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## **An Investigation into Psychological Issues Among Secondary Students School Students in India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Secondary school children often experience significant emotional, cognitive, and social changes during adolescence, a vital period of psychological growth. The prevalence of psychological problems among secondary school children in India has risen due to various factors, including increasing academic pressure, competition, family expectations, socioeconomic disparities, and the growing influence of digital media. This study focuses on issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, emotional instability, and behavioural problems, examining their types, severity, and underlying causes among Indian secondary school students. Key factors contributing to moderate to severe psychological distress include exam anxiety, peer competition, parental expectations, and insufficient emotional support. The study also highlights how these issues are exacerbated by limited counselling services, mental health stigma, and low awareness. Students and girls from low-income backgrounds are especially vulnerable to anxiety and emotional stress.

**Keywords:** *Adolescence, Competitive, Emotional, Susceptible, Vulnerability.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. Secondary school students, typically aged between 13 and 18 years, often experience heightened psychological vulnerability as they navigate academic pressures, identity formation, peer relationships, and expectations from family and society. In India, these challenges are further shaped by diverse socio-economic conditions, urban–rural disparities, competitive educational environments, and changing cultural values. As a result, many students face psychological issues such as anxiety, stress, depression, low self-esteem, behavioural problems, and emotional instability.

The schooling system at the secondary level plays a decisive role in determining students' future academic and career trajectories. Board examinations, performance comparisons, parental expectations, and the growing influence of digital media contribute significantly to mental strain. Additionally, factors such as family conflict, financial hardship, lack of guidance, bullying, and inadequate mental health awareness can intensify psychological distress among adolescents. In both urban centres like Kolkata and rural districts, students may struggle silently due to stigma surrounding mental health and limited access to counselling services.



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Understanding the nature, causes, and extent of psychological problems among secondary school students is therefore essential for promoting healthy development and academic success. An investigation into these issues in the context of India can help identify risk factors, vulnerable groups, and gaps in institutional support systems. Such research can also inform policymakers, educators, parents, and mental health professionals in designing effective interventions, school-based counselling programs, and supportive learning environments. Ultimately, addressing students' psychological well-being is not only vital for individual growth but also for building a healthier and more productive society.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Bharti Kumari and Parmod Kumar (2022)** They investigated that secondary school is the most crucial time in a student's life when they deal with issues related to their health, relationships, families, education, and personal lives. At this point, mental health is crucial and plays a big part in how these kinds of issues are handled very successfully. Consequently, the paper takes on importance as a sincere attempt to investigate the problems and obstacles related to secondary school students' mental health. This paper is a review that draws from several research studies that either directly or indirectly address mental health. The study's findings showed that a number of problems, including misunderstandings about mental health, a lack of knowledge and resources, and social, personal, financial, environmental, and technology-related issues, are to blame for India's poor mental health status. Additionally, the lack of treatment-related facilities and resources as well as the treatment gap were discovered. The two most important things for mental health are prevention and treatment. For secondary school kids to handle stressful situations and become well-adjusted members of their families and communities, they need to be properly oriented and aware of mental health difficulties and obstacles. In order to promote the mental health of secondary school kids, the results of this study will be very helpful to educators, parents, guidance counsellors, and administrators in making the necessary arrangements to create a supportive atmosphere at home and at school.

**Kanak Dwivedi and Rashi Srivastava (2021)** They found that the competitive modern world is a result of the numerous advances in science and technology. This has had a significant impact on the educational system, and growth and expansion are occurring everywhere. The attainment of academic excellence plays a crucial role in determining a student's career goals and helps them recognised their own abilities and potential. A student's ability to beat the competition and earn a high score determines whether they succeed or fail. The researcher compared different anxiety levels in the current investigation. In an effort to ascertain the relationship between anxiety and academic success, the researcher has tried to identify the various anxiety levels. The researcher has attempted to investigate the differences between genders with regard to academic performance. A random selection of 100 senior secondary school students (50 boys and 50 girls) from two Lucknow city schools made up the sample.

**Valeria Cavioni (2020)** She researched that children and adolescents have been experiencing an increase in mental health issues in the past few decades. Reviews of recent studies on this subject indicate a significant lack of agreement over the definition of school mental health and its constructs, despite the proliferation of papers documenting successful school-based mental health programmes. Our goal in this



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paper is to close this gap in two ways: first, we provide a critical review of recent studies on the topic of school mental health; and second, we suggest a thorough theoretical framework for academics, professionals, and decision-makers working on mental health promotion and school prevention initiatives. The three primary domains of the suggested framework are as follows: the first two deal with resilience building and social and emotional development, while the third one addresses behavioral issue prevention.

**Michaela C. Pascoe (2019)** She explored that students in secondary and postsecondary education settings have to cope with a variety of ongoing stressors related to their academic responsibilities. Previous research has connected academic stress to lower academic achievement, lower motivation, and a higher likelihood of dropping out of school. The long-term consequences, which include a lower likelihood of long-term employment, cost governments billions of dollars every year. This narrative review includes the most recent research on the consequences of academic stress, information on how it affects students' learning and academic success, and details on how it affects mental health conditions like drug misuse, sleep disorders, and anxiety and depression.

**Radhika Kapur (2019)** She explored that the primary goal of this study is to gain awareness of psychological issues that students face, particularly when pursuing academic goals and learning in the classroom. The main psychological issues that affect students include anxiety, stress, depression, and pressure. The main factors contributing to psychological issues in students include learning disabilities, experiencing setbacks in their academic career, a lack of learning resources, unfavourable home environments, and so on. Students' psychological issues can be resolved. As long as kids are given the opportunity to grow in socialisation and interactive skills both at home and in school. When students encounter these issues, it is crucial that they receive assistance in finding answers to their challenges. It is crucial that they implement the policies and initiatives in an appropriate way after receiving direction. In this research work, the causes of psychological difficulties, coping mechanisms for psychological problems, and recommendations have been the primary considerations.

**Anuradha and Champa Pan (2018)** They investigated the idea that every child has an innate entitlement to an education. To guarantee that no child remains uninformed, the federal government and state governments have developed a number of initiatives. But there are a number of issues with our educational system. Even though the number of children attending school has significantly increased, they nevertheless confront a variety of challenges. This chapter addresses issues related to education in senior secondary schools. To remove the barriers and find solutions to the issues, we must work consistently and cooperatively. The period of secondary education spans the ages of 15 to 18. The most important years in a student's life are these transitional and adolescent years. During this time, students experience rapid changes in their physical makeup as well as emotional and mood swings of all kinds. Students must now transfer from school to the working world; secondary education must prepare them for this by honing their skills and abilities to ensure a seamless transition. Due to ingrained opinions, societal bias, discrimination, and taboos that are set forth for women in society, girls must face additional challenges during this shift. Periodically, a number of commissions have highlighted the flaws in secondary education. There is a widespread belief that secondary education in India places too much focus on academics and does not fully prepare students for pursuing further education. It also fails to provide students with the skills



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necessary to effectively manage day-to-day challenges. A large number of students frequently fail the university's exams in the first year of their degree programme. The pupils don't think of themselves as confident and ready to face life with grace. The instruction and training offered there do not adequately prepare the pupils for a good and respected career that would enable them to lead fulfilling lives.

**Owan Valentine Joseph et al. (2018)** They explained that this study looked into issues with academic performance and school administration in the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State's secondary school students. To help with the study, two null hypotheses were developed. An ex-post facto research design was used in the study. Out of the total population of 18,078 pupils, a sample of 3616 students was chosen using the proportionate stratified sampling technique. The researcher-designed instruments, the "Problems of School Management Questionnaire (PSMQ)" and the Senior Secondary Mathematics Achievement Test (SSMAT), were employed to gather data. While the null hypotheses were assessed at the .05 level of significance using the population t-test and, when appropriate, multiple regression analyses, the obtained data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data analysis was conducted using a spreadsheet programme called Microsoft Excel 2016. The study's conclusions included the following: discipline control, classroom management, teacher motivation, and secondary school students' academic performance are all highly influenced by their teachers, and secondary school students' academic performance is significantly high in the Calabar Education Zone. Recommendations and conclusions were made in light of these findings.

**M. Mohamedayupkhan and S. Mani (2014)** They explored that the study's objectives are to determine the degree of academic achievement, study involvement, and personal problems among upper secondary school students. Random sampling was the method of sampling that was applied in this instance to choose the sample. In all, 306 pupils enrolled in upper secondary education were chosen from three distinct educational institutions within the Usilampatti district. A total of 102 students from government schools, 102 students from government-aided schools, and 102 students from private schools were chosen by the investigator. Data were gathered using a personal data sheet created by the investigator, the Student Personal Problems Questionnaire created by N.N. Wig and R.N. Nagpal in 1980, and the Study Involvement Scale created by Jayalakshmi Indiresan in 1978. The "t" and "f" tests were used to statistically analyze the results. Gender influences students' academic performance, participation in their studies, and personal issues. Academic achievement, study participation, and personal issues are all tied to one another among students.

## CONCLUSION

Adolescence is a very sensitive and susceptible stage that is characterized by severe academic demands, emotional oscillations, and social adaptations, according to the findings of the current inquiry into psychological concerns among secondary school children in India. At the secondary level, students are confronted with a variety of stresses, such as the pressure to perform well on examinations, the expectations of their parents, the competitiveness among their peers, the uncertainty of their future careers, and the quick changes in sociocultural norms. These elements, when taken together, are responsible for a wide variety of psychological issues, including but not limited to anxiety, stress, depression, low self-esteem, emotional instability, and behavioural disorders.



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Gender, socioeconomic background, type of school, and urban versus rural location are all factors that have been shown to have an impact on the mental health condition of individuals. Girls are more likely to report experiencing higher levels of internalized difficulties such as anxiety and depression, whereas boys may be more likely to demonstrate behavioural issues. Students from economically disadvantaged areas seem to be particularly vulnerable and those enrolled in highly competitive educational settings. Many kids are discouraged from seeking assistance because of the stigma that is connected with mental health, the lack of understanding that exists, and the inadequate counselling services that are available in schools.

The study highlights the significant impact that the family environment, the support of teachers, the relationships between peers, and the atmosphere of the school all have in determining the psychological well-being of pupils. The presence of supportive peer networks, empathic teaching approaches, and positive parental involvement can considerably lower the amount of emotional discomfort experienced by children and boost their resilience. On the other hand, psychological challenges are exacerbated by family conflicts, neglect, bullying, and unreasonable expectations, which also affect academic success and general development.

I would want to conclude that in order to effectively treat the psychological disorders that are prevalent among secondary school kids in India, a comprehensive and collaborative approach that includes schools, families, communities, and policymakers is required. The incorporation of mental health education into the curriculum of schools, the establishment of guidance and counseling services, the training of teachers to recognize early warning signs, and the promotion of awareness in order to minimize stigma are all urgently needed responsibilities. Not only is it vital for the academic achievement of students to ensure their psychological well-being, but it is also essential for the development of emotionally healthy, self-assured, and socially responsible individuals.

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