


# Chapter 13

## Silent Struggles: Revealing the Mental Health Crisis Among Kattunauakan Tribal Adolescents in Kerala, South India

**V. K. Aswathy**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8895-8373>

*Lovely Professional University, India*

**Sanjeev Kumar**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7375-7341>

*Lovely Professional University, India*

### ABSTRACT

*Kattunayakan, the largest particularly vulnerable tribal group in the state, are facing highest mental health problems and are subjected to higher extend of suicidal rate. This study aims to identify the current state of mental health among Kattunayakan tribal adolescents and explores the reasons and influencing factors behind the mental health deficits among them. A total of 93 tribal adolescents from the Kattunayakan community in Wayanad district, Kerala, were randomly chosen as participants in this study. Data was collected using a self-administered interview questionnaire to assess different aspects of mental health, including self-rated anxiety, mental stress, and social interaction as perceived by the adolescents themselves. The results illuminate the distinctive difficulties that tribal adolescents encounter and offer valuable knowledge for crafting targeted interventions and support systems designed specifically for this demographic.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-9755-8.ch013

## INTRODUCTION

Mental health, according to the World Health Organization (2013), encompasses an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It reflects their capacity to realize their potential, handle life's stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community. The World Health Organization (WHO) has consistently highlighted the critical need for global mental health reform. In its 2024 and 2025 updates, the WHO emphasized that mental health disorders are a leading cause of disability worldwide, accounting for 15.6% of years lived with disability (YLDs). Despite the prevalence of conditions like depression and anxiety, approximately two-thirds of individuals with mental health conditions do not receive treatment. The WHO's 2025 guidance calls for urgent transformation in mental health policies, advocating for a shift from outdated institutional models to community-based, rights-centered care. This approach aims to address the significant gaps in access and quality of mental health services, ensuring that care is accessible, effective, and aligned with international human rights standards. Mental health deficits refer to limitations or challenges in various aspects of psychological functioning, including cognition, emotional regulation, social interactions, and adaptive behaviors. Assessing these deficits helps identify the specific needs of individuals within a community, guiding the development of tailored mental health programs and services. It informs resource allocation and policy development, supporting mental health promotion, prevention, and treatment. Identifying community-specific mental health deficits enables early intervention, targeting, and the provision of resources tailored to the community's unique needs, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Mental health deficits can arise from a combination of factors that interact and influence an individual's mental well-being. Genetic predisposition or imbalances in brain chemistry can play a role in the development of mental health deficits. Certain mental health conditions, such as depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, have been linked to genetic and biological factors. (Proctor, Flanagan, 2009). Adverse experiences or stressful life events can contribute to mental health deficits (Aysheha Yousef Mosallam, et al, 2016). These can include childhood trauma, abuse, neglect, loss of a loved one, relationship difficulties, financial problems, or other significant life stressors. Individual temperament, personality traits, and coping styles can impact mental health (Manuela Pérez-Chacón et al, 2023). Factors such as low self-esteem, negative thinking patterns, perfectionism, and poor stress management skills can contribute to mental health deficits (M. Mann et al, 2004). Social support, relationships, and social determinants of health can influence mental well-being (Val Livingston et al. 2022). Isolation, loneliness, discrimination, poverty, inadequate access to healthcare, and lack of social support systems can contribute to mental health deficits. Substance abuse and addiction can significantly impact

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/silent-struggles/380558](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/silent-struggles/380558)

## Related Content

---

### Blockchain Technology and Healthcare Applications: A Comprehensive Study

Anita Venaik, Sanjeev Bansaland Rinki Kumari (2022). *Quality of Healthcare in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic* (pp. 180-191).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/blockchain-technology-and-healthcare-applications/292427](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/blockchain-technology-and-healthcare-applications/292427)

### Awareness and Information Sources of Hypertensive Diseases Among Aged Civil Servants in Southwest, Nigeria

Ojinga Gideon Omiunu (2018). *International Journal of Public Health Management and Ethics* (pp. 38-54).

[www.irma-international.org/article/awareness-and-information-sources-of-hypertensive-diseases-among-aged-civil-servants-in-southwest-nigeria/196595](http://www.irma-international.org/article/awareness-and-information-sources-of-hypertensive-diseases-among-aged-civil-servants-in-southwest-nigeria/196595)

### Cognitive Security For Smart Rural Infrastructure: Edge AI And Federated Learning Solutions

Sudan Jha (2026). *Cognitive Security and Predictive Health Monitoring for Rural Development* (pp. 1-24).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/cognitive-security-for-smart-rural-infrastructure/407280](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/cognitive-security-for-smart-rural-infrastructure/407280)

### Environmental Change and the Emergence of Infectious Diseases: A Regional Perspective from South America

Ulisses Confalonieri, Júlia Alves Menezesand Carina Margonari (2017). *Examining the Role of Environmental Change on Emerging Infectious Diseases and Pandemics* (pp. 109-137).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/environmental-change-and-the-emergence-of-infectious-diseases/162354](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/environmental-change-and-the-emergence-of-infectious-diseases/162354)

### Musculoskeletal Disorders and Their Associated Risk Factors in Long-Distance Truck Drivers From Allahabad, India: A Cross-Sectional Study

Ravindra Kumar, Anish Kumar Sinhaand Apurvakumar Pandya (2022). *International Journal of Applied Research on Public Health Management* (pp. 1-9).

[www.irma-international.org/article/musculoskeletal-disorders-their-associated-risk/290375](http://www.irma-international.org/article/musculoskeletal-disorders-their-associated-risk/290375)