

# Students' Depression: A Critical Analysis Across Different Levels of Education in West Bengal

A synopsis of PhD thesis

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## Chapter outline

Chapter 1:	Context of the Study
Chapter 2:	Problem of the Study
Chapter 3:	Method and Procedure of The Study
Chapter 4:	Analysis and Interpretation
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**Introduction**

Depression, also known as Depressive Disorder, is a mental illness characterized by a pervasive and debilitating state of melancholy or despair, a lack of pleasure in formerly rewarding activities, and disruptions in a variety of other everyday functions. Our society is constantly evolving in which we currently live. Insufficient mental health among students is a current global concern. We occasionally encounter a variety of difficulties in order to meet our needs. However, when our needs aren't met, we become depressed. Today, depression is the world's most serious problem. Every country makes significant financial investments to address psychological issues, depression included. The transition to a new residence, being apart from one's family, and academic duties are just a few of the difficulties a young person must face while a student. Student life offers many opportunities for maturation, progress, and development, but it also requires accepting challenges and facing one's flaws, anxieties, and melancholy.

**Depression and Students**

There has been an observed increase in the prevalence of depression among college students. According to a study conducted during the academic year 2021-2022, including a sample of students from 133 college campuses, it was found that 44% of the participants reported experiencing symptoms indicative of depression. Additionally, 15% of the respondents disclosed having seriously contemplated suicide during the preceding year. Understanding the risk factors and symptoms of depression may facilitate the prompt diagnosis and treatment of this mental health condition for both parents and pupils. The challenges encountered by college students are multifaceted in nature. Individuals often experience significant pressure to achieve success while simultaneously acquiring essential life skills. The increasing expense of education imposes further strain on students and their families. In contemporary educational settings, there is a growing trend of subjecting children to excessive academic demands, starting as early as their primary school years. Consequently, their psychological well-being and mental health are experiencing negative effects.

## **Depression and Academic Achievement**

The advent of the human revolution has been instrumental in driving accelerated economic expansion, the development of advanced technologies, and perhaps improved societal standing. Nevertheless, these advancements pose a challenge for the majority, particularly students. The expectations placed on students to bridge the gap between their tertiary education and the demands of companies might create additional stress. The measure of a student's achievement may be attributed to their academic success as well as their soft skills, including effective communication abilities. Additionally, other elements such as mental well-being, age, and the kind of given activities may also contribute to their level of excellence. Several studies were aimed to investigate the correlation between students' academic performance and the aforementioned parameters. The findings estimated significant link between depression level and age with students' academic performance.

Academic-related demands, such as transitioning to university, coping with the multitude of tasks assigned by lecturers, and acquiring essential skills, can potentially affect the mental health among students (Khalid et al., 2016). The pressures associated with meeting these expectations may overwhelm students, making it difficult for them to effectively manage these challenges (Carveth, Gesse, & Moss, 1996). While it may present challenges to quantify mental health, it would be beneficial to examine the correlation between mental health issues and academic performance. This analysis would provide insights into the significance of mental well-being on students' educational achievements. The objective of this research is to assess the rate of prevalence of depressive symptoms among accounting students and investigate the potential associations between mental health, financial background, age, and gender with academic performance.

## **Significance of the study**

The purpose of the study to find out the level of depression among the school and college going students respect of their gender deferens, minority status, family type, locality of institution, stream of study, educational level, father 's occupations, mother 's occupations, monthly family income, academic achievement. Over the past ten years, research on depression among the student's mental health has become an important topic in our country India as well as foreign country also. Regrettably, there has been a significant increase in student suicide rates in India. Based on a research published in 2013 by The Registrar General of India titled "Suicides in India, 2013," it was found that suicide ranks as the second most prevalent cause of mortality among the demographic of those aged 15 to 24 years. A

total of 25,942 men within this particular age cohort engaged in the act of suicide, while 20,693 females within the same age range took their own lives. This article depicts a somber portrayal of the younger generation, who are resorting to fatal measures in their pursuit of resolving their issues. The objective of this research is to ascertain the prevalence rates of minimal, mild, moderate, and severe degrees of depression among students in the state of West Bengal. Depression has an impact on the academic performance of students across various age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic strata, hence incurring substantial personal, social, and economic burdens. Depression poses a significant risk of mortality, especially among young individuals, mostly due to suicide. Therefore, it is essential to do research on the prevalence and impact of depression among students at the secondary education level. Depression has been shown to exhibit associations with distinct cerebral regions, neurotransmitter substances known as chemicals, hereditary factors, and significant life occurrences. Depression is a prominent factor in global disability rates and has a significant role in the total burden of illness globally. Depression has been seen to co-occur with several mental problems and physical ailments, including but not limited to stress, anxiety, adolescent delinquency, chronic pain, and headaches. Depression has the potential to exacerbate several diseases, and conversely, these disorders may also contribute to the worsening of depression. Research on depression is needed to inform students about the various reasons are there that's why they are suffering from depression. The research result will be benefiting the future researchers work on measure the level of depression among the various level of students as well as the teacher, parents, administrators of education system to find out and short out the problem of depressive disorder among the student who have family problem, personal problem, economic problem, and educational achievement problem.

This chapter reviews previous research in the area of depression and mental health problems. Researcher looked at an online journal, a report piece, some publications, and a thesis to set the stage for this debate. In this instance, the review procedure included both domestic and international studies. It also describes the statement of problem, major research questions, objectives, delimitations and hypotheses which have led the researcher to select and move forward with the problem of this research.

### **Research Questions**

- a. How much depressed are the students of different educational levels in West Bengal? (School &, Higher Education students).
- b. How different demographic and socioeconomic factors results in variation of depression in students of different educational levels in West Bengal? (School &, Higher Education students).

### **Delimitations of the study**

- a. The study was restricted to 1941 samples from upper primary, secondary, undergraduate level and post graduate level only.
- b. Only North 24 Parganas, south 24 Parganas, Alipurduar, Birbhum, Purulia, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Hooghly, Nadia, Howrah, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Nadia, Medinipur and South Kolkata, North Kolkata districts were only selected for the study.
- c. The study was delimited to the school, college and university students around fifteen districts in West Bengal only.
- d. The study was restricted to the student's locality of institute (rural and urban) only.
- e. Some specific socio-demographic variables were treated as Independent Variable which was delimited to – Gender, Minority Status, Type of Family, Locality of Institution, Stream of Study, Student's Level of Education, Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Family Monthly Income and Academic Achievement were only included for the study.

- f. The study focused only on two Dependent Variables i.e Academic Achievement and Level of Depression for the study.

### **Objectives of the study**

- a. To study the existing Levels of Depression with respect to the Level of Education of students in West Bengal.
- b. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Gender of students in West Bengal.
- c. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Minority status with of students in West Bengal.
- d. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Family type of students in West Bengal.
- e. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Locality of institution of students in West Bengal.
- f. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Stream of Study of students in West Bengal.
- g. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect the Father's Educational Qualification of students in West Bengal.
- h. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to the Mother's Educational Qualification of students in West Bengal.
- i. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Father's Occupation of students in West Bengal.
- j. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Mother's Occupation of students in West Bengal.
- k. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to Family Monthly Income of students in West Bengal.
- l. To examine the existing Levels of Depression with respect to the Academic Achievement of students in West Bengal.

### **Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Levels of Education in West Bengal.

**H<sub>02</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Gender in West Bengal.

**H<sub>03</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Minority Status in West Bengal.

**H<sub>04</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Family Type in West Bengal.

**H<sub>05</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Locality of Institutions in West Bengal.

**H<sub>06</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Stream of Study in West Bengal.

**H<sub>07</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Father's Educational Qualification in West Bengal.

**H<sub>08</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Mother's Educational Qualification in West Bengal.

**H<sub>09</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Father's Occupation in West Bengal.

**H<sub>010</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Mother's Occupation in West Bengal.

**H<sub>011</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Family Monthly Income in West Bengal.

**H<sub>012</sub>** – There is no significant relationship between existing Levels of Depression and Academic Achievement in West Bengal.



This chapter describes the method and procedures followed in the study. The researcher has adopted various techniques to structure the work by complying with different theoretical assumptions in educational research.

### **Methods, Population and Sample**

The present study was conducted in the state of West Bengal to find out the depression among the school & college going student & impact of various demographic variable, for this purpose, an intensive survey was conducted in schools, colleges & Universities from North 24 Parganas, south 24 parganas, Murshidabad, Nadiya, Alipurduar, Hooghly, Purulia, Birbhum, Coochbehar, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Jhargram, North Kolkata district. The students from Twenty schools, sixteen colleges, five universities were selected randomly from sixteen districts of West Bengal. The purpose of the study was to explore the Levels of depression across different Level of Education. This study focused on the framework for cross-sectional survey research. The study's demographic consisted of undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in various West Bengal institutions. The total sample for the study comprised of 1941 students from different schools, colleges and universities of West Bengal.

### **Variables**

Independent variables of the study was characteristic features of the students i.e., gender, minority status, type of family, locality of institution, stream of study, estudent's educational level, father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation, monthly family income and academic achievement.

Dependent variable of the study was the level of depression of the participant students.

### **Instruments for data collection**

The socio-demographic measures were prepared by the investigator for the study that includes Gender, Type of Family, Social Status, Locality of Residence, Level of Education, Medium of Instruction and Stream of Study. To measure the level of depression of the students, the researcher has used Beck Depression Inventory-II developed by Aron T. Beck in 1996.

## **Procedure & Analyses**

After obtaining necessary permission from the administrative heads of the schools, colleges and university departments. Data was collected from four universities, sixteen colleges and twenty higher secondary schools in West Bengal.

The students took 45-50 minutes to complete the test. The response sheets were then collected from the students for further analysis. At the end of the data collection the researcher thanked the principal of colleges, teachers and students of many colleges, head of the departments of universities and also teacher and students of universities who helped the researcher so much to collect data from those institution. The data was then coded for the final analysis and interpretation. A tabulation sheet was prepared in Microsoft Excel from the datasheets. Further, the data was cleaned, and items renamed as per the criteria of variables. No addition or omission of data was made in both the tabulation sheets. Statistical analyses were done using IBM SPSS 20 software.

## Chapter 4                      Result and Interpretation

The results and interpretations of all analyses are presented in this chapter. The findings from the study are presented independently, then compared for clarity. Both descriptive and inferential data were addressed in each study. Inferential statistics, such as the t-test, one-way analysis of variance, chi-square test of independence etc., were performed.

Some highlights of the finds are as follows.

1. There is a significant relationship found in the Level of Education and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
2. There is a significant relationship found between Gender and the Existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
3. There is a significant relationship found between the Minority status and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
4. There is a significant relationship found between the Family type and existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
5. There is a significant relationship found between the Locality of institution and existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
6. There is a significant relationship found between the Stream of Study and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
7. There is a significant relationship found between the Father's Educational Qualification and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
8. There is a significant relationship found between the Mother's Educational Qualification and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
9. There is a significant relationship found between the Father's Occupation and the existing Levels of Depression of students to West Bengal.
10. There is no significant relationship found between Mother's Occupation and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
11. There is a significant relationship found among Family Monthly Income and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.
12. There is a significant relationship found between the Academic Achievement and the existing Levels of Depression of students in West Bengal.

Apart from the above, there are further non-parametric statistical tests were computed of which summary is given below.

a chi-square test of independence was computed between the levels of depression and level of education. A statistically significant dependency was found ( $\chi^2-112.576$ , **df-3**, **p-0.000**, **p<0.05**). Higher Education Level Students are higher than School Education Level in the existing Level of Depression. A statistically significant dependency was found between the levels of depression and Gender of students. ( $\chi^2-48.607$ , **df-3**, **p-0.000**, **p<0.05**). The study revealed that female students had a greater level of depression compared to their male counterparts. A substantial statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2-12.033$ , **df-3**, **p-0.007**, **p<0.05**). Research has shown that students who identify as non-minority exhibit greater levels of depression compared to those who identify as belonging to a minority group. A considerable statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2-10.192$  **df-3**, **p-0.017\***, **p<0.05**). Research findings specify that students hailing from mixed family structures exhibit greater levels of depression compared to those from nuclear family backgrounds. A substantial statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2-17.878$  **df-3**, **p-0.000\***, **p<0.05**). The study revealed that students attending urban institutions show greater levels of depression compared to those attending rural institutions. A substantial statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2-145.965$ , **df-3**, **p-0.000\***, **p<0.05**). The study revealed that students pursuing arts and scientific disciplines have a greater prevalence of depression compared to their counterparts in commerce and school-related fields. A substantial statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2 - 22.634$ , **df - 12**, **p -0.031\***, **p < 0.05**). The study discovered that students whose fathers are illiterate exhibited lower levels of depression compared to students whose fathers had received some level of education in primary, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education. This suggests that students with educated fathers experienced a higher degree of depression than those with illiterate fathers. No statistically significant relationship was found between the levels of depression and amount of education ( $\chi^2-10.784$ , **df-12**, **p-0.548\***, **p>0.05**). The study revealed that students whose mothers have limited or no literacy skills experience minimal levels of depression. Conversely, students whose mothers have received primary, secondary, higher secondary, or higher education exhibit mild levels of depression and demonstrate a higher degree of depressive symptoms compared to students whose

mothers are illiterate. A substantial statistical association was seen between the degrees of depression and the amount of schooling ( $\chi^2$ -34.948, df-12, p-0.000, p<0.05). The study revealed that adolescents whose fathers are engaged in occupations related to agriculture, business, private employment, government employment, or labour tend to exhibit symptoms indicative of mild depression. No statistically significant association was seen between the levels of depression and amount of education ( $\chi^2$ -8.845, df-6, p-0.182, p>0.05). The study discovered that adolescents whose mothers are engaged in occupations such as homemaking, private employment, or government employment tend to exhibit symptoms of mild depression. A substantial statistical association was seen between the levels of depression and the monthly income of families ( $\chi^2$ -12.868, df-3, p-0.045, p<0.05). The study indicated that adolescents from numerous socioeconomic backgrounds, including rich, moderate, and poor family monthly income, display mild levels of depression. A considerable statistical relationship was seen between the levels of depression and the level of education ( $\chi^2$ -17.881, df-6, p-0.007\*, p<0.05). The research findings specify that individuals classified as Moderate Achievers exhibit greater levels of depression compared to both High Achievers and Low Achievers in relation to their academic achievements in the region of West Bengal.

The section titled "Result and Discussion" have significant importance inside a thesis. The "Results" section presents the study results in an unbiased manner, devoid of any interpretation, so providing a comprehensive overview of the collected data. The provided information establishes the empirical foundation for the next parts. Conversely, the "Discussion" section provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the aforementioned results. In this instance, the researcher provides a contextual framework for the findings, including them into the existing body of knowledge, and extrapolating its wider implications. This part also facilitates critical examination, by comparing the findings with previous studies and emphasizing the practical or theoretical importance of the study. Additionally, the study suggests potential avenues for future research, establishing links between the study's findings and broader scholarly discussions. Fundamentally, the section labeled "Results" presents the unprocessed data, while the section labeled "Discussion" ascribes significance to the data, so guaranteeing that the thesis is grounded in empirical evidence and has a comprehensive interpretive framework.

### **Discussion**

Research has shown a significant relationship between educational level and depression levels, with higher prevalence and severity observed with higher education levels. Gender also plays a role in depression, with girls from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds exhibiting the highest levels of symptoms. Studies have also found that women in rural and urban areas have higher depressive symptoms than men. However, no significant differences in mental health were observed among male and female students, and no significant disparities were found based on religion.

Depression is more prevalent among students from minority groups, with rural residents having higher rates of melancholy. Academic variables were found to be significantly linked to depressive symptoms scores, with low scorers reporting higher levels of depression compared to high scorers. Academic achievement was found to be associated with lower depression levels in Korean elementary students. However, no significant correlation was found between academic achievement and global anxiety and depression.

## **Educational Implications**

There exists a need to establish a program or service catering to the needs of students in schools and universities, with the primary objective of mitigating the occurrence of depression and enhancing their adjustment to academic and higher educational environments. The provision of support for this particular cohort of students is vital, necessitating the involvement and assistance of both the community and the university administration. Students who are identified as experiencing symptoms of depression should be referred to specialized psychiatric centres for a comprehensive diagnosis. It is central to highlight the status of educating both parents and teachers about depression relative to the students' well-being. Additionally, there is a need for the development of educational programs targeted towards students, addressing the challenges they may encounter during their academic journey. There is a need to create early detection methods for depression and implement customized preventative programs in order to enhance mental well-being and academic achievement within the school, college, and university demographic. Enhancing the psychological and material aspects, together with facilitating educational opportunities for those with low Socio-Economic Status, may potentially lead to a decrease in the occurrence of depression across the broader community. Gender should be taken into consideration as an additional component in prevention and intervention efforts. It is essential to establish targeted initiatives aimed at the prevention, identification, and intervention of prevalent mental disorders among the youth population.

Numerous interventional studies are required to make a significant contribution towards the implementation of strategies aimed at enhancing the identification and reducing the prevalence of depression among students, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It is advisable for teaching personnel to strengthen their teaching and communication abilities. There exists a need for enhanced screening procedures, psychoeducational programs, and services to provide improved identification, early intervention, and targeted support for those who are at risk.

The educational attainment level of individuals may have a significant influence on their ability to get healthcare services and ultimately affect their health outcomes. The rising prevalence of depression represents a significant issue within the realm of public health, particularly as it pertains to those with less educational attainment, who have an amplified susceptibility to depressive symptoms. The assessment of depression has significant importance throughout several sectors of healthcare, including primary care as well as

specialized mental health services. The present study aimed to explore the impact of schooling on the psychometric features of self-report measures assessing depressed symptoms.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

1. The study was conducted on School and Higher Education students. Further investigation could be done on Elementary Children.
2. The present study was focused only students from West Bengal. So further studies can be done with a comparative analysis taking other state and country.
3. Further studies can be done taking the B.Ed teacher trainees, teachers, administrators, management and even parents. Teachers from different level like primary, secondary, senior secondary, college and university level.
4. Beck Depression Inventory-II was used to investigate the levels of depression among students. Further studies can be done taking other scales like DASS.
5. The study focused on the socio-demographic variables. More studies could be done on other Psychological variables like Motivation, Emotional competence, social competence, Parenting Style, Value Conflict, Welbeing, Personality, Self Awareness, Critical and Creative Thinking, Spiritual Intelligence etc.
6. Experimental study and studies pertaining to interventions for solving issues related to Depression can be conducted. A study can be effectively done on depression to suggest rightful interventions for this younger group.
7. Further studies can be done with Government, Semi-Government and Private Sector employees.
8. Further studies can be done on the remedial actions and treatment of Depression through different Meditations, Counselling, Psychotherapy etc.
9. Further studies can be done on the Literacy of Depression among Students, Teachers, Administrators, Head of the Institutions etc.
10. Further studies can be done on Students from ICSE, CBSE, Kendra Vidyalayas, Sainik School, Distance Education like IGNOU, NIOS etc.
11. For generalizing the result of the present study further studies may be conducted on larger sample size taking different districts and states.
12. Further studies can be done on the impact of age, community, living status, family environment on level of Depression.



13. More studies can be done to change the way of viewing depression in the society.
14. More studies can be done on different strategies and awareness about the treatments of depressive students.
15. More studies can be done on altering the society's attitude towards the depression.
16. More studies can be done on creating a happy school and family environment.

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