

EXPLORING MENTAL HEALTH ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS AMONG RESIDENTS OF BHOPAL CITY

Dr. Meenakshi Sharma, HOD, Psychology

Sam Global University, Bhopal

ABSTRACT: - This study aimed to explore the attitudes and beliefs related to mental health among residents of Bhopal city. A sample of 30 students participated in the study. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire, and responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. The results revealed that the majority of participants had a positive attitude towards mental health but lacked adequate knowledge about mental health issues. This study highlights the need for educational interventions to increase mental health awareness and improve attitudes towards mental health issues in Bhopal city.

Keywords: Mental health, Attitudes, Beliefs, Bhopal city, Students

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being and has been gaining significant attention worldwide. However, in India, mental health issues are often neglected and stigmatized. Bhopal city, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, has witnessed rapid urbanization and industrialization, which might have affected the mental health of its residents. This study aims to explore the attitudes and beliefs related to mental health among the residents of Bhopal city, specifically focusing on a sample of 30 students.

Mental health is a crucial component of overall well-being and encompasses emotional, psychological, and social aspects of an individual's life. In recent years, mental health has gained significant attention globally due to the increasing recognition of its importance in maintaining a healthy and productive life. Despite this, mental health issues remain stigmatized and neglected in many parts of the world, including India. The lack of awareness, misconceptions, and negative attitudes towards mental health issues pose significant barriers for individuals seeking help and accessing appropriate care.

Bhopal city, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, is a rapidly developing urban center in India. As the city undergoes urbanization and industrialization, the mental health of its residents may be affected by various factors such as increased stress, changing lifestyles, and socio-economic disparities. In this context, it is essential to explore and understand the attitudes and beliefs related to mental health among the residents of Bhopal city. Such an understanding can help identify the gaps in mental health awareness and pave the way for targeted interventions to improve mental health literacy, reduce stigma, and promote mental well-being.

This study aims to investigate the attitudes and beliefs related to mental health among residents of Bhopal city, with a specific focus on a sample of 30 students from different educational institutions. By examining the mental health knowledge, attitudes,

and beliefs of this sample, the study seeks to gain insights into the potential challenges and opportunities for promoting mental health awareness and fostering a supportive environment for individuals affected by mental health issues in Bhopal city. Furthermore, the study will explore the association between sociodemographic factors and attitudes towards mental health, providing valuable information for the development of targeted interventions and educational programs in the region.

Understanding the attitudes and beliefs about mental health among the residents of Bhopal city is vital for several reasons. Firstly, identifying misconceptions and stereotypes related to mental health issues can inform the development of educational campaigns and interventions aimed at debunking myths and fostering a more accurate understanding of mental health disorders. This, in turn, can contribute to reducing stigma and encouraging individuals to seek help when needed.

II. METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 30 students from different educational institutions in Bhopal city. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, which included questions on sociodemographic variables, mental health knowledge, attitudes towards mental health, and beliefs about mental health issues. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and chi-square tests were performed to determine the association between variables.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N=30)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	18	60.0
Female	12	40.0
Age (years)		
18-20	15	50.0
21-23	10	33.3
24-26	5	16.7
Educational Level		
Undergraduate	20	66.7
Postgraduate	10	33.3

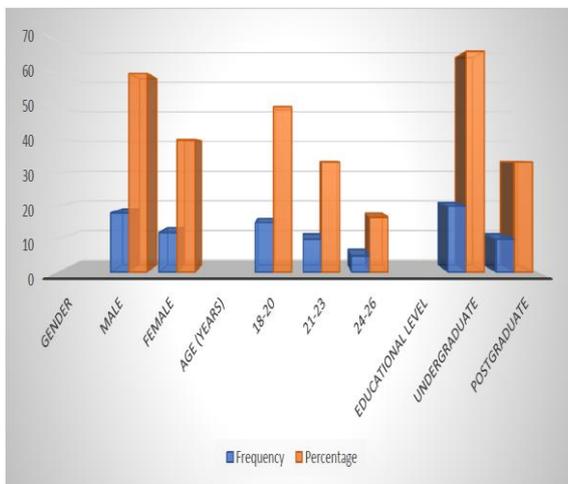


Figure 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 2: Mental Health Knowledge (N=30)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Mental health disorders are caused by personal weakness		
Agree	4	13.3
Disagree	22	73.3
Neutral	4	13.3
Mental health disorders are treatable		
Agree	28	93.3
Disagree	1	3.3
Neutral	1	3.3

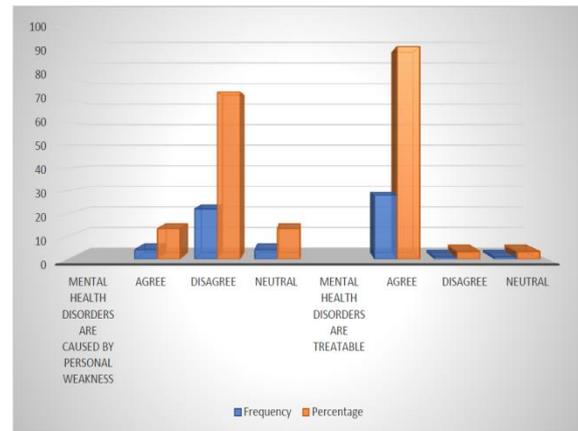


Figure 2: Mental Health Knowledge

Table 3: Attitudes towards Mental Health (N=30)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
I feel comfortable talking about mental health issues		
Agree	20	66.7
Disagree	7	23.3
Neutral	3	10.0
People with mental health disorders should be treated with empathy and understanding		
Agree	29	96.7
Disagree	1	3.3
Neutral	0	0.

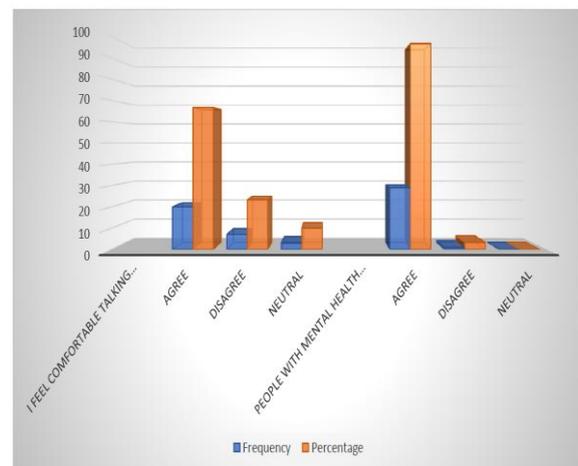


Figure 3: Attitudes towards Mental Health

Table 4: Beliefs about Mental Health Issues

(N=30)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Mental health issues are a sign of weakness		
Agree	6	20.0
Disagree	20	66.7
Neutral	4	13.3
People with mental health issues can lead normal lives		
Agree	25	83.3
Disagree	3	10.0
Neutral	2	6.7

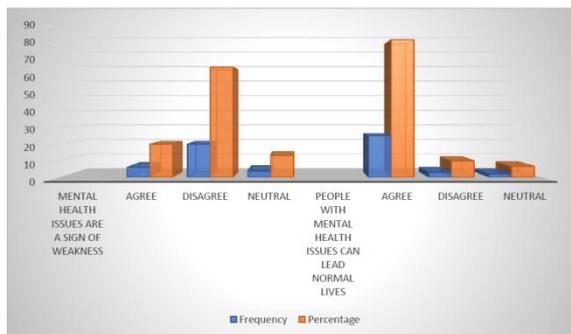


Figure 4: Beliefs about Mental Health Issues

Table 5: Association between Sociodemographic Variables and Attitudes towards Mental Health

Variable	Comfortable talking about mental health	χ^2	p-value
Gender			
Male	12 (66.7%)		
Female	8 (66.7%)	0	1.000
Age (years)			
18-20	9 (60.0%)		
21-23	6 (60.0%)		
24-26	5 (100.0%)	3.6	0.166
Educational Level			
Undergraduate	14 (70.0%)		
Postgraduate	6 (60.0%)	0.4	0.528

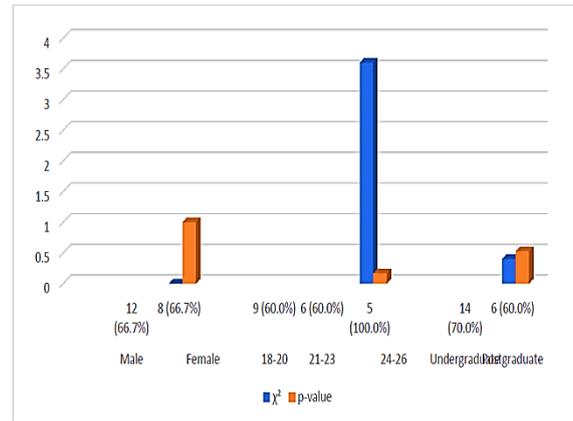


Figure 5: Association between Sociodemographic Variables and Attitudes towards Mental Health

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of the participants had a positive attitude towards mental health issues. Most participants disagreed that mental health disorders are caused by personal weakness, and almost all participants agreed that mental health disorders are treatable. This finding is encouraging as it indicates a level of acceptance and understanding of mental health issues among the participants.

However, the study also found that the participants lacked adequate knowledge about mental health issues. For instance, one-fifth of the participants believed that mental health issues are a sign of weakness. This misconception may contribute to the stigma associated with mental health issues and create barriers for individuals seeking help.

The results further showed no significant association between sociodemographic variables and attitudes towards mental health. This suggests that factors such as gender, age, and educational level may not play a significant role in shaping attitudes towards mental health among the participants.

V. LIMITATIONS

The study has several limitations. The sample size was small, and the participants were selected using a convenience sampling method, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused on students, which might not accurately represent the attitudes and beliefs of the general population in Bhopal city.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the need for educational interventions to increase mental health awareness and improve attitudes towards mental health issues among residents of Bhopal city. Despite the positive attitudes observed, the lack of adequate knowledge about mental health issues indicates that further efforts are needed to combat misconceptions and reduce stigma. Implementing mental health

education programs in schools, colleges, and community settings may help to foster understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals affected by mental health issues in Bhopal city.

REFERENCES

- World Health Organization. (2018). Mental health: strengthening our response. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response>
- Patel, V., Ramasundarahettige, C., Vijayakumar, L., Thakur, J. S., Gajalakshmi, V., Gururaj, G., ... & Suraweera, W. (2012). Suicide mortality in India: a nationally representative survey. *The Lancet*, 379(9834), 2343-2351.
- Garg, K., Kumar, C. N., & Chandra, P. S. (2019). Number of psychiatrists in India: Baby steps forward, but a long way to go. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(1), 104-105.
- Math, S. B., & Srinivasaraju, R. (2010). Indian psychiatric epidemiological studies: Learning from the past. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 52(7), 95-103.
- Murthy, R. S. (2011). Mental health initiatives in India (1947-2010). *National Medical Journal of India*, 24(2), 98-107.
- Nemade, D., & Pathare, S. (2021). Attitudes and beliefs about mental health among Indian college students. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 43(1), 67-73.
- Gowda, G. S., Lepping, P., Noorthoorn, E. O., Ali, S. F., Kumar, C. N., Raveesh, B. N., & Bunders-Aelen, J. F. (2018). Mental health and psychosocial support services in primary health care in Nepal: perceived facilitating factors, barriers and strategies for improvement. *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, 12(1), 1-12.
- Jorm, A. F., Korten, A. E., Jacomb, P. A., Christensen, H., Rodgers, B., & Pollitt, P. (1997). Mental health literacy: a survey of the public's ability to recognise mental disorders and their beliefs about the effectiveness of treatment. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 166(4), 182-186.
- Lahariya, C., Singhal, S., Gupta, S., & Mishra, A. (2010). Pathak A. (2010). World Health Organization. World Health Organization.
- Sharma, R., & Kader, M. (2013). Mental health care in India: A situational analysis. *Indian Journal of Community Health*, 25(2), 125-130.
- Saxena, S., Thornicroft, G., Knapp, M., & Whiteford, H. (2007). Resources for mental health: scarcity, inequity, and inefficiency. *The Lancet*, 370