

Abstract

This study explores the awareness of primary school teachers in West Bengal regarding children's mental health. Recognizing teachers' crucial role in early identification and intervention of mental health issues, this research aimed to assess the current state of teachers' mental health literacy, identify socio-demographic factors influencing their awareness, and determine the need for targeted professional development. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey research design, data were collected from 550 primary teachers across ten districts of West Bengal. The study employed descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including T-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation, to evaluate the data. The key findings revealed that majority of teachers demonstrated low and moderate (36.73% & 37.82%) level of awareness on child mental health. Only 25.45% teachers showed high awareness on child mental health and significant differences found in mental health awareness based on gender, type of institution, mental health-related training, habitation, medium of instruction, highest educational qualification, and social category. Female teachers, private school educators, and those with mental health training demonstrated higher levels of awareness. Moreover, teachers from semi-urban areas and those with advanced educational qualifications were more attuned to children's mental health needs. Conversely, a negative correlation was found between teaching experience and mental health awareness, suggesting that more experienced teachers might rely on outdated knowledge. These findings underscore the necessity for ongoing professional development and mental health training for teachers to enhance their ability to support students' mental well-being. The study's implications are significant for policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to improve mental health literacy among teachers, thereby fostering a supportive educational environment conducive to the well-being of all students. This research contributes valuable insights into the current state of mental health awareness among primary school teachers in West Bengal and offers a foundation for future studies and policy development.