

Mental Health of Secondary School Teachers in Murshidabad District of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

With the changing socio-economic scenario and increasing unemployment, the value of teacher and their professional concern with the job have forcibly undergone a change which adversely affect their mental health. The level of mental health of a teacher affects his/her working as well as organizational climate. Keeping into this thing consideration, the study was aimed at finding the mental health of secondary school teachers in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The study was confined to 200 teachers of secondary schools of Murshidabad district by using simple random sampling techniques from government and private schools. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant difference in mental health of teachers dimension wise and a whole in relation to sex and management variation but educational qualification does not play any role in shaping the mental health of teachers.

Keywords: Mental health, secondary school, gender, management, qualification

Teachers can make the pillars of the nation deep and lift them high to the sky only when they perform their duties with dedication and sincerity. This is possible only when their personality is fully developed and they possess a mental well being. In recent decades, significant advances in technology and industry have brought a wave of stress that has caused reduction of mental health. Mental health is described as something more than a mere absence of mental disorders. Mental Health refers to a state of mind which is characterized by emotional well being, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationship and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life (Bhagi, 1992). Mental health is an index of the mind. It symbolizes mental readiness and willingness with which individuals identify them with their work.

A mentally healthy individual has a sense of identity, a wholeness, belongingness, security and meaningfulness: He is goal oriented in life and puts effort constantly to achieve it. The goal accomplished further strengthens his positive attitudes towards self. A mentally healthy person is effective, competent and is able to interact freely and openly with others and can share himself with other people and grow from such experiences. It is a balance between what is expressed and what is repressed between outer and inner conflicts and drives, and a regulation of one's moods and emotions. It includes emotional responsiveness, control and unified philosophy of life. A mentally healthy person acts independently, dependently and interdependently as the need arises, without permanently losing independence.

Traditionally the teaching job enjoyed a considerably high level of prestige and only dedicated and selected individuals joined the profession. The teachers were usually held very high esteem by the different sections of people and society was sensitive to take care of the needs of the teacher. With the changing socio-economic scenario and increasing unemployment, the values of teacher and their professional concern with the job have undergone a change which adversely affects the mental health of the teacher. Common mental health problems arise from life events as well as the pressure of work. Bereavements, divorces, financial difficulties, family history and personal characteristics can trigger mental health problems. Unproductive levels of stress might be harmful to teachers and can affect their teaching, personal lives and most importantly their students.

Need and Importance of the Study

In the present world, each human being is surrounded by worries and tensions. If he does not adjust with environment and problems, he may become a problem for himself. There is a need of good mental health for decreasing strain and tension, for proper emotional, social, moral adjustment, for actualizing one's potentialities, to develop desirable personality, seeking proper adjustment and seeking set of goals of life.

Modern teaching is not confined to only formal and mechanical procedure. It has become a highly versatile occupation calling for alertness, patience, persistence, judgment and other resources required in meeting novel situations. The constant solving of novel situations is precisely the kind of activity which leads to much wear and tear. Physical weaklings and tired people are poorly fitted to represent civilization on the frontiers of childhood where conflicts with law and order, intelligence or emergencies involving the physical safety and mental potentialities of children are constantly arising.

A teacher's personality has a great bearing on the personality development of students. Teacher's mental health plays an important role in the entire

teaching learning process. The teachers of today are facing new challenges in education calling for greater effort on their part to discharge challenging roles and functions but are ill equipped due to various reasons. The teacher in the Indian society is suffering from economic problems, negligence, insecurity and low status. Mental health of teachers is at stake owing to reasons like heavy work load, relationship between teachers and authority (Das, 1989), burn out (Panda, 1990), working condition, family environment (Singh, 1989) and accepting less paid job with high educational qualification (Nayak, 2004). Keeping in view the paucity of Indian researches on the mental health of teachers and inconsistent findings, the investigator is inclined to assess the mental health status of teachers working in secondary schools of Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To assess the mental health of all secondary school teachers dimension wise and in total so as to find out the percentage of teachers under good, average and poor mental health condition category.
2. To study differences if any in the mental health of teachers due to the variations of sex, qualification and management type of schools.

Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the above objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

- ⊙ There is no significant difference in mental health of teachers dimensions wise and as a whole due to sex, qualifications and management variations.

Population and Sample

The sample was drawn by employing stratified random sampling technique. The sample comprised 200 secondary school teachers of Murshidabad district, 100 from each of the government, and private unaided schools including male and female. While selecting the sample the variation

of sex, qualification and school type was taken as intervening variables.

Tools Used

The RCE Mental Health Scale by Dr. Anand (1992) was used for the study. The tool is consisting of 60 items in five point Likert scale which measures six dimensions namely self-concept, concept of life, perception of self amongst others, perception of others, personal adjustment and record of achievement. The scoring was done as per the descriptions given in the manual of the standardized scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to accomplish the objectives of the study the t-test was applied to study significant differences of school teachers' mental health in relation to their sex, qualification and management type of schools. The results are given in following tables.

From the Table 1 it was observed that there is difference in mean scores of mental health of male and female teachers. In order to find out significance of the difference component wise analysis of scores of teachers of both the sexes was made.

Table 2 indicates that there is significant difference in respect of self-concept, perception of others and record of achievement. It was also observed that in each component female teachers show superiority as compared to their male counterparts.

On perusal of the above table, it was evident that obtained value of 't' ratio in case of gender variation which was 3.23 was greater than the tabulated value (2.60) at 0.01 level of significance for 198 degrees of freedom. Hence the 't' ratio in case of sex variation was significant. The study was in conformity with earlier studies done by Sharma (1995), Pradhan (2009) who have shown gender as an intervening variable for mental health of teachers.

The 't' ratio in case of qualification variation (1.94) was lesser than the tabulated value (1.97) at 0.05 level of significance for 198 degrees of freedom. Hence the 't' ratio in case of qualification was also not significant. So, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the mental health of teachers with regard to locale variation could not be rejected.

The 't' ratio in case of school type variation (3.96) was greater than the tabulated value (2.60) at 0.01 level of significance for 198 degrees of freedom.

Table 1: Component wise Comparison of Mental Health between male and female school teachers

| Sex | Components | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|----------------------|------|---------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| | Self-concept | | Concept of Life | | Perception of self amongst others | | Perception of others | | Personal adjustment | | Record of achievement | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Male | 6.28 | 3.01 | 9.68 | 4.87 | 20.51 | 5.35 | 8.54 | 4.01 | 10.79 | 3.46 | 13.34 | 5.22 |
| Female | 7.68 | 2.66 | 10.86 | 3.96 | 21.72 | 4.96 | 10.99 | 3.49 | 11.71 | 3.28 | 16.98 | 4.77 |

Table 2: Component wise analysis of scores of teachers

| Components | 't' | Remarks |
|-----------------------------------|------|----------------------|
| Self-concept | 3.50 | Significant (p< .01) |
| Concept of Life | 1.90 | NS |
| Perception of self amongst others | 1.68 | NS |
| Perception of others | 4.62 | Significant (p< .01) |
| Personal adjustment | 1.91 | NS |
| Record of achievement | 5.12 | Significant (p< .01) |

Table 3: Summary of test of significance of differences between the means of contrasts of the sample on Mental Health

| Variation | Sub Samples | N | Mean | SD | SED | df | 't' | Remarks |
|-----------------|---------------|-----|-------|-------|------|-----|------|----------------------|
| Sex | Male | 100 | 65.61 | 20.50 | 2.67 | 198 | 3.23 | Significant (p< .01) |
| | Vs. Female | 100 | 74.24 | 17.21 | | | | |
| Qualification | Postgraduates | 94 | 73.41 | 9.86 | 1.78 | 198 | 1.94 | NS |
| | Vs. Graduates | 106 | 69.95 | 15.12 | | | | |
| Management type | Government | 100 | 76.68 | 13.31 | 2.08 | 198 | 3.96 | Significant (p< .01) |
| | Vs. Private | 100 | 68.43 | 16.02 | | | | |

Hence the 't' ratio in case of school type variation was significant. The above table also revealed that the Government school teachers have higher mental health as compared to teachers of privately managed schools. The study was in conformity with earlier studies done by Galgotra (2013), Dager (2016).

Conclusion

The present study exposes mental health condition of our secondary school teachers and this study have implications for school management members, policy makers, school authorities and administrators. The teachers of private schools differ significantly in mental health in comparison to government school teachers and therefore the school management and higher educational authorities should look into the matter seriously and should provide necessary motivation and emphasis should be given on development of self confidence of teachers in order to stabilize their mental health. Attempts should be taken to address the difficulties of teachers working in private schools. Emphasis should be given for creating better organizational climate which is mainly hampered due to groupism, internal rivalry and narrow politics among staff in schools. School administrators and higher authorities should arrange faculty improvement programmes for teachers to refresh their knowledge of content and teaching method. Seminars, workshops and

conferences should be organized in which experts should be invited to refresh knowledge and discuss their problems which they face in their work environment. Ample opportunity should be given for research work for professional growth of teachers.

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