SYNOPSIS

Introduction

Definition of Mental Health

Mental health is a term used to describe either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. From the perspectives of the discipline of Positive Psychology or Holism, mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

H.W. Bernard (1961) writes (a) mental health involves continuous adjustment rather than a static condition and is therefore a progressive goal. It is an ability to cope with the present and in all likelihood to adjust satisfactorily in the future. (b) Mental health involves a point of view one takes of all phases of living.

The History of Mental Health Movement

The history of mental health movements began in 1909 when the National Committee for Mental Hygiene was erected. The Committee’s goals were, the preservation of mental health, prevention of psychiatric disorders, and improvement of care among others. The initiative came from Clifford W. Beers, himself a psychiatric patient, who, after his release, crusaded to bring mental health and mental illness to the attention of his fellow citizens.

Aim of Mental Health

The aim of mental health is both personal and social. The personal aim is, a mentally healthy individual who according to Stevenson, can pursue
reasonable and professional objectives and can make fruitful use of his talents and abilities. A mentally healthy individual has a sense of self respect, self-reliance and of achievement, and knows that he is liked, or loved or wanted.

**Characteristics of a Mentally Healthy Person**

Burnham who emphasized the importance of integration of wholeness of personality said that a mentally healthy person is one who has a wholesome balanced personality free from schemes and inconsistencies, emotional and nervous tensions, disorders and conflicts.

Mentally healthy individual would exhibit the following characteristics:


Promoting Factors of Mental Health:


**The Causes and Conditions of Mental Ill Health**

Abnormal behaviour is the product of both heredity and environment and environmental factors include both psychological and social. Therefore causes of abnormal behaviour may be classified into the following categories.

1. Hereditary factors
2. Biological factors
3. Psychological factors
Mental Health and Adolescence

Adolescence is a period during which significant changes take place. Adolescents persistently strive to develop and acquire appropriate social roles, complex interpersonal skills, and necessary acumen to solve problems more effectively. Certain developmental tasks and problems are especially characteristic of adolescence.

Need for the Study

The problems of mental disorders have been increasing tremendously for the last two decades all over the world. We have witnessed a rapid growth in mental disorders of all types during this period. The incidences of mental disorders are acquiring unusual dimensions every year, causing a great concern to educationists, psychologists, sociologists, social workers who are closely connected with the welfare of the individual and the society as a whole. The world statistics reveal that about 500 million people are believed to suffer from neurosis, stress related and somato form (psychological problems which present themselves as physical complaints). A further 200 million from mood disorders such as chronic or manic depression, mental retardation affects about 83 million people, epilepsy 30 million, dementia 22 million and schizophrenia 16 million. India’s surveys of mental morbidity carried out in various parts of the country suggested a morbidity rate of not less than 18-20 per 1000 and the type of illness and their prevalence are very much the same as in other parts of the world.
Excessive competition, rapidly changing culture and social values, cross-cultural influences, and constant exposure to speed have made the young generation to live in urgency and emergency, because of this rush they are failing to perceive their real goal and one is becoming direction less and goal less. A constant feeling of comparison denies the development and maintenance of healthy social relations and acts as a threat to individual under stress. Expectations of the youth are even unrealistic and unusual which inevitably lead to frustration. Frustration, among college youth becomes one of the main causes of student unrest, followed by eve teasing, misbehaviour, suicides, addiction to drugs, intolerance etc., which are evidences of poor mental health. Suicide is the third leading cause of death (besides accidents and homicides) for teenagers. Teenage girls and boys hang themselves, lie down on the railway tracks, take pesticides etc. over perceived academic failure. The warning signs and risk factors associated with teen suicide include – depression, frequent thought about death, etc.

Intermediate at present is the decisive stage of student’s career. Moreover this Higher Secondary Education strives to lay solid foundations in their chosen subjects. Most of the junior college students will be in the age group 16-18 which is known as the adolescent stage.

A boy or a girl who enters the Junior college at the age of 15, during his 2 years of college education is prone for academic and social pressures.

Adolescence is that period in life in which there is an undue physiological, social and emotional stress for which the individual is not
prepared. It is a period at which mental abnormalities may and do appear or those already in existence become more socially significant. So, the period of adolescence appears to be crucial for the development of desired personality and socialization patterns. This is the last stage before adulthood and it offers both the teachers and parents an opportunity to educate and mould the adolescents. In this context it is highly necessary to investigate the mental health status of Intermediate students in relation to hardiness and academic achievement.

**Nature and Scope of the Study**

Mental health is how we think, feel and act as we cope with life. It also depends on how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. Like physical health, mental health is also important at every stage of life, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. People who are mentally healthy are in control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. They feel good about themselves and have good relationships. The present study intends to find out and analyze mental health status of Intermediate students.

The mental health analysis is organized in three categories: Personal Aspect, Social Aspect and Academic Aspect. Personal Aspect, Social Aspect, Academic Aspect.

**Mental Health and Hardiness**

One of the specific personality traits for a sound mental health identified by Kobasa and associates is Hardiness. People of this trait are committed to what they do; they are in control of their lives, they see change
as a challenge rather than a threat. According to Kobasa, psychologically hardy individuals are less likely than non-hardy individuals to fall ill as a consequence of stressful events. There are three components of the hardy personality. Hardy individuals are high in commitment, control and challenge aspects. Hence, hardiness is taken as another correlate associated with good mental health.

As two long years of devoted study is meant for a fruitful and satisfactory outcome, academic performance is taken as another correlate. In this context there is a necessity to identify and isolate factors which contribute and also disturb their mental health.

**Review of Related Studies**

The researcher conducted a thorough survey of available research surveys, books, journals for related literature. Studies done on the mental health status of students and studies with respect to mental health status and academic achievement were summarized. On other hand mental health studies related to teachers were also surveyed. Studies related to hardiness were also summarized.

Though mental health status of students was studied, no attempt was made with intermediate students regarding the study their mental health status in terms of social, personal and academic aspects and in relation to hardiness. Hence this research is unique in its own way. However certain guidelines were taken from researches like Joseph A. Durlak and Anne M. Wells (1995), Hilten Davis (2000) and Manik Mohan (2006).
Plan and Procedure of the Study

The present study aims at finding out the difference in mental health status between the Intermediate students with regard to gender, chosen group, residents vs. day scholars, medium of learning, parental education, order of birth, rural vs. urban, economic status of the family on one hand and the association between mental health aspects (Academic, Personal and Social) and academic achievement of the II year Intermediate students. The present study also aims to find out association between mental health and hardiness of the Intermediate students.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study.

1. To find out the mental health status of the II year intermediate students and classify them.
2. To find out the mental health status of Intermediate students in
   1. Academic
   2. Personal and
   3. Social aspects.
3. To find out the mental health status of II year Intermediate students with reference to the following variables.
   a. Gender
   b. Residential Vs. Day scholars.
   c. Medium of study
   d. Rural Vs. Urban
   e. Order of birth
   f. Parental Education
   g. Economic Status of the family
4. To find out the association between mental health and hardiness of Intermediate students

5. To find out the association between mental health and academic achievement of Intermediate students.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing.

1. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the male and female intermediate students

2. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the male and female intermediate students in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

3. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the intermediate students of English Medium and Telugu Medium

4. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the intermediate students of English Medium and Telugu Medium in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

5. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the Residential and Non-Residential intermediate students.

6. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the Residential and Non-Residential intermediate students in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

7. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the Rural and Urban intermediate students.
8. There would be no significant difference in the mental health status of the Rural and Urban intermediate students in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

9. There exists no significant difference between first born and later born intermediate students in their mental health.

10. There exists no significant difference between first born and later born intermediate students in their mental health in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

11. There exists no significant difference in the mental health status between students of different economic groups.

12. There exists no significant difference in the mental health status between students of different economic groups in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

13. There exists no significant difference in the mental health status between students with parents having different educational back ground.

14. There exists no significant difference in the mental health status between students with parents having different educational back ground in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.

15. There exists no significant association between the mental health status and academic performance of II year Intermediate students.

16. There exists no significant association between the mental health status and academic performance of II year Intermediate students in terms of (a) Academic aspect, (b) Personal aspect, (c) Social aspect.
17. There exists no significant association between the mental health status and hardiness of II year Intermediate students.

18. There exists no significant association between the mental health status and hardiness of II year Intermediate students in terms of (a) Control Component, (b) Commitment Component, (c) Challenge Component.

Population for the Study

The population for the study consisted of the II Year Intermediate students studying in academic year 2008, in Guntur district.

Sample and Sampling

A random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sample in the present investigation. After obtaining nominal rolls of the candidates from each of the colleges, a random sample of 700 II year Intermediate students was selected. But 143 students had to be discarded as their response sheets were incomplete. Hence the sample was confined to 557 only.

The Method of Study and Variables

The investigator followed descriptive survey analysis and 557 Intermediate students were selected as the sample, from one region of Andhra Pradesh i.e. Guntur district, through random sampling technique. The student sample was further categorized on the variables namely Gender (Boys/Girls), Residence (Residential/day scholars), Medium (English/Telugu), Location (Rural/Urban), Order of birth in the family, Parental education, and Economic status of the family.
Tools Used

For the purpose of gathering data the following tools were employed in the present investigation.

1. Mental health questionnaire developed by the investigator.
2. Hardiness Test (standardized)
3. A personal data schedule constructed by the investigator.

Administration of the Tool and Data Collection

A program was charted carefully by the investigator. The investigator visited in person, the selected intermediate colleges in Guntur district, approached the heads of the institutions, explained the purpose of research work to them and the students and sought their cooperation and collected the data.

Findings

1. The sample of the Intermediate students was found to have moderate Mental Health status and the group was found to be heterogeneous in its Mental Health status.
2. 38.60% of the total sample of Intermediate Students was found to have moderate Mental Health; 25.49% good Mental Health and 3.77% of the sample was found to have very good Mental Health status.
3. 29.98% of the sample of Intermediate students was found to have poor and 2.16% was found to have very poor Mental Health status.
4. Gender difference, ordinal position, medium of instruction, residential stay, nature of residential area were found not influencing the Mental
Health of the Intermediate students. But there was a significant difference between male and female Intermediate students in the academic Aspect of Mental Health. Boys were found having significantly better Mental Health Status than the girl students.

5. Students from rural and urban areas also differed significantly in the Academic and Social Aspects of Mental Health. The Intermediate students from urban area were found having significantly better Mental Health in academic and social aspects, than the students from rural area.

6. Mental Health status of the Intermediate Students in relation to the Educational background of the parents was found to be significantly differing. The Intermediate students with parents having University Education were found having better Mental Health Status followed by the parents having college, secondary and primary education.

7. The Academic and Personal Aspects of the Mental Health of the Intermediate students were found to be significantly influenced by the parental educational background. But in the Social Aspect of the Mental Health of the Intermediate students a significant influence of Parental Educational background was not found the Intermediate students with parents having University Education were found having better Mental Health in Academic and Personal aspects followed by those with College, Primary and Secondary Education.

8. The Mental Health and Academic Achievement of the Intermediate students were found significantly associated with each other.
9. A significant association was also found between the academic aspect of mental health and academic achievement of the Intermediate students while such was not the case with personal and social aspects of mental health and academic achievement.

10. Likewise mental health and hardiness were found to be having a significant association with each others.

11. Significant association was also found between the mental health and control aspect of hardiness, whereas commitment and challenge aspects of hardiness did not associate significantly with mental health.

**Educational Implications**

Most of the Intermediate students are generally well adjusted and their problems are such that little direct or indirect assistance in the college environment brings in mediate or little delayed adjustment. However certain students, who, because of lack of balanced temperament, family and home training, excessive or unwarranted ambitions or desires, or actual neurotic tendencies sometimes combined with unusual intellectual superiority, are liable to great conflicts, when they can’t resolve their conflicts they go seriously maladjusted, due to which their college life would turn burdensome, unworthy and ineffective. They may exhibit hysterical or obsessive or depressive or maniac behaviours.

**The Mental Hygiene Programme in Colleges**

The mental hygiene programme in Intermediate colleges should function both directly and indirectly. The preventive programme should
include the establishment of hygienic, environmental conditions, and learning and play activities and the teaching of the principles of hygienic and healthy living through courses in mental hygiene. Such courses appear to be most effective if the discussion method is used for small groups.

In addition to these courses, constant opportunities for all students to receive personal advice on any problem must be provided to keep up and enrich their mental health.

Finally since perfect mental health is not characteristic of even normal person, Mental Hygiene as a service must be rendered in case of every adolescent.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

1. Cor ELational studies of mental health may be attempted with some other variables like adjustment, frustration motivation and some personality factors to get further insight into the problem.

2. Mental health of students of different profession can be studied.

3. Mental Health of orphaned children can be studied.

4. Mental Health of Juvenile drug addicts, and alcohol addicts can be studied.

5. Effect of Yoga and Meditation classes on the Mental Health Status of school going children can be studied.

6. A study of the Mental Health of secondary school teachers and college lecturers can also be taken up.

7. A comparative study of Mental Health of old people in old age homes and those residing in their families can be studied.
**Bibliography**


