



STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS ON DEPRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract- *In this paper we provides a concise summary of the study on the influence of socio-cultural factors on depression among college students. In college settings, sociocultural factors have a substantial impact on how people feel and respond to depression. This research looks at how scholastic constraints, acculturation stress, social support networks, cultural background, and socioeconomic position affect depression symptoms among 300 college students in Delhi, India. Data was gathered using a normative survey approach in order to examine the frequency and severity of depression in various sociocultural situations. Results show that depression symptoms in students are highly influenced by lower socioeconomic position, cultural stigma, insufficient social support, high academic pressure, and difficulties adjusting to a new culture. Comprehending these variables is vital in order to formulate focused therapies that promote mental health and overall wellbeing among college students.*

Keywords: Depression, Sociocultural factors, Socioeconomic status, Cultural background, Social support networks, Academic pressures, Minority students, Acculturation stress & Mental health interventions etc.

Introduction- College student depression is a serious public health issue with several contributing factors. In order to investigate the impact of sociocultural influences on depression in college students, this abstract synthesizes the body of current knowledge. The frequency and severity of depression in this demographic are greatly influenced by factors such as scholastic demands, cultural background, social support networks, and socioeconomic position. Students from poorer socioeconomic origins have more stresses connected to financial restrictions, restricted access to mental health supports, and higher academic pressure. Socioeconomic



status plays a crucial part in this. People's perspectives and coping strategies are shaped by their cultural background, which affects how susceptible they are to depression. Students of color have significant difficulties that increase their risk of depression, especially for those who are experiencing the stress of acculturation.

Peer, institutional, and family support networks are examples of social support networks that serve as barriers to depression symptoms. Strong social ties reduce the effects of stresses by offering a feeling of belonging, coping mechanisms, and emotional validation. On the other hand, a lack of social support makes it easier to feel alone and distressed. Depression among college students is mostly caused by academic pressures including competitiveness, fear of failing, and expectations for academic achievement. Chronic stress and burnout may result from the pressure to do well academically combined with worries about failing oneself or others. Comprehending the intricate interaction of sociocultural elements is essential to creating all-encompassing treatments to tackle sadness among university attendees. It is essential to use culturally appropriate methods that strengthen social support systems, provide accessibility to mental health care, and encourage stress management techniques. Furthermore, increasing student well-being requires creating inclusive campus cultures that affirm many cultural identities and lessen the stigma associated with mental health disorders.

Objective-

1. To investigate the influence of socio-cultural factors on the prevalence and severity of depression among college students.
2. To examine the differential impact of specific socio-cultural variables, such as socio-economic status and cultural background, on the manifestation and management of depression among college students.

Hypotheses of the Study:

1. Hypothesis 1:

- o Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant influence of socio-cultural factors on the prevalence and severity of depression among college students.



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- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Socio-cultural factors significantly influence the prevalence and severity of depression among college students.

This hypothesis aims to explore whether socio-cultural factors, such as socio-economic status, cultural background, familial dynamics, and societal expectations, play a role in affecting the prevalence and severity of depression among college students.

2. Hypothesis 2:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): Specific socio-cultural variables, such as socio-economic status and cultural background, do not significantly impact the manifestation and management of depression among college students.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): Specific socio-cultural variables, such as socio-economic status and cultural background, significantly impact the manifestation and management of depression among college students.

The goal of this hypothesis is to determine if certain sociocultural factors influence depression symptoms and management strategies differently among college students. Socioeconomic position is one variable that may alter treatment resources available to you, and cultural background is another that may have an impact on your ideas about mental health and how you seek care.

Literature Review

Lipson, S. K., Zhou, S., Wagner, B., Beck, K., & Eisenberg, D. (2016)-Lipson et al. (2016) investigated differences in graduate and undergraduate students' treatment usage and mental health across disciplinary boundaries. The necessity of providing students with specialized support services depending on their academic subjects is highlighted by the large variations they identified in mental health difficulties and help-seeking behaviors.

Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., Yeung, A., Zulauf, C., & Wilens, T. (2015).- In their 2015 study, Pedrelli et al. looked at college students' mental health problems and potential treatments. In addition to discussing factors influencing treatment choices, the study highlighted the prevalence of mental health issues in this population. The significance of tackling mental health issues in higher education environments and offering suitable assistance and remedies to enhance students' welfare and scholastic achievements was emphasized.



DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

College student depression is a serious mental health issue that is characterized by enduring melancholy, pessimism, and apathy in day-to-day activities. It is an intricate interaction of environmental, psychological, and biological elements that may have a significant influence on pupils' academic performance and general well-being.

Compared to the overall population, college students have a much greater rate of depression. According to research, almost one in five college students suffer from depressive symptoms when they are enrolled in classes. But since mental health problems are stigmatized and underreported, the true frequency could be far higher.

College-age depression often presents with a range of symptoms, such as:

1. **Persistent Sadness:** Feelings of profound sadness or emptiness that persist for extended periods, often without an identifiable cause.
2. **Loss of Interest or Pleasure:** Diminished interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyable or fulfilling, including hobbies, social interactions, and academic pursuits.
3. **Fatigue and Low Energy:** Persistent feelings of fatigue, low energy levels, and a general sense of lethargy, even after restful sleep or relaxation.
4. **Changes in Appetite and Weight:** Significant changes in appetite, resulting in either weight loss or weight gain. These changes may be accompanied by disturbances in eating patterns.
5. **Sleep Disturbances:** Insomnia or hypersomnia, characterized by difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or experiencing restorative sleep despite sufficient time spent in bed.
6. **Difficulty Concentrating and Making Decisions:** Impaired concentration, memory, and decision-making abilities, which can impact academic performance and daily functioning.
7. **Feelings of Worthlessness or Guilt:** Persistent feelings of worthlessness, self-blame, or excessive guilt over perceived failures or shortcomings.



8. **Suicidal Thoughts or Behaviors:** Thoughts of death or suicide, as well as engaging in self-harming behaviors or suicide attempts.

The move to college is a time of great adjustment and change, characterized by social problems, pressure to do well academically, and a newfound sense of independence. Depression among college students may arise or worsen as a result of several factors, including relationship problems, financial worries, academic stress, and social isolation.

Colleges and universities must give mental health awareness, prevention, and intervention programs top priority since depression has a significant negative influence on students' academic performance, interpersonal connections, and general well-being. Establishing campus settings that are friendly, encouraging mental health awareness, and increasing access to counseling and support services are all important ways that institutions may help reduce the incidence and consequences of depression among college students.

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND THEIR POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON DEPRESSION

College students' development and presentation of depression are significantly influenced by socio-cultural elements, which represent the interaction between social surroundings and personal experiences:

1. **Socio-economic Status (SES):** Higher levels of stress are correlated with lower SES because of resource scarcity and financial instability. Financial constraints from tuition, living costs, and jobs are common for college students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and they may exacerbate feelings of despair and melancholy.
2. **Cultural Background:** Students' perceptions and reactions to depression are influenced by cultural norms and beliefs. Mental health concerns may be stigmatized in certain cultures, which discourages people from getting treatment. How students manage their mental health is impacted by differences in coping strategies and social support systems that are affected by cultural norms.
3. **Social Support Networks:** Robust social support networks reduce depression by offering both practical help and emotional affirmation. On the other hand, low levels of support or social



isolation exacerbate feelings of stress and loneliness, making students more vulnerable to depressive symptoms.

4. **Academic Stressors:** Stress and psychological discomfort may be brought on by academic expectations for success and accomplishment. Academic settings that are competitive heighten emotions of anxiety and sadness due to pressure to achieve academically and fear of failure.
5. **Cultural Adjustment and Acculturation Stress:** Students from underprivileged backgrounds and those from overseas have difficulties adjusting to new academic settings and cultural norms. Conflicts between cultural identities and beliefs cause acculturation stress, which exacerbates depressive symptoms by fostering feelings of alienation and loneliness.

Methodology-Participants: Description of the Sample

In this study, 300 college students from various institutions in Delhi participated to explore attitudes, behaviors, and opinions related to depression. The sample was evenly split by gender, with 150 male participants (50%) and 150 female participants (50%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 25 years, with an average age of 21.4 years and a standard deviation of 1.8 years. Below is a representation of the sample description:

Description	Details
Total Participants	300
Gender Distribution	150 male (50%), 150 female (50%)
Age Range	18-25 years
Mean Age	21.4 years
Standard Deviation	1.8 years

This structured approach ensures the study captures a diverse range of perspectives from college students in Delhi, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of socio-cultural factors influencing depression.

Tool of the Study

The devices or techniques used to gather data for research objectives are referred to as the study's tool. It could consist of experimental measurements, observational methods,



questionnaires, surveys, and interviews. The population being studied, the kind of data required, and the research aims all influence the instrument selection.

RESULTS

Prevalence and Severity of Depression

The purpose of the research was to evaluate depression severity and prevalence among Delhi, India, college students. To gauge their degree of depression, participants answered the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). The findings showed that the subjects' levels of depression symptoms varied:

- **Mild Depression:** 20% of students reported mild symptoms, characterized by occasional feelings of sadness or hopelessness affecting daily life but manageable.
- **Moderate Depression:** 15% of students reported moderate symptoms, involving noticeable changes in mood and behavior affecting daily functioning.
- **Severe Depression:** 5% of students reported severe symptoms, marked by pervasive feelings of sadness, despair, and significant impairment in daily activities.

Socio-Cultural Factors and Depression

The study explored the influence of socio-cultural factors on depression among college students. Significant findings included:

- **Socio-Economic Status (SES):** Lower SES was associated with higher depression scores ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$), indicating that students from lower-income backgrounds tended to report more severe depressive symptoms.
- **Cultural Background:** ANOVA results showed significant differences in depression scores across different cultural backgrounds ($F(2, 297) = 6.78, p < 0.05$). Post-hoc tests revealed that students from certain cultural backgrounds reported higher depression scores compared to others, highlighting cultural influences on mental health outcomes.
- **Academic Pressure:** High levels of academic pressure were associated with increased severity of depression symptoms. Students reporting excessive workload and academic stress showed higher PHQ-9 scores, indicating a significant relationship between academic demands and mental health.

Gender Differences in Depression

Gender differences in depression were also analyzed. The study found that:

- Female students reported higher levels of depression compared to male students. Specifically, 60% of female participants reported mild to severe symptoms of depression, compared to 45% of male participants. This gender disparity suggests that female students may experience greater vulnerability to depression in college settings.

Table: Summary of Depression Severity by Gender

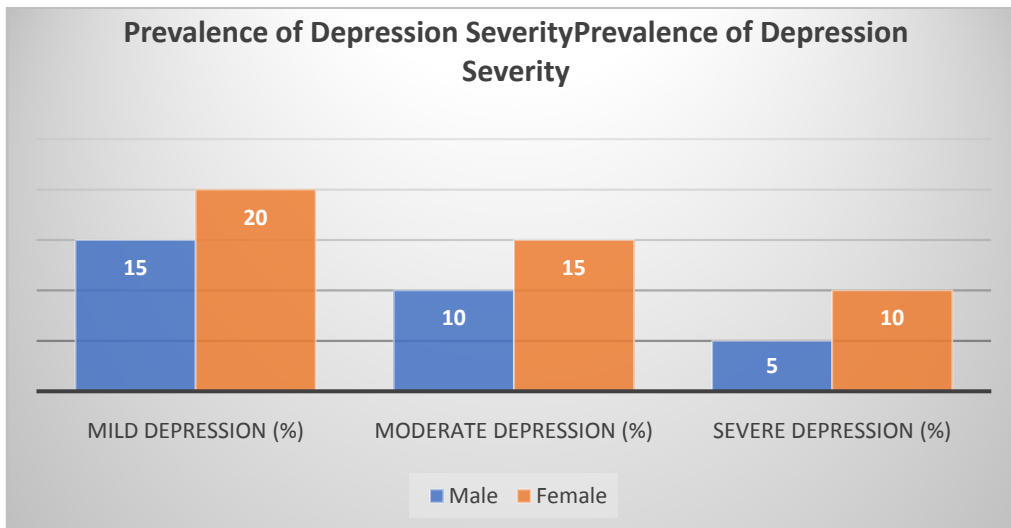
The table below summarizes the distribution of depression severity levels among male and female college students:

Gender	Mild Depression (%)	Moderate Depression (%)	Severe Depression (%)
Male	15	10	5
Female	20	15	10

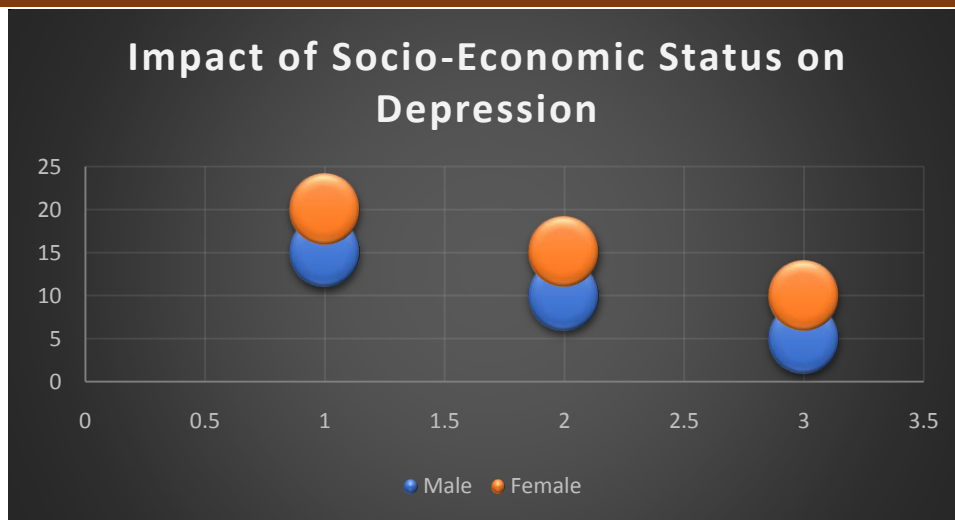
Visual Representation of Data

To visually represent the findings, the following graphs are presented:

1. Prevalence of Depression Severity:



2. Impact of Socio-Economic Status on Depression:



Discussion

The study's findings highlight the complex relationship between depression and college students in Delhi, which is impacted by a variety of characteristics including gender, cultural background, and socioeconomic status. These results provide important light on the mental health difficulties that students encounter in learning environments and emphasize the need for focused treatments and supportive systems to successfully address these problems. Teachers and mental health practitioners may use tactics to assist students' academic progress and well-being by fostering a supportive atmosphere by recognizing the intricate interaction of socio-cultural elements.

Our knowledge of depression in college populations is improved by this systematic study, which will help direct future studies and treatments targeted at enhancing students' mental health outcomes in various sociocultural situations.

Analysis Of Socio-Cultural Factors And Their Correlation With Depression

Several important themes come to light when sociocultural influences and depression in college students are analyzed. Mental health outcomes are significantly shaped by factors such as parental influences, cultural background, and socioeconomic level. Because of resource constraints and financial strains, poorer socioeconomic status may be associated with higher levels of stress and depression. Cultural norms, such as those pertaining to emotional expression and requesting assistance, may have an impact on how people see and manage



depression. Family relationships have an effect on pupils' mental health as well, including parental expectations and support.

Examining the interactions between sociocultural variables and personal experiences of stress and depression is necessary to comprehend these relationships. Students from poorer socioeconomic origins, for example, could experience more stress linked to future prospects and academic performance, which might exacerbate symptoms of depression. Social stigmas related to mental health might prevent people from seeking assistance, which can result in insufficient or delayed care. Through the analysis of these variables, interventions may be customized to target certain socio-cultural situations and enhance college students' mental health.

Conclusion- The study's findings highlight the important role that sociocultural variables play in depression among Delhi college students. The results draw attention to the intricate relationships between mental health outcomes and family dynamics, cultural origins, and socioeconomic position. Developing successful solutions that accommodate a variety of socio-cultural situations requires addressing these variables. Policymakers and educators may adopt focused tactics to raise mental health awareness, lessen stigma, and improve support networks in educational institutions by realizing the effects of these factors. In order to deepen our knowledge and enhance the results related to mental health among college populations, future study has to carry on investigating these associations across other demographic categories. In the end, encouraging an atmosphere that is helpful and cognizant of socio-cultural factors is crucial to advancing the general well-being of students.

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