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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of Unemployment on Mental Health and Depression of Youth in Saran Chhapara Bihar

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Abstract

Depression is a common mental health disorder marked by sadness, disinterest, guilt, low self-esteem, disrupted sleep or appetite, fatigue, and concentration difficulties. It can become chronic, severely impacting daily life, and in extreme cases, leads to suicide, claiming around 850,000 lives annually. Depression emerged as the leading cause of disability in terms of years lived with disability (YLDs) and was the fourth major contributor to global disease burden (DALYs) in 2000; it is expected to rank second by 2020. Affects all demographics, depression often surfaces between 15 and 30 years, with higher prevalence in women and seasonal variations. About 121 million people worldwide are affected, yet less than 25% receive treatment. Effective options like antidepressants and psychotherapy are underutilized due to resource shortages, lack of professionals, and stigma around mental health.

Keywords: Depression, Mental health, Unemployment

Introduction

A prevalent mental health condition is depression, which is characterized by feelings of sadness, lack of interest or enjoyment, a sense of guilt or diminished self-esteem, disrupted sleep or appetite, fatigue, and difficulty concentrating. These issues can evolve into chronic or recurring problems, significantly hindering a person's ability to manage daily tasks. In severe cases, depression can result in suicide, leading to the tragic loss of approximately 850,000 lives

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each year. Depression stands as the primary cause of disability based on years lived with disability (YLDs) and was the fourth leading factor in the global disease burden (DALYs) in 2000. It is anticipated that by 2020, depression will be ranked second in DALYs across all ages and both genders.

Currently, depression ranks as the second most significant cause of DALYs for individuals aged 15 to 44 years across genders. This disorder affects individuals of all genders, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Depression is fundamentally a brain disorder with various contributing factors, including psychological, genetic, environmental, and biochemical influences. It frequently emerges between the ages of 15 and 30, and is more prevalent among women, who may also experience postpartum depression following childbirth. Some individuals suffer from seasonal affective disorder during the winter months. Depression is a central aspect of this disorder.

There are effective treatments available, such as antidepressants and psychotherapy, and most people benefit from a combination of both. Globally, around 121 million individuals are affected by depression, making it one of the primary causes of disability worldwide. Depression can be accurately diagnosed and treated in primary care settings, yet less than 25% of those affected have access to appropriate treatment options. Antidepressant medications along with brief, structured psychotherapy can effectively help 60-80% of affected individuals and can be made available in primary care facilities. Unfortunately, fewer than 25% of sufferers (and even less than 10% in some countries) actually receive these treatments.

Various obstacles to effective care include a shortage of resources, a lack of trained professionals, and the social stigma that surrounds mental health issues, including depression. Research conducted by 20 different scientists indicates that depression impacts nearly 121 million people around the globe and is the second leading cause of reduced lifespan for those aged 15-44.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of depression include:

1. Persistent feelings of sadness or discontent
2. Increased irritability or frustration over minor issues
3. Disinterest or lack of enjoyment in usual activities
4. Decreased libido
5. Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
6. Changes in appetite — it often leads to reduced appetite and weight loss in some, while others may experience increased cravings and weight gain
7. Increased agitation or restlessness — like pacing, wringing hands, or inability to remain still
8. Irritability or angry reactions
9. Slowed thoughts, speech, or physical movements
10. Difficulty making decisions, easily distracted, and reduced focus
11. Exhaustion and loss of energy — even small jobs may feel overwhelming

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12. Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, concentrating on past mistakes or blaming oneself during hardships
13. Problems with thinking, focusing, decision-making, and memory
14. Frequent thoughts about death, dying, or suicide
15. Spells of crying without any clear cause
16. Physical issues that cannot be explained, like headaches or back pain Each individual experiences depression differently, leading to a variety of symptoms. Factors such as genetics, age, gender, and cultural background influence the effects of depression on a person.

2. STUDY GOALS:

- To explore the connection between unemployment and mental health, including depression.
- To examine how unemployment impacts the mental well-being of selected respondents from urban and rural areas.
- To investigate the influence of unemployment on the mental health and depression levels among men in the Saran district of Bihar.
- To analyze the effects of unemployment on mental health and depression in both rural and urban males.

STUDY LIMITATIONS:

This research is restricted to the Saran district in Bihar. It focuses on only two factors: "unemployment" and "mental health or depression." The study is specifically set in the Saran district of Bihar because gathering data from the entire state is not feasible. Therefore, the researcher chose Saran district to streamline the work, and data was sourced from the Education Department of the Saran Gazetteer.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Studies in India:

Venkatesan, M (Feb 2015) studied the "Psychological health of unemployed graduates" in Coimbatore, focusing on personal and environmental factors. He used ancillary sampling to research 220 unemployed graduates. The study aimed to explore how these factors affect mental health. Findings revealed that housing significantly impacts the perception of job opportunities, with urban graduates feeling a greater promise and importance of employment compared to rural graduates. The unemployment situation has led to increased insecurity among urban graduates.

Vanzara's 2016 study focused on mental stress, depression, and suicidal tendencies among educated unemployed youth, considering gender and living situations. The findings revealed significant differences in stress levels between urban and rural educated unemployed men and women. Additionally, there were notable differences in suicide rates among these groups, highlighting the varying tendencies of suicide between urban and rural men and women.

Ahmad Bhal and Dr. Jeshi conducted a study in June 2020 on the impact of unemployment on the mental health of youth in the Kashmir valley. The study aimed to compare the mental health levels of working and unemployed youth. Findings revealed that

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unemployed youth experienced higher anxiety, depression, and loss of emotional control, along with lower life satisfaction and psychological well-being compared to employed youth.

Chatterjee, S., McDougall, L., and Raj, A. studied the impact of Covid-19 on financial stress, job loss, and mental health in Pune, Maharashtra, with a rural population of 3.7 million. The research examined these issues nine months after India's first lockdown. They found that men who lost their jobs reported more mental health symptoms, while financial hardship affected women's mental health more. However, social support and government aid improved mental health for women.

R. Pharr, J. Moonic, S., and J. Bungum researched "The Impact of Unemployment on Mental and Physical Health, Access to Health Care and Health Risk Behaviors" in December 2011. They aimed to explore how employment status and the length of unemployment affect perceived health, health care access, and health risk behaviors using the Nevada BRFSS survey data from 2009. Their findings indicate that the reason for unemployment, whether chosen or not, can greatly influence a person's mental health.

Monios, A, studied the effects of unemployment on the mental health of young individuals in January 2015. This research focused on identifying and preventing the negative effects of unemployment on young people, using data from articles found in various academic databases. The study concluded that unemployment severely harms the psychological well-being of young individuals, leading to decreased self-esteem, dysfunctional relationships, and a lower quality of life.

Mokona, H, Yohannes, K, and Ayano, G studied youth unemployment and mental health in August 2020. Their main goal was to examine the presence of depression among unemployed young adults in Gedeo zone, Southern Ethiopia. They analyzed data from 1,452 unemployed young adults and found that 30.9% experienced depression. Among these, 56.7% had mild depression, 36% had moderate depression, and 7.3% had severe depression.

Posel, D, Oyenubi, A, and Kollamparambil, U researched job loss and mental health during the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2021. Their study aimed to understand how job loss affected mental health in South Africa during the pandemic, using data from a national survey conducted from May to August 2020.

The studies mentioned are valuable for understanding the amount of research done on certain topics. Each study uses a critical method but has its own limitations. There are noticeable differences between national and international studies based on the problems addressed. The researcher has examined studies from both levels and noted their varied nature. A review of published literature shows that many researchers have explored the impact of unemployment on mental health and depression. However, the 10 topics discussed have not mainly focused on the depression level, which is why this area was chosen for further study.

STUDY POPULATION:

The current research focused on a specific group of young individuals from the Saran chhpara district in Bihar. This investigation highlights two key types of variables. The Independent Variable is manipulated by the researcher to determine its effect on the Dependent

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Variable. Here, mental health and depression represent the Dependent Variable, while unemployment stands as the Independent Variable. It is believed that the Independent Variable influences the changes observed in the Dependent Variable, which is evaluated as a response.

TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY:

The current research is founded on data collected from primary sources. A questionnaire has been developed for this purpose.

DATA GATHERING PROCESS:

For their study data collection, researchers employed online techniques. The questionnaire was shared with participants via Google Forms, and the data was gathered through the internet.

STUDY RESULTS:

Depression ranks as the most prevalent affective disorder, ranging from mild symptoms that are almost normal to severe (psychotic) depression characterized by hallucinations and delusions. Globally, depression is a significant factor contributing to disability and premature mortality. When we frequently and intensely respond negatively to life's challenges, we begin to show signs of depression. Life presents countless situations that we encounter with a mix of both negative and positive feelings, including excitement, frustration, fear, joy, anger, and sadness.

Depression affects people of all ages and across various life circumstances. Indians have one of the highest rates of depression in the world. According to research, around 9% of individuals in Saran, Bihar, reported experiencing prolonged depression at some point in their lives, while nearly 36% faced what is termed a Major Depressive Episode (MDE). MDE is identified by symptoms such as sadness, lack of interest or enjoyment, feelings of guilt or low self-esteem, disrupted sleep or appetite, diminished energy, and difficulty concentrating, along with a general feeling of being depressed.

The lowest occurrence of MDE was found in Chhapra (12%). The average onset age for depression in Sonpur is 31.9 years, compared to 18.8 years in Marhaura, and 22.7 years in Chhapra. The ratio of females to males is approximately 2:1. The World Health Organization lists depression as the fourth leading cause of disability globally and anticipates it will become the second leading cause by the year 2020.

STUDY LIMITATIONS:

The researchers have attempted to finalize this study based on the available data collection capacity in the present circumstances. They endeavored to conduct the study efficiently within a short timeframe. However, due to current challenges, they could only work with a limited population, which is a limitation of the research. The investigation focused on selected blocks within the Saran district, making it difficult to achieve precise results from these limited areas. Nonetheless, despite the small population size, the principal findings of this study remain highly accurate and were conducted with careful attention and diligence.

CONCLUSION:

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By examining the data mentioned earlier, we have come to a few conclusions that we will discuss below: Unemployment occurs when an individual is unable to secure a fitting job for their skills. This situation can be viewed as a disruption or crisis within society. Additionally, it describes a typical mindset where a person tries to find stability. From the research conducted, it can be observed that the impact of unemployment on young people's mental health, specifically concerning depression, differs and depends on the level of depression.

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