

TWO DAYS NATIONAL SEMINAR

ON

“EDUCATION FOR CHANGING WORLD”

ORGANIZED BY

ARIHANT EDUCATION FOUNDATION’S

ARIHANT COLEGE OF EDUCATION

TITLE OF THE PAPER: *STRESS REDUCTION FOR SCHOOL*

TEACHERS

SUB-THEME: *EDUCATION AND IT’S INTER RELEVANCE IN*

SOLVING CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

STRESS REDUCTION FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the factors responsible for occupational stress of teachers. It also suggests some remedial measures to reduce teachers stress. Role conflict, role ambiguity, lack of administrative support, lack of resources etc. are some causes of stress among teachers.

Today, teacher in any organization has to shoulder many responsibilities with his/her regular which can cause stress. It is important that a teacher identifies and recognizes the type of stress she/he is facing and takes necessary measures to relieve it.

Monitoring of teacher behavior can be done through programmes like yoga, workshops, group discussion, counseling etc. which will help teacher to deal with his/her stress.

**Keywords: Occupational stress; Role Conflict; Role ambiguity;*

1. INTRODUCTION

In present times, work is good for our health. It gives varied experiences, increases knowledge, makes us interact with other people with different thoughts, new and current knowledge, develops skills and gives us a chance to contribute to our society as an individual. Teaching profession is said to be most respectful profession in society. But with the growing needs of the society teacher work load is also increasing. With an advent of growing demands of pupil, parents, school and society a teacher has many responsibilities to shoulder to achieve a respectful status in society. When a teacher performs his work not in accordance with their capability and skills he/she is prone towards *stress*.

Greenberg (1984) defined stress as —the physical, mental, or emotional reaction resulting from an individual's response to environmental tensions, conflicts, pressures, and other stimuli (p. 2).

Occupational stress is an important issue in the teaching profession because of the health problems and reduction in work performance effectiveness that can result (Quick and Quick 1984). These can lead to poor teaching effectiveness, less job satisfaction, poor decision

making, lower initiative in taking responsibility and managing work, poor judgment skills and high rate of absenteeism.

1.1 WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is an unavoidable characteristic of life and work. It is age neutralized non-specific response of the body to any demand made on it. Stress is a process in which external or internal demands are interpreted by persons in relation to their own resources, values and goals. Stress is then on specific response of the body to any distraction (Weismann, 2007).

1.2 OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury.

Kyriacou (1987) defines “teacher stress as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions such as tension, frustration, anger and depression resulting from aspects of his work as a teacher.”

Occupational Stress differs according to an individual. But factors responsible for stress in any occupation will be similar.

1.3 IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION OF STRESS

For reducing stress among teachers, there is a necessity that a teacher identifies the symptoms of stress in him/her. All individuals are not same. Different individual will respond to stress experiences in different ways depending on their experiences in the past and sources they acquired to reduce the stress level.

It is very important that a person must identify when they are experiencing stress in work and try to manage by taking remedial measures. If stress is timely recognized it can prevent stress affecting ones job performance, concentration level and health.

2. NEED OF STRESS REDUCTION

- a. For improving the quality of work process in school:* When there is lack of infrastructural facilities in fulfilling teacher need the quality of work declines. Through stress reduction a teacher can fulfil his/her requirements and will try to accommodate his/her work according to the need.

- b. *For making academic and non academic responsibilities of teacher manageable:***
The teachers while playing a number of diverse as well as specialized roles as employees, officials, organizers and administrators easily become prone to Occupational stress. Stress reduction will make a teacher able to recognize his/her problems and will generate ideas to make work manageable as per teacher's ability.
- c. *For accommodating according to changing scenarios in education field:*** The lack of in-service training and ineffectiveness of workshop leaves teachers in a dire situation in accordance to the changing technology. Stress reduction will help identify the capability a teacher is lacking and will give exposure to teachers where they can achieve the requirements of the job.
- d. *For managing external forces:*** Family, social and environmental barriers may stand in the way of teacher progress and duties. A dissatisfied and maladjusted teacher cannot optimize the impact of his/her subject areas on children. A stress reduction will hence, help the teacher to optimize such situations
- e. *For improvement school health:*** By conducting stress reduction programme an organization can know the stressful areas for a teacher in work environment and can formulate means to reduce it.

3. IMPORTANCE OF STRESS REDUCTION

- 1. *Improvement in quality:*** It is important to focus on work atmosphere and work load of teachers and draw favorable environment for them to reduce stress level for them.
- 2. *Measures to improve teacher-student relationships:*** The factors responsible for teachers stress such as role ambiguity, role conflict, powerlessness etc. should be reduced after which teacher-student interaction can be improved at some level.
- 3. *Guideline for reducing stress at individual level:*** There should be basic outlook on ways to reduce stress level among selected teachers and also learn the positive or negative effects of stress reduction exercises which is currently in practice.
- 4. *Improvement in effectiveness of teacher:*** Stress reduction will help teacher concentrate on her teaching more than the other unimportant things which directly focus on her methods of teaching.
- 5. *Awareness among teachers:*** Teachers should speak out to their problems with their colleagues and should put an end to competition within the staff. Teachers must help each other out for a healthy working of an institution.

6. ***Stress management techniques:*** It is must for a school to plan and conduct stress management programmes for its teachers and if proved to be successful it can be conducted widely and extensively for smooth working of organization.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the factors which are responsible for stress
2. To take necessary measures to reduce the stress level

5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

i) ***Stress Reduction:*** Stress refers to teachers' Occupational stress in relevance to work-overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, group pressure, responsibility, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relationship etc. Reduction means identification and recognition of the level of stress by an individual and taking necessary measures to reduce it.

ii) ***Teachers:*** Teachers considered in this study are of school level.

6. REVIEW OF RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

- a) Garg, Saroj (2007). **Stress, Stress Management Styles and Job Satisfaction of Pre-primary Teachers**, Ph.D., JRN Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University. Udaipur, Education. *Indian Educational Abstracts*, 8 (2).

In this research it was found that Psychological causes were the main reason for the stress. Psychological, social and administrative causes were found to be the most important causes.

- b) Shukla, Indira (2008). **Burnout and Stress among Secondary School Teachers In Relation To Their Teaching Effectiveness**. *E-journal of All India Association for Educational Research (EJAIAER)*, 20 (3 & 4). Retrieved from <http://www.ejournal.aiaer.net/~>

In this research it was found that Teachers have the perception that teaching effectiveness is not influenced by the level of stress. Teachers have shown that their Stress and teaching effectiveness on the basis of qualification, experience, subjects taught, type of school and age of teachers are not related.

- c) Anbuchelvan.C. (2012). **Teachers' Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction**. *Journal of Community Guidance & Research*, 29(3), 369-373

In this research it was found that there is no significant difference between male and female high school teachers in their job satisfaction was found, there was a positive correlation between Occupational stress and Job satisfaction among high school teachers.

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY IN RELEVANCE TO THE REVIEW

- a. The present study helps to refine the general factors responsible for occupational stress among teachers
- b. The present study focuses on the basic techniques to relieve stress among teachers.
- c. The present study suggests some implications to manage stress and subsequently reduce it.

8. FACTORS AFFECTING STRESS

- a. ***Lack of resources and poor working environment:*** Due to Lack of resources such as books, teaching models, instruments for demonstration, laboratory etc. teachers suffer in conducting their responsibilities to make students understand the content thoroughly. Also in some schools staff room is not provided for teachers where they can relax and if staff room is provided the cleanliness is not maintained, which ultimately leads to teachers' dissatisfaction with the job and job stress.
- b. ***Lack of administrative support:*** Particularly in primary schools the teachers are given schools work as well as administrative work. Which makes them disorient with their teaching methods, since they do not get time to procure their class teaching and student activities that were previously done and the pending activities and teaching that are remaining.
- c. ***Teacher workload/Role conflict and Time Constraints:*** Other than school work teachers are given administrative work. Many other responsibilities such as election duties, survey, census etc. has to be done by the teacher. Time constraints for submission and reporting of work, as well as checking of notebooks, exam sheets etc. puts teacher into lot of work pressure and an assured work stress.
- d. ***Poor communication/ under participation and Poor relation with colleagues:*** Lack of motivation to teachers and their ignorance leads to stress among teachers. Also when teachers are devalued and their opinions are not considered in decision making a sense of low morale is generated. Relationship with subordinates, co-workers and superiors matters a lot for a teacher. So as to have smooth co-ordination in school. A

strained relationship among colleagues slows down a process of work and also spoils the organizational progress.

- e. ***Problems in classroom management:*** Overcrowded class is hard to manage and difficult to engage while teaching. Teacher-pupil relationship severs when teacher is unable to mix with the students. The communication gap between teacher and students leads to lack of discipline. Also pupils' lenient attitude towards study also adds to the teacher stress.
- f. ***Expectation of Parents and community:*** A teacher has to fulfill moral obligations to society/ community to develop students as future citizens and make them able enough to face the outer world. Parents also have an ambition to position their pupil in the highest position in mainstream so that they can secure their future through their good performance in school. Teachers are hence expected to fulfill community and parents wishes.
- g. ***Poor staffing and Role ambiguity:*** Some schools have budget constraints and hence recruitment of staff for administration and teaching is limited. Due to this, presently working teachers are authorized to do the work for example such as data entry work for result and list of attendance for students, organizing parent teacher meeting etc. Less staffing makes thing unmanageable and can have conflicts between teachers for filling up an undone task. Teachers may also face confusion to give first priority to any one of the tasks given to them and can go through strenuous period while doing so. Hence, they would also face situations where they will have unclear goals for completion of a task.
- h. ***Teacher competence:*** Priority over job, cut-throat competition among staff members and job promotions can put teacher into lot of work pressure. A teacher can have trust issues among colleagues, and may feel out of the due to personal differences among colleagues. For e.g. A teacher having language and regional differences with other teachers may not be included in discussions and outing by his/her colleagues.
- i. ***Lack of opportunity and poor salary:*** Sometimes teaches do not get favorable opportunities, tasks or duties of their will, which leads them to detest their current work and eventually affects their teaching skills in classroom. High expectations on work opportunities, regular promotions and good salary prospects if not achieved by the teacher, it directs to job dissatisfaction and stress among teacher.

9. TECHNIQUES TO REDUCE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG TEACHERS

- a. **Group Discussions:** Colleagues can discuss among each other about stressful situations and can help each other out for reducing their stress. This will help bring out many causes of stress which were either unknown or were unnoticed by teachers. Teachers can counsel each other by sharing personal experiences and take suggestions of their colleagues to reduce the stress levels.
- b. **Workshops:** Awareness among teachers can be spread about causes or factors of stress such as work-overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, group pressure, responsibility, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relationship etc. Teachers can be given course handouts on how to deal with daily stress and manage their work efficiently.
- c. **Counseling:** Teacher can counsel a psychological expert for his/her problems and can take proper guidance from the counselor. For example if a teacher has an aggressive behavior towards colleagues he/she may be advised to have an assertive attitude to everything by a counselor and can also be advised to meditate and do mind relaxing exercises for sober behavior at work place.
- d. **By engaging oneself in various other activities:** Teacher can engage oneself in creative activities such as yoga, meditation, painting, reading book etc. so that they can have time to relax their minds. One can also socialize with other people and avoid negative thoughts in one's mind. Attaining leisure pursuits will be an overhaul for a stressed mind. One can also engage oneself in sports to refrain from negative thoughts and remain fit. For eg. Basketball, badminton, cricket etc.

10. CONCLUSION

Occupational stress is held responsible for the teacher dissatisfaction with his/her job. There is a need to know the actual aspects of stress and its effects on a teacher's daily life. Also with the growing demands on completion of work from the organization has teachers' subsided in stress. Teachers need to be responsive towards factors such as role conflict, powerlessness, time constraint etc. and should always be ready to face such situations wisely. Schools should also be aware of teachers' situation and should monitor a teacher's behavior by taking frequent feedbacks from students and their parents. Schools can organize various programmes and recreational activities for teachers and equally distribute workload among teachers to reduce their stress.

11. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. ***Need To Implement Stress Reduction Programmes:*** Programmes, workshops, seminars etc. on stress management where teachers get knowledge regarding the stress effects on their work.
2. ***Regular Orientations and Workshops:*** Teacher knowledge must remain up to date and their skills must improve according to the changing demands of the curriculum.
3. ***Feedback or appraisal of all the teachers:*** Regular feedback must be taken from their colleagues, students and parents to identify stress in their behaviour and work.
4. ***Recreational work for teachers and students:*** To improve teacher-pupil relationship.
5. ***Yoga and meditational programmes:*** For better concentration and reducing the level of strain in work for teachers.
6. ***Regular Guidance and Counseling:*** for teachers to express their feelings and problems for finding proper solution and guidance for managing it.

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