

Primary Teachers' Awareness of Children's Mental Health

A Synopsis of the PhD thesis

Submitted by

Pratiksha Goswami

Registration No- AOOED1100419

Under the supervision of

Prof. Muktipada Sinha

Department of Education

Jadavpur University

Kolkata

2024

Chapter Plan

Chapter – I: The Context of the Study

Chapter – II: Problem of the Study

Chapter – III: Method and Procedure

Chapter – IV: Result and Interpretation

Chapter – V: Discussion and Conclusion

Chapter – I: Context of the Study

Introduction

Children's mental health is fundamental to their overall well-being and development. Teachers, who interact with children daily, are uniquely positioned to spot and address mental health concerns early on. Their awareness and understanding of child mental health are crucial for providing the right support and care to their students. In schools, teachers often act as the first responders to signs of mental health issues. These signs can show up in various ways, such as changes in behaviour, drops in academic performance, or shifts in social interactions. When teachers are knowledgeable about mental health, they can recognize these early warning signs and take the necessary steps to help. However, not all teachers have the same level of awareness. Some might have had training in mental health, while others might not be as informed. This difference can lead to uneven support for students, with some children potentially not getting the help they need. It's vital to provide teachers with education and training in mental health. This training can come through professional development workshops, in-service training, and incorporating mental health topics into teacher education programs. With the right knowledge and tools, teachers can better understand and address mental health issues. Creating a supportive school environment goes beyond just training teachers. It also involves having mental health resources available, access to counsellors, and fostering a school culture that values student well-being. By encouraging open discussions about mental health and providing strong support systems, schools can ensure all students receive the care they need. When teachers are more aware of child mental health, they can identify issues early, intervene promptly, and create a more nurturing learning environment. This approach not only benefits individual students but also enhances the overall well-being of the entire school community.

According to the World Health Organization (2016), mental health involves self-awareness, managing daily stresses, and contributing to the community. For children, good mental health is essential as it impacts their learning, behaviour, and ability to handle life's challenges. Statistics showed increasing concerns about children's mental health worldwide. Approximately 10% to 20% of children and adolescents are estimated to have mental health problems, yet many go undiagnosed and untreated (UNICEF, 2021). In Canada, around 15-20% of children face mental health issues, meaning one in five

students in a typical classroom is affected (Statistics Canada, 2017). In the United States, 17.4% of children aged 2-8 have a developmental, behavioural, or mental health diagnosis (CDC, 2022). Children's mental health problems can appear in various ways, including emotional, behavioural, and cognitive issues. Often, these behaviours are misunderstood as mere misbehaviour rather than signs of underlying psychological stress. Teachers, being on the front lines, play a crucial role in identifying and addressing these issues early on. However, research shows that many teachers feel unprepared to recognize and support students with mental health challenges. A survey by the Federation of Canadian teachers found that 70% of teachers felt unprepared to identify and support students with mental health issues (Carr & Byle, 2019). The gap in teachers' mental health literacy is significant. Mental health literacy involves understanding mental health, recognizing mental illnesses, seeking appropriate help, and reducing stigma (Wei, Stanley, & Kutcher, 2016). Improving teachers' mental health literacy can lead to better identification, prevention, and management of mental health issues in children. Understanding mental health involves looking at the complex interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors, as well as genetic influences. Germain (2012) emphasized that mental health, especially in early childhood, is as important as physical health. Children's mental health problems can include emotional, behavioural, and psychotic issues, often mistaken for misbehaviour. These behaviours can be signs of underlying psychological stress that often goes unrecognized, potentially indicating past or potential abuse, neglect, or exploitation (Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools, 2018). There is a significant difference in mental health care needs between high-income and low-income countries, with the latter facing more challenges. Research by Crabb (2012) and Atiola (2015) shows that a lack of knowledge and resources leads to poor mental health management. Schools are increasingly seen as key places to address mental health issues through promotion, prevention, and care (McGorry et al., 2011). Teachers need to be informed and capable of providing the right support and interventions, with policies to promote student well-being (Fazel et al., 2015).

Schools play a crucial role in supporting children who need mental health care. Many students face mental health challenges, and long waiting lists for mental health services make it essential to offer these services within school settings. In the field of mental health, there are three levels of preventative interventions: universal, selected, and indicated (Nastasi, Moore, & Varjas, 2004). Prevention is closely tied to enhancing

protective factors. When protective factors are present, they reduce the likelihood of negative impacts on a child's development. These protective factors include temperament traits, socio-cognitive and social skills, and cognitive abilities (Luthar & Zigler, 1992).

The second category of protective factors involves the quality of interactions between children and their environments, including the school environment and the connection between family and school. Improving these protective factors and addressing risk factors are key to effective prevention. Factors related to the child's development include family, neighborhood, school, and their interactions (Severson, Walker, Hope-Doolittle, Kratochwill, & Gresham, 2007). Psychological resilience, the ability of children to adapt to their environments despite adverse conditions, is closely linked to prevention (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Developing psychological resilience is a gradual process. By nurturing both internal factors, such as adaptive skills, and external factors, such as a supportive environment, especially in the early years, the effects of negative life experiences can be mitigated (Friedman & Chase-Lansdale, 2002).

Protective factors that contribute to psychological resilience include forming emotionally secure and nurturing relationships with family and peers, developing a sense of belonging, effective communication, problem-solving skills, social skills, and the ability to self-regulate behavior and emotions. Positive school climates, characterized by warmth, security, stability (consistent boundaries), and opportunities for involvement in school, family, and community activities, also play a significant role. When designing early interventions to reduce the negative impacts of mental health disorders, it is important to consider factors known to influence mental health. Teachers, in collaboration with mental health professionals, families, and students, can help plan and implement interventions for specific groups of children. Additionally, they provide ongoing support to students and their families. Teachers can identify children exposed to risk factors and work to strengthen protective factors for all children to promote psychological well-being and resilience. Empowering children with skills related to psychological resilience can lower the risk of mental illness. Implementing socio-emotional learning interventions in schools is a crucial aspect of fostering children's resilience (Kay-Lambkin, Kemp, Stafford, & Hazell, 2007).

Rationale of the study

Mental health issues among children and adolescents are a growing concern worldwide, including in India. The increasing prevalence of these issues necessitates a comprehensive approach to their identification and management. Teachers, who spend a significant amount of time with children, are in a unique position to observe and identify early signs of mental health problems. However, there is a notable gap in research, particularly in West Bengal, regarding primary teachers' awareness and understanding of child mental health. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the awareness and perceptions of primary school teachers in West Bengal concerning child mental health issues.

In India, mental health remains a stigmatized and often neglected aspect of overall health, especially among children. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 10-20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders, yet these conditions are often undiagnosed and untreated. Early identification and intervention are crucial in mitigating the long-term impacts of mental health issues. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process, as they are often the first to notice changes in a child's behavior that may indicate underlying mental health problems. Despite the critical role of teachers, there is a significant lack of training and awareness among educators regarding child mental health. This issue is particularly acute in regions like West Bengal, where mental health resources are limited, and societal awareness is low. The lack of research in this area further exacerbates the problem, leaving teachers without the necessary tools and knowledge to support their students effectively. This study is, therefore, crucial in highlighting the current state of awareness among primary teachers in West Bengal and identifying areas where further training and resources are needed.

The rationale for this study is grounded in the pressing need to address the mental health needs of children in West Bengal through the education system. By understanding the level of awareness and the specific challenges faced by primary school teachers, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and training programs. This, in turn, will contribute to a more supportive educational environment that promotes the mental well-being of children. The global burden of mental health disorders among children and adolescents is significant, with long-term consequences for individuals, families, and societies. Mental health issues can affect academic performance, social

relationships, and overall quality of life. In India, where educational and mental health systems are already under strain, the role of teachers becomes even more critical. Teachers who are aware of mental health issues and equipped with the appropriate skills can make a substantial difference in the early identification and management of these problems.

In West Bengal, the situation is further complicated by socio-economic factors that limit access to mental health care. The state has a diverse population with varying degrees of access to health and educational resources. In rural areas, in particular, there is often a severe shortage of mental health professionals and services. As a result, primary school teachers may be the only adults in a position to notice and address the early signs of mental health issues in children. However, without adequate training and awareness, they are ill-equipped to fulfill this role. This study is particularly timely and relevant given the recent emphasis on mental health in national and international policy. The Indian government has recognized the importance of mental health and has introduced several initiatives aimed at improving mental health services and awareness. However, there is a need for localized research to understand specific regional challenges and develop targeted interventions. In West Bengal, there is a clear gap in the literature regarding primary teachers' awareness of child mental health, making this study an essential contribution to the field.

By conducting this research, the study aims to achieve several objectives. Firstly, it seeks to assess the current level of awareness and understanding of child mental health among primary school teachers in West Bengal. Secondly, it aims to identify the specific challenges and barriers that teachers face in recognizing and addressing mental health issues in their students. Thirdly, the study will explore the training needs of teachers and provide recommendations for professional development programs that can enhance their ability to support student mental health. The study will contribute to the broader discourse on child mental health in India, offering insights that can be applied in other regions with similar challenges.

This study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature on child mental health awareness among primary school teachers in West Bengal. Given the significant role that teachers play in the early identification and support of mental health issues, it is essential to understand their current level of awareness and the challenges they face. This research

will provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice, ultimately contributing to the well-being of children in West Bengal and beyond.

Operational Definitions

- i. **Primary teachers' perception of children mental health** - Primary teachers' perception of child mental health pertains to their awareness of their students' mental health issues. This awareness is assessed through seven dimensions of a questionnaire developed by Kerebih et al. in 2016. The dimensions were – emotional problems, peer- relationship problems, hyperactivity problems, conduct problems, pro-social deficit problems, learning problems and other problems. Where high scores indicated high awareness and low scores indicated low awareness.
- ii. **Semi-Urban** - Semi-urban areas are places that blend both urban and rural qualities. They usually have some urban features, like better infrastructure, access to essential services, and some economic development. However, they don't fully meet all the criteria to be classified as urban.
- iii. **Primary Teachers** – In present study, Primary teachers of West Bengal are defined as the dedicated teachers who guide young children from class 1 to 4. Teachers who teach essential subjects like math, language, science, and social studies, helping to build the foundation for future learning. These teachers are vital in nurturing both the academic and social growth of their students.
- iv. **Children's Mental Health Problems** – In current research, children's mental health problems are described as issues related to their mental well-being, measured by dimensions identified by Kerebih et al. in 2016. These dimensions include emotional problems, peer- relationship problems, hyperactivity problems, conduct problems, pro-social deficit problems, learning problems and other problems. This research focuses on children aged 6 to 9 years old.
- v. **Mental health related training** – In the present research, teachers who had received direct mental health training or had participated in workshops, seminars, and conferences related to mental health were considered trained teachers.

Chapter – II: Problem of the Study

Review of Literature

Kamel et al. (2020) conducted a study “Beliefs about students’ mental health issues among teachers at elementary and high schools, Hail Governorate, Saudi Arabia.” The objective of this study was to ascertain the level of awareness and perception among instructors in elementary and secondary schools in Hail Governorate, Saudi Arabia, about students' mental health concerns. A survey was undertaken, with the participation of 2398 instructors, resulting in a response rate of 60%. Our research revealed that the majority of instructors displayed a favourable disposition towards children with mental health concerns, achieving an average score of 74.7% on our attitude scale. However, their level of awareness regarding these difficulties was comparatively lower, with an average score of 55.1%. The survey revealed that a significant percentage of teachers (73.7%) acknowledged the importance of receiving mental health training for themselves, as well as for other school personnel (76.2%). Furthermore, a majority of teachers (81.1%) recognised the value of having psychologists present in schools. Additionally, there was a strong consensus among teachers regarding the necessity of access to instructional resources (78.1%), a support hotline (78.5%), and increased mental health awareness in the media (84.4%). This study emphasises the imperative of providing mental health training and resources to facilitate the optimal growth and well-being of children.

Mahmoud et al. (2018) in their study “Impact of awareness program on knowledge of primary school teachers regarding mental disorders among school children” aimed to see how much primary school teachers knew about children's mental disorders and to find out if an awareness program could improve their knowledge. Between September and November 2017, 200 teachers from four public primary schools in Beni-Suef City participated. We used an interview questionnaire to assess their understanding of the causes, types, signs, and treatments of mental illness. Initially, only 49.5% of teachers had a good grasp of these topics. After the awareness program, there were significant improvements: knowledge of causes rose from 15.5% to 50%, types from 62.5% to 90%, signs from 62.5% to 76%, and treatments from 21% to 42%. The program clearly helped, highlighting the need for more studies on how teachers can help identify mental health issues in children.

Ma & Anto (2022) in their work “Importance of mental health awareness among school teachers in bridging mental health treatment gap in India” aimed to understand how well school teachers in Kerala are aware of mental health issues and how they handle students showing signs of depression. We surveyed 74 high school and higher secondary teachers, using a questionnaire and a scenario describing a student with depression. While many teachers had good general knowledge about mental health, only 23% recognized the student's symptoms as a mental health issue, and just 18% identified it specifically as depression. Most teachers (54%) said they would talk to the student, but only 2% would refer them to a mental health professional. These findings highlight the need for better mental health training for teachers to help them support students more effectively.

Kerebih et al. (2018) conducted a study “Perception of primary school teachers to school children’s mental health problems in Southwest Ethiopia.” This study aimed to understand how primary school teachers in Jimma town, Ethiopia, perceive child mental health problems and their attitudes towards school-based mental health programs. Conducted in October 2013, 568 teachers participated by completing a structured questionnaire. We found that only 40% of teachers recognized the listed child mental health issues, though 54.4% rated these problems as severe, especially externalizing behaviors. Teachers with more experience and those in public schools were more likely to see these issues as severe. Despite this, 95% of teachers agreed that school-based mental health programs are important, but noted that such programs are not widely available. These findings emphasize the need for greater mental health awareness among teachers and the establishment of mental health services in schools to support children better.

Shateri et al. (2019) in their study “The relationship between mental health and spiritual intelligence among primary school teachers” tried to investigate how spiritual intelligence relates to mental health among primary school teachers. We focused on 203 randomly selected teachers from Darreshahr in Ilam province during the 2016-2017 school year. Using surveys, we measured their spiritual intelligence and mental health. Our analysis revealed a strong connection: teachers with higher spiritual intelligence tended to have better mental health. In particular, aspects like transcendental awareness and finding personal meaning were key predictors of mental well-being. The results suggest that boosting spiritual intelligence could help improve teachers' mental health.

Therefore, it's recommended that educational programs focus on enhancing spiritual intelligence to support teachers' mental health.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher examined a limited number of scholarly publications on the origins, presence, and remedies for mental health issues among various demographic groups. Additionally, the researcher reviewed studies on teachers' perspectives regarding the mental health of children. This exploration prompted the researcher to delve further into the assessment of teachers' awareness of child mental health using diverse criteria. The researcher was unable to find a study that provided substantial evidence about instructors' perception of child mental health based on empirical data. While there have been many theoretical explanations proposing the presence of mental health issues in emerging nations, especially in the undeveloped areas of these nations, there is still a dearth of actual evidence to support these claims. Prior scholars have undertaken thorough investigations on both teachers and staff at higher education institutions, such as colleges and universities. However, the field of school education remained completely unexplored. Given the current demand for teachers' responsibilities and the necessity for a modern school education system, this endeavour is of utmost importance. Consequently, the researcher proceeded to perform a study on the topic of teachers' perception of child mental health. The researcher has discovered a significant disparity in the understanding and application of child mental health awareness among primary school teachers in West Bengal. Through the researcher's examination and evaluation of the current literature, the following research questions on the present study were identified as –

- 1) Do the primary teachers of West Bengal have adequate awareness on child mental health?
- 2) How do different socio-demographic factors result in variation on primary teacher's awareness of child mental health at West Bengal?

In search of the suitable answers of above-mentioned research questions, the researcher framed and stated the problem of the study as - ***“PRIMARY TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH”***.

Delimitations of the study

Current study was delimited to followings:

- i. The present study was delimited to only ten districts of West Bengal i.e., Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Hooghly, Kolkata, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur, North 24 PGS., South 24 PGS., Nadia and Birbhum.
- ii. The study was restricted to 550 primary school teachers only.
- iii. Demographic characteristics were delimited to gender, type of institution, mental health related training, habitation, medium of instruction, highest educational qualification, social category and teaching experience only.

Objectives of the study

The study generated objectives based on the research questions and study delimitations.

The objectives are as follows:

- i. To determine the level of awareness regarding child mental health among primary teachers in West Bengal.
- ii. To understand the present state of awareness possessed by the primary teachers of West Bengal on child mental health.
- iii. To explore the difference in various dimension of primary teachers' awareness of children mental health based on various independent indicators i.e, gender, type of institution, mental health related training, habitation, medium of instruction, highest educational qualification, social category.
- iv. To investigate the variation of various independent indicators viz; gender, type of institution, mental health related training, habitation, medium of instruction, highest educational qualification, social category of primary teachers on their perception of child mental health.
- v. To examine the correlation between teacher's teaching experience and their perception of child mental health.

Hypotheses of the study

Based on objectives, the researcher formulated the null hypotheses as -

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to their gender.

H₀₂: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to types of institutions.

H₀₃: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to mental health related training.

H₀₄: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to their habitation.

H₀₅: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to their medium of instruction.

H₀₆: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to their highest educational qualification.

H₀₇: There is no significance difference in perception of teachers on child mental health with respect to their social categories.

H₀₈: There is no significance correlation between perception of teachers on child mental health and their teaching experience.

Chapter – III: Method and Procedure

The current study was an attempt to understand the perception of West Bengal's primary school teachers on children's mental health. In order to achieve the purpose, the research has conducted a concentrated survey upon primary school teachers at West Bengal. The researcher has selected 10 districts of West Bengal during the sampling process viz. Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Hooghly, Kolkata, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur, North 24 PGS., South 24 PGS., Nadia and Birbhum.

The target population for this research consists of primary school teachers across the identified districts of West Bengal. A total of 550 teachers participated in this study.

Variables

1. **Independent Variables:** Independent variables are believed to be the influencing variables that affect the dependent variables. The following independent variables were used in the study.

- i.* Gender
- ii.* Habitat
- iii.* Type of institution
- iv.* Medium of instruction
- v.* Mental health related training
- vi.* Highest educational qualification
- vii.* Social category
- viii.* Teaching experience

2. **Dependent Variable:** In the present study **perception of Primary school teachers on children's mental health** was considered as dependent variable.

Tools for data collection

- I. **Basic Information Schedule** – A blank demographic information sheet was used to collect relevant data from respondents and also it was deployed to gather socio-economic and demographic information from teachers.

II. **Perception of primary school teachers on children's Mental Health Questionnaire** - Kerebih et al. (2016) developed this self-administered questionnaire, where most of the items were taken from SDQ. The implemented measuring instrument was utilized to evaluate the teachers' perception regarding whether the relevant elements constituted a mental health issue or not. Present investigator has adopted and modified this questionnaire according to her research purpose. The questionnaire comprised of 36 items and teachers should assess the severity of each issue using a Likert scale ranging from 0 (not a problem) to 5 (a very serious problem).

Description of Tool

DIMENSIONS	ITEM NO.
1.Emotional problems	8,11,17,18,21
2.Peer-relationship problems	14,15,19,22,24
3.Hyperactivity problems	1,2,5,7,9
4.Conduct problems	3,4,13,16,31
5.Pro-social deficit problems	6,10,20,23,26
6.Learning problems	12,28,29,30,33
7.Other problems	25,27,32,34,35,36
TOTAL	36 ITEMS

Scoring Procedure

Responses	Interpretation
0	NOT A PROBLEM
1	-
2	-
3	-
4	-
5	VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM

Level of Awareness

Sl No.	Levels of Awareness	PTPCMH
1.	High	25-36
2.	Moderate	13-24
3.	Low	0-12

Reliability and Validity

The first English version of the questionnaire was translated into Bengali and subsequently retranslated into English to maintain its coherence. The data was acquired using the bilingual version of the questionnaire. Content and face validity of particular questionnaire was determined by two experts. The researcher conducted a pilot study on 200 sample units after determining tool's validity. The calculated Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was determined to be 0.904. Subsequently, a survey was administered to a cohort of 550 teachers. Once again, the internal consistency value was determined to be 0.925.

Collection of Data

During the school visit, the researcher approached the headmasters or headmistresses of each school to provide a clear explanation of the study's purpose and methodology. The

researcher offered a lucid elucidation of the confidentiality provisions pertaining to the furnished information and data. In addition, they presented an authorization letter, issued by the supervisor on behalf of the Department of Education at Jadavpur University, in order to obtain the required data. After receiving authorization from the school administration, the researcher initiated the process of collecting authentic data. The researcher surveyed a total of 50 schools spanning all ten districts, with 44 schools successfully obtaining agreement from their teachers for data collection. After receiving the required authorization, two instruments were given to the teachers who were taking part. No explicit time constraint was imposed on the participants for completing the surveys. Approximately 95% of the teachers completed the questionnaires within a timeframe of approximately 30 minutes. Data collection was conducted solely on weekdays between June 15th, 2023 and September 16th, 2023.

Data Quality

In aggregate, 572 teachers provided responses to the questionnaire. However, 22 of them were excluded from the dataset because they either did not complete the questionnaires or provided an excessive amount of incomplete information. As a result, the data obtained from the remaining 550 participating teachers were incorporated and utilized as sample units in the present study.

Tabulation of the data

The entire dataset was methodically collected and organized in a sequential manner to facilitate subsequent analysis and draw conclusions in line with the aims of the current study. The researcher meticulously tabulated the raw data of 550 teachers individually in an Excel file. Moreover, it was encoded using several identities and prepared for subsequent analysis.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed Microsoft Excel for data tabulation and IBM SPSS version 20 for data analysis, considering several variables. The features of the sample were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation. The teacher's perception of mental health based on several criteria were visually depicted using bar diagrams and pie charts to provide clear comprehension. The inferential statistical techniques employed in this study included the independent sample T-test, one-way

ANOVA and Pearson correlation. These methods were used to draw conclusions about the population based on sample statistics.

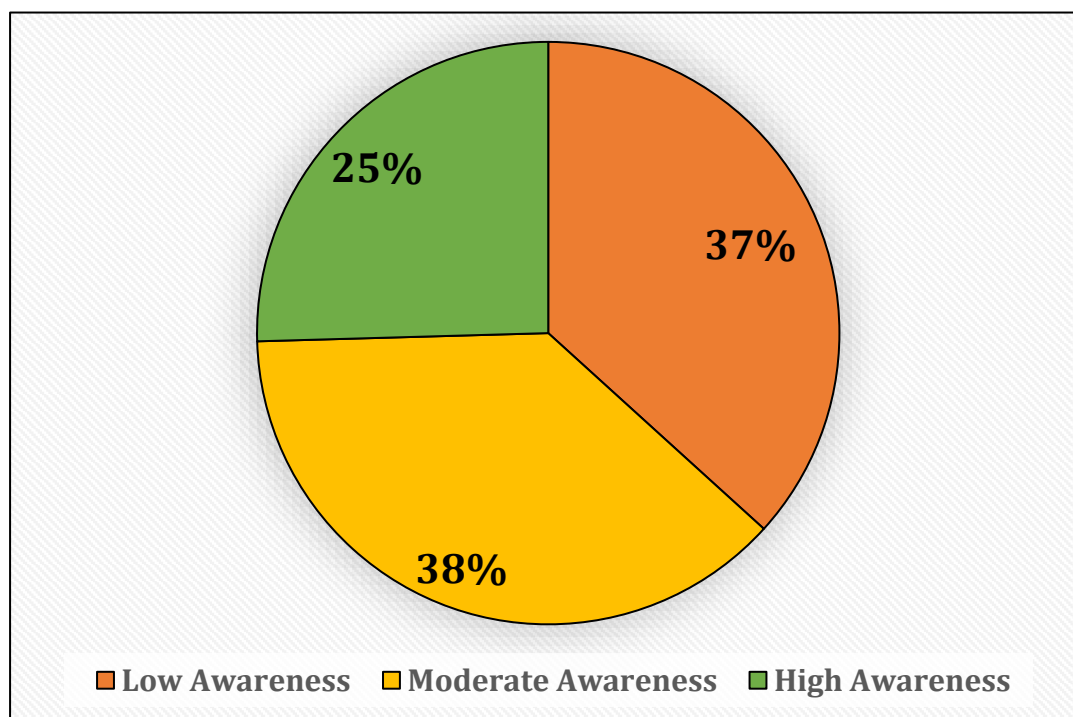
Chapter – IV: Result and Interpretation

Major Results

Level of teacher's awareness of child mental health

	Frequency	Percentage
Low Awareness	202	36.73%
Moderate Awareness	208	37.82%
High Awareness	140	25.45%
Total	550	100%

Figure 4.1 Presenting level of teacher's awareness of child mental health.



Among 550 primary teachers, 202 teachers (36.73%) demonstrated low level of awareness of child mental health; 208 teachers (37.82%) demonstrated moderate level of awareness of child mental health and 140 teachers (25.45%) demonstrated high level of awareness of child mental health.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and gender**

- i. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children than male teachers.
- ii. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children than male teachers.
- iii. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children than male teachers.
- iv. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children than male teachers.
- v. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children than male teachers.
- vi. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children than male teachers.
- vii. Female teachers showed higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children than male teachers.
- viii. Finally, Female teachers appeared with high awareness of mental health of children than male teachers and the found difference was statistically significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and type of institutions**

- i. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children than govt. school teachers.
- ii. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children than govt. school teachers.
- iii. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children than govt. school teachers.
- iv. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children than govt. school teachers.
- v. Govt. school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children than private school teachers.
- vi. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children than govt. school teachers.
- vii. Private school teachers showed higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children than govt. school teachers.

viii. Finally, Private school teachers possessed high awareness of mental health of children than Govt. school teachers but the found difference was statistically not significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and mental health related training**

- i. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- ii. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- iii. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- iv. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- v. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- vi. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- vii. Trained teachers showed higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children than non-trained teachers.
- viii. Finally, Teachers who have any kind of mental health related training showed high awareness of mental health of children than that of who were non-trained and the found difference was statistically significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and habitation**

- i. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.
- ii. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.

- iii. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.
- iv. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.
- v. Teachers belonged to rural habitation showed higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children than teachers belonged to semi-urban and urban habitation.
- vi. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.
- vii. Teachers belonged to semi-urban habitation showed higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children than teachers belonged to rural and urban habitation.
- viii. Finally, Teachers from semi-urban habitation showed high awareness of mental health of children than teachers from rural and urban habitation and the found difference was statistically significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and medium of instruction**

- i. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying emotional problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- ii. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying peer-relationship problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- iii. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.

- iv. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying conduct problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- v. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- vi. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying learning problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- vii. Teachers who used bengali and english both mediums together as medium of instruction appeared with high awareness in identifying others' problems among children compared to only bengali and english medium separately.
- viii. Finally, Teachers who usually taught students using both English and Bengali medium, they showed high awareness of mental health of children than teachers who taught in either Bengali or English medium and the found difference was statistically significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and highest educational qualification**

- i. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- ii. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- iii. Teachers with a Master degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- iv. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children compared to its other counterparts.

- v. Teachers with a both Master and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- vi. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- vii. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- viii. Teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher mental health awareness of children compared to its other counterparts and found difference statistically significant.

- **Primary teachers' awareness of child mental health and social category**

- i. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying emotional problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- ii. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying peer relationship problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- iii. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying hyperactivity problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- iv. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying conduct problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- v. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying pro-social deficit problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- vi. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying learning problems among children compared to its other counterparts.

- vii. Teachers belonged to Other backward classes (OBC) social category showed higher awareness in identifying others' problems among children compared to its other counterparts.
- viii. Teachers belonged to OBC category appeared with high awareness of mental health of children than teachers belonged to General, SC and ST categories the found difference was statistically significant.

- **Relationship between perception of teachers on child mental health and their teaching experience.**

- Pearson correlation between teachers' awareness and teaching experience was negatively correlated ($r = -0.027$) and there is no statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it is evident that increase in teaching experience led to lower awareness of child mental health and vice-versa.
- Lastly, A negative correlation found between teachers' mental health awareness of children and their teaching experience.

Hypotheses Testing

HYPOTHESES	REMARKS
H₀1: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR GENDER.	REJECTED
H₀2: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS.	FAILED TO REJECT
H₀3: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO MENTAL HEALTH RELATED TRAINING.	REJECTED
H₀4: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR HABITATION.	REJECTED

<p>H₀₅: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.</p>	<p>REJECTED</p>
<p>H₀₆: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION.</p>	<p>REJECTED</p>
<p>H₀₇: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE DIFFERENCE IN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH WITH RESPECT TO THEIR SOCIAL CATEGORIES.</p>	<p>REJECTED</p>
<p>H₀₈: THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANCE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON CHILD MENTAL HEALTH AND THEIR TEACHING EXPERIENCE.</p>	<p>FAILED TO REJECT</p>

Chapter – V: Discussion and Conclusion

Understanding primary teachers' perceptions of children's mental health is essential for shaping effective policies, practices, and professional development. When we delve into teachers' views, we can better equip policymakers and educators with strategies to support children's mental well-being in schools. Research can uncover gaps in teachers' knowledge and training, guiding the creation of tailored professional development programs that enhance teachers' abilities to support their students effectively. Moreover, examining teachers' perceptions can shed light on barriers to early intervention and identify ways to improve the detection and response to mental health issues in educational settings. Addressing any stigmatizing attitudes or misconceptions among teachers can foster more positive attitudes and greater awareness about mental health. Additionally, considering factors like school culture and available resources can help in developing supportive learning environments. Research findings can also promote collaboration among educators, mental health professionals, and other stakeholders, ultimately enriching the professional knowledge base. This collaborative approach is crucial for fostering the well-being and academic success of all students. By humanizing these insights and making them actionable, we can create a more supportive and understanding educational landscape.

Findings showed that Majority of teachers have low to moderate awareness of child mental health, with only 25.45% having high awareness. This may be because they don't get enough training or professional development in this area. Mental health isn't always a priority in their education programs, and there can be stigma or misunderstandings about it. Schools also might not provide enough resources and support to help teachers learn more about child mental health.

Findings revealed that female teachers appeared with high awareness of mental health of children than male teachers and the found difference was statistically significant, possibly due to traditional gender roles emphasizing nurturing and caregiving. Women may have more exposure to discussions about mental health in their personal and professional lives. This observed difference was statistically significant in the study. Ni Chorcora and Swords (2022) discovered that female teachers and those with more experience in mental

illness were more concerned about children's mental health. No other studies showed directly comparable results to these findings.

Findings showed that private school teachers possessed high awareness of mental health of children than Govt. school teachers but the found difference was statistically not significant due to better access to resources, training, and professional development opportunities. Private schools often have smaller class sizes, allowing teachers to focus more on individual student needs. No handful studies found with similar findings but Gorsy et al. (2015) found that teachers in urban (often better-resourced) schools had better mental health levels compared to those in rural schools, which may imply private schools potentially having better resources and training.

Findings revealed that teachers from semi-urban habitation showed high awareness of mental health of children than teachers from rural and urban habitation and the found difference was statistically significant due to a balanced exposure to both advanced resources and community-oriented practices. Semi-urban regions often benefit from proximity to urban centers while maintaining strong community ties, facilitating better mental health awareness. No handful studies found with similar findings but the general trend often indicated rural teachers having less access to resources and training, as seen in Kulkarni et al. (2019), where rural teachers had different levels of knowledge compared to urban teachers.

Findings showed that teachers who have any kind of mental health related training showed high awareness of mental health of children than that of who were non-trained and the found difference was statistically significant because their education equips them with specific knowledge and skills. This training enables them to recognize and address mental health issues more effectively. Mahmoud et al. (2018) showed that awareness programs significantly enhance teachers' understanding of mental health disorders. Similarly, Kerebih et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of increased mental health awareness among teachers through training.

Findings revealed that teachers who usually taught students using both English and Bengali medium, they showed high awareness of mental health of children than teachers who taught in either Bengali or English medium and the found difference was statistically significant because they are likely more adaptable and culturally attuned. Their bilingual

teaching approach may enhance their ability to understand diverse student needs and perspectives. No studies showed directly comparable results to these findings.

Findings showed that teachers belonged to OBC category appeared with high awareness of mental health of children than teachers belonged to General, SC and ST categories the found difference was statistically significant due to potentially greater emphasis on social and community issues within their own experiences. This background might foster a deeper understanding of mental health challenges. No studies showed directly comparable results to these findings.

Findings revealed that teachers with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree demonstrated higher mental health awareness of children compared to its other counterparts and found difference statistically significant because their advanced education likely includes extensive research and training in various educational and psychological aspects. This higher level of academic exposure equips them with deeper insights into mental health issues. No studies showed directly comparable results to these findings.

Lastly, findings showed that a negative correlation between teachers' mental health awareness of children and their teaching experience may indicate that more experienced teachers rely on outdated knowledge or established routines. Over time, they might have fewer opportunities for updated training in mental health. This trend suggests that continuous professional development is crucial to maintain awareness. The study found this correlation to be statistically significant. Ni Chorcora and Swords (2022) found that more experienced teachers were less likely to offer help, indicating that greater experience might not always correlate with higher mental health awareness. Apart from that, no studies showed directly comparable results to these findings.

Educational Implications

Present research has several educational implications as follows –

- i. Schools can provide specific training to help teachers understand and manage children's mental health, making sure all teachers are prepared to support their students' emotional needs.
- ii. With increased awareness, teachers can spot mental health issues early and provide help quickly, preventing more serious problems and aiding students' overall growth.

- iii. Knowledgeable teachers can create a classroom environment that is supportive and welcoming, helping all students, especially those with mental health concerns, to feel safe and ready to learn.
- iv. Research findings can guide policymakers to create school policies that prioritize mental health, ensuring there are resources and support for both teachers and students by providing school-based mental health services.
- v. When teachers are aware of mental health issues, they can work better with parents and the community, creating a strong support network for children's mental well-being at school and at home.

Scope for further study

The present research, while comprehensive, has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. Despite some constraints, the findings provide valuable insights and pave the way for further research as –

- i. The research was carried out on teachers employed in primary educational institutions. Additional research might be conducted on secondary level and tertiary levels.
- ii. The current investigation was specifically focused on teachers hailing only from the state of West Bengal. Further research may be conducted by a comparative study including other states and countries.
- iii. In the present study, Bi-lingual (Bengali-English) Perception of primary school teachers on children's Mental Health Questionnaire developed by Kerebih et al. (2016) was used. Further studies can be done taking other scales.