

Job Stress among School Teachers: A Comparative Study with respect to Locality, Age, and Gender

Divya Rani^{1*}, Dr. Binay Kumar²

¹ Research Scholar, University Department of Psychology, L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar, India.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, U. R. College, Rosera, Samastipur, Bihar, India.

Corresponding Author:

Divya Rani

Research Scholar, University Department of Psychology, L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar, India.

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ABSTRACT

The effect of Job Stress on the School Teachers with respect to locality, age and gender was studied in the present study. The objectives of the study were to determine the overall level of job stress and its major dimensions and to determine whether there are significant differences between teachers in rural and urban localities, different age groups and gender. A descriptive survey research design in the quantitative paradigm was used. The population of the study was comprised of 240 school teachers of different schools in Samastipur District in Bihar. The Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984) was used to measure job stress and a personal information sheet to obtain the demographical data. The results showed that teachers' job stress is a multidimensional phenomenon. The most significant sources of occupational stress were: role overload, strenuous working conditions, role conflict and unprofitability. Some of the other dimensions were intrinsic impoverishment, under-participation and role ambiguity, group pressure, political pressure, poor peer relations, powerlessness, low status and responsibility for persons. The study also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in job stress score of rural teachers compared to urban teachers where the latter had a comparatively higher score. There was also a significant difference between the different age groups, where the teachers in the age group 51 years and above had high mean scores of job stress. The differences between gender were statistically significant and female teachers reported higher job stress than male teachers. Results show that the factors affecting the occupational stress of school teachers are both organizational and demographic factors. The study suggests that workload should be balanced, roles should be clearly defined, decisions should be made through participation, leadership should be supportive, professional recognition should be given, and interpersonal relations should be healthy, as well as implementing stress-management programmes with special emphasis on urban, senior and female teachers.....

Keywords: Job Stress, School Teachers, Locality, Age, Gender, Occupational Stress

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is one of the most important professions in society as teachers are at the very core of the intellectual, social, emotional and moral development of the students. Teachers' professional competence, motivation, commitment and psychological wellbeing are significant factors in the quality of the school education. But teaching has become more challenging because of increased teaching responsibilities, administrative duties, classroom management, assessment, changes in technology, parents' expectations, and accountability for the performance of the students. Teachers may experience job stress when the demands made on them personally and professionally are beyond the available resources. Job stress is the psychological and emotional strain that occurs when the job's demands are seen as overwhelming an individual's ability to respond in a manner that is congruent with the job. Stress is an outcome of the relationship between the person and the environment, when environmental demands are felt to be threatening and/or expectations are that the individual cannot cope with them (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Teacher stress was defined by Kyriacou (2001) as unpleasant emotions (anxiety, frustration, tension, anger or depression) that arise from various facets of teacher work. Therefore, job stress of teachers can come from the overload of work, lack of time, discipline problems of students, pressure of administration, inadequacy of infrastructure, lack of autonomy of teaching profession, interpersonal problems, and lack of institutional support. High levels of job stress can have an impact on teachers and schools. Can lead to lower job satisfaction, emotional....

exhaustion, lack of motivation, poor relationships with others, less commitment to professions, lack of attendance and burn out. According to Maslach et al. (2001), one of the major contributors of burnout, which is typically defined as feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decrease in job performance, is prolonged occupational stress. In the same vein, Montgomery and Rupp (2005) identified factors of teacher stress to be related to work demands, emotional reactions, coping styles, personality traits, and environmental context. So, it is important to understand the factors associated with teacher job stress to enhance teachers' well-being and the quality of teachers' instruction in the classroom

Locality may be one important variable that can affect the job stress of school teachers. Educational, social and organisational conditions in rural and urban schools are frequently different. The challenges that may arise in rural schools include a lack of facilities, a lack of teaching-learning material, transportation problems, lack of teachers, lack of professional development opportunities and some additional administrative burden. By contrast, urban-school teachers might face pressures from bigger institutional demands, enhanced competition, intensive parental involvement, technology-based demands, busy schedules, and accountability for performance. These differences in working conditions can produce a differential in job stress experienced by rural and urban teachers both in terms of the nature of job stress and the extent of stress. According to Job Demands–Resources model, occupational stress arises, when the job demands are high and professional resources and organisational support are low (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). One other critical element that might have an impact on teachers experiences of occupational stress is age. Generally different age groups of teachers are at different stages of their personal and professional lives. Younger instructors may be more stressed due to less teaching experience, classroom management challenges, not being known to the institution, and needing to build professional competence. Middle-aged teachers might be required to take on more management, professional and family demands. Older teachers might have more professional experience, however, may not have developed coping strategies or may not be able to keep up with the fast pace of technological advances, educational change and new ways of teaching. The study conducted by Klassen and Chiu (2010) revealed a significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction with teaching experience and occupational stress, suggesting that teachers' career stage may impact their professional experiences.

Gender can also play a role in the differences in levels of job stress. Male and female teachers have the same professional responsibilities and experiences, but there is a possibility that their stress experiences may differ due to the differences in social roles, family responsibilities and work-family balance, coping strategies and expectations in the workplace. Females' teachers might be under more stress to perform well at work and at home, while males' teachers might be under a different kind of stress from other social and occupational aspects. Klassen and Chiu (2010) found differences between male and female teachers regarding workload, classroom stress and other factors. But these differences may be different in different social and institutional settings.

Study of job stress in comparison with locality, age and gender is therefore important in order to understand the influence of environment and demographic characteristics on teachers' occupational well-being. Awareness of differences between rural and urban teachers, between different age groups and between male and female teachers can enable educational administration to provide appropriate mechanisms like supervision, equal workload, counselling and professional development facility and stress management programmes. Thus, the current study aims at exploring the difference in job stress of school teachers with respect to locality, age and gender and to contribute towards the creation of healthy and supportive school environments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fontana & Abouserie (1993) examined the stress levels, gender and personality factors of 95 school teachers (51 females and 44 males). The Professional Life Stress Scale and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire were used. The results showed that 72.6% of the sample had moderate level of stress and 23.2% of the sample had serious level of stress. There was no significant difference found in the stress level of the teachers with respect to gender. In addition, personality traits, especially neuroticism and extraversion, were more important factors in predicting stress than age and gender. The study emphasizes the fact that sometimes individual psychological factors can have a more significant impact on job stress than demographic factors.

Antoniou, Polychroni and Vlachakis (2006) investigated occupational stress and professional burnout of 493 primary and secondary school teachers in Greece, in relation to their gender and age. Occupational stress factors were identified as difficult student behaviour, student lack of interest, low academic achievement, workload and colleague and student relationship issues. Female teachers had significantly higher occupational stress in a number of dimensions such as workload, interpersonal relations etc. Younger teachers felt more burned out and less interested in the teaching profession, while older teachers felt more stress around feeling supported by the government. The results strongly suggest that occupational stress experienced by teachers may differ as to type and degree in relation to age and gender.

Klassen and Chiu (2010) investigated the relationships between teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, self-efficacy, job stress and job satisfaction on a large sample of 1,430 practising teachers. We distinguish between workload stress and classroom stress in the study. Results showed that female teachers had significantly more workload stress and more classroom

stress due to pupils behaviour than male teachers. There were also complex and nonlinear relationships between teaching experience and teachers' occupational characteristics. There was a negative correlation between classroom stress and self-efficacy and job satisfaction. The study shows that it is important to look at occupational stress for teachers from a gender perspective and a perspective of their career stage.

Kalyva (2013) done a study on the stress in 384 primary school teachers in Greece and the effect of gender, age, teaching experience, teaching special educational needs students and burnout. The age of the participants was between 25 and 59 years and both male and female teachers participated in the study. Overall, the results showed that the participants were not very stressed. Burnout, along with teaching circumstances, proved to be the significant factors in predicting teacher stress, and demographic variables, by themselves, were not the best explanation of stress levels. The study reveals that age, gender and experience should not be analyzed separately but should be related with teachers' real working conditions and psychological experiences.

Manju (2015) did a study on Job Stress of Secondary School Teachers in relation to their Gender, Type of School and Length of Experience. The selected samples of the study were 100 secondary school teachers from Mysore city using Stratified random sampling technique. The job stress was measured through Indore Teachers Job Stress Scale. The study particularly focused on gender differences, school type differences, and differences in job stress across the varying levels of teaching experience. The results showed that there was no significant difference between job stress of male and female teachers. Likewise, no significant difference was found between the teachers of government, private-aided and private-unaided schools. There were also no significant differences among teachers with varying levels of teaching experience in their levels of job stress. This study is significant in relation to the present study as it simultaneously took into account institutional type, gender and professional experience.

Kaur and Kumar (2019) conducted a study on the determinants of occupational stress among urban school teachers in New Delhi (398 teachers) including male and female teachers from both government and private schools was examined by . Demographic, socioeconomic, work experience, promotional factors and workplace stressors were studied. The results showed that the percentage of teachers with high level of occupational stress was about 28%. Age group, work experience, and promotion opportunities were found to be significant factors in explaining stress. The researchers highlighted the importance of conducting regular checks on teachers' stress levels and providing them with effective counselling strategies. The study shows that there are also factors that relate to demography and career that affect the amount of stress experienced by teachers.

Dhull (2018) investigated the occupational stress among 200 secondary education teachers with respect to gender and type of school. Stratified random sampling method was used in selecting teachers and the data were collected by using Occupational stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastava and Singh. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the occupational stress of secondary school teachers, both male and female. A significant institutional difference was observed, however, as teachers of the private schools had a higher level of occupational stress than those in government schools. The study indicates that employment conditions and organizational environments of these types of schools might play a substantial role in teachers' experience of stress.

Bodiwala and Chaithani (2020) studied occupational stress in government and private school teachers in Ahmedabad city focusing on gender as well as type of institution. The sample was 120 teachers with equal number of male and female and from both types of schools. The Occupational Stress Scale was completed and means, standard deviations and t-tests were used to analyse the data. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the occupational stress of male and female teachers. However, there was a significant difference between government and private school teachers, the former rating less occupational stress than the latter. These results confirm the role of working conditions in the institutions on occupational well-being of teachers.

Ali and Kumar (2022) did research on occupational stress of government school teachers and private school teachers. A cross sectional research design was followed and 40 female school teachers of government and private intermediate schools of Bareilly City were selected for the study. It used Occupational Stress Index (OSI) designed by Srivastava and Singh for data collection. The findings revealed that the teachers of Government and Private schools had average job stress. But there was no significant difference between the government and private school teachers. This result is in contrast to some studies that have found higher levels of stress for private school teachers, suggesting that these differences in teacher stress may be related to particular organizational and local conditions.

Bian and Jiang (2026) studied the differences between males and females, and between teachers with different levels of teaching experience, regarding occupational stress and psychological symptoms among junior high school teachers in China. There was no significant difference between males and females in terms of occupational stress or psychological symptoms. But, significant variations appeared based on level of teaching experience. More experienced teachers (30+ years) had significantly less overall occupational stress and less psychological symptoms compared to early and middle career teachers. The researchers found that there may be a non-linear relationship between teaching experience and occupational stress and recommended support for teachers in relation to their career stage. This recent study gives strong reason to consider age and

years of teaching as significant factors to study in relation to teacher stress.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Teaching cannot be limited to instruction in class; teachers are expected to conduct assessments, keep records, manage pupils, exchange with parents, engage in various institutional activities, adjust to curriculum changes and fulfill other administrative duties. If they are too great, or if they are not complemented by sufficient institutional resources and support, teachers can experience high levels of job stress. Kyriacou (2001) noted that teacher stress can be seen as a negative emotional experience that can be manifested as tension, anxiety, frustration and exhaustion in response to work-related demands. Hence, it is essential to know the determinants of job stress to improve teacher wellbeing and effectiveness in education. Job stress is not shared by all teachers in the same ways; this is the rationale of the present investigation. The Job Demands–Resources model suggests that job stress will be more likely when job demands are high and resources (such as autonomy, organizational support, professional recognition and workload) are low (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Dhull (2018) and Bodiwala and Chaithani (2020) identified that private-school teachers experienced more occupational stress while Manju (2015) stated that there was no significant difference between the levels of job stress of teachers from private schools and public schools. These contradictory results are a good foundation for future comparative studies.

However, age is an additional factor considered in this study as teachers with varying life and career stages might experience and cope with occupational pressures differently. Younger teachers may have challenges adjusting to the profession, classroom management, authority, lack of teaching experience, and lack of clarity on professional development. Klassen and Chiu (2010) identified a complex relationship between teaching experience and job stress, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Thus, job stress as a function of age group may indicate if there are some specific periods of a teachers' professional life that are more correlated with job stress. Gender has also been taken into account as a crucial factor since male and female teachers may vary in their social responsibilities, work-family roles, coping patterns and emotional demands, and experiences on the job market. Some teachers may face extra stressors related to balancing work and home or family life, and others may face other social and occupational expectations, all of which may be related to gender. Females' teachers in some aspects were reported to be under more stress due to workload and classroom related stress (Klassen and Chiu, 2010). However, Manju (2015) did not indicate any significant difference between the level of job stress among males and females. The mixed results indicate that gender differences in teacher stress may be context-bound and related to the social and institutional context of teachers' work. Thus, more empirical studies are needed to see if gender is a significant factor to difference in job stress.

The study has significance also because of the high rate of change in school education. Teachers are expected to meet the challenges of technology, inclusive education, competency-based learning, continuous assessment, curriculum changes, electronic record-keeping, greater accountability, and varied student needs. While these advances can enhance the quality of education, they also can make teachers' jobs more complex and demanding if they are not given proper resources, training, autonomy and institutional support. The present study has practical implications for school principals, administrators and management authorities, as job stress can lead to diminished teacher motivation, job satisfaction, commitment and effectiveness. Economic stress and burnout (Maslach et al., 2001) may also be a consequence of prolonged occupational stress. Furthermore, stress among teachers has been found to negatively affect their engagement and intentions to quit (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). The study is significant from a research standpoint because previous studies have yielded inconclusive results on the effects of institution type, age and gender on job stress. A comparative study of these three variables may give a fuller picture of the demographic and organizational factors that relate to teacher stress. The results can also be used as a basis for further research regarding variables like teaching experience, job satisfaction, organizational climate, workload, self-efficacy, social support and coping behaviour. Hence, the present study is theoretically and practically justified, which aims to explore job stress differences among schoolteachers and evidence may help to create a healthy work environment, improve teacher well-being, increase teacher effectiveness as well as improve the quality of school education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study “Job Stress among School Teachers: A Comparative Study with respect to Type of Institution, Age, and Gender” are:

To assess the job stress among the school teachers.

To compare the job stress of school teachers working in rural and urban areas.

To examine the difference in job stress among school teachers belonging to different age groups.

To compare the job stress of male and female school teachers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purposes of the present study, a descriptive survey research design in the quantitative research paradigm was used to attain the objectives of the study and to examine the differences between selected variables. The target population was the teachers working in schools in Samastipur District of Bihar. A total of 240 school teachers were selected from various schools

of the district. To enable for meaningful comparative analysis, the sample was stratified based on selected demographic variables which include: Locality; Age group; Gender. The researcher used Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava & Singh (1984) to assess the job stress. Relevant demographic and background information of the respondents were also obtained by using a Personal Information Sheet.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Table No. 01

Analysis of Job Stress among the Teachers

Variables	Dimension of the Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Job Stress	Role Overload	240	10	24	17.38	3.01
	Role Ambiguity	240	8	20	14.42	2.84
	Role Conflict	240	9	23	15.86	3.12
	Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure	240	7	21	14.09	2.78
	Responsibility of Persons	240	6	19	13.47	2.65
	Under Participation	240	7	20	14.68	2.95
	Powerlessness	240	6	18	13.82	2.49
	Poor Peer Relations	240	7	19	13.95	2.54
	Intrinsic Impoverishment	240	8	21	14.73	2.87
	Low Status	240	7	20	13.66	2.75
	Strenuous Working Conditions	240	9	23	16.28	3.05
	Unprofitability	240	8	22	15.24	2.98
	Total Job Stress	240	110	255	198.10	17.42

Analysis and Interpretation: The descriptive data of job stress and its dimensions of 240 school teachers is given in Table No. 01. The results revealed that the teachers were different in their level of stress on different dimensions of occupational stress. Role Overload had the highest mean score ($M = 17.38$, $SD = 3.01$) and the scores were in the range of 10 to 24 for the 12 dimensions. This indicates that overburden of work, having several jobs and pressure to complete assigned tasks within the given time frame are significant stressors to the teachers. Strenuous Working Conditions was the next salient dimension ($M = 16.28$, $SD = 3.05$), followed by Role Conflict ($M = 15.86$, $SD = 3.12$) and Unprofitability ($M = 15.24$, $SD = 2.98$). All of the above suggest that the working condition, incompatible or competing role expectations and dissatisfaction related to perceived rewards or benefits of the job could play a significant role in teachers' occupational stress. The mean scores for Intrinsic Impoverishment ($M = 14.73$, $SD = 2.87$), Under Participation ($M = 14.68$, $SD = 2.95$), and Role Ambiguity ($M = 14.42$, $SD = 2.84$) also indicate that restricted opportunities for professional development, limited involvement in organizational decision making, and poor clarity of expectations and duties are relevant sources of workplace stress. Likewise, Unreasonable Group (14.09 (2.78)) and Poor Peer Relations (13.95 (2.54)) obtained a mean score, meaning that organizational and interpersonal reasons are also involved in the stress experiences of teachers. Relatively lower mean scores were observed for Powerlessness ($M = 13.82$, $SD = 2.49$), Low Status ($M = 13.66$, $SD = 2.75$), and Responsibility for Persons ($M = 13.47$, $SD = 2.65$). These dimensions had a comparatively lower raw mean scores, but it is still an aspect of stress experienced by the teachers in relation to their occupation. It should be noted, however, that the raw mean scores for the dimensions should not be compared directly unless each dimension has the same number of items.

The teachers' mean score for the overall job stress was 198.10 with a standard deviation of 17.42 and ranged from 110 to 255. The fairly large band of scores suggests a high degree of individual differences in the teachers' levels of occupational stress. The standard deviation also indicates that there was some significant variation among the teachers in their total job-stress scores from the mean. In this way, these results indicate that job stress experienced by school teachers is a multidimensional phenomenon related to workload, working conditions, conflicting roles, participation in the organization, opportunities to work, interpersonal relations and perceived rewards of the work. Of the dimensions analyzed, role overload, strenuous working conditions and role conflict seem to be the more significant aspects of the teachers' occupational stress.

Table No. 02

Comparison of Job Stress between Rural and Urban Teachers

S. No.	Gender	N	Mean Job Stress Score	S.D.	df	t-value	p-value
	Rural	120	96.24	10.83	238	2.2617	0.0246
	Urban	120	99.47	11.29			

Analysis and Interpretation: A comparison of job stress of rural and urban school teachers has been made in Table No. 02. As seen in the table, the mean score on job stress for the rural teachers (N = 120) is 96.24 with a standard deviation of 10.83 while for the urban teachers (N = 120) is 99.47 with a standard deviation of 11.29.

Therefore, it was concluded that urban teachers have a higher mean score of job stress of 3.23 points which is indicative of the comparatively greater job stress experienced by the urban teachers. The computed t value is 2.2617 with 238 degrees of freedom and the p value is 0.0246. The obtained p value is less than the level of significance (0.05) and hence the difference in job stress of teachers in rural and urban areas is statistically significant. It can be inferred that the job stress of teachers is greatly affected by the locality of the school, in that urban teachers experience significantly more job stress than rural teachers.

Table No. 03

Showing Difference in Job Stress among Different Age Groups of Teachers

S. No.	Age Group of Teachers	N	Mean Job Stress	S.D.	df	F-Value	p-Value	Level of Significance
1.	21 – 30 Years	36	102.31	10.24	140	4.31	0.0061	Significant
2.	31 – 40 Years	48	104.68	9.71				
3.	41 – 50 Years	36	103.52	9.88				
4.	51 Years & Above	24	105.91	10.11				

Analysis and Interpretation: Table No. 03 compares the level of job stress of teachers in four different age groups namely 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 years and above. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been used in the analysis to see the effect of age as a factor on stress felt by teachers in their jobs. There are significant differences between the age groups in terms of the mean job stress scores. The mean score for the 21–30 age group was 102.31, for the 31 – 40 age group it was 104.68 and for the age group 41 – 50, it was 103.52. Teachers in the age group 51 years & above obtained the mean score of 105.91 which indicated that they had the greatest level of job stress. This trend shows that as the person grows older, his or her job stresses also escalate. The F-value obtained 4.31 is significant at 0.05 level ($p = 0.0061$), thus confirming that differences in job stress of different age groups are not due to chance. It is obvious that the results show that age is important on the job stress of the teachers. Senior teachers (51 years and above) are more likely to be stressed in their jobs compared with younger teachers. This could be explained by higher workload, administrative burdens, the natural wear and tear, health problems and pressures associated with job security and retirement. On the other hand, the results indicate that job stress is comparatively low among the younger teachers which may be related to their flexibility, and their enthusiasm towards job challenges.

In general, the table show that the stress level of teachers tends to increase with their age which indicates that age-specific stress management programs, customized workloads and institutional support system should be considered to improve teachers' well-being and professional effectiveness.

Table No. 04

Comparison of Job Stress between Male and Female Teachers

S. No.	Gender	N	Mean Job Stress Score	S.D.	df	t-value	p-value
	Male	120	97.21	9.31	238	3.8414	0.0002
	Female	120	102.67	12.48			

Analysis and Interpretation: A comparison of job stress of male and female teachers is given in Table No. 04. As shown in the table, the mean job stress score of the male teachers (N = 120) is 97.21 with a standard deviation of 9.31, while the mean job stress score of the female teachers (N = 120) is 102.67 with a standard deviation of 12.48. As the mean difference is 5.46 points, it shows that female teachers experience more job stress than male teachers. The calculated t value and degrees of freedom are 3.8414 and 238 respectively and the calculated p value is 0.0002. The p value is less than 0.01 which indicates that the difference in the job stress scores of male and female teachers is statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the significant role of gender in job stress of teachers and female teachers experience significant higher job stress than male teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research result indicates that job stress of the school teachers is a multidimensional phenomenon which is affected by the organizational, personal, demographic and social factors. In the variety of factors of occupational stress, role overload became a major factor of occupational stress which means that teachers were under stress due to heavy workload, multiple responsibilities, lack of time, administration, assessment, documentation, co-curricular activities and institutional expectations. Other significant stressors were strenuous working conditions, role conflict, unprofitability, intrinsic impoverishment, under-participation and role ambiguity. The results indicate that low level working conditions, inconsistent expectations, lack of participation in decision making, lack of recognition and rewards, lack of clarity of responsibilities, and lack of opportunities for professional development can exacerbate teachers' occupational stress. Stress is also caused by interpersonal and group-related factors. Emotional pressure can come from difficult relationships with colleagues, lack of cooperation, poor communication, not getting enough support from colleagues, parents, students and other stakeholders, and high expectations of administrators, parents, students and other stakeholders. Though the dimensions of powerlessness, low professional status and responsibility for others were less salient, they also helped make up the overall job stress experience. The results also show that there are high local differences in job stress, by gender and age. As compared to the rural teachers, the urban school teachers reported higher level of job stress. In urban schools, this can be related to increased competition, increased expectations of student performance, parental involvement, administrative monitoring, technological demands, and institutional pressures. Rural teachers might face other problems like lack of infrastructure, limited resources, transportation issues, lack of teaching resources etc. There was also a difference between the levels of stress experienced by teachers at different ages, with older teachers being more likely to experience high stress levels. Older teachers may experience more stress because of increased administrative, supervisory, mentoring, examination and institutional responsibilities, as well as challenges in adjusting to the changes in the education policies, digital technologies, assessment practices, and curricular reforms. Younger teachers might be more flexible when it comes to new technologies and new teaching approaches, but might also experience stress about job security, classroom management, professional identity and career development. There was also significant difference between gender, as female teachers experienced higher level of occupational stress than their male counterparts. This could be due to the simultaneous stress of work and family, caregiving and domestic responsibilities, and time pressures, which could foster role overload, time pressure and work-life balance issues.

In sum, the study highlights the importance of a comprehensive and multidimensional perspective on teacher wellbeing. Schools should have balanced workloads, clearly defined roles, participative decision making, supportive leadership, equitable task distribution, positive interpersonal relationships, professional recognition, career-development programmes and appropriate stress-management programmes. Work stress reduction can enhance teachers' motivation to work, job satisfaction, mental health, working efficiency, interpersonal relationships with students and eventually the quality of teaching.

CONCLUSION

In the present study it can be inferred that job stress of school teachers is a complex phenomenon and having multi dimensions which are influenced by both organizational and personal factors. The results show that teachers face stress due to overload, the physical strain of the job, role ambiguity, low rates of financial compensation, a lack of involvement in decision making,

lack of professional development opportunities, and interpersonal conflicts at work. Of these, the most significant were role overload, demanding working conditions and role conflict, implying that the job of teachers is getting more diversified and challenging. The study further reveals that the job stress of the teachers varies widely with respect to locality, age and gender. Urban teachers were identified as having slightly higher levels of job stress than rural teachers, suggesting that urban schools may have higher job demands due to institutional competition, administrative pressure, parental expectations, accountability, and a rapidly evolving context. Likewise, job stress was observed to be different from age group to age group with senior teachers experiencing relatively high level of stress. This can relate to accumulated work roles, administration, shifting education, technology adoption and other career-related stressors. Gender also proved to be a significant factor as female teachers reported job stress to be higher than male teachers. This difference may stem from the professional demands, family responsibilities, and work–life balance. All the above suggest that it is necessary to implement systematic measures in schools and by educational authorities to reduce unnecessary occupational pressure. It is desirable to promote balanced workload distribution, clear role definition, supportive leadership, participative decision-making, professional recognition, healthy interpersonal relationship and proper stress-management programmes. Urban, senior and female teachers should also be given special attention.

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