

# **Mental Health Status of M.Ed. Students with Respect to Gender in Kerala**

by

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## **Abstract**

The present research endeavor was aimed to assess Gender differences in Mental Health Status of M.Ed. students in Kerala. The sample of the study consisted of 314 M.Ed. students, of which 49 were males and 265 were females in Kerala. The method used for the present study was survey method. Mental Health Status Scale (M.H.S. Scale) was used and t-test was used for the analysis of data. The statistical results of the study indicated that, there was no significant difference in each of the components of Mental Health Status with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala. In general, there was no significant difference in Mental Health Status with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala. Based on the findings obtained, the present study provides educational implications for better educational outcomes as well as for further researches in the research area based on the findings.

**Keywords:** *Mental Health Status, Gender, M.Ed. Students*

## **Introduction**

Mental health is a global term which refers to state of a person, resulting from the normal organization and proper functioning of his mind. It is a combined product of physical, emotional, moral, spiritual and social health while, mental health is the most important component of the overall health and psychological well-being of a person. It is an integral and essential component of overall health. Right thoughts, right attitudes and right actions are very useful and necessary for maintaining good mental health. Mental health is also called the process of human self satisfaction, self realization and fully successful existence. It is a condition of psychological maturity (Haneef Kumar, Mohd & Baliya , J.N., 2016).

Mental health is considered as one of the most important factors in the promotion of human development and this point is especially important in student teachers as they are going to build a bridge for the future of education. They are going to become teachers and teacher educators for the new generations of mankind. To achieve these objectives, a student teacher should be mentally and psychologically fit and free from all kind of mental disorders to teach effectively in his/her classroom.

## **Need and significance of the study**

Gender is related to how we are perceived and expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organised, and not because of our biological differences (World Health Organization, 1998). A gender approach to health means to distinguish biological and social factors while exploring their interactions, and to be sensitive to how gender inequality affects health outcomes. A gender approach to mental health provides guidance to the identification of appropriate responses from the mental health care system, as well as from public policy. It is well-accepted that the achievement level of an educational system is decided by the quality functioning in the system. No system of education can rise above the level of its teachers. If nations want to have quality in education, it must have quality in teachers. Teacher education seeks to promote excellence, adventure of ideas and search for truth. Teacher education has to help to develop those capabilities in a trainee which would help him to conceptualize a phenomenon or situation and enable his/her to contribute to social development through his/her knowledge, understanding of knowledge and skills to produce social well-being.

However, not much study in this area have been conducted in India and especially among M.Ed. students in Kerala, who have the fundamental responsibility as new generation of teachers on the improvement of our society and the welfare of new generation of mankind. Hence the investigator has come up with the idea of undertaking a study in Kerala.

### **Statement of the problem**

In accordance with the need, as specified before, the present problem would be stated around as a study on ‘Mental Health Status’ and ‘Gender’ among M.Ed. students to explain the nature and scope of the study to a great extent. Therefore, the problem can be stated as **“Mental health status of M.Ed. students with respect to gender in Kerala”**.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To find whether there exists significant difference in each of the Components of Mental Health Status vis., i) Attitudes toward the self, ii) Positive attitude toward others, iii) Self-actualization, iv) Integration, v) Autonomy, vi) Perception of Reality, vii) Environmental mastery and viii) Optimism factors with respect to Gender.
2. To find whether there exists significant difference in Mental Health Status with respect to Gender.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

1. There exists significant difference between each of the Components of Mental Health Status vis., i) Attitudes toward the self, ii) Positive attitude toward others, iii) Self-

actualization, iv) Integration, v) Autonomy, vi) Perception of Reality, vii) Environmental mastery and viii) Optimism factors with respect to Gender.

2. There exists significant difference in Mental Health Status with respect to Gender.

### **Method adopted for the study**

Considering the nature of the problem, data to be used and the objectives selected for the study, the method used for the present study is survey method. The study is descriptive and co-relational in nature.

### **Sample Selected for the Study**

Population in the present study was the M.Ed. student teachers in Kerala state of India. Since, the population was large in size an optimum sample which fulfils the requirement of the population was selected by stratified random sampling by giving due representation to Gender (male/female). The sample for the study consisted of 314 students undergoing M.Ed. programme on regular basis in University Departments and affiliated Colleges under the Universities such as Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, Calicut and Kannur in Kerala in 2016.

### **Tool used for the study**

Mental Health Status Scale (M.H.S. Scale)-(prepared and standardized by the investigator). The scale comprised of eight components, vis., i) Attitudes toward the self, ii) Positive attitude toward others, iii) Self-actualization, iv) Integration, v) Autonomy, vi) Perception of Reality, vii) Environmental mastery and viii) Optimism factors.

### **Statistical technique used for the study**

The t-test or test of significance for difference between means for large independent samples (Garrett, 1969) was used to compare the means obtained by any two groups of subject on any of the variables.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The analysis of the data and results obtained for the present investigation are interpreted and discussed in this chapter under following head.

#### **1. Comparison of the variables based on gender**

The comparison of various components of Mental Health Status, Total Mental Health, with respect to Gender was made using t-test for the total sample. The details are given in table 1 to table 10 respectively.

#### **Table 1**

##### **1.1 Distribution of the sample based on gender**

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Sub-</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
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Sample		Percent		Percent
Gender	Female	265	51.6	84.4
	Male	49	9.6	15.6
<b>Total</b>		314	61.1	100.0

The above table shows the break-up of samples taken for the study based on gender. The total number of the sample was 314. Out of 314 male and female students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala, 49 (15.6%) were male and 265 (84.4%) were female.

### 1.2 Data and result of t-test for the various components of mental health status among male and female students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala with respect to gender

Comparison of the various components of mental health status such as: i) attitude toward the Self, ii) positive attitude toward others, iii) self-actualization, iv) integration, v) autonomy, vi) perception of reality, vii) environmental mastery and viii) optimism with respect to gender was made. The data based on components of mental health status with respect to the male and female students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given below:

### 1.3 Data and result of t-test of attitude toward the self with respect to gender among M.Ed. students in Kerala

The data regarding the Attitude toward the Self with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 2.

**Table 2**

#### Data and result of t-test of attitude toward the self among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Attitude toward the Self	Female	265	31.97	5.409	1.703	0.092
	Male	49	30.86	3.937		

From table 2, it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Attitude toward the Self is 1.703 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance (t = 1.96). This shows that, there is no

significant difference in Attitude toward the Self with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

**1.4 Data and result of t-test of positive attitude toward others with respect to gender among M.Ed. students in Kerala**

The data regarding the Positive Attitude toward Others with respect to the Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 3.

**Table 3**

**Data and result of t-test of positive attitude toward others among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Positive Attitude toward Others	Female	265	35.66	6.496	0.641	0.523
	Male	49	35.12	5.167		

From table 3 , it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Positive Attitude toward Others is 0.641 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance (t = 1.96). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Positive Attitude toward Others with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

**1.5 Data and result of t-test of self-actualization with respect to gender among student teachers in Kerala**

The data regarding the Self-Actualization with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 4.

**Table 4**

**Data and result of t-test of self-actualization among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p

	Female	265	33.48	5.783		
Self-Actualization	Male	49	35.22	6.725	1.704	0.093

From table 4 , it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Self-Actualization is 1.704 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance (t = 1.96). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Self-Actualization with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

**1.6 Data and result of t-test of integration with respect to gender among M.Ed. students in Kerala**

The data regarding the Integration with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 5.

**Table 5**

**Data and result of t-test of integration among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Integration	Female	265	36.75	6.767		
	Male	49	36.86	9.090	0.081	0.936

From table 5, it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Integration is 0.081 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance (t =1.96). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Integration with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

**1.7 Data and result of t-test of autonomy with respect to gender among students in Kerala**

The data regarding the Autonomy with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 6.

**Table 6**

**Data and result of t-test of autonomy among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Autonomy	Female	265	32.98	5.238	1.030	0.307
	Male	49	34.12	7.393		

From table 6, it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Autonomy is 1.030 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance ( $t=1.96$ ). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Autonomy with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

### 1.8 Data and result of t-test of perception of reality with respect to gender among student teachers in Kerala

The data regarding the Perception of Reality with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 7.

**Table 7**

**Data and result of t-test of perception of reality among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Perception of Reality	Female	265	33.70	6.484	0.360	0.720
	Male	49	34.10	7.258		

From table 7, it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Perception of Reality is 0.360 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance ( $t=1.96$ ). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Perception of Reality with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

### 1.9 Data and result of t-test of environmental mastery with respect to gender among M.Ed. students in Kerala

The data regarding Environmental Mastery with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 8.

**Table 8**



### Data and result of t-test of environmental mastery among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Environmental Mastery	Female	265	35.69	5.695	0.129	0.898
	Male	49	35.53	8.091		

From table 8, it is found that, the 't' value for Environmental Mastery is 0.129 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance ( $t=1.96$ ). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Environmental Mastery with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

### 1.10 Data and result of t-test of optimism with respect to gender among student teachers in Kerala

The data regarding the Optimism with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 9.

**Table 9**

### Data and result of t-test of optimism among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender

Component of Mental Health Status	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Optimism	Female	265	34.02	5.931	1.318	0.193
	Male	49	35.63	8.205		

From table 9, it is found that, the 't' value for Optimism is 1.318 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance ( $t=1.96$ ). This shows that, there is no significant difference in Optimism with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala.

The results indicated that, the components such as: Attitude towards Self, Positive Attitude toward Others, Self-Actualization, Integration, Autonomy and Perception of Reality,

Environmental Mastery and Optimism of students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala are independent of Gender.

**1.11 Comparison of the total mental health status among students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala with respect to gender**

Comparison of the data based on Total Mental Health Status with respect to Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were made. The details are given below:

**1.11.1 Data and result of t-test of total mental health status with respect to gender among student teachers in Kerala**

The data regarding the Total Mental Health Status of Male and Female M.Ed. students in Kerala were collected and analysed. The details are given in table 10.

**Table 10**

**Data and result of t-test of total mental health status among M.Ed. students in Kerala with respect to gender**

Predictor Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Test for Equality of Means	
					t	p
Total Mental Health Status	Female	265	274.25	31.704	0.504	0.616
	Male	49	277.45	42.345		

From table 10, it is found that, the ‘t’ value for Mental Health is 0.504 which is less than table value even at 0.05 level of significance (t = 1.96). This shows that, there is no significance in Mental Health with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala. Based on this, it is seen that, there is no significant difference in Total Mental Health Status with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala

**Tenability of the hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There exists significant difference in each of the components of Mental Health vis., i) Attitudes toward the self, ii) Positive attitude toward others, iii) Self-actualization, iv) Integration, v) Autonomy, vi) Perception of Reality, vii) Environmental mastery and viii) Optimism factors with respect to Gender. The results indicated that, there is no significant difference in each of the components of Mental Health Status with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala. Hence, the hypothesis 4 is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There exists significant difference in Mental Health with respect to Gender.

The results indicated that, there is no significant difference in Mental Health Status with respect to Gender among the students in Kerala. Hence, the hypothesis 4 is rejected.

### **Discussion of the results**

The present study moves on from the review of literature to examining the Mental Health Status among male and female students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala. The statistical results of the study indicated that, Components of Mental Health such as: Attitude towards Self, Positive Attitude toward Others, Self-Actualization, Integration, Autonomy and Perception of Reality, Environmental Mastery and Optimism of students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala are independent of Gender. Similarly, the results revealed no significant differences in Total Mental Health Status among the students in Kerala with respect to their Gender. It means that sex has no effect on mental health of students. The results of the present study were not supported by research studies by Soet & Sevig, 2006; Santos et al., 2009; Patil, 2012 & Singh, 2015; found a significant difference in Mental Health with respect to Gender.

The results could be positive if Gender equality was considered among M.Ed. students in Kerala. The sample sizes were roughly unequal and the study was limited to 49 (15.6%) male and 265 (84.4%) female out of 314 M.Ed. students in Kerala. Therefore, insufficient gender equality among the students maybe was the reasons for getting such results. However, Rani, Ritu & Singh, Ajmer (2012), found significant difference in mental health with respect to gender.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The study was limited in scope and hence the finding should be looked upon as presenting only a small part of the total picture. Based on the findings obtained, the investigator would like to suggest on the following areas of further research:

Research studies with much larger sample size would be required to ensure appropriate generalization of the findings of this kind of studies.

Gender equality is an often-used but infrequently defined term. Translating the concept of gender equality in education into a practical framework will assist education programmers in better designing, managing, and evaluating education projects. To be practical, this research work must draw clear distinctions and demonstrate interrelationship among gender equality. Consideration of gender equality between genders in size would be required to ensure appropriate generalization of the findings of the study.

Implications of findings suggested that gender (male and female) was not key factor in mental health among students undergoing M.Ed. programme in Kerala according to this study. Educational authorities should not pressurize students with too many academic activities at the risk of their life. Right thoughts, right attitudes and right actions should be developed among students as they are very useful and necessary for maintaining good mental health.

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Contemporary India: Issues and Challenges' organized by the  
Department of History, School of Distance Education, University of  
Kerala on 21-23 November 2017 at Senate Chamber, University of  
Kerala, Palayam, Thiruvananthapuram. He / She has presented a  
paper/ chaired a session on Mental Health Status of M.Ed.*

  
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