

**AMELIORATION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL
ADJUSTMENT: A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AT
ELEMENTARY LEVEL**



ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore the role of school teachers in creating awareness of mental health and social adjustment among learners, to find the role of the school authority and school environment in creating awareness of mental health and promoting social adjustment and to know the correlation between mental health and social adjustment. A descriptive research design and survey method were used. Data were collected from 25 teachers teaching for classes 6th to 8th in Delhi/NCR, India. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results revealed that teachers played a major role in creating awareness of mental health and social adjustment among learners. It was found that the support from the school authority and the school environment helped in the promotion of both mental health and. The findings also revealed a positive significant relationship between mental health and social adjustment in learners.

Keywords: *Mental health, social adjustment, Awareness, Schoolteachers, Learners*

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization just the absence of any disease is not health; it is the deeper relationship between the physical, mental, and social well-being. A person's health is determined on the basis of these aspects and these are interrelated. Mental health among these is the least talked about and given importance. Mental health can be described as the combined well-being of an individual's emotional, social, and psychological aspects. This affects the way how one thinks, feels, and acts. Some factors such as childhood experiences, trauma, abuse, genes, etc. affect the previously mentioned process of thinking feeling, and acting. Mental illnesses are considered taboo around the world. People tend to ignore all the abuse or generational traumas throughout their lives that majorly act as the root cause of mental illnesses. Early visible signs in the patients must be identified and treated timely. Prioritizing mental health helps one understand their capabilities and potential by finding ways to cope with the stresses of life and achieve their goals.

Adjustment is a wider concept that is used in various spheres of life. Adjustment with respect to psychology is a change in attitude, behavior or both by an individual to satisfy her/his needs beneficially and healthily by demonstrating appropriate social and psychological responses to demands

and situations. Social adjustment is the accommodation of restrictions, demands, and more of society. It can be considered as the ability to live and work with people by engaging in satisfying interactions and relationships in society. It is a mental procedure that incorporates changing oneself according to the dynamic environment to adapt to new norms or values and thrive with fellow members of the community. Social adjustment is quite essential for the welfare of an individual and society.

There are many myths regarding mental health in society. One of the major myths is that children do not experience mental health problems. While adolescents may start showing early warning signs related to mental health problems. These problems can be the product of biological, psychological, or social factors and are clinically diagnosable. More than half of mental health disorders show the first signs before the age of 14 years.

RESHMA SURESH

*Research Scholar,
Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Science,
Amity University, Noida, India.*

Dr. RAJLAKSHMIRAINA

*Assistant Professor,
Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Science,
Amity University, Noida, India.*

Children are like soft clay and the teachers are the artists who are capable enough to shape and mold the children to be the best version of themselves. Since they spend most of their days in the school environment, the educators and authorities play a vital role in providing support to their students suffering from any mental health-related issues. Social adjustment helps in characterizing an individual. Teachers must help learners develop the skill to adjust socially in different circumstances that will create a sense of belongingness making them socially responsible citizens. Thus, it is very important to study the steps taken by the school with regard to mental health issues and social adjustment among learners.

Significance of the study

This study was conducted to understand the importance of teachers and the school authority in providing the safest environment for a child's growth and mental health. This study focused on the subjective responses of the teachers and analyzed them to gather knowledge about the mental health training received by them and the measures taken by school authorities for the betterment of the mental health of both students and teachers.

Review of related literature

Shokeen (2017) and Pathak (2014) investigated the mental health and social adjustment among senior secondary students as well as college students respectively. Through both studies, it was found that there was a significant relationship between the mental health and social adjustment of a person.

Nikolaou, E., & Markogiannakis, G. (2017) conducted a study to find the role of teachers in promoting the mental health of primary school students. The results revealed that mental health promotion by school teachers is directly related to the early detection of warning signs of children at risk. The quality of the interpersonal relationships between the three factors- students, parents, and teachers play a vital role in the promotion of mental health among the students.

While Alradaan, D. (2012) investigated the attitudes and perceptions of middle school teachers about their role in promoting pupils' mental health in the state of Kuwait which revealed that Kuwait middle school teachers tend to hold moderately favorable attitudes towards promoting

pupils' mental health. It was also found that these perceptions and teachers' attitudes were embedded within the socio-cultural and religious context.

Parikh, R. et. al. (2019) conducted a multi-stakeholder study with adolescents, parents, school staff, and mental health providers on the priorities and preferences for school-based mental health services in India. Through this study, it was found that school-based mental health services were desired by adolescents and adult stakeholders.

Woods, J.A. (2014) assessed the mental health training given to teachers by analyzing and classifying the mental health challenges of students. Results revealed that the teachers participated in workshops and other training through a positive frame of mind and the results lend support for the justification and value of providing teachers with mental health professional development.

Yamaguchi, S. et. al. (2020) conducted a systematic review and narrative synthesis on programs for mental health literacy for school teachers. It was found that before the programs for mental health literacy were established for teachers there was a need to have reliable evidence to know its effectiveness.

It was found that no study has been conducted to understand the role of school teachers in creating awareness about mental health and social adjustment among learners in Delhi/NCR, India. The present study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

Research questions

1. What are the opinions of teachers in creating awareness of mental health and social adjustment?
2. What role does the school environment play in promoting social adjustment among learners?
3. What is the relationship between mental and social adjustment?
4. What are the measures taken by the school teachers in order to create awareness about mental health?
5. What are the measures taken by the school authority for organizing mental health awareness programs for both the teachers and students?

Methodology

The researcher adopted a descriptive research design and survey method for this study. The population of the present study comprised school teachers in Delhi/NCR, India. The sample for this study consisted of 25 teachers from 13 different schools teaching classes 6th to 8th selected through purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher on Google Forms containing 20 items consisting of 11 close-ended yes/no type questions and 9 open-ended questions which revolved around the role of school teachers and school authority in creating awareness of mental health as well as social adjustment among learners. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data was done with the help of percentages and graphs. The data was analyzed by analyzing the responses to each question.

Findings

Through the results of the present study it was revealed that:

- a) The schoolteachers played a major role in creating awareness of mental health and social adjustment among learners. The teachers should be aware of the mental health and social adjustment issues in students and accept that students may also face such problems due to reasons like home environment, peer pressure, bullying, etc. The teachers must update themselves in this regard by taking proper mental health training to act as a helping hand for the students suffering.
- b) The school authority and teachers should work together and must take measures to educate the parents and society about mental issues among students to normalize the discussion on mental health problems and create a sense of acceptance among people regarding these problems. It can be done by organizing different events such as workshops, street plays, role plays, skits, etc. involving students to reach out to society. The first step towards it would be educating the teachers about mental health issues in students and the major mental disorders faced by people.
- c) The school must provide an environment that eases out students' problems and educate them about mental health problems and the importance of social adjustment for an

individual. The schools must also have a full-time well-trained student counselor who can help the students with their problems and maintain their privacy.

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- d) The parents must be oriented and well-informed about their role in the mental well-being of their wards. It was also revealed that the mental health and social adjustment of an individual are correlated and have a great impact on each other.
- e) Academic performance of the students was impacted if they suffered mental health issues. The sound mental health of students would help in better adaptation to society and development in school.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a significant role of school authority and teachers in creating awareness of mental health and social adjustment among learners. It was observed that the school authority must take measures to educate students about mental illnesses as well as train the teachers to create a positive classroom environment. The level of support from the school authority also plays a major role in the form of organizing workshops, training, and other awareness programs in school frequently. The results revealed that school as a social institution plays a major role in promoting social adjustment among learners. It was also found that the correlation between mental health and social adjustment among learners was significant.

Thus, it can be concluded from the study that schools and teachers play an important role in making or breaking a student's life. The study recommends that teachers must be trained and student counselors must be employed in schools to diagnose the mental health issues of learners which will also help in the betterment of social adjustment among them. Intervention of the school authorities would help in enhancing the mental health and social adjustment of the learners where teachers would act as the major warriors trained to recognize the primary warning symptoms in students so that they can be diagnosed and treated timely.

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- The library can publish a pocketbook, which will contain all the required e-information details.

Conclusion

Just providing access to e-resources is not sufficient but the orientation/demonstration cum training program is necessary to know hands-on use of these e-resources, contents/steps of access, etc. library users. Organization of such a program in either online or offline mode will definitely help in strengthening of library literacy skills of the university students and more use of subscribed library resources. Apart from the traditional services and facilities with the changing technological scenario library should provide advanced services and facilities as a part of Library Literacy skill of E-Information Literacy.

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