

Perceived Mental Health among Teachers with Particular Reference to Begusarai District of North Bihar, India

Dr. Md. Qutbuddin Ansari^{1*}

¹Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty), Department of Psychology, G. D. College (A Constituent Unit of L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga), Begusarai – 851101, Bihar, India

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*Corresponding author: Dr. Md. Qutbuddin Ansari

Assistant Professor (Guest Faculty), Department of Psychology, G. D. College (A Constituent Unit of L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga), Begusarai – 851101, Bihar, India

Abstract

The present study is aimed at studying the degree of perceived mental health among teachers working in private and government schools with particular reference to Begusarai district of North Bihar, India. It is generally observed that teachers differ to each other in respect of their institutional values, other related opportunities and problems, therefore, the present investigation is planned to make a comparative study of perceived mental health among teachers working in private and government schools of Begusarai district– a well-known town of North Bihar. The sample of the present investigation consisted of one hundred sixty (N = 160) teachers comprising Government School (n=80) and Private School (n=80) randomly selected from different corners of Begusarai district where teachers resides. It was hypothesized that teachers working in private school in Begusarai district would have better mental health in comparison to the teachers working in government schools especially in Begusarai district. A standardized mental health inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (2003) was administered individually on the sample. This inventory also consists of 6 dimensions such as self- evolution, perception of reality, integration of personality, autonomy and stability, growth oriented attitude and environmental mastery. In this inventory high score indicates good mental health. Finally, results revealed significant difference between means of two groups of private and government school teachers as t was found statistically significant. Although, government school teacher has been found to have better mental health as compared to private school teachers, hence, such discrepancy of results has been discussed in detail by giving probable reasons.

Keywords: Mental Health, Teachers, Begusarai.

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INTRODUCTION

The present research endeavor is aimed to see the degree of mental health among private school teachers and government school teachers with particular reference to Begusarai district of North Bihar. Mental Health is a psychological state of well-being, characterized by continuing personal growth, a sense of purpose in life, self- acceptance, and positive relations with others. Some people define mental health as the absence of mental illness. Hence, psychologists have identified a number of distinct dimensions of mental health. These include self-acceptance, or self- esteem, characterized by a positive evaluation of oneself and one's past experiences; personal growth reflected in one's sense of continued psychological growth and development; a sense that one's life has purpose and meaning; positive relations with others; environmental mastery, the capacity to manage effectively in the surrounding world; and

autonomy, a sense of self-determination and the ability to control one's own life. Self-acceptance, relations with others, environmental mastery, and autonomy usually improve as a person ages and gains life experience. However, many people find that their personal growth and sense of purpose in life begin to decline in midlife.

Some psychologists regard mental health as the ability to maintain a balance between positive and negative emotions, such as elation and sadness. In this view, a person who displays emotional extremes in either direction is less well-adjusted. Other psychologists emphasize the role of one's environment in influencing well-being. This perspective sees mental health reflected in a person's overall happiness with various domains of life, such as social relationships, work, and community.

In 1999, the Surgeon General's report focused for the first time on mental rather than physical health. In that report, mental health was defined as "a state of successful performance of mental function, resulting in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with people, and the ability to adapt to change and to cope with adversity" (U.S. Public Health Service, 1999).

Health is an essential aspect of human life. It is well-recognized truth from the time immemorial that possessing good health is pre-requisite for every human being for all-round growth and development. The word "Mental" means "of the mind". It describes our thoughts, feelings and understanding of ourselves and the world around us. The word "health" generally describes the working order of our body and mind. So, that when we talk about mental health we refer it to the working order of an individual's mind.

Mental health, however, is a contested and still much debated concept, with no universally accepted definition (Herron, *et al.*, 2000; Friedli, 2004). In fact, it has been argued that there can be no universally accepted definition (Herron *et al.*, 2000; Friedli, 2004; Warr, 1987) due to the fact that mental health is multi-dimensional and value-laden. A wide range of meanings and definitions exist amongst individuals, reflecting, for example, differences in terms of age, sex, socio-cultural contexts, experiences, and lack of common language. Additionally, interpretations are dynamic and mental health is often used interchangeably with, emotional, psychological and subjective well-being. Thus, no definition is ideal or without problems and mental health is more complex and subjective than any definition in this regard. It is recognized that focusing on achieving a consensus on definitions of an abstract concept like mental health may not be the most beneficial use of efforts or necessary (Herron *et al.*, 2000; Friedli, 2004; McDonald, (1999). However, the way mental health is defined and conceptualized will affect how it is measured.

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO, 2005). According to Menninger (1945), it is the ability of human being to adjust to the world and to each other with maximum effectiveness and happiness. Boehm (1955) says that the condition and level of mental health should be socially acceptable. According to Charandas (1986) mental health is the adjustment of human being

to the world and to each other with maximum of effectiveness and happiness. It is an important aspect of one's total health. From perspectives of the discipline of positive psychology mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

In the recent past the field of Global Mental Health has emerged, and defined as 'the area of study, research and practice that places a priority on improving mental health and achieving equity in mental health for all people worldwide' (Patel and Prince, 2010).

The term mental health has been classified into two different broader categories known as positive and negative mental health. Mental health from the positive angle refers to behavior, attitudes and feeling that respect an individual's level of personal effectiveness, success and satisfaction. Argyris (1951) suggested that persons with positive mental health should have the ability to understand the realities which exists both externally and internally when he/she strives to be aware of their oneself. Buck (1972) found that employees who reported working under pressure indicated decreased mental health. Emmons (1992) viewed that mentally healthy persons are able to fulfill their social roles successfully. They enjoy peace of mind, happiness, self-confidence and others' companionship. Negative mental health covers a wide variety of deep feelings including sorrow, disappointment, anger and empathy etc. O'Neil and others (1985) found that stress in the work environment has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of working women. Rastogi and Kavita (2001) found a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and mental health. Nagaratnamma (1999) says that employees of different organizations differ with regards to their mental health. According to Johns *et al.*, (1989) mental health is a condition which is characteristics of the average person who meets the demands of life on the basis of his own capacities and limitations.

Sharma and Singh (2001) revealed that in the state of Goa the prevalence of mental disorder was 60%, more among males as compare to females and likewise it was found much higher among Christians as compared to Hindus; but it was found very much similar in urban and rural areas.

Mental health is the launch pad of thinking, communication skills, learning, emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem. It is how people look at themselves, their lives and the other people in their lives; evaluate their challenges and problems; and explores choices. A meta-analytic review by Stansfeld and Candy (2006) provides robust consistent evidence

that (combination of) high demands and low decision latitude and (combination of) high efforts and low rewards are prospective risk factors for common mental disorders and suggested that the psychological work environment is important for mental health. The impact of work stressors on common mental disorders differ from men to women.

Moreover, Zilli and Ali (2009) have conducted a study on mental health among players and non-players. The findings of the study revealed significant difference between players and non-players on mental health dimensions. Similarly, Zilliet *al.*, (2009) concluded that female youth scored higher on mental health dimensions as compared to their male counterparts. Recently, Priya and Ahmad (2021) studied “perceived mental health and subjective well-being among women” and they found significant difference between the group of women viz., housewives and working women in terms of their degree of mental health, although, both the group of women had shown positive inclination towards perceived reactions on mental health.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Having surveyed the extensive literature on the phenomenon, it has been observed that none of the studies are available on the problems; hence, the present study is of utmost value which may fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned. As it is generally assumed that private and government school teacher differs to each other in respect of their institutional values, other related opportunities and problems, therefore, the present investigation was planned to study mental health among private and government school teachers only up to XII standards.

Hypotheses:

In the light of the broad objectives of the study the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Private school teachers will have better mental health as compare to government school teachers on over all mental health inventory.
2. None of the dimensions of mental health will differ significantly between the group of Private and Government School teachers especially in Begusarai district of North Bihar.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Total sample of the present investigation consisted of (N=160) school teachers, comprising private school teachers (n=80) and government school teachers (n=80) which were randomly selected from different corners of Begusarai districts – a well-known town of North Bihar.

Tools used

The following measures were used in the present piece of research work:

1. **Mental Health Inventory:** For measuring mental health of the school teachers a standardized mental health inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (2003) was used. Inventory consisted of 56 items and each item was rated on 4 point rating scale ranging from always to never with a score of 1 to 4. Inventory comprises of six dimensions such as, Positive self-evaluation (PSE), Perception of reality (PR), Integration of personality (IP), Autonomy (Autonomy), Group-oriented attitudes (GOA), and Environmental Mastery (EM). In this inventory high score indicates good mental health and low score indicates poor mental health.
2. **Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** Biographical Information Blank (BIB) was also prepared and used for analyzing the obtained results. Information included in it was like age, income, job tenure, number of depends, total working experience, qualifications, etc.

Procedure

These two materials were in printed form and were administered on each teacher who was engaged in imparting teaching-learning either in private or government schools located in Begusarai district by giving assurance that information provided by them will be kept strictly confidential.

The responses were scored according to the procedure and the individual scores were obtained. Having obtained the data, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment for obtaining the results and presented in tables. Finally, the results were discussed and the formulated hypotheses were tested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Showing mean, SD and t-value of private and government school teachers on overall mental health questionnaire

Dimensions	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P*
Overall mental health dimension	Private School	80	156.22	34.15	3.66	< .01
	Government School	80	177.46	38.8		

*Significant at 0.01 level.

Table-No. 1 clearly indicates that in the case of teachers of private schools the mean and SD was found to be 156.22 with SD 34.15 while in the case of teachers of government schools the Mean and SD was found to be 177.46 and 38.8 respectively, which is statistically significant at 0.01 level as the t – value :

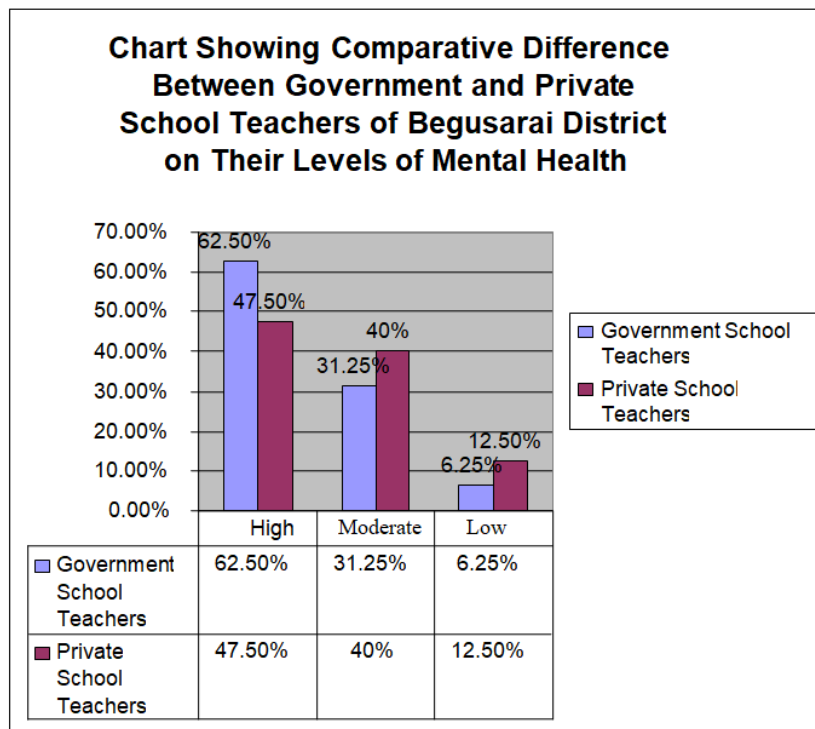
3.66 has been found. Thus, the present trend of obtained result disproves the present underlying major hypothesis of our present piece of research that “private school teachers would have better mental health as compare to government school teachers on overall mental health dimensions” stands rejected.

Table 2: Showing Comparative Difference between Private and Government School Teachers of Begusarai district on their levels of Mental Health

Levels	Government School Teachers Group(N=80)		Private School Teachers Group(N=80)	
	n	Percentage	n	Percentage
High	50	62.5 %	38	47.5 %
Moderate	25	31.25 %	32	40 %
Low	05	6.25 %	10	12.5 %

Extending the table-1, table – 2 also reveals the clear cut picture regarding the levels of perceived reactions of private and government school teachers on the degree of perceived mental health. It could be observed from the table-2, 62.5 % teachers from Government schools had shown higher degree of mental health than Private school teachers i.e. 47.5 %. It is also evident from the table, 31.25 % teachers from

government schools have been found possessing moderate level of mental health than Private school teachers i.e. 40 % which is comparatively higher in percentage, whereas, 12.5 % teachers of private schools had low degree of mental health which is comparatively higher than government school teachers working in Begusarai district of North Bihar i.e. 6.25 %. The above result can also be understood by the following diagram:



The result obtained in table no. 1 on total dimension of mental health clearly highlight the facts that Government school teachers are getting comparatively more sound mental health as compared to Private school teachers due to high conducive organizational climate, more autonomy and furthermore

much authoritative power invested to them along with lower level working stressful situations. A number of studies conducted by Buck (1972), O’Neil and others (1985) and Nagaratnamma (1999) extend their whole heartedly support to present findings in this regard.

Table 3: Showing Mean, SD and t – values on Different Dimensions of Mental Health between the group of Government and Private School Teachers Working in Begusarai district of North Bihar, India

Dimensions of Mental Health	Group	N	Mean	SD	't' values
Positive Self-Evaluation	Government School	80	31.62	7.14	4.17*
	Private School	80	27.24	6.04	
Realistic Perception	Government School	80	27.70	5.72	3.38*
	Private School	80	24.72	5.35	
Integration of Personality	Government School	80	35.76	7.96	9.46*
	Private School	80	25.35	5.79	
Autonomy	Government School	80	20.33	4.06	0.05** Insignificant
	Private School	80	20.30	4.03	
Group – Oriented Attitude	Government School	80	30.29	6.72	2.88*
	Private School	80	27.35	6.15	
Environmental Mastery	Government School	80	31.76	7.20	0.45** Insignificant
	Private School	80	31.26	6.79	

*Significant at 0.01 level.

Table-No: 3 clearly indicates that on various dimensions of mental health viz., Positive self – evaluation, Realistic Perception, Integration of Personality, and Group – oriented Attitude have emerged as the predictors of mental health between the group of government and private school teachers working in Begusarai district as their t – values 4.17, 3.38, 9.46 and 2.88 respectively has been found significant between the group of Government and Private School Teachers at .01 level of confidence, hence the proposed hypothesis i.e. “None of the dimensions of mental health will differ significantly between the group of Private and Government School teachers especially in Begusarai district of North Bihar” also stand rejected. Thus, proves the present underlying minor hypothesis of our present research that “Government school teachers have better mental health as compare to private school teachers on Positive self-evaluation.

In this case positive self-evaluation of Government school teachers clearly indicates that school teachers working in Government schools use to assess themselves more positively as compare to private school teachers, since they realize their potentialities in a better way, have good confidence level and self-confidence among themselves as compared to private school teachers.

Similarly, in the case of Government school teachers the mean and SD was found to be higher, while in the case of private school teachers which has been found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus, proves the present underlying hypothesis of the present research that “government school teachers would have better mental health as compare to private school teachers on “realistic perception” – a dimension of mental health.

It is quite clear from the above mentioned findings that government school teachers are more realistic, farsighted and sharp in decision taking in their

different matter of the organization as compare to private school teachers.

From the table – 3, it can also be observed that the dimension of mental health i.e. “Integration of Personality” which has also been found to be significant at 0.01 level. Thus, proves the present underlying hypothesis of the present research that “Government school teachers have better mental health as compare to private school teachers on Integration of personality dimension”. The above mentioned context of present result clearly indicates that government school teachers possess highly well-behaved, delightful, incorporated and value-oriented personality; therefore, they got better mental health as compared to private school teachers.

Table-No. 3 clearly indicates that in the dimension of “Group – Oriented Attitude” private school teachers scored low as the mean and SD was found to be 27.35 and 6.15, while in the case of government school teachers the Mean and SD was found to be 30.29 and 6.72 respectively, which has been found significant between the group of private and government school teachers at 0.01 confidence level. Thus, proves the present underlying hypothesis of the present research that “government school teachers have better mental health as compare to private school teachers on “Group – Oriented Attitude”. Thus, the result obtained also clearly indicates that government school teachers are getting better group attitude and job-related freedom; sense of oneness and generosity, therefore, they got better mental health as compared to private school teachers.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the obtained results and discussions the important conclusions are summed up below:

1. Significance of differences has been found between government and private school teachers up to XIIth Standards, although, both the group have shown

quite favorable inclination towards their sound mental health.

2. Significance of differences have been found between private and government school teachers on different dimensions of mental health, namely, Positive self-evaluation (PSE), Perception of reality (PR), Integration of personality (IP), and Group-oriented attitudes (GOA).
3. Government school teachers were comparatively more prone to higher degree of perceived mental health than private school teachers.
4. Observations have revealed the fact that there is a need to pay much more attention to the necessities of value based education to save Indian socio-cultural milieu in both the schools (GOVERNMENT and PRIVATE) of India. It is because of the fact that sound mental health is the need of the hour in general and in all walks of life to understand the importance of Indian culture especially in the private schools. However, the sample of this study is given up inadequate but it may have its own far-reaching implications in its wider point of views.

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