



## TEACHER'S MENTAL HEALTH –IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING-LEARNING

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### Abstract

*Teaching is a multifarious activity and teachers have multiple roles to play. They are interacting with animate and inanimate aspects of the teaching –learning process. The effectiveness of teaching-learning depends on the extent to which the teacher has put in her efforts. The teaching profession today faces a number of challenges be it – different kinds of students, over burdened curriculum, over demanding parents, over powering technology, extensive evaluation and lack of infrastructural facilities. Under these circumstances the teacher needs to deliver her goods effectively and efficiently. What would be the mental health of the teacher? The study explores the mental health of few selected teachers and assesses the overall mental health using the MHI-38. The study will throw light on the importance of mental health equally as physical health and also helps to understand how to use the MHI-38 to assess the mental health of teachers.*

**Keywords:** *Mental Health, Negative states, Positive states, Global scales, Psychological distress, Psychological well being.*



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**INTRODUCTION:** Mental health studies have become equally important as physical health. Sigmund Freud in his definition of mental health states that it is the capacity to work and love. A good mental health motivates individuals to give off their best. According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others."<sup>[2]</sup> The WHO further states that the well-being of an individual is encompassed in the realization of their abilities, coping with normal stresses of life, productive work and contribution to their community.<sup>[1]</sup> Mental health in yesteryears was considered only as serious mental disorders, but now the definition is widened to even normal people experiencing symptoms of a bigger problem, thus leading to a drop in their productivity. In India, the **Mental Health Act** was passed on 22 May 1987. The law was described in its opening paragraph as "An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the treatment and care of **mentally ill** persons, to make better provision with respect to their properly and affairs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Education leads to transformation and as teachers we are the stewards of this transformation. Teachers must enjoy good mental health so that they can deliver their best to society. Teachers work with individuals and have to train and mould them to become productive citizens of a progressive society. All this is possible if the teachers enjoy good mental health. This study was undertaken with this concern.

**RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY:** Teachers are also part of the society and they too have a lot of responsibilities being a member of society. The society itself puts all the burden of educating their young on the already heavy shoulders of the teacher. Being a part of society a teacher serves multiple roles. The studies of job satisfaction clearly reveal the two pivotal points that give satisfaction to the teacher one is the home and the other the school. The factors of home and school interfere in the job satisfaction of teachers which will contribute in the mental health of the teachers. The study has focussed on senior teachers to understand their mental health. The studies on mental health can reveal the need for focussing on this area in an urgent manner as this is a dormant area which is intangible. Mental health issues are hardly discussed among teachers as it could lead to ostracisation . The study attempts to understand the mental health of senior teachers only.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:** The study suffers from the following limitations-very few teachers were included in the study due to reluctance of teachers to participate in the study. The MHI-38 was implemented as was understood by the researcher.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the psychological traits of Mental health of teachers under the six subscales of the Mental Health Inventory.
  - I. Negative states of Mental Health indicators
    - a. Anxiety
    - b. Depression
    - c. Loss of Behavioural / Emotional control
  - II. Positive states of Mental Health indicators
    - d. General positive effect
    - e. Emotional ties
    - f. Life satisfaction
2. To find out the scores of teachers on the global scales
  - a. Psychological Distress

b. Psychological Well Being

3. To analyse the overall Mental Health of teachers qualitatively.

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY :** The ‘Survey method’ was used to study the Mental health of teachers. Teachers who were identified for the study were given questionnaires which they had to fill and submit.

**SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY:** The sample for the study was 20 senior teachers having atleast 5-6 years of teaching experience in the same school were included in the study. The teachers were selected from 2 schools according to the convenience of the researcher. Teachers showed initial reluctance to answer the questionnaires but later agreed, out of the 20 teachers only 16 teachers returned the filled questionnaires.

**TOOLS FOR THE STUDY**The tool used was the MENTAL HEALTH INVENTORY (MHI-38) . The details of the subscale and global scale scoring are provided below are based on the following source : Davies AR, Sherbourne CD, Peterson JR and Ware JE(1998) Scoring Manual: Adult Health status and patient satisfaction measures used in RAND’S Health Insurance Experiment, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. This tool was used to test the mental health of teachers and categorise them also to estimate the overall mental health of teachers.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**Some of the studies reviewed to understand the concept of mental health and its correlates are as follows:

**Galgotra , M.(2013)** conducted a study on Mental Health of High School Teachers In Relation To Their Sex and Job Satisfaction.It was found that government school teachers possess good mental health in comparison to private school teachers..

**Gorsy , M.(2015)** studied Mental Health among Government School Teachers. The level of mental health of a teacher has been found affected with numerous personal as well as professional demands. The t-values reveals that significant gender differences exist among government school teachers and male school teachers were found better on mental health than their female counterparts. Additionally, teachers posted at schools located under urban area were found higher on mental health as compared to teaches posted at schools located under rural areas.

**Maninkardan , K. (2012)** studied occupational mental health of school and college teachers.. An attempt has been made in this study to find out whether sex and institution influences occupational mental health of teachers. Sex and institution has significant main and

interaction effects on certain components of occupational mental health but not on the total occupational mental health.

**Nandoliya , H.** (2013) conducted a study on ‘Mental health of higher secondary school teacher with relation to sex, habitat, types of school and faculty’. The result shows a significant difference existed between male and female teachers on mental health. A significant difference existed between urban and rural teachers on mental health. Significant difference existed among arts, commerce and science faculty’s teachers on mental health. Sex and type of school of teachers, interact with each other on mental health.

**Pachaiyappan , P.** (2014) carried out a study on Mental Health of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Teachers - The study reveals that the Government school teachers’ mental health and Higher Secondary school teachers’ mental health is higher than their counterparts. Gender-wise analysis shows that female teachers’ mental health is higher than the male teachers.

**Cezar –Vaz, M.** (2015) conducted a study on Mental Health of Elementary School teachers in Southern Brazil: Working Conditions and Health Consequences. There was a statistically significant association between inadequate salary and anxiety and between an excessive number of activities and stress. Teachers reported that a good relationship among colleagues in a working condition promotes well-being in the workplace.

**Gholamitooranposhti, M.** (2012) conducted a study on Teachers’ Mental health. The purpose of the present research is comparison of mental health normal and retarded students’ teachers. The results showed that in mental and physical scales, retarded students’ teachers showed less mental health. Also results of independent t-test showed that there are a significant difference between teachers of normal and retarded students in loneliness and fatigue scales. Also there is significant relation between religious attitude and mental health.

**Gonsalves, A.**(2014) studied Public school teachers’ perceptions about Mental Health. Teachers’ understanding of the terms “health and “mental health,” was studied. The result shows from the teachers’ perspective, general health is defined as the proper physiological functioning of the body and mental health is related to the balance between mind and body, as a requirement for happiness. Most of the teachers (80.6%) showed great interest in acquiring knowledge about mental health and receiving educational materials on the subject. The review revealed that there is much need for studies in Mental health for better awareness. Researchers are also trying to find out more correlates to Mental health.

**ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY:**

1.To study the psychological traits of Mental health of teachers under the six subscales of the Mental Health Inventory.

- I. Negative states of Mental Health indicators
  - a. Anxiety
  - b. Depression
  - c. Loss of Behavioural / Emotional control
- II. Positive states of Mental Health indicators
  - a. General positive effect
  - b. Emotional ties
  - c. Life satisfaction

**Table 1 Psychological traits of Mental Health according to MHI-38**

Psychological traits	Level of Psychological trait				Inference	Assessment
	Low	Moderate	High	V.High		
Anxiety %	5 31%	4 25%	7 44%	----	High anxiety range	High negative state of mental health
Depression %	15 99%	1 1%	----	----	Low depression	Low negative state of mental health
Loss of Behavioural /Emotional control %	15 99%	1 1%	----	----	Low loss of emotional control	Low negative state of mental health
General positive effect %	2 13%	7 44%	4 25%	3 18%	Moderate positive effect	Moderate positive state of mental health
Emotional ties %	3 18%	3 18%	10 64%	----	High emotional ties	High positive state of mental health
Life satisfaction %	----	2 13%	13 86%	1 1%	High life satisfaction	High positive state of mental health

2. To find out the scores of teachers on the global scales

- II. Psychological Distress
- III. Psychological Well Being

**Table 2 Scores of global scales of mental health indicators**

Global traits	Low	Average	Good	High	Very high	Inference
Psychological Distress %	16 100%	-	-	-	-	Low psychological distress
Psychological well being %		5 35%	6 39%	4 25%	1 1%	Moderate Psychological well being

3. To analyse the overall Mental Health of teachers qualitatively.

**Table 3 Consolidated scores of overall mental health of teachers**

Subscales	Assessment for teachers	Overall Mental health
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAITS OF MENTAL HEALTH</b>		
Anxiety	High negative state of mental health	Moderate negative state of Mental health
Depression	Low negative state of mental health	
Loss of Behavioural /Emotional control	Low negative state of mental health	
General positive effect	Moderate positive state of mental health	High positive state of Mental health
Emotional ties	High positive state of mental health	
Life satisfaction	High positive state of mental health	
<b>GLOBAL SCALES OF MENTAL HEALTH</b>		
Psychological distress	Low psychological distress	Good Mental health
Psychological well being	Moderate Psychological well being	
<b>OVERALL THE TEACHERS IN THE SAMPLE ENJOY VERY GOOD MENTAL HEALTH</b>		

**SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Teachers with good mental health would definitely perform better. The results of the study shows that the teachers in this study enjoy good mental health. This is very vividly seen in the index of the Mental Health sub scales. Most teachers show low anxiety, depression, low loss

of emotional control, high general positive effect, and high life satisfaction. Thus teachers have been rated high on positive states of mental health and low on negative states of mental health which shows that teachers enjoy good mental health.

In the global scales teachers have rated themselves high on psychological well being and very low on psychological distress. This also shows that teachers enjoy a good mental health. In the overall assessment of teachers who participated in this study it was seen that the teachers enjoyed very good mental health.

It is imperative that the responsibility of the good mental health condition goes to the work environment in schools. Both the schools selected for the study have provided such an environment that has led to these results. Studies have also shown that a good mental health means high job satisfaction, this would mean that the teachers in this study also enjoy high job satisfaction. The teachers who enjoy good mental health and high job satisfaction are most likely to be more productive than those who do not possess high job satisfaction or good mental health.

It is very important that efforts are made to ensure that our teachers possess good mental health. Activities like yoga, exercise and meditation could be conducted in the school premises for teachers which would help in the overall mental health. There is a need to constantly update our teachers with the latest modes of communication and manner of communication with students, colleagues and parents. The environment would be full of challenges therefore problem solving skills would be an asset for the teacher. Moreover the right attitude needs to be nurtured in the teacher towards teaching-learning.

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