

## **Job stress among female teachers of rural primary schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to measure the job stress among female teachers of government run primary school of rural areas. Thirty five female subjects aged 25 to 35 years were selected randomly for the study. Indore Teacher's Stressors Scale (ITJSS) developed by Dr. Meena Buddhisagar and Dr Madhulika Verma was used to collect the data. On the basis of the results it can be concluded that female primary teachers of government run primary schools in rural areas have high job stress. Overloadedness, role-conflict, powerlessness, role ambiguity, motivelessness and frail interpersonal relationship are significantly correlated with job stress. But overloadedness and role –conflict are the main factor of job stress among primary school's female teachers. It can also be concluded that female assistant teachers who have charge of school have significantly higher job stress than the female assistant teachers who do not have charge of school.

**Key Words :** Stress, Job stress, Stressor, Primary teachers, Rural primary schools

### **INTRODUCTION**

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 the Government of India passed the free and compulsory education bill for the children up-to the age of 14 years. To meet out this situation and to teach all children, government increases the number of school. But government fails to provide the teacher in all school. At present there are 322 primary schools on every one lakh population and government is planning to open new schools while there are about 1.5 lakh vacancies of primary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh. The working conditions in these schools are not upto the mark. Some schools do not have building, furniture and even sitting flour. Besides this most of the primary schools are situated in rural area where there is neither proper road nor proper facilities for vehicle to reach there. The teachers appointed in these schools belong to other place and after appointment they have to live at these places.

Besides these, primary school teachers have to perform pulse-polio duty, election duty, census, counting of family member, making of voter I. card, BPL card and other work along with the duty to distribute and keep the record of mid-day-meal, book and dress distribution. Due to this, the work load of primary teacher is increasing day-by-day and it becomes a challenge for every primary school teachers to meet out this work load and to adjust him/herself accordingly. This increasing work load and the working conditions create stress in primary school teachers. (Stotland and Pendleton, 1989).

Teaching has been identified as one of the most stressful occupations in many countries (Cooper *et al.*, 1988). Teaching related stress, commonly termed 'teacher stress', is defined as a teacher's experience of "unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression,

resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (Kyriacou, 2001). Like other forms of occupational stress, it can have serious implications for the healthy functioning of the individual as well as for the organization in which the individual serves. At a personal level, teaching related stress can affect a teacher’s health, well-being, and performance (Larchick and Chance, 2004). From an organizational perspective, it translates to unproductive employee behaviors such as alienation, apathy, and absenteeism (Gugliemi and Tatrow, 1998). Hence, even after nearly three decades of research effort, the study of teacher stress, particularly its sources and manifestations, continues to attract widespread interest and attention.

Several factors have been identified as a major source of stress among teachers. Prominent among these factors are poor working conditions (Rowsey and Ley, 1986), misbehavior of students (Dunham, 1984), lack of resources for teaching (Faber, 1984; Okebukola and Jagede, 1989), overloading with non-teaching duties (Payne and Furnham, 1987) and pupils’ poor attitudes to work (Kyriacou, 1998; Okebukola and Jegede, 1989). Besides these role ambiguity, role insufficiency, role overload, role boundary, responsibility, and physical environment (Osipow and Spokane, 1987; Osipow, 1998) are also responsible for stress in teachers. Turning specifically to teachers’ stress, Johnstone (1989) argued that many researchers (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978a; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978b; Kyriacou 1980d; Dunham, 1984) all attributed the major causes of stress to Pupils’ failure to work or behave; Poor working conditions, generally in terms of relations with colleagues, Workload, in terms of overload, under-load, or routine work and Poor school ethos.

Sources of teacher stress are varied (Dewe, 1986). Some of the more common sources include the need to make adaptations to sudden curriculum changes and feeling of disempowerment (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Moriarty *et al.*, 2001). Apart from school curriculum changes, a change in school structure is also a stressor. Such change causes erosion of collegial relationship and harbors feeling of inequity and uncertainty (Taris *et al.*, 2004). Other often reported stress catalysts include role overload, namely the need for teachers to cope with a number of competing roles within their job (Pithers and Soden, 1998), excessive over-time work (Cooper and Kelly, 1993), and management problems associated with student misbehavior and large class sizes (Gordon, 2002).

### **Review of literature :**

Teacher’s stress is a relatively new area of empirical approach. Teaching has been identified as a particularly stressful occupation (Cacha, 1981) because it is a demanding profession. Research has suggested that a number of stressors are intrinsic to teaching. In the Travers and Cooper (1997) study, workload and long working hours emerged as particular issues for English teachers as opposed to colleagues in France. When Travers and Cooper (1997) questioned British teachers across all educational sectors high workload, poor status and poor pay emerged as three of the seven major sources of stress - the others being systemic in origin.

Kinnunen and Leskinen (1989) studied the source of stress among school teachers. They assessed 142 teachers by repeated self-report during the autumn and spring terms of an academic year. It was found that recovery from stress occurred each weekend during the spring term, but that by the end of the longer autumn term weekend recovery no longer took place. Classroom discipline is also a significant source of stress. Similar results were found by the Lewis (1999), Morton *et al.* (1997) and Capel (1997).

A study by Male and May (1998) of learning support coordinators in Further Education colleges further illustrates the importance of these factors. 35 coordinators were assessed for burnout, stress and health. Overall mixed evidence for heightened stress in this group emerged, but there was strong evidence for work overload and excessive working hours, associated with emotional exhaustion. A factor related to workload is role overload, which takes place when an employee has to cope with a number of competing roles within their job.

Valerie (2002) reviewed the related literature on stress and its causes among teachers. The

overall aim of the review is to report on literature published during the past ten years in the UK on the level of teacher stress, its impact and comparison with other professions. After review of the related literature he conclude that :

- Despite the difficulties inherent in defining stress, research indicates that its development is influenced by personal, situational and structural factors.
- Studies of occupational stress indicate that workload and communications are significant causes.
- Anticipation, worry, helplessness and executive roles have all emerged from laboratory studies as psychological factors which influence stress.
- Several writers concur in finding that pupils' behavior (misbehavior), poor working conditions, especially relationships with colleagues, workload (mainly overload) and poor school ethos are the major causes of teacher's stress.
- There is considerable evidence, mainly from self-reports, that teachers feel ill as a consequence of excessive stress. However, available absence and retrials' statistics are not sufficiently detailed to support this connection.
- Despite the widely reported feeling of teachers' disenchantment with their profession and the desire for early retirement, there was no evidence to show that these are impacting on pupils.

Eva *et al.* (2006) studied the source and manifestations of stress in female teachers. The topic of the study was – “Sources and Manifestations of Stress in female kindergarten teachers.” One hundred and thirteen female kindergarten teachers were selected for the sample. The teaching experience of the sample ranged between 1 and 24 years with the mean being 12.10 years. Sources and manifestations of teachers stress were assessed with the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) developed by Fimian and Fastenu (1990). The findings show that :

- Work – related Stressors and time management are the more salient sources of stress contributing to the overall teaching stress experienced by the sample.
- Fatigue and emotional stress are the more common stress manifestations reported by the teachers.

Wu *et al.* (2006) studied to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions on occupational stress among teachers in middle schools. The study group consists of 459 teachers (247 men and 212 women) from four middle schools. The control group consists of 502 teachers (271 men and 231 women). The three dimensions of occupational adjustment (including occupational stress, psychological strain, and coping resources) were measured with the Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised Edition (OSI-R) and the work ability was assessed with the Work Ability Index (WAI) among teachers. The integrated interventions (involving organizational and individual level intervention) were taken to the teachers in the study group. This study suggested that interventions were efficient in reducing the teachers' occupational stressors, increased their coping resources and improved their work ability.

Chan *et al.* (2010) investigated the occupational health problems among teachers of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. A random sample of 6000 teachers was generated from the database of Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (HKPTU) members. A self-administrated questionnaire was designed and sent by mail to the teachers of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, together with a cover letter and a reply paid envelope. A total of 1,710 usable questionnaires were returned. The results indicated that comparing with one year and five years ago, 91.6% and 97.3% of the responding teachers reported an increase of perceived stress level, respectively. Heavy workload, time pressure, education reforms, external school review, pursuing further education, and managing students' behavior and learning were the most frequently reported sources of work stress. The four most frequently reported stress management activities were sleeping, talking to neighbors and friends, self-relaxing, and watching television, whereas the least frequently reported activity was doing more

exercises or sports. Jan *et al.* (2013) studied the social and family role stress among primary school teachers of District Budgam. The sample for the investigation consisted of 120 primary school teachers of District Budgam. The sample was further divided into two strata (60 males and 60 females). Both groups were selected from the universe by using random sampling technique. For the measurement of social and family role stress among primary school teachers, The Social and Family Role Stress Scale (SFRS) by S. Sultan Akhter and Priti Vadra were administered. The analysis of the data showed that Female primary school teachers were found to have more stress as compared to male primary school teachers of District Budgam. Private male primary school teachers were found to have more stress as compared to Govt. male primary school teachers of District Budgam. Further, this research showed that private female primary school teachers were found to have more stress as compared to Govt. female primary school teachers of District Budgam. The main reason is that private females feel insecurity in terms of safety, job, pressure from home and society.

In a study Kalyva (2013) aimed to explore the effect of gender, age, years of teaching experience, teaching students with special educational needs and burnout on teacher stress. The participants were 384 Greek primary schoolteachers, aged 25 to 59 years old (mean age = 41 years and 4 months), 146 males (38%) and 238 females (62%). They completed the Questionnaire on Teacher Stress and the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey – MBI-ES. It was found that Greek primary schoolteachers report low levels of stress and that their stress is predicted by burnout and teaching students with special educational needs. More specifically, teachers with higher levels of burnout and those who do not teach students with special educational needs report higher levels of stress.

Husan (2014) compared teachers' occupational stress of primary government and private school teachers of Tehsil Laksar, District-Haridwar. A sample of 100 teachers was selected, 50 each from government and private schools. Teachers' Occupational Stress Scale constructed and standardized by Dr. Sajid Jamal and Dr. Abdul Raheem was administered. Findings revealed that in general, the primary school teachers have found to be highly stressed. The next finding of this study revealed that on the basis of type of school private school teachers face more stress than the government teachers this may be due to low salary and more burden of work in the private schools. This result is in line with the findings of Ravichandran and Rajendran (2007).

The present study was also design to measure the job stress among female teachers of rural primary schools and various factors which may be responsible for this stress.

### **Objectives :**

Objectives of the study were as follows :

- To study the job stress of female teachers of rural primary schools run by state government.
- To study the relationship between different job stressors of female teachers.
- To study the job stress of primary teachers who have charge of school and primary teachers who do not have charge of school.

### **Hypotheses :**

On the basis of the review of the studies conducted on the issue and objectives of the study the following hypotheses were formulated –

- There is high degree of stress among female teachers of primary school exists in rural areas.
- There is no significant relationship between various job stressors and stress.

There is no significant difference between the stress of female assistant teachers who have charge of school and female assistant teachers who do not have charge of school.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample :

The random sample technique was used to collect the data. The subjects were female teachers of rural areas' primary schools. Age of subjects ranged from 25 to 35 years. Out of 40 rural areas' government run primary schools of District Meerut (UP), 35 female teachers were selected for the study.

### Tool used :

To collect the data we used Indore Teacher's Job Stressors Scale (ITJSS) developed by Dr. Meena Buddhisagar Rathod (Indore) and Dr Madhulika Varma (Indore). There were 49 items in the test related to six stressors: Overloadedness (OL), Role Conflict (RC), Powerlessness (PL), Role Ambiguity (RA), Motivelessness (ML) and Frail Interpersonal Relationship (FIR).

### Procedure of data collection :

Primarily 40 primary schools of rural area were selected for the study. Data regarding total number of teachers and number of female teachers in these schools were collected from office of Basik Shiksha Adhikari, Meerut. After it, 35 female teachers (out of 60) were selected randomly. The data was collected individually from each subject. They were given individually the ITJSS. There was no time limit for the test. Subjects were also asked to give general information like age, education qualification, job experience, no. of children in school, no. of teachers in school, total teaching experience etc. The filled-in tests were collected and scored as per procedure given in manual. Each stressor was scored individually. By adding the scores of all stressors, total score of stress of each teacher was calculated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS programme. To test the hypotheses, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis and t-test was calculated.

To test the first hypothesis mean and standard deviation was calculated. Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation of female primary school teachers on the stress scale. The mean of the primary teachers on - overloadedness was 23.43 with S.D. 11.10, on role conflict was 27.29 with S.D. 4.99, on powelessness was 24.23 with S.D. 4.73, on role ambiguity was 26.06 with S.D. 5.44, on motivelessness was 20.94 with S.D. 5.45, on frail interpersonal relationship was 22.60 with S.D. 4.74 and of total stress scores was 144.54 with S.D. 28.06. The mean of overloadedness scores, role-conflict scores and stress scores fall in the 75, 90 and 75 percentile (as per the manual) respectively. It means that overloadedness, role-conflict and stress in primary school teachers are much higher than the normal population.

<b>Table 1 : Showing the average scores of primary school teachers on different stressors and stress</b>							
	Over-loadedness (OL)	Role – conflict (RC)	Power- lessness (PL)	Role ambiguity (RA)	Motive- lessness (ML)	Frail interpersonal relationship (FIR)	Total score on stress scale
Mean	23.43	27.29	24.23	26.06	20.94	22.60	144.54
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
S.D.	11.10	4.99	4.73	5.44	5.45	4.74	28.06
Percentile	75	90	50	50	50	50	75

To test the second hypotheses, correlation analysis was used by the researchers. Table 2 showed that there was a significant positive correlation between overloadedness (OL) and role-conflict (RC) (0.596), role- ambiguity (RA) (0.507), motivelessness (ML) (0.579), frail interpersonal relationship (FIR) (0.580). But overloadedness was not correlated significantly with powerlessness (0.364). There was positive significant correlation between role-conflict and role ambiguity (0.452), motivelessness (0.507), interpersonal relationship (0.635). There was no significant relationship between role-conflict and powerlessness (0.383). Powerlessness is significantly correlated with role ambiguity (0.440), motivelessness (0.439) and with frail interpersonal relationship (0.511). Role Ambiguity (RA) was significantly correlated with OL, RC and PL but was not correlated significantly with ML (0.261) and FIR (0.307). Motivelessness (ML) was significantly correlated with OL, RC, PL, and FIR (0.756). Results also showed that total scores on stress scales was correlated significantly with OL (0.871), RC (0.772), PL (0.638), RA (0.652), ML (0.765) and with FIR (0.83).

To test the third hypothesis t-test was calculated. Table 3 showed the mean, standard deviation, standard error of difference between mean and t-test between assistant teachers who have charge of school and who do not have charge of school. 't' value showed that there is a significant difference between the mean of assistant teachers who have charge of school and who do not have charge of school (t= 2.89). This value is significant at 0.01 level of significance.

Results showed that the mean of job stress scores of primary schools' female teachers fall in 75 percentile. Which means that female teachers have high degree of job stress than the normal population. Thus we accept our first hypothesis that 'there is high degree of stress among primary schools' female teachers'. As it is clear form the Table 1 that we measure the six stressors of job stress among primary schools' female teachers. Results shows that though all the six stressors pay vital role in job stress

**Table 2 : Showing the co-relation analysis among various job stressors**

	Over-loadedness (OL)	Role – conflict (RC)	Power- lessness (PL)	Role ambiguity (RA)	Motive- lessness (ML)	Frail interpersonal relationship (FIR)	Total score on stress scale
Over-loadedness (OL)	1.000	.596**	.364	.507**	.579**	.580**	.871*
Role – conflict (RC)	.596**	1.000	.383	.452**	.507**	.635**	.772*
Power-lessness (PL)	.364	.383	1.000	.440**	.439**	.511**	.638*
Role Ambiguity (RA)	.507**	.452**	.440**	1.000	.261	.307	.652*
Motive-lessness (ML)	.579**	.507**	.439**	.261	1.000	.756**	.765*
Frail interpersonal relationship (FIR)	.580**	.635**	.511**	.307	.756**	1.000	.803*
Total score on stress scale	.871**	.772**	.638**	.652**	.765**	.803**	1.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed), \*-Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Table 3 : Showing critical ratio of stress scores of primary school teachers who have charge of school and who do not have charge of school**

Assistant teachers	N	M	S.D.	SEd	df	T test	Level of Sig
Have charge of school	10	162.10	20.14	8.48	33	2.89	0.01
Not have charge of school	25	137.52	27.99				

Table value of CR for df 33 at 0.05 level is 2.03 and at 0.01 level is 2.72.

among the primary school teachers but overloadedness and role-conflict are the main stressors. It means that female teachers have work overload. As the mean of overloadedness fall in the 75 percentile, it means that work overload is a factor of stress among female primary school teachers. Results also shows that mean of role-conflict scores fall in 90 percentile of the norms. It means that there is a situation of role –conflict among primary schools’ female teachers. The reason of this role –conflict may be due to that the main work of teachers should be teaching but besides teaching, primary school teachers perform other duty like pulse-polio duty, election duty, census, making voter I.D, BPL card and other work allotted by the district/state authorities. Thus they have to perform non-teaching duty which not only increase their work load but also create a situation of role-conflict among these teachers. Our results are incongruent with the results of the study conducted by Payne and Furnnam (1987); Osipow and Spokane (1987); Osipow (1998); Travers and Cooper (1997) and Pithers and Soden (1998).

Results showed that the six stressors measured by the researchers are significantly correlated with the job stress scores. It means that overloadedness, role-conflict, powerlessness, role ambiguity, motivelessness and frail interpersonal relationship are the main factors or stressors of job stress among female primary school teachers. Results also shows that there is a significant difference between the mean of stress scores of primary schools’ female teachers who have charge of school and primary schools’ female teachers who not have charge of school. These results conforms that overloadedness is the main factor of job stress among primary school teachers. The primary teachers, who have charge of school, have to do more work than the primary teachers who not have the charge of school. The incharge have to do the duty as a teacher and also as a head of school. Though some teachers are not head of school by post but as they are single teacher in the school, they work as head of school. So their work load increases and create stress among these teachers. Besides these, being the only teachers in school, the incharge has to reach in school before time and has to stay in school after the school time to finish the daily routine work. She has the duty to keep the record of mid-day-meal, scholarship, books and bag distributed to students and attendance register. She also has to teach all the class from I to V and perform other duties allotted to her by the district/state authorities. Thus all these factor not only create stress but also responsible for role conflict, role ambiguity and motivelessness in these teachers.

### **Conclusion :**

On the basis of the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the primary schools’ female teachers of government run primary schools in rural area have high job stress. Overloadedness, role-conflict, powerlessness, role ambiguity, motivelessness and frail interpersonal relationship are significantly correlated with job stress. But overloadedness and role-conflict are the main factor of job stress among female primary school teachers. The primary school female teachers, who have charge of school, have significantly higher job stress than the primary school female teachers who do not have the charge of school. So effort should be made not to allot non-teaching work to these primary school teachers to reduce their stress.

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JOB STRESS AMONG FEMALE TEACHERS OF RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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