

The Effects of Urbanization on Mental Health: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Populations

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Abstract

As urbanization increases, more people are exposed to mental health risk factors due to the urban physical and social environment. However, research on the relationship between urbanization and mental health is lacking. This cross-sectional study, which was based on the proposed theoretical model, aimed to examine the relationships between physical and social factors (such as urban environment, spatial cohesion, and neighborhood cohesion) and mental health (such as symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression), as well as physical health and the mediating role of loneliness. The ANOVA's findings showed that city dwellers had greater mental health indices than those who resided in rural areas and small towns. Urbanization was one of the most important nodes in the network model, acting as a connection between every other node. The model was validated and showed that the relationships between the physical environment and mental health were successively mediated by neighborhood cohesion and loneliness. While spatial cohesion was linked to both physical environment and physical health parameters, physical health had a clear linkage with sociodemographic traits and a minor correlation with stress. Anxiety was the main risk factor. Improving neighborhood cohesion and restoring deteriorating buildings are two examples of social and architectural features that can improve mental health.

Keywords: Urbanization; Measurements; Architectural; Mental Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

The transition from a rural to an urban lifestyle is known as urbanization. Globalization, fast urbanization, and technology have a significant impact on social, economic, and personal life. Family life in India went from a joint family system to an extended family, then to a nuclear family, and finally, for a variety of reasons, to a single family. Rural agrarian civilization gave way to urban industrial society and the global economy (Gruebner et al., 2017). People are relocating to cities in search of better living conditions or to survive. Urbanization has an effect on mental health. Urbanization's effects are linked to a rise in mental illnesses. Poverty makes it harder for them to survive and pursue their goals in metropolitan areas, making them more susceptible to mental health problems (Luciano et al., 2016). In addition, prior research has shown that, in comparison to rural communities, deprived populations in cities experience more mental health issues due to a lack of education and knowledge, a lack of infrastructure, increased stressors, crowded living conditions, environmental pollution, high levels of insecurities, and a

decline in "social support (Juengsiragulwit & Nikapota, 2020)." Depending on the stage of life, psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors influence mental health and mental health issues. "Social inequality has a strong correlation with risk factors for many common mental disorders; the more inequalities there are, the higher the risk inequality" (WHO 2014). People who are denied fundamental necessities, security, affection, and a sense of belonging experience stress, and they may lack the knowledge, abilities, or disposition to handle the circumstances. This leads to distress, which in turn causes more health issues (Dagher, 2020).

The researcher paid particular attention to social inequality in Pune's metropolitan neighborhoods. The researcher was employed by a reputable Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that promoted education and empowerment for girls from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds as a social worker and counselor. The researcher saw and felt a great deal of stress operating on the entire family as a result of everyday life issues when interacting and working closely with the families in the areas for the aim of educating and empowering the female child. In addition to having great goals, the young girls' desire and ability to strive and achieve well at the school and college levels were being impacted by daily living obstacles, unfavorable social and physical conditions, and a lack of high-quality education (Wissing et al., 2013).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Percudani et al. (2024), mental health is defined as humor, competence, trust, and accomplishment. Mental health (MH) promotes intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and psychological growth as well as increased maturity and empathy in interpersonal interactions. It facilitates improved functioning, making the most of opportunities, and fully engaging with friends, family, coworkers, and the community (Percudani et al., 2024).

Globally, women are more likely than men to suffer from mental illness, and populations exposed to co-morbid conditions, humanitarian crises, or severe deprivations are particularly vulnerable (Sijuwade, 2015; Juengsiragulwit & Nikapota, 2020).

Urbanization has been shown to influence mental health through socioeconomic pressures, limited infrastructure, and environmental stressors. Iqbal (2024) highlights that urban living can exacerbate social inequalities and marginalization, impacting mental well-being. Similarly, Gruebner et al. (2017) and Luciano et al. (2016) found disparities in mental health access and psychosocial outcomes between urban and rural communities, with urban areas often presenting higher stress and resource challenges.

Khopkar et al. (2015) emphasize that adolescents in urbanized regions face increased risks of substance use and mental health challenges, underlining the need for targeted interventions (Luciano et al., 2016).

Education and socioeconomic status also interact with urbanicity to influence mental health outcomes. Breslau et al. (2014) report that individuals with lower educational attainment often

experience fewer psychosocial resources and greater exposure to daily stressors, which mediates their mental health outcomes.

Overall, urbanization, environmental stress, and social disparities combine to shape mental health, making it critical to address these factors through both policy and community-level interventions.

Objectives of the Research

1. Recognize the present situation of mental health in selected areas under study
2. Knowing about the social determinants of mental health of people living in urban areas.
3. Identify health educational needs of people living in urban areas as essential for promotion and prevention of mental health
4. Explore possible linkages with urban health system for promotion and prevention of mental health.
5. Outline research implications for promotion of mental health education and research interventions within the framework of National Mental Health Policy.

Statement of Research

Social determinants of mental health in urban areas for mental health education, prevention and promotion needs from people's perspective of selected areas.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions about 'mental health' of people living in areas and what is the situations of mental health in these areas?
2. Which are the perceived risk and protective factors /social determinants affecting their mental health?
3. What are their perceived needs for health education which can promote and prevent mental health in areas?
4. What 'people living in areas' do when they face mental health problems? What are the 'health prevention and promotion' facilities available for people facing mental health problems?

III. METHODOLOGY

An attempt has been made to compare several psychological factors between rural and urban players in the current study. Human conduct is the subject of different social sciences in various contexts. However, those sciences' operations won't enable them to completely meet their needs. For instance, history investigates the lives of deceased kings and queens, chieftains, and warriors; sociology studies group life; anthropology studies the ancient men; and economics studies the creation, distribution, and consumption of products. These fields' research focuses solely on facets of human existence. In the same way. The study of human behavior is another area of interest for psychology. However, psychology is the only social and biological science that attempts to examine man from every angle. It integrates many from every dimension for this purpose (Purtle et al., 2019). It incorporates a number of sciences into its fold for this reason, making its research extremely thorough and in-depth. In this sense, it takes a thorough and multidisciplinary approach to studying its subject—the human condition.

Measurements of the chosen test items, including stress and aggression, were made after they were administered. One hundred carefully chosen volunteers took the tests, and information was gathered. The goal of the current study was to evaluate the differences between the chosen group of rural urban male players and rural urban female players. The current study was built on the aforementioned variables, and it was intended to gather relevant data from the chosen test items. In order to determine the necessary outcome for school athletes, the appropriate statistical analysis was used. One hundred players—50 boys and 50 girls from rural and urban areas—were the main sources of data. Players were chosen to be the study's subjects. Through appropriate statistical analysis, the collected data was transformed into a table and shown using a variety of bar graphs and diagrams.

IV. EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS

Because of the various competitions, sports and physical education are becoming more and more important. Their issues are growing along with the significance of physical education and sports. Numerous behavioral issues arise during a player's training, practice, and competition. In addition, players must deal with a number of psychological issues both before and after the game in order to accept victory or defeat, which has a significant impact on their conduct.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of urbanization on mental health, and how can policymakers balance these competing factors?	5.168	46.986	46.986
How do new technologies, such as social media and mobile devices, affect mental health in urban and rural populations?	1.982	18.023	65.012
Are there any emerging mental health issues in urban populations that are not yet well understood?	1.223	11.116	76.117
How do urban and rural populations differ in their perceptions of mental health and mental illness?	.775	7.055	83.172
What are the similarities and differences in the factors that contribute to mental health outcomes in urban and rural populations?	.586	5.334	88.506
How do mental health outcomes differ between urban and rural populations in different regions or countries?	.439	3.986	92.492
What are the differences in access to mental health services between urban and rural populations?	.320	2.904	95.397
How do environmental factors, such as air pollution and noise, affect mental health in urban and rural populations?	.246	2.236	97.633
What is the relationship between urbanization and social support networks, and how does this impact mental health?	.145	1.322	98.955
How do socioeconomic factors, such as income and education, influence mental health outcomes in urban and rural populations?	.106	.962	99.917
What are the specific factors associated with urbanization that contribute to mental health outcomes?	.009	.082	100.000

A specialized area of psychology was desperately needed to investigate and analyze all of these mental health issues that were connected to behavior. Sports psychology met this need in

this way. The study's conclusions contributed to the body of knowledge in the fields of sports and physical education. The findings might encourage avoiding various psychological factors. The findings of this study may help coaches, physical education teachers, and athletes understand how important these techniques are to attaining high performance.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrated how loneliness and subsequent social neighborhoods are linked to mental health through the physical environment. Therefore, improving architectural conditions—that is, fixing and eliminating graffiti and other vandalism from the neighborhood's buildings—is essential. Through the role of better physical health, spatial cohesiveness is essential for mental health. Therefore, it is safe to say that living near urban areas and open green spaces improves physical health, which in turn affects mental health. The practical implications would be ensuring a shorter travel to specific areas, which is directly related to the frequency of use. Thus, enhancing green and urban areas and paying close attention to the physical surroundings are indicators of better mental and physical health. Indicators of mental health were better in cities than in small towns and rural areas. Despite having no direct connection to mental health, urbanicity was the most important component in the validated model in terms of the betweenness centrality. Our model shown that while urban life does not directly correlate with mental health, it can serve as a link between social cohesiveness, physical health, mental health, and the physical environment. As a result, our model demonstrated the intricate connections and the city's influence on both physical and mental health.

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