



## A STUDY ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS OF WEST BENGAL

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### ABSTRACT

*Since ancient times, teaching has been regarded as one of the most honorable professions. The values of teachers and their professional concern with the work have forced experienced a significant transformation as a result of the changing socio-economic environment and rising unemployment, which has a negative impact on their mental health. Numerous personal and professional obligations have been discovered to have an impact on a teacher's degree of mental health. Teachers' wellbeing in the areas of social, physical, and mental health contributes to both their personality and professional development. They have furthermore been seen as a nation's builders of the future. These factors were taken into account in the current research, which sought to determine the degree of personal mental health among school instructors, especially those who work in public schools. The data were gathered using a survey approach using the Mental Health Index (MHI). The research involved 100 secondary and upper secondary school instructors. Descriptive analysis was used to assess the data, and a t-test was used to see if gender and location made a difference. The t-values show that there are significant gender disparities among government school instructors, with male teachers scoring higher on mental health tests than female teachers. Additionally, compared to instructors assigned at schools in rural regions, teachers placed at schools in urban areas scored better on mental health tests.*

*Keywords: mental health, gender equality*

### Introduction

Schools are not locations where students go to learn, but rather are seen as the temple of education, where instructors assume a function comparable to that of a priest in a religious institution. The performance of the school is the result of instructors and pupils working as a team. Teachers are not only responsible for educating pupils, but also for bridging the gap between students, principal, administration, and parents. Their cordial relationship with students is reflected in their behavior and language. Teachers who have positive professional relationships with their pupils, their parents, their coworkers, and management may have improved mental health.

In today's world of professional competence, everyone faces increased competition and deteriorating conditions. Health is and has always been one of the most crucial topics requiring constant attention. As a result, the definition of health has been expanded to include regulated emotions and a sound and effective mind in addition to the appropriate functioning of the body. Simply said, it indicates that the mind and body are functioning properly and in harmony (Kaur, 2007). Previous study demonstrates that mental health plays a pivotal and essential part in human existence. It is not only important, but necessary for social survival. No aspect of human existence is beyond the scope of mental health. It encompasses every facet and dimension of human personality, as well as an individual's adjustment to self, others, and environment. The fundamental feature of mental health is adjustment, the degree of which determines the mental health state. The higher the degree of adjustment, the higher the mental health, and the lower the degree, the worse the mental health. The mentally healthy individual is able to adapt to all of life's best and worst conditions and environments.

The term "Mental Health" is composed of two words: Typically, the term 'mental' refers to more than a person's simply cerebral activity. It comprises an individual's emotional emotive states. The connection one develops with others reflects the balance within one's sociocultural setting. Similarly, the term 'health' encompasses more than physical wellness. It also refers to the individual's intra-physical equilibrium, the interplay between one's physical structure and the external and social environment (Kaur, 2007). For instance, a person who is academically sound and understands what is to be taught, but is unable to convey this knowledge owing to issues relating to his or her surroundings. Mental health refers to the condition of the mind, akin to the wholesomeness of the body that is implied in physical health. In the same way that physical health is concerned with the health and function of one's bodily organs, mental health is concerned with the health and function of one's mind. In common parlance, mental health is a state of psychological health or the absence of a mental disease (Singh, 2004). From the standpoint of positive psychology or holism, mental health may encompass a person's capacity to enjoy life and strike a balance between life activities and attempts to acquire psychological resilience. WHO defines mental health as "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational reliance, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional capacity, among others."

According to Kornhauser (1965), mental health encompasses the actions, perceptions, and emotions that define an individual's total degree of personal efficiency, success, happiness, and superiority of functioning as a person. It is dependent on the formulation and maintenance of objectives that are neither too high nor too low to facilitate the successful preservation of one's self-belief as a valuable, effective human being. In addition, it is the situation in which a person exhibits self-evaluation, adaptability, maturity, a regular lifestyle, the lack of extremism, adequate social integration, and employment fulfillment. Ideal mental health is complete. Whoever exhibits the largest amount of these characteristics will be closest to the ideal (Singh, Chandra & Parihar, 2011).

Singh and Gupta (1983) described six indices of mental health, namely emotional stability (experiencing subjectively stable positive or negative feelings), over-all adjustment (achieving an overall harmonious balance between demands of various aspects of the environment, such as home, health, social, emotional and school and cognition), autonomy (a stage of independence and self-determination in thinking), security-insecurity (a high or low sense of safety); and autonomy (a stage of independence and self-determination in thinking) (general mental ability which helps the person in thinking rationally, and in behaving purposefully in his environment).

Das (2008) defines mental health as follows: "Good mental health may be attained by adhering to the notion of mental hygiene, which is the study and use of those methods that prevent mental disease. Mental wellness is a means of interacting with other members of society in a satisfying and productive manner. Numerous studies have been undertaken to assess the mental health of school instructors in connection to a variety of psychological characteristics. It is vital to note that these many variables interact with one another in a dynamic manner and may work for or against the mental health of a person. Table 1 presents some examples of elements that may be detrimental to or protective of mental health. For instance, a person's sense of self-worth may be strengthened or lessened by social support or

economic security at the home level, which may in turn be impacted by the degree of political stability, social fairness, or economic prosperity in a nation.

Mental health determinants			
Level	Adverse factors		Protective factors
Individual attributes	Low self-esteem	↔	Self-esteem, confidence
	Cognitive/emotional immaturity		Ability to solve problems
	Difficulties in communicating		Physical health, fitness
	Medical illness, substance use		
Social circumstances	Loneliness, bereavement	↔	Social support of family & friends
	Neglect, family conflict		Good parenting / family interaction
	Exposure to violence/abuse		Physical security and safety
	Low income and poverty		Economic security
	Difficulties or failure at school		Scholastic achievement
	Work stress, unemployment		Satisfaction and success at work
Environmental factors	Poor access to basic services	↔	Equality of access to basic services
	Injustice and discrimination		Social justice, tolerance, integration
	Social and gender inequalities		Social and gender equality
	Exposure to war or disaster		Physical security and safety

Using a mental health measure, Ananda (1989) performed a research on the mental health of schoolteachers and found that 59% of instructors were mentally sound. Teachers' mental health was favorably correlated with social ideals, but there was no correlation between working conditions and mental health. Kumar (1992) noticed that a teacher's poor mental health not only hinders his ability to carry out his many responsibilities at school, but also causes challenges and problems for his pupils. Kaur (2007) studies the link between work stress, mental health, and coping resources of high and upper secondary school teachers.

The findings demonstrated that teachers sometimes experience stress as a consequence of role overload, duties, and physical school-based stresses. Teachers who are psychologically healthy, on the other hand, adopt coping strategies to resist the effects of occupational stress. To alleviate mental pressures, they engage in activities such as watching television, listening to music, and receiving social support from friends. In addition, the study suggested a negative association between work stress and mental health. Additionally, occupational stress and coping strategies tend to be detrimental. The correlation between mental health and coping resources is considerable and good.

Srivastava and Khan (2008) performed a research to determine the influence of mental health on the amount of teacher burnout at various education levels. They found that instructors with poor mental health are more likely to experience burnout than those with medium or good mental health. Srivastava(2010) evaluated the personality and mental health of elementary and secondary school educators. The results reveal that personality types and attributes impact the mental health of primary and secondary school teachers, with extrovert instructors enjoying greater mental health than their introverted counterparts.

Kale (2011) performed a research about B.Ed. students' understanding of mental health. The survey technique was used by the researcher to acquire data. The findings suggest that freshly accepted B.Ed students have a high level of mental health awareness.

Kumar (2013) observed that a t-test demonstrates that elementary school teachers in urban areas had higher mean scores on mental health ( $t = -16.06; p.01$ ), while elementary school teachers in rural areas have worse mental health scores. Thus, self-awareness of mental health enables elementary school instructors to deal with stressful situations more effectively and to conduct a more accurate assessment of students' unwanted behavior at the elementary school level. In conclusion, a teacher may often model the classroom setting after their own personal experiences and cultural background (Kroeger & Bauer, 2004).

This picture may resemble what they were taught in school, as well as their own opinions about how houses and lives should be ordered, feeling that this is the correct way and will continue to be so (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2006). Some academics, such as Langley (2008), have proposed that instructors should investigate the possibility that the issue is within themselves and not the kid.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The following aims for the current research were presented on the basis of the conceptual description that was supplied and the analysis of the literature that was conducted addressing the mental health of school teachers: To assess the mental health among government school teachers.

1. To investigate whether or whether there are gender variations in the mental health of teachers working in schools.
2. To examine the differences in the levels of mental health experienced by school instructors assigned to urban vs rural schools.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. When it comes to one's mental health, there are likely to be considerable variances between the sexes.
2. School instructors who are assigned to schools in urban regions are likely to be quite

different from those who are assigned to schools in rural areas.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

A method of sampling at random was used in the selection process for the sample. The investigator chose one hundred teachers from secondary and upper secondary schools throughout West Bengal who were between the ages of 36 and 50. These instructors were from a variety of areas. At the end of the test, there were a total of 100 participants, and they were split evenly between male and female groups (50 in each group). Every single one of the instructors has a minimum of five years of experience teaching at the current position, and they all live with members of their families.

### Tools

The following resources were used in this investigation:

**Mental health index:** Only two of the total of 38 items on the MHI are not graded on a scale of six points each (range 1-6). Items 9 and 28 are the only exceptions; they are both rated on a scale of five points (range 1-5). The values that were pre-coded for each item are shown on the copy of the instrument that is located on the pages that came before it.

### Procedure

Data collection began upon receipt of the necessary authorization from the Principals of the institutions that were of concern. For the aim of collecting trustworthy data, participants were given an explanation of the background of the study as well as its goals before they took part. They were given assurances regarding the data's ability to remain secret. Several instructions pertaining to the surveys were provided. The participants were responsible for filling the scale while they were on duty, and it was collected as soon as it was finished being filled.

### Statistical analysis

In order to evaluate the mental health of the instructors, a descriptive analysis and a t test were carried out. SPSS-21 was used in order to do the analysis on the data. In the next part, we provide the statistical findings that were obtained.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The tabulation used to convey the findings of the statistical analysis performed on the current inquiry, which shows the descriptive statistical values for the variables in question, accompanies the presentation of these findings. In addition, a t-test was conducted to compare the gender disparities of the instructors as well as the differences between urban and rural schools' staff members.

**Table 1: Shows descriptive statistics for the overall data.**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Mental Health	100	97.82	37.28	0.264	-1.051

It is clear from looking at Table that the mean values for mental health are on the somewhat upper end of the spectrum. This indicates that the majority of public school teachers who make up the current sample have improved mental health as a result of the demands of their



jobs.

**Table 2: Mental health of male and female school teachers**

GENDER	N	Mean	SD	t -value	Level of significance
Male	50	107.76	38.02	2.38	0.02
Female	0	0.97	6.48		

Table, which you may see below, illustrates the disparity in mental health that exists between the two groups (male and female). It is very clear that there is a considerable gender gap when it comes to the mental health of male and female school instructors.

When compared to their female counterparts, males often report having superior mental health. Even if they have to commute long distances, men are able to manage their single role as a teacher, whereas female teachers have to maintain both their personal and professional fronts. For whatever reason, men are able to do this, whereas female teachers have to deal with a great deal of difficulty.

**Table 3: Mental health of rural and urban school teachers**

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t- value	Level of Significance
Rural	50	78.16	34.22	-6.46	0.001
Urban	0	21.58	0.81		

According to the findings that are shown in Table 3, there is a statistically significant gap in the mental health of rural and urban school teachers. It has been established that the mental health of government school instructors who are posted in metropolitan regions is higher than the mental health of teachers who are placed in schools situated in rural areas. Possible explanations include more convenient transportation options, a shorter distance between the student's house and the school, more connectedness to district officials, and an improved quality of life.

In conclusion, it has been discovered that the mental health of male school teachers is greater than that of their female counterparts in the same profession. In addition, it has been discovered that the urban school teacher has a larger salary than the female school instructors in the same location. As a result, we may accept any of the hypotheses.

### CONCLUSION

Psychiatry is a specialized field that focuses on mental health, and the goal of this field is to protect mental health in a variety of ways, including through preventive measures, controlling factors that are effective on the development of mental diseases, timely diagnosis of mental diseases, prevention from complications due to relapse of mental diseases, and the provision of a healthy environment as a contributory factor on sound human relationships. Regarding the mental health of school instructors, the current research conducts an investigation into this problem and makes an attempt to offer answers for the following question.

Ananda (1989) used a mental health scale in the course of her research on the subject of the mental health of school teachers. She found that 59% of the instructors were found to have a

good mental state. The fate of our nation's progress is now in the hands of its educators. Maintaining a healthy mental state is of the utmost importance for everyone, but especially for educators. Inadequate mental health in educators may have a negative impact, not only indirectly but also, and in some cases, directly, on the personality development of their students. It is imperative that all of the school administrators and higher authorities place a strong emphasis on fostering and preserving the good mental health of both the children and the teaching staff.

As a result, it is essential for there to be a guidance and counseling cell in each and every one of the schools. It will assist in the resolution of issues relating to instructors' and students' emotional, psychological, and physical health. The promotion of mental health should be the subject of associated workshops, seminars, group discussions, and conferences. If it were arranged on the level of the interschool competition, then only the instructors and children would gain. The job that is done in the classroom has a direct bearing on the mental health of the instructors. Therefore, a teacher's sound mental health should be considered just as crucial a qualification as their intellectual prowess.

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