A Study on Status of Mental Health among Male and Female Senior Secondary Level Students of Uttarakhand State

Azhar Hussain Ansari, Hiralal Yadav, Mukul Pant

Abstract

Mental health of the student has been a big concern for parents in the academic world in recent times. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic made huge contributions in it by forcing the school to adopt online teaching and subsequently confining the young generation to their homes and endless hours of screen time. Although online teaching has made academic activities possible at least during this pandemic situation, it has also caused significant stress on the mental health of school children. The present study has been conducted to find out the status of mental health among male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand state. Total of four hundred (400) Senior secondary level Male and female students studying in different schools and Boards of Uttarakhand State were selected as subjects by using random sampling method. The subjects were Aged between 14-19 years and were studying in 9th-12th classes at different schools in Uttarakhand state. Mental Health Status was assessed using the Mental Health Scale developed by Dr. Shushma Talesara and Dr. Akhtar Banao [2017]. The collected data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and independent t-test. The level of significance was fixed at 0.05. The result revealed that there was a significant difference in the total mental health status between male and female students. Female students were better on mental health status than male students. In subcategories of mental health status, there was a significant difference found for home-related causes, whereas, in the other two subcategories, there was no significant difference between male and female students of Uttarakhand state.

Keywords: Mental health, Home-related causes, School-related causes, Peer group-related causes, Senior secondary level, COVID-19, Pandemic

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Introduction

There is a maxim that says "Body is Temple" so when we talk about the body; it covers physical health as well as mental health. It is important to be healthy both physically and mentally specially in your teenage years. There is a close connection between the physical and mental health of a person. Exercise or any physical activity which a person does, not only makes the body fit but also his mental health is also boosted. Physical fitness is very important as it also benefits the mind of the person. When an individual has a healthy mind, then, it helps him to take proper and precious decisions regarding his studies, selection of peer group, and other important issues of his life. It also helps him to stay calm and composed during odd situations. The anxiety factor can be controlled by good mental health. As we know that stress is an alarming call of many diseases, so good mental health also reduces stress, and eventually, it drives away many diseases.

Health has been the most precious possession of an individual throughout the hardest of hours of journey in human civilization. Healthy individuals make a healthy society and contribute to the growth of it, not merely surviving the situation but also excelling in it. Today the phrase, "survival for the fittest" has again come back in the field of physical and mental fitness. Physical fitness plays great importance in the life of every individual to prove himself fit and better than his opponents. Every effort that an individual puts to perform any activity is only possible through the body as it is the medium of action and execution. Every individual does daily activities with the coordination of body and mind. The human being is blessed with the skills that help them to perform daily routine activities. Physical activities are the basic need for the human body, because without them, there will be an ill effect on every aspect of human life. Nowadays, the lifestyle of a human being is completely changed. Modern machines have made human life easier, as most

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of the daily life activities are done by machines, which results that the human being is becoming less active and reducing their efficiency. The hard work done by human beings makes them more active and leads them toward well-being and stress-free life.

Mental health is made up of two words mental and health. The word mental refers to the mind that is the wisdom and cognitive power of humans. The word health refers to different things to different people, there are different opinions about health, to the term health depends on the combination with other works that are done by the individual. The particular meaning of health is wellness or good condition of the individual. Mental health refers to such condition of mind which is described by emotional well-being, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and potential to set up a good relationship and cope up with the normal requirement and fitness of life. "Mentally healthy person is one who is happy, lives peacefully with his neighbors, and makes his children healthy citizens, and after fulfilling such basic responsibilities is still empowered with sufficient strength to serve the cause of the society in any way." The COVID-19 pandemic has made a large impact on human life. Students are no different. The school life of

young children is not existent for almost two years for now. No or very less outdoor life and online classes have enormously increased their screen time every day. Peer group recreational activities are replaced by online gaming, coding classes, OTT platforms, etc., all of these lead to challenges to the normal being of the young generation of society. Most of us have accepted it as the "New normal" of our life, but it is difficult for young students to cope with this stimulation without getting adverse effects on their health. However, the government and other academic agencies are making efforts to change the curricula and examination patterns according to the prevailing situation that relieves the students but that is not the solution to the problem, just an ad-hoc arrangement. Since this situation doesn't seems to get change any sooner, other teenage students studying in the secondary and above classes may feel the stress of their study, board exams and their future career.The existing situation has multiplied their plight. It seems pertinent to study about the present mental health status of young male and female students to get the clear picture of their current mental status and this study was conceived.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Subjects

For the purpose of this study, total of 400 senior secondary level male and female students from 20 different schools affiliated to different boards like C.B.S.E.I.C.S.E. and Uttarakhand state education board from all around the Uttarakhand state were selected as subjects using a random sampling technique. The selected subjects were aged between 14 and 19 years and their classes ranged from 9th to 12th. The data were collected through online mode using Google Form.

Methodology

The questionnaire method was used to collect the data. Mental Health Status was measured using the Mental Health Scale developed by and validated by Dr. Shushma Talesara and Dr. Akhtar Banao [2017]. There are 54 items in this scale. Out of these items, 1–29 are negative statements and from 30 to 54 are positive statements. The scoring for positive statements is four for always, three for often, two for sometimes, one for rarely, and 0 for never and for negative items scores are as vice versa. The Google form was created and sent to respondents through WhatsApp and Email. The objective and significance of the study was explained to the subjects and requested for their honest response. The subjects cooperated and responded accordingly.

Statistical Analyses

Descriptive and Inferential Statistics were applied for the purpose of data analysis and comparing the groups on chosen variables. Data were analysed using SPSS Version 22.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Science, version 22.0, SPSS Inc., IL, and USA). An independent sample t-test was used to test if the population means estimated by three independent samples differed significantly. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

The present section is dedicated to the presentation of results along with the discussion of present study.

From Table 1, it is evident that the Mean and S.D. of male and female students on their school-related causes for mental health status are 50.1300 ± 11.55270 and 52.1250 ± 11.47728, respectively. The statistical analysis indicates that t-value is 1.541 which is not significant at a 0.05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom ($P = 1.24$). It shows that the mean scores of school-related causes for mental health of male and female students do not differ significantly, however, school-related causes for mental health of female students (52.1250) are significantly higher than the male students (50.1300) [Figure 1].

From Table 2, it is evident that the Mean and S.D. of male and female students on their Home-related causes for mental health status are 64.1700 ± 12.92620 and 67.7200 ± 13.34323, respectively. The statistical analysis indicates that t-value is 2.702 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance with 398° of freedom ($P = 0.007$). Further, it shows that the mean scores of home-related causes for mental health status of male and female students differ significantly and home-related causes for mental health status of female students (67.7200) are significantly higher than the Male students (64.1700) [Figure 2].

From Table 3, it is evident that the Mean and S.D of male and female students on their peer group-related causes for mental health status are 40.3900 ± 9.56637 and 41.5700 ± 9.19663, respectively. The statistical analysis indicates that t-value is 1.258 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom ($P = -0.209$). Further, it shows that the mean scores of peer group-related causes for mental health status of male and female students do not differs significantly and peer group-related causes for mental health status of female students (41.5700) is significantly higher than the male students (40.3900) [Figure 3].

From Table 4, it is evident that the Mean and S.D. of male and female students for their mental health status are 154.9100 ± 30.31330

Table 1: Mean and t-value of mental health status (school-related causes) of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand state

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	df	P-value
Male	200	50.1300	11.55	1.541	398	1.24
Female	200	52.1250	11.48			

Table 2: Mean and t-value of mental health status (home-related causes) of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand state

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Df	P-value
Male	200	64.1700	12.93	2.702	398	0.007
Female	200	67.7200	13.34			

Table 3: Mean and t-value of Mental health status (Peer group-related causes) of Male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand state
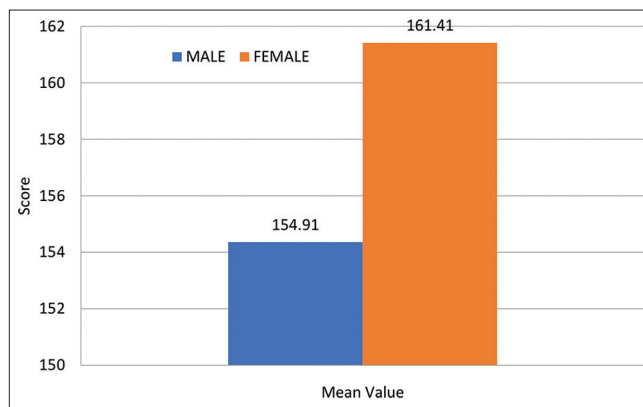
Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Df	P-value
Male	200	40.3900	9.57	1.258	398	0.209
Female	200	41.5700	9.20			

Table 4: Mean and t-value of mental health status (overall mental health scale) of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand state
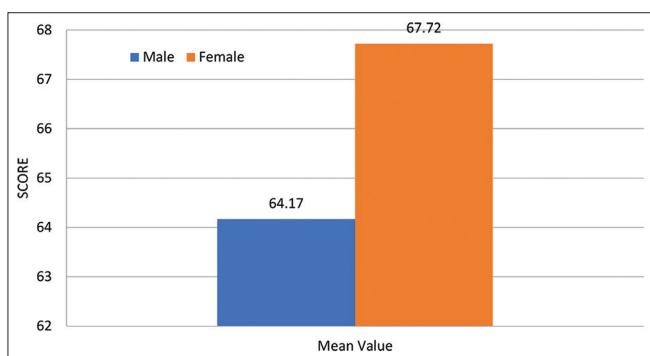
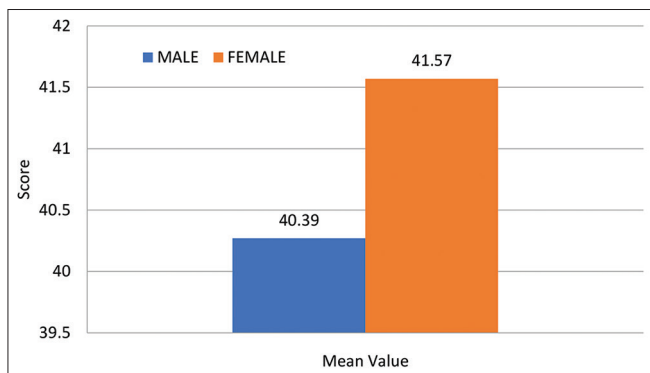| Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	P-value
Male	200	154.9100	30.31	2.120	398	0.035
Female	200	161.4150	31.04			
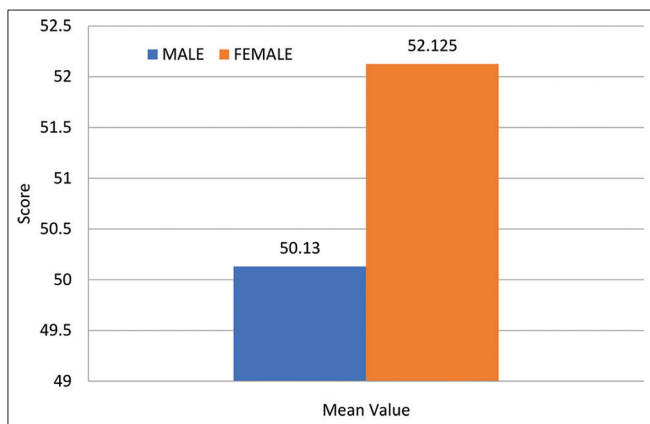
Figure 1: Mean difference of mental health scale (school-related causes)

Figure 2: Mean difference of mental health scale (home-related causes)

Figure 3: Mean difference of mental health scale (peer group-related causes)

and 161.4150 ± 31, respectively. The statistical analysis indicates that t-value is 2.120 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom ($P = -0.035$). Further, it shows that the mean scores of mental health of male and female students differs significantly, and mental health of female students (161.4150) is significantly higher than the male students (154.9100) [Figure 4].

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

According to the Findings of the study the following conclusions are drawn.

Figure 4: Mean difference of overall mental health scale

The result of the study shows that there were significant differences on Overall Mental Health Scale of Male and Female students in Uttarakhand state. It reflected that the female students have a higher mean score than the male students which means female students have better mental health than male students. The reasons behind this may be because females feel more comfortable at home while boys feel more comfortable, or we can say more mentally healthy in outdoor with the peer group.

It showed that there were significant differences in the mental health' subcategory home-related causes of male and female students in Uttarakhand state, where females have higher home-related causes mental health in comparison to boys, Because the females nature is in that way that they feel more comfortable at home and most of the time, they remain at home and enjoy the company of the family as all the family members were at home during the lockdown, and when we talk about the boys, there nature is that they like to stay outside the home and enjoy the company with friends when they were at home with all the family members they feel like they are locked and all the family members are against them and whenever they are asked to do some work the feel like all the work has been given to them and they feel stressed.

It showed that there were higher scores on mental health (School Related Cause) in both groups, but insignificant differences were found in Mental Health' sub category School Related Causes of Male and Female students in Uttarakhand state. Because both the male and female students were not attending the school due to corona because of it the mental health, that is affected by school cause shows an insignificant difference in their mental' subcategory School Related Causes.

The result showed that there were higher scores on mental health (Peer Group Cause) in both groups but insignificant differences in Mental Health' sub category Peer Group Related Causes of Male and Female students in Uttarakhand state. Both male and female students were studying at home, and they were away from there peer group and were not able to be in contact with their peer group, this could be the reason which shows no significant difference on Mental Health' sub category Peer Group Related Causes of Male and Female students.

Liaqat and Bilkees Abdullah Puju, in 2018 also found a significant difference between senior secondary male and female students in Jammu Kashmir state. In his study he found that the mean value on mental health of male students was higher than female students.[6]

Subramani and Dr. S. Kadhiravan, in 2017, in their study of Academic stress and mental health among high school students of Tamil Nadu state, concluded the significant difference between private and government schools.

CONCLUSIONS

There was a significant difference in the overall mental health scale of male and female students. Based on the finding of the present study, it is concluded that

- There is no significant difference in mental health's subcategory school-related causes of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand. However, the Mean scores of Female students (52.12) are significantly higher than the Male students (50.35).
- There is a significant difference in mental health's subcategory home-related causes of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand. Further, it shows that the mean scores of female students (67.72) is significantly higher than the male students (64.17).
- There is no significant difference in mental health's subcategory peer group-related causes of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand. However, the mean scores of female students (41.57) is significantly higher than the Male students (40.39).

- There is a significant difference in the overall mental health scale of male and female senior secondary level students of Uttarakhand. Further, it shows that the mean scores of female students (161.41) are significantly higher than the male students (154.91).

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