

A study on attitude of college teachers and students of Guwahati towards the mentally ill

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ABSTRACT: *In developing countries like India, there are evidences that stigma associated with mental illness is increasing. As in parts of the developing world, with advancement of urbanization and rapid industrialization, people tend to react in a very peculiar and biased way when they confront a mentally ill person. The present study aimed to find out college students and teachers attitude towards mentally ill. A total of 62 students and teachers (31 teachers and 31 students) from guwahati were purposively recruited for the study, Community Attitude towards Mentally Ill (CAMI) Scale was administered to collect data. A significance difference was observed between college teachers and students and also finds out the average mean of teachers and students according the dimension of the CAMI scale.*

KEYWORDS: *Attitude, College, Mentally ill, Students, Teachers*

I. INTRODUCTION

Illness refers to ill health, unfavorable on bad health. Illness can be either “physical” or “mental”. Thereby “Mental Illness” is difficult to define. The current version of the DSM characterizes a mental disorder as “a clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual [which] is associated with present distress...or disability...or with a significant increased risk of suffering.” It also notes that “...no definition adequately specifies precise boundaries for the concept of 'mental disorder'...different situations call for different definitions”. It states that “there is no assumption that each category of mental disorder is a completely discrete entity with absolute boundaries dividing it from other mental disorders or from no mental disorder” (APA, 1994 and 2000).

Attitude refers to evaluation of various aspects of social world. Attitude plays an important role in shaping the behavior of individual. Every individual is unique and everyone has different attitude towards different situation. There are some stigma works on people’s attitude and these stigmas create on designs a mental framework to perceive a situation and behave according to it. People also have some stigma towards mental illness. For some it is favorable and for some it is unfavorable. Some individuals accept mentally ill people in their community and some rejects them.

Stigma and negative attitude have harmful effects on mentally ill people. If people have stigma and negative attitude towards mentally ill people, the mentally ill people can not change their thoughts, irrational beliefs etc because they assumed that they are rejected and neglected from the society. So, it helps to grow their mental illness.

Socall and Holtgraves (1992) found that participants rejected a confederate depicted as mentally ill more than a physically ill confederate who behaved identically. Their finding showed that a mental illness label, regardless of a person's behavior, can result in public rejection. Therefore, research on the attitudes toward mental illness, specifically of those in mental health related fields, is necessary to ensure quality care to persons with mental illness.

Causes of mental illness have been said to have a significant impact on the acceptance of the mentally ill. Eker (1985b) studied the relationship between various attitudes toward mental illness in male and female respondents. He suggested types of causes of mental illness by observing the effect on perception of behaviors as suggestive of mental illness, social distance, and prognosis. The results determined that the type of cause had no significant influence on judgments of mental illness, social distance, and prognosis.

1.1 Significance of the study:

Attitude about mental illness plays vital role in long-term care of mentally ill patients. Not only people but patients who are mentally ill also frame a different picture about their illness which can be neutralizing by public’s familiarity with serious mental illness, which subsequently will decrease stigma (Patrick *et al.*, 2001). People frame a picture about mental illness and mentally ill patients in their mind, which generally guides their behavior, so public must be educated to bring about positive changes in attitude (Song *et al.*, 2005). Studies in India indicate that the public is largely misinformed about the various aspects of mental health, and information possessed by them remains uncrystallized. According to the study the mentally ill are perceived as aggressive,

violent and dangerous and not fit for coexistence in society. There is still a tendency to maintain social distance from mentally ill and to reject them socially which makes its existence to be felt. Studies addressing this issue have pointed out that a great deal of misconceptions, superstitions and ignorance with regard to mental illness exists in our society, which makes the picture more distorted.

1.2 Objectives of the study:

Present study is undertaken on the basis of these objectives:

1.2.1. To study the attitude of college teachers in guwahati towards mentally ill.

1.2.2. To study the attitude of college students in guwahati towards mentally ill.

1.3. Sample design:

A total 31 college teachers and 31 college students of guwahati city were purposively recruited for the present study. The sample comprised of both males and females teachers and students.

1.4. Limitation of the Study

Small sample size, viz., 62 participants, (31 college teachers and 31 college students) is definitely not good enough to make conclusive remarks with regard to attitude towards mental illnesses. The same study can be replicated with a larger sample size and by including larger geographical areas.

II. TOOLS USED:

To measure the attitude towards mentally ill, the investigator has used the scale, Community Attitude towards Mentally Ill (CAMI). This scale focused on discussion that one most strongly evaluative and at best discriminate between those positively and negatively disposed towards the mentally ill and mental health facilities. This scale includes 40 items with four dimensions. These are authoritarianism, benevolence, social restrictiveness and community mental health ideology.

III. DATA COLLECTION

The survey technique under 'Descriptive method of Research' was used in the present investigation. 31 college students and 31 college teachers were randomly selected from Guwahati area for this purpose. We met the students and teachers of colleges and interact with them and distributed the scale Community Attitude towards Mentally Ill to them and collected the scale after completing the responses given by the students and teachers.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

On the basis of the response given by subjects, their questionnaires were scored. For our purpose, we have pooled data in several ways to get scores on various dimensions. The t-test was applied to study the attitude of college teachers and students towards mentally ill. The average mean is also applied to see the attitude on all the four dimensions of each group.

Table 1 Attitude of college students and teachers towards mentally ill

| Sl no. | Attitude towards mentally ill | M | S.D | t | Level of significance 0.05 | Level of significance 0.01 |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------|------|------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Teachers(N=31) | 139.8 | 4.56 | 1.07 | Not significant | Not significant |
| 2 | Students (N=31) | 142.7 | 4.68 | | | |

The results presented in the Table 1 indicate that computed t-value is 1.07 which is lower than the critical value at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. So the t value is found to be not significant at both the level. So there is no significance difference in attitude towards mentally ill between college teachers and students.

Table 2 Average Mean of All the Dimensions

| Authoritarianism | | Benevolence | | Social restrictiveness | | Community mental health ideology | |
|------------------|------|-------------|----|------------------------|------|----------------------------------|------|
| Teachers | 30.5 | Teachers | 37 | Teachers | 32 | Teachers | 35.2 |
| Students | 31.5 | Students | 32 | Students | 35.1 | Students | 33 |

The results presented in the Table 2 indicate that the average mean differences in the dimension of Authoritarianism students have more scores than the teachers. In the dimension Benevolence we have seen that the scores of average mean is more in teachers than the students which indicates that teachers have more paternalistic and sympatric view of mentally ill. In the discussion of Social restrictiveness students' scores more than the teachers which indicate that students have more belief that the mentally ill are a treat to society and should be avoided. In the dimension of Community mental health ideology, researchers found that teachers have more acceptances to mentally ill patients in the community.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS

In this present study researcher found that

- 5.1. There is no difference in attitude towards mentally ill between college students and teachers.
- 5.2. The college students are more Authoritarianism than the college teachers.
- 5.3. The college teachers have more paternalistic and sympatric view of mentally ill than the college students.
- 5.4. Students have more belief that the mentally ill are a treat to society and should be avoided than college students.
- 5.5. Researcher found that college teachers have more acceptances to mentally ill patients in the community.

VI. CONCLUSION

It has always been an important area of investigation among mental health professionals. Every section of society has its unique way of perception about mental illness, particularly the young generation and college-going students. College has remained the best place to develop a comprehensive mental health program, because the attitude and values of college-going students influence society the most.

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