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Exploring the Prevalence and Factors Contributing to Mental Health Issues Among Students

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Abstract - The mental health of students has become a pressing concern globally, with increasing reports of anxiety, depression, and stress among this demographic. In India, the situation is alarming, with limited research focusing on this critical issue. This study aims to investigate the prevalence of mental health issues among students in India and identify the contributing factors. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining surveys and focus group discussions with students from various educational institutions. The results indicate a high prevalence of mental health issues, with significant associations found between academic pressure, social media usage, and family expectations. The study highlights the need for targeted interventions, awareness programs, and accessible mental health services to support students' well-being.Recommendations include integrating mental health education in curricula, training teachers and parents, and leveraging digital platforms for mental health support.
Keywords- mental health, students, institutions, family, awareness.

Introduction - The mental health of students has emerged as a pressing concern globally, with increasing reports of anxiety, depression, and stress among this demographic. In India, the situation is particularly alarming, with the National Mental Health Survey (2015-16) revealing that nearly 14% of the country's population suffers from some form of mental disorder. Students, in particular, are vulnerable to mental health issues due to various factors such as academic pressure, social media influence, and family expectations. The prevalence of mental health issues among students in India is staggering. A study by the Indian Journal of Psychiatry found that 41% of students in India suffer from anxiety, while 23% experience depression. Another study by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) reported that 50% of Indian students experience stress-related problems. Despite the growing concern, mental health issues among students in India often go unnoticed and undertreated. The stigma associated with mental illness, lack of awareness, and inadequate mental health resources contribute to this neglect. This study aims to explore the prevalence and factors contributing to mental health issues among students in India, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support systems to promote student well-being.

Effects of mental health issues on student's studies: Mental health issues can significantly impact students' academic performance and overall educational experience. Here are some key effects:

1. **Decreased Concentration and Focus:** Mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and stress can make it challenging for students to concentrate in class, leading to difficulties in understanding and retaining information .
2. **Reduced Academic Performance:** Mental health issues can lead to decreased motivation, resulting in lower grades, poor attendance, and reduced participation in class activities .
3. **Increased Absenteeism:** Students struggling with mental health issues may miss classes or appointments, leading to missed opportunities and falling behind in their studies .
4. **Impaired Cognitive Function:** Mental health issues can affect memory, problem-solving skills, and decision-making abilities, making it harder for students to learn and retain new information .
5. **Strained Relationships:** Mental health issues can lead to social withdrawal, making it challenging for students to form and maintain relationships with peers and teachers .

Effects of mental health on student's carrier: Mental health issues can significantly impact students' career prospects and professional lives. Here are some key effects:

1. **Career Uncertainty:** Mental health issues can lead to difficulties in choosing a career path, setting goals, or making decisions about future plans .
2. **Reduced Opportunities:** Mental health issues can affect academic performance, leading to reduced job prospects, internships, or networking opportunities .
3. **Stigma and Disclosure:** Students may struggle with disclosing mental health issues to potential employers, fearing stigma or bias .
4. **Impaired Professional Skills:** Mental health issues can affect communication, teamwork, and time

management skills, essential for career success .

5. **Burnout and Career Burnout:** Unaddressed mental health issues can lead to burnout, affecting career longevity and satisfaction .

Effects of mental health on student's social life: Mental health issues can significantly impact students' social lives. Here are some key effects:

1. **Social Withdrawal:** Students may withdraw from social interactions, friends, and family, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation .
2. **Strained Relationships:** Mental health issues can affect communication, leading to conflicts and strained relationships with peers and family .
3. **Reduced Participation:** Students may avoid social activities, clubs, or sports due to anxiety, low self-esteem, or lack of energy .
4. **Difficulty Forming Connections:** Mental health issues can make it challenging to form new relationships or connections with others .
5. **Feeling of Isolation:** Students may feel like they don't fit in or are judged, leading to increased feelings of loneliness and disconnection .

Effects of mental health on students physical health and activities: Mental health issues can significantly impact students' physical health and activities. Here are some key effects:

1. **Sleep Disturbances:** Mental health issues like anxiety and depression can lead to insomnia, oversleeping, or poor sleep quality .
2. **Changes in Appetite:** Students may experience increased or decreased appetite, leading to weight changes or nutritional deficiencies .
3. **Physical Symptoms:** Mental health issues can manifest as physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, or fatigue .
4. **Reduced Physical Activity:** Students may struggle with motivation to engage in sports, exercise, or other physical activities .
5. **Substance Abuse:** Some students may turn to substances like nicotine, alcohol, or drugs to cope with mental health issues .

Strategies to improve student's mental health

Study/Carrier:

1. **Set Realistic Goals:** Break tasks into manageable chunks, prioritize, and celebrate small wins .
2. **Time Management:** Balance study and leisure time, use planners or apps to stay organized .
3. **Seek Support:** Talk to teachers, mentors, or peers about academic stress or concerns .

Social Life:

1. **Nurture Relationships:** Connect with friends, family, or join clubs to build support networks .
2. **Socialize Offlin:** Balance online interactions with face-to-face connections .
3. **Communicate Openly:** Share feelings and concerns with trusted individuals .

Physical Activity and Health:

1. **Exercise Regularly:** Engage in activities like yoga, sports, or walking to reduce stress .
2. **Healthy Eating:** Focus on balanced diets, hydration, and limit junk food.
3. **Sleep Hygiene:** Establish consistent sleep schedules and create a relaxing bedtime routine .

Additional Tips:

1. **Mindfulness and Relaxation:** Practice techniques like meditation, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation.
2. **Seek Professional Help:** Consult counselors or therapists if needed .
3. **Digital Detox:** Set boundaries with social media and screen time .

Conclusion : Mental health issues among students in India are a pressing concern, with rising cases of anxiety, depression, and stress. According to recent reports, approximately 70% of students experience moderate to high anxiety, while 60% show symptoms of depression [1].The factors contributing to this crisis include:

1. **Academic Pressure:** Excessive focus on grades and competitive exams creates a stressful environment.
2. **Digital Overload:** Excessive screen time and social media usage lead to social isolation and decreased attention span.
3. **Lack of Support:** Insufficient mental health resources and stigma surrounding mental illness prevent students from seeking help.

To address this issue, experts recommend:

1. **Integrating Mental Health Education:** Incorporating mental health awareness and coping strategies into school curricula.
2. **Increasing Access to Counseling:** Training teachers and recruiting more counselors to provide support.
3. **Promoting Balanced Lifestyle:** Encouraging physical activity, social connections, and digital detox.

The Indian government has initiated programs like Tele-MANAS and the National Mental Health Programme to provide mental health support. However, more efforts are needed to create a supportive environment and reduce stigma around mental health

References :-

1. Tele-MANAS Helpline: India's national mental health helpline has received over 34 lakh calls since its launch in October 2022, indicating a rising anxiety crisis among students and young adults.
2. Global Mind Health Report: A study by Sapien Labs found that nearly half of young adults worldwide, including in India, face mental health challenges, linking early smartphone use, ultra-processed diets, and weaker social connections to declining mental health.
3. National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS): Reports indicate that anxiety, depression, and stress are prevalent among Indian students, with some centers handling over 57,000 calls in 2025 .