

Influence of Parental Education on Mental Health of High School Children

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Abstract: The study was conducted to know the influence of parent's education on mental health of high school children at UAS, Dharwad during the year 2023-24 on a sample of 240 children from four high schools of rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk of Karnataka state and Boko taluk of Assam state. Aggarwal's socio-economic status scale was used to assess father's and mother's education. Mental health among children was assessed through Goodman's strengths and difficulties questionnaire. Frequency, percentage, chi-square test and ANOVA were used for data analysis. The results showed that children whose fathers were less educated had poor mental health than children whose fathers were educated up to graduation. Similarly, children with less educated mother showed higher mental health problems than children whose mothers educated up to graduation. So, there is a need to educate parents through open communication, providing accessible information about child mental health and parenting strategies, offering workshops or group session, encouraging active participation in their child's education and using relatable examples to explain important concepts which can positively impact children's mental health.

Introduction: Mental health is a person's emotional, psychological and social well-being. It's how a person's thinks, feels and acts. High school children are in the adolescence phase of life. This stage marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and involves significant physical, cognitive, emotional and psychological development. Parenting practices play a vital role in shaping children's mental health by providing emotional support, secure attachment and promoting a positive self-image. Higher level education of parents is associated with more effective parenting styles *i.e.*, authoritative parenting which foster a supportive, informed and resource-rich environment conducive to positive mental health. Parent's education can raise awareness of psychological development and well-being for both the parents and their children. They can help their

children develop a better self-image by acknowledging their unique qualities and teach their children effective ways to manage stress and anxiety such as mindfulness, physical activities and hobbies. Education of parents can increase parenting abilities and marital quality which can positively impact children's mental health.

Materials and Methods

Differential research design was used to know the mental health of high school children in rural and urban settings of selected regions. Sample of the study comprised of 240 high school children were selected from four high schools of rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk and Boko taluk through random sampling method.

Tools used for the study

Aggarwal's socio-economic status scale and Goodman's strengths and difficulties questionnaire were used to assess parental education and mental health of children respectively.

Education of father and mother:

Education of father and mother was classified separately as per Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) SES scale.

Categories	Score
Illiterate	0
Just illiterate but not schooling	1
< Primary but attended school for at least one year	2
Primary pass but < 10 th pass	3
10 th class pass but < graduation	4
Graduation	5
Post graduation (non-technical incl. Ph.D)	6
Professional qualification with technical degree or diploma (e.g. Doctor, Eng, CA, MBA)	7

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire by Goodman (1997): The tool comprised of 25 items having 5 separate sub-scales designed to measure i) conduct problems, ii) hyperactivity, iii) emotional problems, iv) peer relationship problems and v) pro-social behaviour. The scoring of the scale was done on the basis of three-point scale (0-2) and reverse scoring for the negative statements. A total difficulty score was generated by adding scores from all the sub-scales except the pro-social scale. The total scores are categorized as close to average (0-14), slightly raised (15-17), high (18-19) and very high (20-40). The highest score representing higher mental health problems of children.

Statistical analysis of the data

For the interpretation of demographic factors of high school children frequencies and percentages were calculated. For knowing the influence of parental education on mental health of high school children chi-square test and ANOVA were used.

Results

Findings showed that among urban children of Dharwad, in the category of close to average mental health, highest percentage (87.50%) of fathers were found in 10th pass but less than graduation whereas, in the slightly raised (15.39%) and high (38.46%) category, majority were found in less than primary but attended school for at least one year. Chi square and F-test analysis revealed significant association and differences where children whose fathers were less educated had higher mental health problems than children whose fathers were educated upto graduation. Among rural children, highest percentage (61.54%) of fathers who were 10th pass but less than graduation fell under close to average category of mental health whereas, in the slightly raised (27.78%) and high (38.89%) category, majority of the children reported their father's education as primary pass but less than 10th pass. However, non-significant association and difference were found. In Boko region, among urban children, highest percentage (88.00%) of fathers who were 10th pass but less than graduation found in close to average category of mental health whereas, in the slightly raised category most (23.53%) of them were found in primary pass but less than 10th pass. In high category, majority (33.33%) of children reported their father education level was less than primary but attended school for at least one year. Chi

square analysis and F-test results showed significant association and difference. Children whose fathers were less than primary but attended school for at least one year showed higher mental health problems than children whose fathers were 10th pass but less than graduation. Among rural children, in the category of close to average, highest percentage (92.60%) of fathers were found in 10th pass but less than graduation whereas, in the slightly raised (35.29%) and high (17.65%) category, majority were found in less than primary but attended school for at least one year. On chi square and F-test analysis, results revealed significant association and difference. Children whose fathers were less than primary but attended school for at least one year revealed more mental health problems than children whose fathers were 10th pass but less than graduation.

Regarding mother's education results showed that among urban children of Dharwad, highest percentage (85.72%) of children whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th pass fell under close to average category of mental health whereas, in the slightly raised (22.22%) category, majority of mothers were found in 10th pass but less than graduation. In high category, most (42.86%) of mothers were less than primary but attended school for at least one year. Chi square analysis revealed significant association between mother's education and mental health problems of urban children. However, F-test revealed non-significant differences where children whose mothers were less educated had higher mental health problems than children whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th pass. Among rural children, in the category of close to average (55.56%) and high (33.33%), highest percentage of mothers were found in 10th pass but less than graduation whereas, 30.44 per cent children whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th pass reported slightly raised mental health problems. However, chi square and F-test analysis revealed non-significant association and difference. In Boko region, among urban children, highest percentage (88.89%) of children whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th pass found in close to average category of mental health whereas, in the slightly raised (35.29%) and high (41.18%) category, most of them were found in less than primary but attended school for at least one year. Chi square analysis and F-test results showed significant association and difference where children

whose mothers were less than primary but attended school for at least one year showed more mental health problems than children whose mothers were primary pass but less than 10th pass. Among rural children, in the category of close to average, highest percentage (87.50%) of mothers were found in 10th pass but less than graduation whereas, in the slightly raised (28.57%) category, majority were found in less than primary but attended school for at least one year. In high category, 10.53 per cent children reported their mother's education as primary pass but less than 10th pass. However, chi square and F-test analysis revealed non-significant association and difference. Children whose mothers were less educated revealed higher mental health problems than children whose mothers were educated upto graduation.

Discussion

Children whose parent's education was less than primary showed more mental health problems which might be due to providing less educational support, less access to information, fewer skills in effective communication, less coping strategies and provide less access to mental health problems. Fakhrunnisak and Patria (2022), Arroyo *et al.* (2017), Sonogo *et al.* (2013) and Boe *et al.* (2012) reported similar findings that, lower parental education level predicted higher symptoms of mental health problems.

Conclusion and Implication

The study highlights the significant influence of parental education on mental health problems of high school children. It was shown that children whose parents were less educated had high mental health problems compared to those which parents were educated up to graduation. Noticeable percentage of urban and rural children of Dharwad and Boko regions had high mental health problems

which significantly affect their cognitive, emotional, social and personality development. So, there is a need to promote mental health awareness and encourage children for early intervention which can be done through implementing programs in schools to teach children about mental health, coping strategies and emotional intelligence. School and home environment can be safe, inclusive and supportive where children can discuss their mental health issues. Educate parents through open communication, providing accessible information about child mental health and parenting strategies, offering workshops or group session, encouraging active participation in their child's education and using relatable examples to explain important concepts which can positively impact children's mental health.

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