



ASSESSMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY IN A SELECTED URBAN COMMUNITY, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mental health literacy refers to the knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders that assist in their recognition, management, or prevention. Inadequate mental health literacy is a major barrier to early identification and treatment of mental health issues, especially in urban communities where stigma, misinformation, and lack of awareness are prevalent. This study aimed to assess the level of mental health literacy among adults in a selected urban community of West Bengal.

Objectives:

1. To assess mental health literacy among people residing selected urban community, West Bengal.
2. To find out the association between mental health literacy with selected demographic variables.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 adults aged 18 years and above in Mullick Fatak, Howrah, West Bengal. Participants were selected using a non probability purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using the standardized Mental Health Literacy Scale (MHLS), which includes 35 items covering domains such as recognition, knowledge, beliefs, and help-seeking attitudes. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. **Results:** The findings revealed that 61% of the participants had poor mental health literacy, 36% had moderate literacy, and only 3% demonstrated good literacy. A significant association was found between literacy levels and demographic variables such as education and exposure to mental health information ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusion:** The study highlights a substantial gap in mental health literacy among the urban population studied. Strengthening awareness through community-based mental health programs and integrating mental health education into public health services are essential steps toward improving overall mental well-being in urban areas of West Bengal.

KEYWORDS : Mental Health Literacy, Urban Community, MHLS, Awareness, Stigma, West Bengal