “down” times are long lasting or interfere with your ability to function, you may be suffering from a common, serious illness-depression. Clinical depression affects mood, mind, body and behavior. Research has shown that in the United States about 19 million people—one in ten adults—experience depression each year and nearly two-thirds do not get the help they need. Treatment can alleviate the symptoms in over 80 percent of the cases. Yet, because it often goes unrecognized, depression continues to cause unnecessary suffering.

1.2 Importance of Study

Mental health can be conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes one’s own abilities, and can cope with the normal stresses of life, and work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to the community.

Mental health disorders are widespread around the world, arising at all stages of life and in all cultures. The World Health Organization estimates mental disorders are a major source of disability. Regrettably, resources for promoting greater awareness, early diagnosis, education and treatment of mental disorders are inadequate. By introducing diagnosis tool, it is hoped to reduce some of the unnecessary suffering related to mental illness worldwide, especially for the adolescents.

Importance of this research in general and development of the ‘Scale’ in particular is justified through various aspects, arguments and studies.

1.2.1 WHO’s vision on mental health

WHO’s vision shows strong need of the research and service in the field of mental health. The essential dimension of mental health is clear from the
definition of health in the WHO constitution: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Mental health is an integral part of this definition. The goals and traditions of public health and health promotion can be applied just as usefully in the field of mental health. WHO has provided many observations and guidelines on mental health.

1.2.2 Indian Government: Mental Health Act, 1987

From the report of National Mental Health Program by The Government of India clearly shows the importance and need in the area of mental health. The Government of India had initiated the National Mental Health Program in 1982 with the objective of improving mental health services at all levels of health care (primary, secondary, and tertiary) for early recognition, adequate treatment and rehabilitation of the patients. The report indicates that early recognition is a first prime step.

1.2.3 Mental Health: Government of Gujarat’s perspective

A prime need to look into the matter of mental health has also focused by Government of Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat (Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat) has published a Mission Report in 2003 regarding mental health which drew a road map to respond to the complex and challenging needs of the mental health. This mission had a vision to provide comprehensive health care for all its citizens by the year 2010. The chief goal of this mission was to address and implement the issues regarding to mental health. The focus of the Governments, both at the centre and in the states, has been increasingly to develop interventions to address the gaps in the service provision of the health sector, and especially Mental Health (MH), is considered to be an important component of the well-being of a person. It is also marked in the
report that MH is often neglected and mental disorders are usually stigmatized. According to the statistics given by the report, at present, the overall psychiatric morbidity in Gujarat indicates that as many as 2.8 million adults at any given time are likely to be suffering from mental disorders.

1.2.4 Generating Awareness and Demand in Community

To sensitize people and meet the demand of strengthening mental health, various awareness strategies were adopted by the government and other organizations. Still due to inadequate resources on early diagnosis, the task remains unfulfilled. Development of the diagnostic tool can cater the need.

1.2.5 Early assess and diagnosis

Research and delivery of Mental Health system is required to operate through a three-tier structure:

1. Early Diagnosis
2. Evaluation-Findings
3. Suggestion-Remedy

The first step ‘Early Diagnosis’ in this sequence is considered to be the primary and necessary action, as it directs the way to evaluation and findings on the diagnosed mental health status and further leads to ‘suggestion-remedy’.

Development of the ‘Scale’ in this research as a tool to diagnosis mental health works as a preventive and promotive device in Mental Heath. Early diagnosis of the status of mental health is most consistently and affectively acquired through the scale that can address the future interventions. Such a scale provides improving early access to the status of mental health.
1.2.6 Adolescent mental health: the age concern

The onset of even a relatively mild mental health problem at the time of adolescent age can have profound effects on social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Adolescence and young adulthood is a critical developmental period in the lifespan, particularly in terms of social and emotional wellbeing.

Young people with mental health problems are unlikely to access mental health services and receive professional help, even when the problems are severe. Early intervention at the onset of the mental health problem aims to prevent the progression of the mental illness, hence minimize the impact on social, educational and vocational functioning.

Adolescent age with emerging mental health problems can fall between the gaps of child & adolescent and adolescent & adult. The foundation of lifelong mental health is laid in the early years. Up to 50% of mental disorders have their onset during adolescence. Mental health problems can be identified in between 10% and 20% of young people, with higher rates among disadvantaged population groups.

WHO recognizes throughout the world that adolescents’ mental health is a necessary priority for the healthy development of societies. Child and adolescent mental health is central to the future development of low income countries throughout the world. Furthermore, the free and forced migration from Africa and other parts of the world affected by conflict brings to the shores of the United States and elsewhere youth who are unable to integrate into society because of mental health problems. The economic and social consequences are obvious and now well documented.
1.2.7 Schools, Teachers and Counselors

A study of mental health of students is very necessary for teacher and for a school. If students are not mentally healthy then the classroom problems arise. When teacher gives guidance, he should keep in his mind the mental health of students.

At some point in time, all school-going adolescents tend to suffer from various anxieties such as examination stress, fear of failure, peer pressures, problems with teachers, adjustment problems in school, etc. Often, they are unable to speak about their problems to their parents, siblings, teachers and even friends. Assessment tool has a definite role to play in the diagnosis of such mental health. Hence, the scale can help schools, teachers and counselors with adequate referral linkages, especially with at the point of assessing the mental status. With the help of such scale, adolescent students can be directed with valid remedy.

1.2.8 Socio-economic and environmental factors

The importance aspect of securing the socio-economical and environmental factors of society in general and adolescence in particular is considered as a prime need. In this reference, the scale indeed is a vital tool to find and designate remedies to cure and restore the mental illness. Mentally healthy adolescents as a future citizens and stake holders of the society can be easily perform the multiple and interacting social, psychological, and biological roles.

The next in this line of discussion is associated with indicators of poverty, including low levels of education, and the situation of poor housing and poor income. Increasing and persisting socio-economic disadvantages for individuals and for communities are recognized risks to mental health. In
such condition, finding of the scale can help to limit the problems, which are raised due to poverty.

The assessment of the findings of the scale can also help to find out the remedy for the vulnerability in experiencing the feeling of insecurity and hopelessness, rapid social change, and the risks of violence and physical ill-health. A climate that respects and protects basic civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights is also fundamental to mentally healthy person, in such a area, the scale is equally helpful to find the remedies and to maintain a high level of mental health.

1.2.9 Mental health and behavior

This scale is also highly helpful in mental, social, and behavioral health problems. And this scale as a diagnosis tool can result in providing better remedies for behavior and well-being. As a result, such conditions like substance abuse, violence, and abuse of women and children on the one hand, and health problems such as depression, anxiety, conditions of high unemployment, low income, limited education, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, and human rights violations can be abolished.

It is a matter of great relief that our educationists have begun to realized the importance of mental health. ‘feeling of insecurity’ and the ‘feeling of inferiority’ are the two great enemies of mental health. Knowledge of mental health and its application helps us to meet these two enemies. A psychological approach is very essential. Our attempts should be to provide suitable emotional, physical and intellectual environments in which a child may have the ‘feeling of security’, ‘the feeling of equality’ and ‘feeling of acceptance’. The child should feel that he is wanted and his personality is respected and is given a suitable place.
One can identify the three important aspects or approaches in Mental Health, namely the preventive, preservative and the curative approach. These different aspects can be utilized for studying the aims and purposes of Mental Health. On the basis of the aspects of Mental Health Crow and Crow have emphasized three major purposes of Mental Health:

a. The prevention of mental disorders through understanding of the relationship that exists between wholesome personality development and life experiences.

b. The preservation of the mental health of the individual and of the group; and

c. The discovery and utilization of therapeutic measures to cure mental illness.

With the help of Mental Health Scale, one can classify the students in mentally healthy-unhealthy groups. It is very important for planning health program. It also helps to develop curriculum for mental health. It helps to give guidance to students with multi dimension. It helps to do remedial program for students and achieve desired goals.

Rising evidence continues show an increase in the occurrence of mental health problems among adolescents. Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness are now recognized to begin by age 14 and three-quarters by age 24.

Justification of research in development of mental health refers to the actions taken to strengthen mental health of adolescent. The need of the development of mental health assessment scale can enhances capacity to take control of life and health. It also helps to take charge of circumstances that affect mental health of adolescent, and participate in decisions about their life and health. Such scale helps to bounce back from life’s difficulties by enhancing defensive factors, reducing inequities and
decreasing risk factors for poor mental health. Looking at the social perspective, the scale takes a positive perspective and promotes foundation of empowerment, helping society and communities to recognize their strengths and determine their own destinies. And it provides resources to enable this empowerment in a supportive environment.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is very necessary to study mental health of students. Investigator decides to study on that issue. To give a suitable title of the investigation on mental health, the investigator has chosen the following statement.

The statement of the problem is “AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MENTAL HEALTH OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO CERTAIN VARIABLES”

1.4 Definition of the Terms

In order to avoid the confusion and misunderstanding about the terms involved in the statement of the problem, it is essential for the investigator to clarify the terms involved in the statement of the problem. They are as follows:

1.4.1 Investigation

The word Investigation has different connotations. In the dictionary of Education Good (1945) writes about the investigation as under:

1. Application of mind to a problem of subject, and
2. Study of particular subject.
According to Stein (1953) in the American Everyday Dictionary the word ‘Investigation’ means:

1. Application of mind to the acquisition of knowledge.
2. Deep thought, and
3. To examine or investigate carefully.

1.4.2 Mental Health

J. A. Hadfield (1951, p. 1-2) describes, “Mental Health is the full and harmonious functioning of the whole personality.”

Cutts and Moslay (1941, p. 4) states, “Mental Health is the ability, which helps us to seek adjustment in the difficult situations of our life.”

In the present study, total score that the students will achieve on mental health scale constructed and standardized by investigator is referring as mental health.

1.4.3 Higher Secondary Students

In Gujarat, education system is divided into three main parts (i) Primary (ii) Secondary and (iii) Higher Secondary. Primary section consist of std I to std VII, Secondary section consists of std VIII to std X and Higher secondary section consist of std XI and std XII.

In the present study higher secondary school students means the students studying in std-XI and std-XII in different districts of Gujarat state during the year 2006-2007.
1.4.4 Variable

According to C. V. Good – ‘Any trait that changes form or condition from one case to another, more strictly the representation of the trait, usually in quantitative form such as measurement.’

For this study, variables are gender, area, standard, achievement, stream and cast (category). In addition to these, SES, Emotional Intelligence, Security-Insecurity and anxiety were taken as variables for correlated study.

1.5 The objectives of the study

The study is undertaken in two phases with following objectives.

Phase – I: Objectives of the phase – I are as follows.

- To construct and standardize Mental Health Scale for higher secondary school students.
- To study mental health of higher secondary students in relation to their gender, area, standard, achievement, stream and cast (category).

Phase – II: Objectives of the phase – II are as follows.

- To study mental health of higher secondary students in relation to their gender, area, standard, achievement, stream and cast.
- To study mental health of higher secondary students in relation to their SES, Emotional Intelligence, Security-Insecurity and anxiety.
1.6 Variables of the study

This investigation is undertaken with some variables. In present study the independent variable, dependent variable and controlled variable are as follows.

1.6.1 Independent variables

The independent variables in phase – I for the present study are:

- Gender (Boys, Girls)
- Area (Urban, Rural)
- Standard (11th, 12th)
- Achievement (SSC Examination percentage)
- Stream (Science, Commerce, Arts)
- Cast/category (SC, ST, OBC, SEBC, OPEN)

The independent variables in phase – II for the present study are:

- Gender (Boys, Girls)
- Area (Urban, Rural)
- Standard (11th, 12th)
- Achievement (SSC Examination percentage)
- Stream (Arts, Commerce, Science)
- Cast/category (OPEN, SC, ST, OBC/SEBC)
- SES (High, Low)
- Emotional Intelligence (High, Low)
- Anxiety (High, Low)
- Security-Insecurity (feeling security, feeling insecurity)
1.6.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in the study was Mental Health.

1.6.3 Controlled variable

Controlled variable in the study was standard XI and XII.

1.9 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

1.9.1 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of boys and girls students of higher secondary school.

1.9.2 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students of urban and rural area.

1.9.3 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students studying in 11th and 12th standard.

1.9.4 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students having high and low achievement.

1.9.5 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students belonging to different streams. (Science, commerce and arts)
1.9.6 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students belonging to different cast/category. (OPEN, SC, ST, OBC/SEBC)

1.9.7 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students belonging to high and low SES.

1.9.8 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students with high and low level of Emotional Intelligence.

1.9.9 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students with high and low level of anxiety.

1.9.10 There will be no significant difference between mean score of mental health of higher secondary students having the feeling of security and insecurity.

1.8 **Delimitation of the study**

The study is undertaken with following limitations:

1.8.1 This study includes only higher secondary students of Gujarat State.

1.8.2 The present study is for Gujarati speaking students.

1.8.3 The present study is limited for the student of the year 2006-07.

1.9 **Chapterization**

The study is taken for construction and standardization of mental health scale, a care should be taken right from planning to the end. As far as
procedure is concerned, the entire work has been reported in the form of chapterization.

The first chapter concerns with the introduction that was already reported. In other chapters details are as follow:

Chapter – 2 Theoretical Orientation and Review of Related Researches

This chapter includes theoretical orientation of this research. It consists of the details of various aspects on mental health like history, perspectives, definition, concepts, principles, importance, and needs. It also covers the theoretical details of mental disorders, characteristics of mentally healthy individual, and concerns of adolescence in the study. The chapter also includes the review of related previous researches carried out in the field of education and psychology.

Chapter – 3 Plan and Procedure of the Present study

This chapter contains the details of planning of the present scale in the study which includes need of the study, deciding the type of the present scale, design and process of the scale construction, method of data collection, technique of data analysis, planning for establishing norms, reliability and validity, guiding principles of preparation of scale items, assignment of weightage of the components, description of the scale and components, and scoring of the scale.

Chapter – 4 Development of the Present Scale

This chapter presents administration of pre-pilot try out, administration of pilot try out, scoring of pilot try out, item analysis, t-test technique and phi-coefficient technique.
Chapter – 5  Final Run, Norms, Reliability and Validity of the Scale

The chapter includes the final run of the scale, establishment of norms, reliability and validity of the scale. It includes sampling method, procedure for administration of mental health scale, scoring of the scale, frequency distribution, calculation of percentile rank, T-score, assigning level of the scale and kurtosis.

Chapter – 6  Related Studies

The chapter presents the related study of the scale through its implement. This chapter focuses on the testing of hypotheses and verifies it.

Chapter – 7  Summary, Major Findings and Suggestions

This chapter gives summary of the research, presents major findings and forwards suggestion for further study and considerations.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed about the importance, justification and need of mental health, the need for development of scale as a tool to assess the status of mental health of adolescents proves to be an essential initiative step.

The next chapter discussed about theoretical orientation on mental health and review of related literature.