

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' ALTRUISM AND EMPATHY IN PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS OF WEST BENGAL**

*A Synopsis of the PhD thesis*

*Submitted by*

**Ataur Hossain**

**Registration No: A00ED1402021**

*Under the supervision of*

**Prof. Muktipada Sinha**

**Department of Education**

**Jadavpur University**

**Kolkata**

**2025**

## **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

*“The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, ‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’ – Madam Maria Montessori*

### Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in shaping not only the academic growth of children but also their emotional development. In primary education, where students are at a sensitive stage of life, teachers’ altruism and empathy can strongly influence learning, motivation, and overall well-being (Batson, 2011). Altruism means acting selflessly for the benefit of others, while empathy is the ability to understand and share someone else’s feelings (Eisenberg, 2000). These qualities are especially important in primary schools, where teachers must meet diverse needs, create inclusive classrooms, and support children’s emotional growth (Hoffman, 2008). In the socio-cultural setting of West Bengal, exploring these traits in teachers offers valuable insights into how they impact effective teaching and student outcomes.

Although many studies worldwide have explored teacher-student relationships, little empirical research has measured altruism and empathy specifically among primary teachers in West Bengal. Existing work mostly relies on qualitative research, which provides useful observations but is harder to generalize. This study aims to fill that gap by using standardized tools to measure these traits and examine how they influence students’ learning and well-being.

This research is grounded in established theories of prosocial behavior. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) explains that altruism and empathy grow from observation and reinforcement. Teachers who model positive, caring behaviors encourage students to adopt the same. The Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis (Batson, 2011) highlights that genuine empathy motivates selfless actions, showing how teachers’ emotional concern can translate into effective teaching. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) adds that teachers with strong intrinsic motivation are more likely to show empathy and altruism naturally, which in turn

improves their teaching practice. These perspectives suggest that empathy and altruism help create engaged, motivated learners in West Bengal's classrooms.

Primary education in West Bengal encounters several hurdles, including socio-economic disparities, first-generation learners, and linguistic diversity, all of which create additional challenges for both students and teachers (Banerjee, 2013). Moreover, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, and the emotional strain on educators further complicate the teaching-learning process (Singh, 2019). In these difficult conditions, teachers' emotional intelligence, particularly their ability to empathize and demonstrate altruism, plays a crucial role in creating a supportive and effective learning environment (Ghosh & Basu, 2017). While emotional intelligence has gained global recognition as a critical component of effective teaching, there remains a scarcity of comprehensive research in India that explores these dimensions in the context of primary education, highlighting the need for further empirical studies in this area.

The implications of this study are wide-reaching. For teachers, it can create deeper self-awareness about how their empathy and altruism influence their practice and student relationships. For school leaders and teacher educators, it highlights the need to integrate emotional intelligence training into teacher preparation and development programs, not just focus on academic or technical skills (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). For policymakers, the findings provide evidence for including empathy, altruism, and mental health competencies in teacher evaluation frameworks to enhance education quality. Most importantly, students benefit directly from classrooms where teachers lead with empathy and selflessness, creating safe, inclusive, and motivating learning spaces.

In the Indian context, where cultural and emotional values strongly shape education, this research fills an important gap. It provides robust, empirical evidence on how teachers' altruism and empathy influence student engagement, motivation, and achievement in West Bengal. By combining theoretical insights

with a rigorous quantitative approach, the study aims to guide teacher training, improve policy design, and strengthen student well-being in primary schools.

### **Rationale of the study**

In primary schools, teachers do more than just teach subjects. They also help shape the social and emotional growth of young children. Two important qualities that guide how teachers connect with students, coworkers, and the school community are altruism and empathy. Altruistic teachers care deeply about the well-being of others without expecting anything in return, while empathetic teachers can understand and respond to their students' feelings and experiences. These qualities help create a caring, inclusive, and supportive learning environment, which is key to a child's overall development. In West Bengal, primary schools face specific challenges related to socio-economic conditions, cultural diversity, and limited resources. Many students come from poor or disadvantaged backgrounds and may deal with emotional and social problems that affect their school performance. Teachers who show strong altruism and empathy are better able to handle these challenges by building positive relationships with students, promoting inclusive teaching methods, and supporting students' emotional needs. Even though these qualities are clearly important, there hasn't been much research on how altruism and empathy are present among primary school teachers in West Bengal. Learning how these traits appear in local schools can give valuable information about teacher behavior, classroom interactions, and student success. Additionally, understanding what factors influence these qualities—such as training opportunities, work conditions, and cultural background—can help create strategies to strengthen altruism and empathy in teachers.

This study aims to address this gap by carefully examining the levels of altruism and empathy among primary school teachers in West Bengal. The results could guide educational policies, improve teacher training programs, and influence how schools are managed, ultimately leading to better learning experiences and outcomes for students.

## **Operational definitions**

### **i) Teachers' altruism**

Teachers' altruism can be understood as the genuine concern and willingness of primary school teachers to care for and support others without expecting any personal reward. Within the school setting, this quality becomes visible in the way teachers help, guide, and stand by their students, colleagues, and the wider community.

For the purpose of this study, altruism has been explained through five major dimensions. Two of these – Helpfulness (adapted from the *Helping Attitude Scale*, Gary Nickell, 2000) and Gratitude (adapted from the *Gratitude Scale*, McCullough et al., 2002) – were taken from existing standardized measures. The remaining three dimensions were identified and refined by the researcher in consultation with experts to suit the context of primary education. Together, the five dimensions are:

- a. Helpfulness – the readiness to extend assistance and cooperation to students and colleagues.
- b. Gratitude – the ability to acknowledge and appreciate positive actions, relationships, and experiences.
- c. Commitment to Students' Well-Being – the sense of responsibility for nurturing the overall growth and welfare of learners.
- d. Moral Responsibility and Ethical Behavior – acting with fairness, honesty, and adherence to professional ethics in school life.
- e. Charity – the generosity to contribute one's resources, time, or effort for the good of others.

In this study, a higher level of altruism is reflected when teachers score strongly across these dimensions, whereas lower levels suggest a weaker orientation toward selfless and prosocial behavior.

## **ii) Semi-Urban**

Semi-urban areas are settlements that share characteristics of both rural and urban life. Such regions often have better infrastructure, improved connectivity, and access to basic services like education, healthcare, and markets when compared to rural areas. At the same time, they may lack the full range of facilities, economic activities, and population density required to be considered completely urban. In this way, semi-urban spaces act as transitional zones between villages and cities, reflecting a mix of traditional and modern features.

## **iii) Membership in Social Organization**

Membership in a social organization refers to an individual's active association with formal or informal groups such as clubs, unions, community bodies, cultural associations, or professional organizations. Being part of such groups provides opportunities for social interaction, collective decision-making, sharing of resources, and mutual support. It often reflects a person's sense of belonging, civic participation, and commitment to community life.

## **Chapter - II: Problem of the Study**

### **Review of Literature**

**Arman, M. (2023)** Pursued a study on Empathy, sympathy, and altruism An evident triad based on compassion. A theoretical model for caring. The study

aimed to establish a knowledge base for developing clinical caring science, focusing on empathy, sympathy, altruism, compassion, and their interconnections. The text examines each concept individually, exploring their historical backgrounds, related research, challenges, and potential biases, before integrating them into a conceptual model. The findings reveal that empathy, sympathy, and altruism are not contradictory but instead form a harmonious triad grounded in compassion. Compassion is identified as both a prerequisite and foundation for these elements to function effectively. In clinical practice, empathy symbolizes intellectual understanding ("from the head"), sympathy represents emotional connection ("from the heart"), and altruism signifies practical action ("from the hand"), all unified by compassion as the driving force for care. The study also highlights the potential to nurture and enhance compassionate attitudes and skills through education and training.

**Banerjee et al., (2014)** Conducted a study on An Investigation into the Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Teaching Profession in Purulia District of West Bengal, India. The primary aim of this study was to assess the attitudes of secondary school teachers in the Purulia district of West Bengal toward the teaching profession. The research adopted a survey approach, specifically the normative survey method. A representative sample of 180 teachers (male and female) from the Social Science and General Science streams was selected. Data was collected using an attitude scale, and the significance of the difference between the means of the two groups was analyzed using the 'CR' test. The findings revealed that secondary school teachers in Purulia have an attitude toward the teaching profession that is neither highly favorable nor unfavorable, indicating a satisfactory or average outlook.

**Barman, P. (2024)** Administered research on ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION. This study aims to examine the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education in the Purulia district of West Bengal. The researcher used a descriptive survey method for this study, which involved a sample of 150 secondary school teachers from the district.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed for data collection. The researcher designed a questionnaire to assess the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. For data analysis, the study used mean, standard deviation, and the t-test. The findings suggest that the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education is neutral, neither strongly positive nor negative. The study also reveals a significant difference in attitudes between rural and urban teachers, but no significant difference between male and female teachers in their attitudes towards inclusive education.

**Bogunovich et al., (2023)** Pursued an investigation on Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education: PRAE in Practice. Professional Reciprocal Altruism in Education (PRAE), as a grounded theory, provides a powerful framework for understanding how altruism—the primary motivation for many who choose the teaching profession—functions as a shared value. It encourages teachers to move beyond isolated practices and engage meaningfully within the professional Community of Practice (CoP). By aligning their personal values, attitudes, and cultural perspectives with those of the CoP, educators can harmonize their authentic and professional selves. This alignment nurtures intrinsic motivation, driving their ongoing growth and development for the benefit of their students, community, and the profession as a whole. Such active engagement also helps combat issues like compassion fatigue and empathy burnout.

**Brackins, H. (2022)** Conducted a study on Middle school students' perceptions of teacher empathy in Christian schools: A transcendental phenomenological study. This study builds on previous research about teacher empathy, which has primarily focused on theoretical, empirical, and practical perspectives. However, few studies have captured the experiences of middle school students, and none have explored this topic in Christian academies. Using Rogers' self-theory and related student-centered pedagogy, this study aimed to examine how 10 middle school students perceive teacher empathy. Data was gathered through individual interviews, a focus group, and letters addressed to future middle school teachers. The findings showed that students view teacher empathy as an ongoing relational

process that positively influences both their personal and academic development. The study highlights the importance for decision-makers to foster relational cultures in schools, while teachers are encouraged to build continuous, open, and nonjudgmental relationships that create meaningful empathic connections.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The researcher studied handful literatures on the causes, existence, and resolutions of teacher's altruism and empathy among different sample groups, which led him to investigate deeply into determining how teachers' altruism and empathy can be measured using various parameters. The researcher was unable to locate a study that significantly shed light on the existence altruism and empathy among primary school teachers using actual data. Although numerous theoretical explanations suggested the existence of teacher's altruism and empathy in developing nations, particularly in the underdeveloped regions of these nations, empirical studies are still lacking. Previous researchers have conducted thoughtful investigation on students as well as teachers and employees in tertiary education level that is higher education. But the Arena of school education was literally unturned. In this endeavours which is very crucial at present time due to increased demand of teacher's altruism and empathy responsibilities and need of the modern higher education system. Henceforth, the researcher ended up in conducting the research on the area of teacher's altruism and empathy. Researcher has identified a substantial knowledge gap between the conceptual and practical existence of altruism and empathy among primary school in West Bengal. Based on the researcher's contextual reading and analysis of the existing literature, the following research questions on the present study were identified as –

- i. Are Teachers in Primary Schools Altruistic?
- ii. Are Teachers in Primary Schools Empathetic?
- iii. Is there any relationship between Altruistic Behavior and Empathetic Behavior of Teachers?

In search of the appropriate answers of aforesaid research questions, the researcher framed and stated the problem of the study as – **“Exploring Teachers’ Altruism and Empathy in Primary Schools of West Bengal”**

### **Delimitations of the study**

- i. The present study was delimited to only Six districts located in West Bengal i.e., Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Coochbehar, Hooghly, South 24 Parganas, and Howrah.
- ii. The study is confined only to Primary school teachers in West Bengal.
- iii. The study was delimited to 570 primary school Teachers in West Bengal considered as a sample.
- iv. The study focuses only on two teacher attributes: Altruism and Empathy.
- v. Altruism has been measured through an Altruism Scale partly adapted from 'Helping Attitude Scale' (Gary Nickell, 2000), 'The Gratitude Scale' (Mc. Cullrgh et al., 2002) and partly developed by researcher, and empathy was measured using the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire.
- vi. The present study was delimited to thirteen demographic and socio-academic variables e.g., Gender, Marital status, social category, Family structure, educational qualification, Academic discipline, School location, Social Organization member, Teacher training qualification year, Birth order, Teaching as a career choice, Religion, and Work Experience.

### **Objectives of the study**

- i) To know the extent of altruistic behavior among primary school teachers.
- ii) To know the extent of empathetic behavior among primary school teachers.

iii) To explore if there is any relationship between Teachers' Altruism and Teachers' Empathy.

iv) To investigate the variation of various independent variables viz; gender, Marital status, social category, Family structure, educational qualification, Academic discipline, School location, Social Organization member, Religion, Teacher training qualification year, Teaching as a career choice, Birth order, Work Experience on Altruism and Empathy among Primary School Teachers of West Bengal.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Gender.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Gender.

**H<sub>0</sub>3:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Marital Status.

**H<sub>0</sub>4:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Marital Status.

**H<sub>0</sub>5:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Social Category.

**H<sub>0</sub>6:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Social Category.

**H<sub>0</sub>7:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Family Structure.

**H<sub>0</sub>8:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Family Structure.

**H<sub>0</sub>9:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Educational Qualification.

**H<sub>0</sub>10:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Educational Qualification.

**H<sub>0</sub>11:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Academic Discipline.

**H<sub>0</sub>12:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Academic Discipline.

**H<sub>0</sub>13:** Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their School Location.

**H<sub>0</sub>14:** Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their School Location.

**H<sub>0</sub>15:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their membership in social organizations.

**H<sub>0</sub>16:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their membership in social organizations.

**H<sub>0</sub>17:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their teacher training qualification year.

**H<sub>0</sub>18:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their teacher training qualification year.

**H<sub>0</sub>19:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on whether teaching was their first choice as a career.

**H<sub>0</sub>20:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on whether teaching was their first choice as a career.

**H<sub>0</sub>21:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Work Experience.

**H<sub>0</sub>22:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Work Experience.

**H<sub>0</sub>23:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Religion.

**H<sub>0</sub>24:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Religion.

**H<sub>0</sub>25:** Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Birth Order.

**H<sub>0</sub>26:** Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Birth Order.

**H<sub>0</sub>27:** Altruism does not significantly correlate with Empathy among primary school teachers.

**H<sub>0</sub>28:** Altruism does not significantly correlate with Birth Order among primary school teachers.

**H<sub>0</sub>29:** Empathy does not significantly correlate with Birth Order among primary school teachers.

### **Chapter – III: Method and Procedure**

The term 'method' encompasses the set of activities, procedures, and techniques used by researchers during their studies, including the processes of data collection, statistical analysis, and the overall study design. As Goundar (2012) explains, "The

research method, particularly the data collection and analysis techniques, is provided with a justification for why the selected method was chosen.” The purpose of this study was to assess the altruistic and empathetic behaviors of primary school teachers and investigate the correlation between teachers' altruism and empathy across various districts in West Bengal, such as Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Coochbehar, Hooghly, South 24 Parganas, and Howrah. To accurately represent the research method, a quantitative descriptive survey approach was followed in this study.

In this study, the researcher employed a cross-sectional survey research design to collect quantitative data through a questionnaire. The target population consisted of all government-aided primary school teachers in West Bengal. A sample of 570 primary school teachers was selected from six districts and twenty blocks across the state, ensuring broad representation of government-aided primary school teachers. A multistage sampling method was used to select the schools, and a simple random sampling technique was applied to choose the teachers who participated.

### **Description of Variables**

In this study following independent and dependent variables were taken –

#### **• Independent Variables –**

- i. Gender:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., Male and Female.*
- ii. Marital Status:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., Married and Un-married.*
- iii. Social Category:** *There are four categories considered, i.e., General, SC, ST, OBC.*
- iv. Family Structure:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., Joint and Nuclear.*
- v. Highest Educational Qualification:** *There are three categories considered, i.e., HS, BA, and MA.*

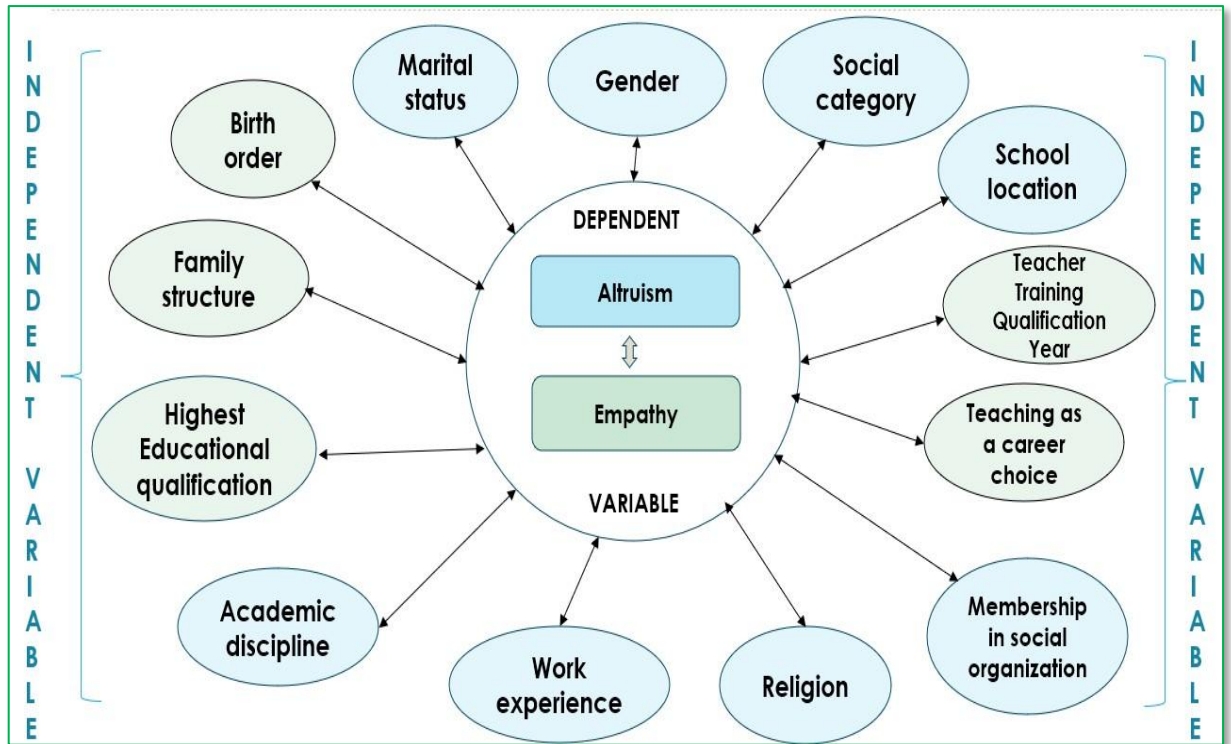
- vi. **Academic Discipline:** *There are three categories considered, i.e., Arts, Science and Commerce.*
- vii. **School Location:** *There are three categories considered, i.e., Rural, Semi-urban and Urban.*
- viii. **Membership in Social Organization:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., No and Yes.*
- ix. **Teachers Training Qualification Year:** *There are three categories considered, i.e., More than 10 years ago, 7 to 9 years ago, 4 to 6 years ago.*
- x. **Teaching as a First Career Choice:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., Yes and No.*
- xi. **Work Experience:** *There are five categories considered, i.e., Less than 1 year, 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, more than 15 years.*
- xii. **Religion:** *There are two categories considered, i.e., Hinduism and Islam.*
- xiii. **Birth Order:** *There are eight categories considered, i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> order, 2<sup>nd</sup> order, 3<sup>rd</sup> order, 4<sup>th</sup> order, 5<sup>th</sup> order, 6<sup>th</sup> order, 7<sup>th</sup> order and 8<sup>th</sup> order.*

- **Dependent Variable –**

Dependent variables are the outcomes or responses that researchers measure in an experiment or study. These variables are influenced or affected by changes in the independent variables (the factors that are manipulated or controlled). In this study, the dependent variables are:

1. **Teachers' Altruism**
2. **Teachers' Empathy**

### **Interaction Between Variables**



### **Tools Used for Data Collection**

In the present study, three tools were used for data collection, namely the Teachers Altruism scale, Teachers Empathy scale and the Teachers Basic Information Schedule. These three instruments are discussed above.

#### **Instrument 1: Teachers Altruism scale**

The Teachers' Altruism Scale was developed by the researcher with assistance from their supervisor to assess the altruistic behavior of primary school teachers. The scale includes two main dimensions: Helpfulness and Gratitude, which were adapted from the 'Helping Attitude Scale' (Gary Nickell, 2000) and 'The Gratitude Scale' (McCullough et al., 2002). Based on a literature review and expert input, the scale consists of 27 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Following pilot testing and expert validation, the final version of the tool demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = .904) and validity, confirming its suitability for the study. The minimum score is 0 and maximum score is 108.

### Showing dimensions and number of items.

Sl. No.	Dimensions	Number of items
1.	Helpfulness	7, 8, 9, 15, 10, 11, 14, 6
2.	Gratitude	22, 16, 17
3.	Commitment to Students' Well-Being	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,13
4.	Moral Responsibility and Ethical Behavior	12, 19, 20, 21, 23, 18
5.	Charity	24, 25, 26, 27
<b>Total Number of Items</b>		<b>27</b>

### Scoring Norms

#### Scoring Procedure

Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Sometimes = 2, Disagree =1, Strongly Disagree= 0

### Reliability and Validity

In the present study, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher to assess the internal consistency of the altruism scale using a sample of 183 participants. The researcher, with the assistance of their supervisor, translated the scale into Bengali while ensuring the preservation of its psychometric properties according to established standards. To maintain the content, concurrent, and face validity, the researcher sought guidance from their supervisor and a subject expert. Prior to the final data collection, the researcher also verified the reliability of the scale. The following table presents the internal consistency results of the data collected in the current study.

### Showing reliability of the altruism scale

Sample size	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Pilot Study (183)	0.904
Final (570)	0.916

### **Instrument 2: Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ)**

The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), developed by Spreng, McKinnon, Mar, and Levine in 2009, is a tool designed to assess an individual's level of empathy through a set of positive and negative statements. The questionnaire consists of items categorized into two groups: Positive Statements (items 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, and 16) and Negative Statements (items 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15). The scoring system for positive statements assigns points based on frequency of agreement (Never=0, Rarely=1, Sometimes=2, Often=3, Always=4), while for negative statements, the scoring is reversed (Never=4, Rarely=3, Sometimes=2, Often=1, Always=0). This bilingual version of the TEQ allows for better accessibility in different linguistic contexts, with higher scores indicating higher empathy levels.

### **Reliability and Validity**

In the present study, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher to assess the internal consistency of the Toronto empathy questionnaire using a sample of 110 participants. The researcher, with the assistance of their supervisor, translated the scale into Bengali while ensuring the preservation of its psychometric properties according to established standards. To maintain the content, concurrent, and face validity, the researcher sought guidance from their supervisor and a subject expert. Prior to the final data collection, the researcher also verified the reliability of the scale. The following table presents the internal consistency results of the data collected in the current study.

### Showing reliability of Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ)

Sample size	Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ )
Pilot Study (110)	0.845
Final (570)	0.896

#### **Instrument 3: Teachers Basic Information Schedule**

A schedule of required information about the teachers was prepared and placed with the main instrument. This schedule seeks information about teachers' gender, marital status, social category, family structure, highest educational qualification, academic discipline, school location, membership in school organization, teachers training qualification year, teaching as a first career choice, work experience, religion and birth order. In accordance with research ethics, the names or any other personally identifiable information of the teachers was not collected in the information schedule.

#### **Procedure**

This section provides a detailed explanation of the steps taken to administer the test instruments for data collection, followed by the process of filtering, organizing, and analyzing the results.

#### **Data Collection**

During visits to primary school, the researcher first met the head masters/ head mistress to explain the purpose and procedures of the study. The researcher also assured them about the confidentiality of the information and data collected. An authorization letter from the supervisor, representing the Department of Education, Jadavpur University, was submitted to formally request permission for data collection.

After receiving approval from the respective schools, data collection commenced. Permission was granted by 160 government aided primary school across all six districts. Once authorization was obtained, survey questionnaires were

distributed to the participating teachers. No strict time limit was imposed for completing the surveys, although about 95% of the teachers finished within 40 minutes. Data collection was carried out on weekdays between November, 2024 to March, 2025.

### **Data Quality**

A total of 594 Teachers completed the questionnaires. However, 24 participants either did not complete the surveys or provided incomplete information, leading to their exclusion from the dataset. Therefore, data from the remaining 570 teachers were used as the sample for this study.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher organized the data using Microsoft Excel and conducted statistical analysis with IBM SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were applied to describe the sample distributions. For inferential analysis, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and correlation techniques were used. These methods supported drawing conclusions about the larger population from the sample data.

### **Normality of Data**

The current study used a large sample size of over 30 participants. The Shapiro Wilk test was applied to assess the normality of the data. Due to the sample size of 570, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was not applicable. The Shapiro-Wilk test revealed a significant p-value of 0.000\* for the total perceived learning environment variable, indicating that the data distribution was not normal. According to the central limit theorem, when the sample size exceeds 30, the distribution of sample means tends to approach normality, even if the underlying population distribution is not normal. In cases like this, where data is collected using multistage sampling from a large population, parametric tests can still be used.

## Chapter – IV: Result and Interpretation

### Mean score distribution of teacher's Altruism based on gender.

Dependent variable	Category of gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALTRUISM	MALE	367	88.17	12.638
	FEMALE	203	90.87	12.618

### Presenting mean score distribution of teacher's Altruism based on gender.

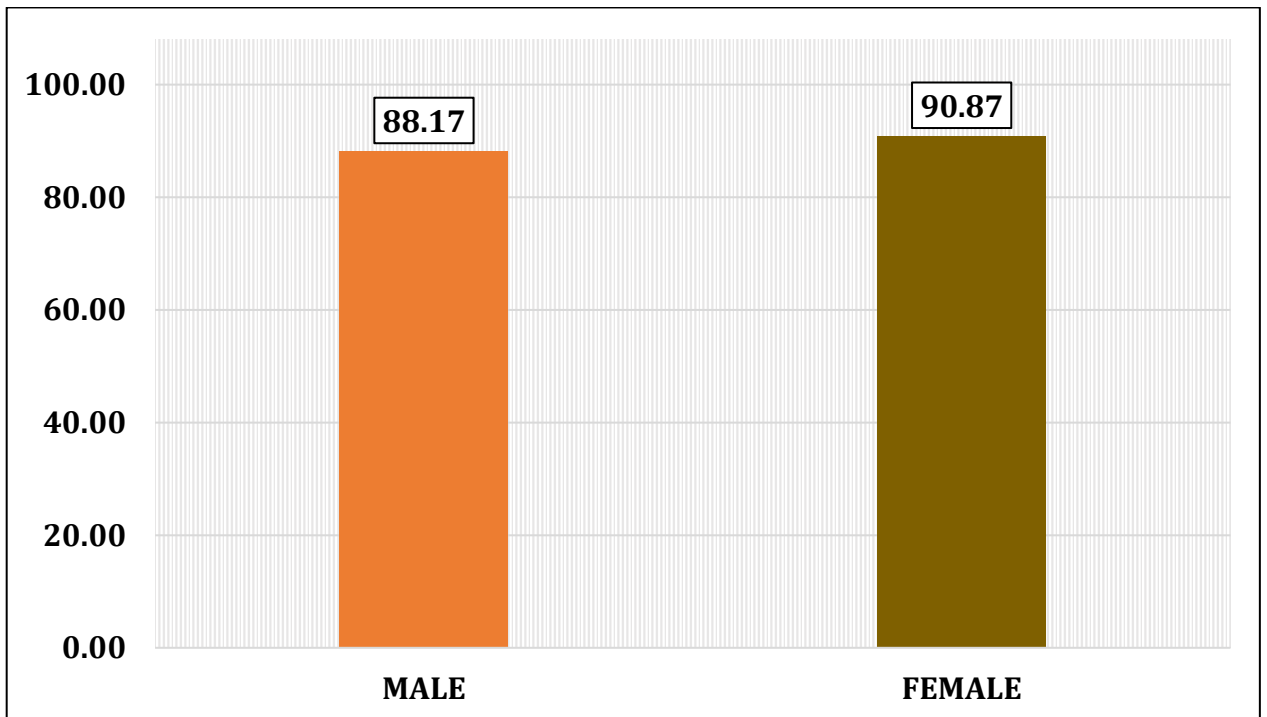


Figure 4.1 presents the mean score distribution of altruism among primary teachers based on gender. Male teachers (N=367) obtained a mean score of 88.17 with a standard deviation of 12.638, whereas female teachers (N=203) recorded a higher mean score of 90.87 with a standard deviation of 12.618. Thus, it can be interpreted that female teachers demonstrated slightly greater altruism compared to their male counterparts.

**Mean score distribution of teacher's Empathy based on gender.**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Category of gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>EMPATHY</b>	MALE	367	45.16	7.614
	FEMALE	203	48.26	6.580

**Presenting mean score distribution of teacher's Empathy based on gender.**

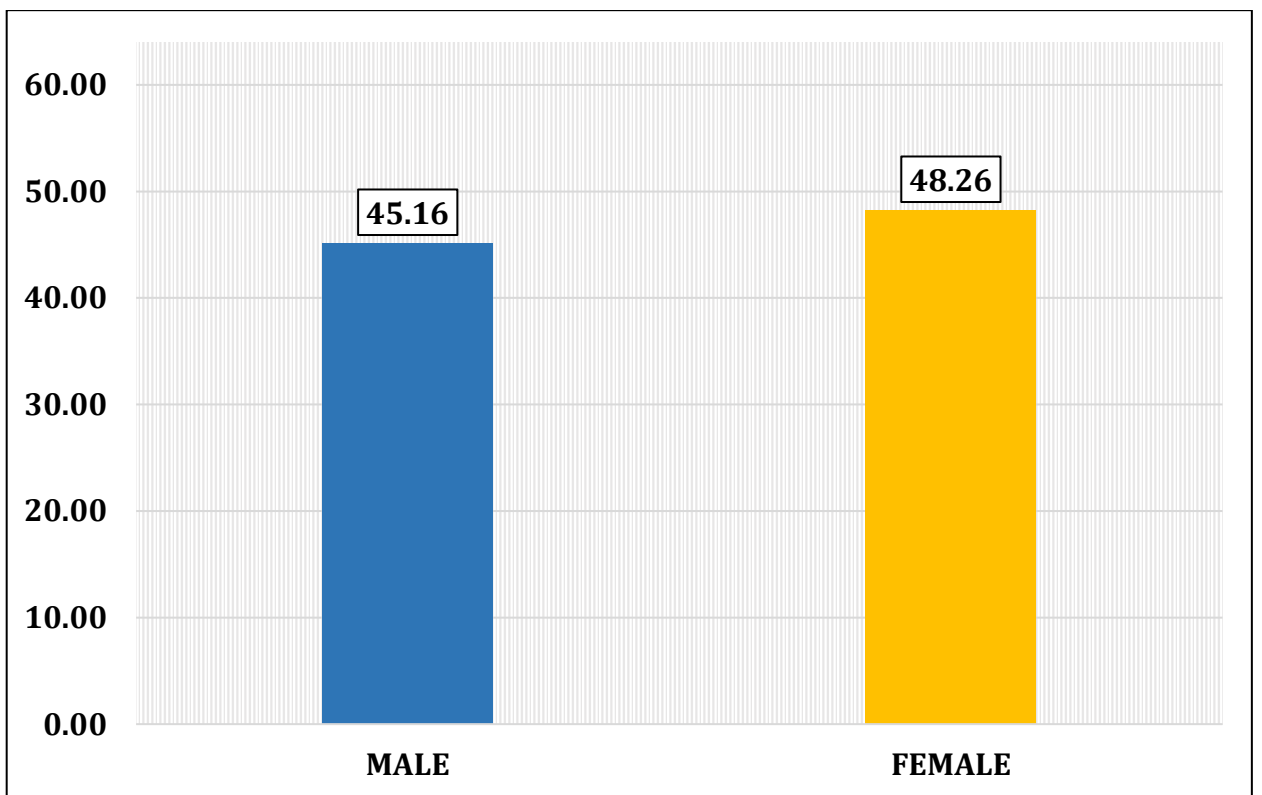


Figure 4.14 shows the mean score distribution of empathy among teachers based on gender. Male teachers (N=367) obtained a mean score of 45.16 with a standard deviation of 7.614, whereas female teachers (N=203) recorded a higher mean score of 48.26 with a standard deviation of 6.580. Hence, it can be interpreted that female teachers demonstrated greater empathy compared to male teachers.

## Major Findings

- **Findings based on Teachers' Altruism & Various Demographic Factors**
  - i) Female teachers demonstrated higher altruism compared to male teachers, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - ii) Married teachers demonstrated higher altruism compared to unmarried teachers, and the difference was statistically significant.
  - iii) Teachers belonging to the unreserved category demonstrated higher altruism compared to teachers from SC, ST, and OBC categories, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - iv) Teachers from Nuclear families demonstrated higher altruism compared to teachers from joint families, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - v) Teachers with Higher Secondary educational qualifications demonstrated higher altruism compared to teachers with Graduate and Master's degree educational qualifications, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - vi) Teachers from the arts academic discipline demonstrated higher altruism compared to teachers from science and commerce academic discipline, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - vii) Teachers from rural schools demonstrated higher altruism compared to teachers from urban and semi-urban schools, and the differences was statistically significant.
  - viii) Teachers who were members of social organizations demonstrated higher altruism compared to non-members, and the difference was statistically significant.
  - ix) No significant differences were found in altruism among teachers based on the year of obtaining their teacher training qualification.
  - x) Teachers who reported teaching as their first career choice demonstrated higher altruism compared to those who chose it as an alternative career, and the difference was statistically significant.

- xi) No significant differences were found in altruism among teachers based on their work experience.
- xii) No significant differences were found in altruism among teachers based on religion.

- **Findings based on Teachers' Empathy & Various Demographic Factors**

- i) Female teachers demonstrated higher empathy compared to male teachers, and the differences was statistically significant.
- ii) Unmarried teachers demonstrated higher empathy compared to married teachers, and the difference was statistically significant.
- iii) Teachers belonging to the unreserved category demonstrated higher empathy compared to teachers from SC, ST, and OBC categories, and the differences was statistically significant.
- iv) Teachers from Nuclear families demonstrated higher empathy compared to teachers from joint families, and the differences was statistically significant.
- v) Teachers with Higher Secondary educational qualifications demonstrated higher empathy compared to teachers with Graduate and Master's degree educational qualifications, and the differences was statistically significant.
- vi) Teachers from the arts academic discipline demonstrated higher empathy compared to teachers from science and commerce academic discipline, and the differences was statistically significant.
- vii) Teachers from rural schools demonstrated higher empathy compared to teachers from urban and semi-urban schools, and the differences was statistically significant.
- viii) Teachers who were members of social organizations demonstrated higher empathy compared to non-members, but the difference was statistically not significant.
- ix) No significant differences were found in empathy among teachers based on the year of obtaining their teacher training qualification.

- x) Teachers who reported teaching as their first career choice demonstrated higher empathy compared to those who chose it as an alternative career but the difference was statistically not significant.
- xi) No significant differences were found in empathy among teachers based on their work experience.
- xii) No significant differences were found in empathy among teachers based on religion.

• **Findings based on Correlations**

- i) The results indicate a negative relationship between birth order and altruism among primary school teachers. In other words, as birth order increases (later-born teachers), their altruistic tendencies tend to decrease.
- ii) Altruism and empathy showed a very weak positive correlation, which was not statistically significant.

**Showing hypotheses testing matrix.**

	<b>Hypotheses description</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>H<sub>01</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Gender.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>02</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Gender.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>03</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Marital Status.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>04</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Marital Status.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>05</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Social Category.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>06</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Social Category.	<b>Rejected</b>

<b>H<sub>07</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Family Structure.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>08</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Family Structure.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>09</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Educational Qualification.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>010</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Educational Qualification.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>011</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Academic Discipline.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>012</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their Academic Discipline.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>013</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their School Location.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>014</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among Primary School Teachers based on their School Location.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>015</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their membership in social organizations.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>016</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their membership in social organizations.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>017</sub></b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their teacher training qualification year.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>018</sub></b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their teacher training qualification year.	<b>Failed to reject</b>

<b>H<sub>0</sub>19</b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on whether teaching was their first choice as a career.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>20</b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on whether teaching was their first choice as a career.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>21</b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Work Experience.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>22</b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Work Experience.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>23</b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Religion.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>24</b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Religion.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>25</b>	Altruism does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Birth Order.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>26</b>	Empathy does not significantly differ among primary school teachers based on their Birth Order.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>27</b>	Altruism does not significantly correlate with Empathy among primary school teachers.	<b>Failed to reject</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>28</b>	Altruism does not significantly correlate with Birth Order among primary school teachers.	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>H<sub>0</sub>29</b>	Empathy does not significantly correlate with Birth Order among primary school teachers.	<b>Failed to reject</b>

## **Chapter – V: Discussion and Conclusion**

The relationship between teachers' personal characteristics and their professional practices plays a significant role in shaping the quality of education. This study aimed to explore the influence of various demographic factors on altruism and empathy among teachers in West Bengal, two essential traits that contribute to effective teaching and positive student outcomes. By analysing the demographic variables such as gender, marital status, family structure, education level, and teaching background, the study offers a deeper understanding of how these factors shape teachers' emotional and prosocial behaviours. These findings have important implications for teacher training, professional development, and educational policy in West Bengal, a region with diverse socio-cultural dynamics. Understanding how personal factors impact teaching practices can lead to more targeted interventions that support teachers in becoming more effective, compassionate, and empathetic educators.

The finding that female teachers demonstrated higher altruism than male teachers align with several studies (Batson et al., 2002; Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983; See et al., 2022) which suggest that female are more likely to engage in altruistic behaviour due to social and cultural expectations. In contrast, married teachers showing higher altruism than unmarried teachers are consistent with research by Emmons & Crumpler (2000), which indicates that marital relationships encourage prosocial behaviour. The finding regarding teachers from unreserved categories demonstrating higher altruism than their counterparts from SC, ST, and OBC groups is significant, as it might reflect socio-cultural differences in access to resources and societal expectations. Previous studies (Chitnis, 2014) suggest that caste and social category can influence personal values and behaviour. In the West Bengal context, these findings hold particular relevance, as caste-based disparities and the role of family structure in shaping educational attitudes remain prominent in the region's social fabric.

The observation that teachers from nuclear families exhibited higher altruism compared to those from joint families is an interesting finding, as it suggests that family structure may play a role in shaping teacher' emotional responses. Family dynamics in West Bengal can be a significant factor, as joint families are still common, and nuclear families may reflect modern, urbanized values. Similarly, the finding that teachers with higher secondary qualifications demonstrated higher altruism compared to those with graduate and master's degrees could be explained by the different career motivations, where those with advanced degrees may focus more on intellectual achievements than emotional connections with students. This is important in the context of West Bengal, where educational levels vary widely, and more emphasis is placed on professional qualifications rather than emotional intelligence.

Another finding that female teachers exhibit higher empathy than male teachers are supported by previous research (Karni & Fiedler, 2013), which highlights that female generally exhibit more empathic behaviours, possibly due to gendered socialization. This aligns with the West Bengal context, where women are often primary caregivers and may translate these caregiving traits into their teaching practice. On the other hand, unmarried teachers demonstrating higher empathy than married teachers contradict some studies that suggest married individuals, particularly those with children, tend to develop higher empathy (Davis, 1983). This result may reflect unique demographic dynamics in West Bengal, where unmarried teachers, especially younger ones, may have more flexibility to engage deeply with their students.

Other finding that teachers from unreserved categories exhibited higher empathy than their peers from SC, ST, and OBC categories mirrors the results seen in the altruism section, as both can reflect societal expectations and the emotional responses shaped by one's social standing. This aligns with West Bengal's caste dynamics, where class and community roles influence teacher-student interactions. Teachers from rural schools showing higher empathy than those from urban or semi-urban schools is also consistent with literature (Larson & Green,

2013), as rural teachers often work in more close-knit, community-oriented environments. In West Bengal, rural areas are known for strong community bonds, which likely foster greater empathy among teachers who are deeply embedded in their students' lives.

Lastly, the result showed that the negative relationship between birth order and altruism among primary school teachers, where later-born teachers showed lower altruism, is a new and intriguing finding. This might be explained by the "birth order theory," which posits that first-borns are more likely to be leaders and caregivers, traits that align with altruism (Sulloway, 1996). The West Bengal context, with its strong family structures and traditional values, may provide fertile ground for these birth order dynamics, where family roles are clearly defined. The weak correlation between altruism and empathy is also a critical finding. While these two traits are often studied together, the lack of significant correlation suggests that altruistic behaviour does not necessarily lead to empathetic actions, or vice versa. This finding aligns with other studies (Caprara et al., 2010), indicating that while both altruism and empathy are pro-social behaviours, they may operate independently depending on individual circumstances and personality.

These findings are crucial for understanding the social dynamics that influence teaching in West Bengal. The region, with its unique demographic, cultural, and educational challenges, can benefit from a deeper exploration of these variables. The emphasis on female teachers' altruism and empathy, for instance, underscores the importance of nurturing these traits in teacher training programs, particularly in a region where women have been shown to be more empathetic and altruistic. Moreover, married teachers and those from nuclear families may be crucial in shaping teaching practices, as their personal experiences may translate into better student engagement. These insights suggest that teacher training programs and policies in West Bengal can focus more on understanding the complex relationship between teachers' personal backgrounds and their professional performance.

## **Educational Implications**

The findings of this study offer several valuable educational implications for improving teaching practices and policies in West Bengal. Understanding how various demographic factors influence teachers' altruism and empathy can guide the development of more targeted teacher training programs. For instance, the study reveals that female teachers exhibit higher levels of altruism and empathy compared to their male counterparts. This suggests the importance of fostering these traits in male teachers through specific training programs that promote emotional intelligence and prosocial behavior. Given the social expectations and caregiving roles often assigned to women, teacher training can focus on nurturing these qualities in all educators, regardless of gender. The study also shows that married teachers demonstrate higher altruism, which can be attributed to the stability that marriage and family life might provide. Teacher development programs could consider integrating family life education and work-life balance strategies to support teachers, particularly those who are unmarried or early in their careers, to develop similar levels of altruism and empathy. Furthermore, the finding that teachers from rural areas exhibit higher empathy than those from urban schools highlights the potential benefits of community-based teaching. This could prompt schools in urban areas to incorporate community engagement activities to encourage more empathetic teaching practices.

Another important finding is that teachers with higher secondary qualifications show more altruism and empathy than their counterparts with graduate or master's degrees. This suggests that emotional intelligence and altruistic behavior might not always correlate with higher academic qualifications. As a result, educational policies and teacher recruitment strategies could place greater emphasis on selecting candidates with strong interpersonal and emotional skills, in addition to academic qualifications, to foster a more compassionate and caring learning environment.

Finally, the study's finding on birth order influencing altruism and empathy suggests that family dynamics play a role in shaping teachers' behavior.

Educational institutions could consider integrating family-related discussions and workshops that help teachers reflect on their personal backgrounds, which may enhance their professional development and improve their relationship with students. These insights can lead to a more holistic approach to teacher training, where both personal experiences and professional competencies are balanced to improve overall teaching effectiveness in West Bengal.

### **Limitations of the study**

- i) The study was geographically limited to six districts and twenty blocks of West Bengal, which may not fully represent the altruism and empathy of teachers in other districts, regions, or the country, thus restricting the broader applicability of the findings.
- ii) Although the study involved 570 primary school teachers, this sample size may not have captured the full diversity of teachers' altruism and empathy across the entire state or nation. A larger and more diverse sample could have provided richer insights.
- iii) The research focused solely on primary school teachers in West Bengal, which narrows the understanding of altruism and empathy within the broader teaching community.
- iv) The study considered only a limited set of demographic factors, such as gender, marital status, social category, family structure, educational qualification, academic discipline, school location, social organization member, religion, teacher training qualification year, teaching as a career choice, birth order, work experience.
- v) The cross-sectional design of the study offered a snapshot of teachers' altruism and empathy at a single point in time, failing to capture potential changes over time or the effects of factors like curriculum reforms, shifting academic expectations, or evolving teaching practices.

### **Scope for Further Studies**

- i) This study focused on a sample of primary school teachers. Future research could extend to include teachers from higher secondary schools and higher education institutions.
- ii) The current research was limited to teachers from West Bengal. Further studies could compare the results with teachers from other states or even countries to see if similar patterns emerge.
- iii) Future research could broaden the scope by including other groups such as B.Ed. teacher trainees, students, school administrators, management staff, and even parents to gain a more comprehensive understanding.
- iv) In the present study self-developed Teachers' Altruism scale and Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), developed by Spreng, McKinnon, Mar, and Levine in 2009 were used for the study. Further studies can be done taking other scales on altruism and empathy.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the altruistic and empathetic behaviors of primary school teachers in West Bengal, focusing on the influence of various demographic factors. The results reveal notable differences in altruism and empathy based on gender, marital status, family structure, education level, and teachers' career choices. The findings suggest that educational policies in West Bengal should prioritize the development of emotional intelligence and prosocial behaviors, particularly among male teachers and those with advanced qualifications. By incorporating community-based teaching methods, family life education, and emotional intelligence into teacher training, it is possible to cultivate more compassionate and empathetic educators. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of understanding teachers' personal backgrounds, including family dynamics and career paths, in shaping their professional growth.