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A STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO GENDER, MARITAL STATUS AND LOCALE

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Abstract

Teaching is a crucial and rewarding job. However, it can be quite stressful as well because of factors including workload, classroom management, pressure from parents and administrators, high expectations, a lack of resources, and professional development. This high level of expectations from a teacher to be able to cater to the educational needs of all students, appease the parents, and the administration and to grow professionally simultaneously along with all the responsibilities they often take a toll on the mental well-being.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the mental health of secondary school teachers and their gender (male and female), marital status (married and unmarried), and school location (rural and urban). This is because all these factors, along with the workload on secondary school teachers, have an impact on both the teachers' instruction and the students' learning.

For the above stated purpose, the data was collected from 160 secondary school teachers of Malda district of West Bengal. A mental health scale comprising of 46 questions was given to the teachers to collect the data. The data was compared through t-test using the SPSS software.

The analysis of the data shows that there exists significant difference between the mean scores of mental health of rural male and rural female secondary school teachers but there was no other significant difference on the basis of their gender, marital status and locality of their schools. The results imply that the mental health of the secondary school teachers should be focused on for the better functioning of the institutions and its teaching learning process.

Key words: COVID-19, Mental Health, Gender, Marital Status and Locale

Introduction

The teaching profession includes a wide range of responsibilities, including managing classrooms, attaining the educational objectives, designing lesson plans, addressing diverse students' educational needs, and navigating administrative demands. Teachers are supposed to create an appropriate learning environment so that the students feel comfortable to ask questions, discussing ideas, and collaborating with peers. Teachers often act as mentors, provide guidance and support to their students both academically and personally. Teachers can serve as positive role models for students, demonstrating values such as respect, empathy, and continuous learning. Teachers also act as a link between students and higher-ups (Mohana, 2013). As Compared to 20 years ago, teaching has changed significantly, and teachers now face additional difficulties in the future (Eacute & Esteve 2000). The workload, the demands and challenges of the teaching profession may have a significant impact on a teacher's mental health and well-being; especially the secondary school teachers deal with more stress in their work environment. Secondary school teachers are particularly vulnerable to burnout (Garcia-Carmona et al 2019). That is why the mental health of the teachers is a critical but it is overlooked as a factor at play in the education system. Recognizing and addressing teachers' mental health not

only benefits educators themselves but also contributes to the overall education system and the learning of the students. Prioritizing teachers' mental health is an investment in the quality of education and the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession. Mental health of any individual can be affected by various factors including physical factors, heredity factors, family factors, social factors etc. Although mental health is an individual phenomenon, the quality of social life matters for the mental health of secondary school teachers, and it is affected by various social factors like social trust, social support and social status (Beheshti, Norian Najafabadi 2021). According to English and English (1945), "Mental health is a relatively enduring state where the person is well-adjusted, has a zest for living, and its attaining self-actualization or self-realization". Social connectedness; Empowerment and control over one's life; and rebuilding positive identities had been identified as central to recovery from Mental Health Difficulties. (Tew et al. 2012). The lack of understanding regarding mental illnesses, especially depression, highlights the significance of raising mental health literacy (Lauber et al 2003).

Teachers' Mental Health: Mental health is an important component of overall well-being that impacts people at all stages of life. It is critical in developing an individual's opinions, emotions, and actions, which can have an impact on their daily

lives, relationships, and academic achievement. The WHO emphasizes that a healthy mental state entails more than simply being free of mental disorders and disabilities. The mental health of the Teachers and all other stake holders plays a vital role in any educational institution where it can have a substantial impact on the teaching learning process. The well-being of students is closely linked with the teacher's well-being (Harding et al 2019). A mentally healthy teacher is better equipped to create a positive learning environment and engages with students more effectively. Improving teachers' mental health can contribute to higher job satisfaction and reduce the likelihood of burnout, leading to increased teacher retention. The maintenance of the wellness of teachers depends heavily on the prudent use of professional resources (Braeunig et al 2018). The Mental Health Literacy can help teachers to maintain good mental health. (Yamaguchi, et. al. 2021) studied that in the high school of Japan the mental health literacy of the high school teachers is very low. So educational programmes should be designed and implemented to improve teachers' mental health in order to assist them in supporting students with mental health issues. Teachers' mental health is unaffected by the

fact that they teach at various levels at various schools and have variable teaching experience. Based on the teacher's gender, some teaching levels were thought to be more susceptible to mental health issues. The main occupational risk factors were determined to be a lack of support from coworkers, dependence on the issues of mental health (Kovess-Masféty et al 2007). The mental health and balance of professional life of the teachers were affected in exceptional situations like COVID pandemic (Marshall et al., 2022). COVID-19 caused significant stress in teachers, which led to lower mental health, and degraded the quality of teaching. Simultaneously, teachers had shown flexibility in their teaching process. Supporting teachers' well-being is essential to prevent negative effects on educators, their pupils, and the educational system. (Baker et al 2021). During both the waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland, the teachers reported at least minor levels of anxiety, stress, and sadness. The negative impact of the pandemic reflected in social relationships and the skills of the teachers, (Jakubowski, and Sitko-Dominik 2021). There was a direct significant relationship of teachers' mental health with various dimensions of social trust which indicates

that, the more social trust, the better the mental and psychological health (Norian Najafabad, Jahangir 2012).

(Ahmad & Shakir 2022) studied on few primary school teachers' mental health and their Self-efficacy. Further studies show the impacts of mental health of the teachers in their profession and few studies talks about the mental health problem. This study aims to find relationship among the mental health of the secondary school teachers and certain demographic variables like gender, marital status and the locale of their schools. All the above studies include mental health as a variable but no studies specifically shows the relationship of Mental Health of secondary school teachers in relation to the demographic variables gender, marital status and locale of their schools. This study aims to find this relationship.

Objectives of the study: The objectives of the study are:

1. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers.
2. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Married and Unmarried Secondary School Teachers.

3. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers.
4. To Compare mean scores of Mental Health of Married Male and Married Female Secondary School Teachers.
5. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Male and Unmarried Female Secondary School Teachers.
6. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Rural Male and Rural Female Secondary School Teachers.
7. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Urban Male and Urban Female Secondary School Teachers.
8. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Married Rural and Married Urban Secondary School Teachers.
9. To compare mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Rural and Unmarried Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Hypotheses of the study:

Hypothesis (H₀1): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀2): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Married and Unmarried Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₃): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₄): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Married Male and Married Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₅): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Male and Unmarried Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₆): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Rural Male and Rural Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₇): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Urban Male and Urban Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₈): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Married Rural and Married Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₉): There is no significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Unmarried Rural and Unmarried Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Population: The population of this study is the Secondary School Teachers of Government and Private schools of Malda district of West Bengal.

Sample: The data for this study was collected from the secondary schools of the Malda District of West Bengal through the random sampling technique.

Tools used in the present study: In the present study The Teacher Mental Health Scale, standardized by Dr. Deepti Sharma and Prof. Mujibul Hasan Siddiqui (2019) was used

Data Analysis: The data for this study was collected from the secondary schools of Malda district. The quantitative data was analyzed using the SPSS software and the statistical techniques, Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used in accordance with the objectives and nature of the study and.

Hypothesis (H₀₁): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers.

Table 1: t-test showing the Mental Health of Male and Female Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison Between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Male	78	168.81	22.011	157	-1.780	.077	Not Rejected

According to table 1, the mean scores of mental health of male and female secondary school teachers are 168.81 and 174.73 and the calculated t-value is -1.780 and the significant value is .077 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant

difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers.” is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀₂): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Married and Unmarried Secondary School Teachers.

Table 2: t-test showing the Mental Health of Married and Unmarried Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Married	76	173.51	16.432	157	.965	.336	Not Rejected

According to table 2, the mean scores of mental health of married and unmarried secondary school teachers are 173.51 and 170.28 and the calculated t-value is .965 and the significant value is .336 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Married and Unmarried Secondary

School Teachers.” is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀₃): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Table 3: t-test showing the Mental Health of Rural and Urban Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Rural	78	170.83	23.209	157	-.579	.563	Not Rejected
	Urban	81	172.78	18.980				

According to table 3, the mean scores of mental health of rural and urban secondary school teachers are 170.83 and 172.78 and the calculated t-value is -.579 and the

significant value is .563 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Mental Health of Married Male and Married Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₄): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of

Table 4: t-test showing the Mental Health of Married Male and Married Female Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Married Male	37	172.11	15.913	74	-.724	.471	Not Rejected
	Married Female	39	174.85	17.009				

According to table 4, the mean scores of mental health of married male and married female secondary school teachers are 172.11 and 174.85 and the calculated t-value is -.724 and the significant value is .471 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Married Male and Married Female Secondary School Teachers” is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀₅): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Male and Unmarried Female Secondary School Teachers.

Table 5: t-test showing the Mental Health of Unmarried Male and Unmarried Female Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Unmarried Male	40	165.13	26.120	80	-1.766	.081	Not Rejected
	Unmarried Female	42	174.62	22.500				

According to table 5, the mean scores of mental health of unmarried male and unmarried female secondary school teachers are 165.13 and 174.62 and the calculated t-value is -1.766 and the significant value is

.081 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Male and

Unmarried Female Secondary School Teachers'' is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Mental Health of Rural Male and Rural Female Secondary School Teachers.

Hypothesis (H₀₆): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of

Table 6: t-test showing the Mental Health of Rural Male and Rural Female Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Rural Male	37	164.24	24.545	76	-2.459	.016	Rejected
	Rural Female	41	174.62	20.452				

According to table 6, the mean scores of mental health of rural male and rural female secondary school teachers are 164.24 and 174.62 and the calculated t-value is -2.459 and the significant value is .016 which is less than 0.05 (sig. < 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, "There is no any significant

difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Rural Male and Rural Female Secondary School Teachers' is rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀₇): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Urban Male and Urban Female Secondary School Teachers.

Table 7: t-test showing the Mental Health of Urban Male and Urban Female Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Urban Male	40	172.85	19.041	78	.052	.958	Not Rejected
	Urban Female	40	172.63	19.394				

According to table 7, the mean scores of mental health of urban male and urban female secondary school teachers are 172.85 and 172.63 and the calculated t-value is .052 and the significant value is .958 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, "There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Urban Male and Urban Female Secondary School Teachers'' is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀₈): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Married Rural and Married Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Table 8: t-test showing the Mental Health of Married Rural and Married Urban Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Married Rural	40	171.85	17.201	74	-.929	.356	Not Rejected
	Married Urban	36	175.36	15.564				

According to table 8, the mean scores of mental health of Married Rural and Married Urban secondary school teachers are 171.85 and 175.36 and the calculated t-value is -.929 and the significant value is .356 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health

of Married Rural and Married Urban Secondary School Teachers.” is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis (H₀9): There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Rural and Unmarried Urban Secondary School Teachers.

Table 9: t-test showing the Mental Health of Unmarried Rural and Unmarried Urban Secondary school teachers

Variable	Comparison between	No of items	Mean scores	Std. deviation	df	t-value	Sig. value	Result
Mental Health	Unmarried Rural	37	169.11	28.504	80	-.291	.772	Not Rejected
	Unmarried Urban	45	170.71	21.272				

According to table 9, the mean scores of mental health of unmarried rural and unmarried urban secondary school teachers are 169.11 and 170.71 and the calculated t-value is -.291 and the significant value is .772 which is greater than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no any significant difference in mean scores of Mental Health of Unmarried Rural and Unmarried Urban Secondary School Teachers.” is not rejected at 0.05 level.

Results: The study was done to draw a relationship between the mental health of secondary school teachers and certain demographic variables like their gender, their marital status and the locale of their school. The result of the analysed data establishes some relation between the variables. Only the rural male and rural female secondary school teachers shows no significant relationship among them otherwise the mental health of secondary school teachers with respect to the other

considered variables of this research are shown significant relationship among them.

Conclusion: The result of a study (Gorsy et al. 2015) shows that there are considerable gender inequalities among public school teachers, with male instructors scoring higher on mental health measures than their female colleagues. Also, in comparison to teachers employed in schools located in rural regions, teachers employed in schools in urban areas scored higher on mental health tests. A teacher can maintain the mental health by keeping the negative thoughts away. Many hazards to mental health can be prevented with the aid of skills related to appropriate management of undesirable thoughts and emotions. The mental health of the teachers is the key aspect to be maintained by the management of the school, because if the teachers remain mentally healthy the school environment including the students, their learning thrives and produces good results for the society.

Educational Implication:

In order to optimize the teaching-learning process the overall well being of both the learners and the teachers is imperative. This study highlights the areas where a gap can be seen in the mental well being of teachers

owing to some demographic variables, female teachers as opposed to males, teachers employed in rural areas as opposed to those working in urban areas have poor mental health. This implies that the working conditions of female teachers in public schools and for teachers in rural areas need to be improved to improve the quality of education in general, because the quality of education imparted by the teachers is not independent of the mental state of the teachers. The interaction between the instructor and the learners is also greatly impacted by the mental state of both the parties involved and to ensure that the interaction is healthy the mental health of both the teachers and students must be taken into account.

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