

Assessment of Mental Health of School-Going Adolescents in Rural Areas of Ghaziabad: Reg ID: 342

Mehak Pal Kaur, Deepika Agrawal, Syed Hasan Nawaz Zaidi, Neha Jetli

Santosh University

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr Mehak Pal Kaur, Santosh University

Email: mehaksran95@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: India has one of the largest adolescent populations globally. Mental health problems during adolescence can significantly affect growth, academic performance, and future well-being. Despite its importance, adolescent mental health remains underexplored, particularly in rural areas. **Aims & Objectives:** To assess the mental health status of school-going adolescents studying in classes 6 to 10 in rural schools of Ghaziabad and to determine its association with selected sociodemographic factors. **Methodology:** A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 357 adolescents aged 12–17 years studying in rural schools of Ghaziabad. Data were collected using a predesigned semi-structured questionnaire covering sociodemographic details and mental health assessment. Responses were recorded on a Likert scale and total scores were categorized as Poor (<13), Satisfactory (13–26), and Good (>26). Institutional permission was obtained, and consent was taken from school authorities. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 26. **Results:** More than half of the adolescents (54.3%) had poor mental health status, while 43.2% had satisfactory and 2.5% had good mental health. Younger adolescents (12–13 years) showed poorer mental health compared to older groups. Significant associations were observed between mental health status and age, family income, and living with parents. Common psychological concerns included feeling low, difficulty concentrating, sleep disturbances, and thoughts of self-harm. Findings were consistent with studies conducted in Bangladesh and rural Tamil Nadu showing high levels of adolescent psychological distress. **Conclusion:** A considerable proportion of rural adolescents demonstrated poor mental health. Strengthening school-based counselling services, enhancing parental engagement, and implementing community awareness programmes are essential to improve adolescent mental well-being in rural Ghaziabad.

KEYWORDS