



## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MENTAL HEALTH OF TEACHERS IN INDIA

**Laxmi Tyagi**

Head Mistress, Primary School-Khurrampur 1, Block- Muradnagar, District- Ghaziabad  
(U.P.) [Laxmityagi12@gmail.com](mailto:Laxmityagi12@gmail.com)

**Paper Received On:** 18 MAR 2023

**Peer Reviewed On:** 31 MAR 2023

**Published On:** 1 APRIL 2023

### Abstract

*The Corona virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak had impacted humankind with herculean force. This outbreak was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The countries around the world cautioned the public to take responsive care. The first Case of COVID-19 in India was reported on 30 January, 2020 in three towns of Kerela. This pandemic has deeply altered social and working environments in several ways. Social distancing policies, mandatory lockdowns, isolation periods, and anxiety of getting sick, along with the suspension of productive activity, loss of income, and fear of the future, jointly influence the mental health of citizens and workers. Workplace aspects can play a crucial role on moderating or worsening mental health of people facing the pandemic scenario. This paper sets the basis for a better understanding of the psychological conditions of teachers during the pandemic, integrating individual and social perspectives, and providing insight into possible individual, social, and occupational approaches to the psychological pandemic.*

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, workplace, teachers



*Scholarly Research Journal's* is licensed Based on a work at [www.srjis.com](http://www.srjis.com)

### Introduction:

No one would have guessed that a virus-like Covid-19 would come and without differentiating, it will alter the lifestyle of people. Due to Covid-19, many changes came to our world and It took some time for everyone to adopt the new normal. The pandemic has also impacted the educational systems of many countries as it forced educational institutions to adopt online remote learning to continue offering their services. This rapid adoption of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) as the primary resource in the teaching-learning process has evidenced several challenges for students and teachers, including tech-illiteracy and access to adequate technological infrastructure, and are expected to aggravate the previously existing learning disparities across regions.

On an individual level, the pandemic has brought a series of stressors to the daily lives of people, including fears of death and infection, the loss of loved ones, confinement and mobility restrictions, increased home and care responsibilities, economic instability, among others. As a result of the pandemic and the series of prevention and control measures taken, there has been an increase in the number of symptoms and signs of stress, anxiety, and depression among the general population.

There is also increasing evidence that suggests that the pandemic has had a significant impact on the well-being of teachers and students. Changes in the mental health condition of teachers are possibly associated to changes in their working conditions. Data suggests that most educators were not prepared to face the technological challenges that came with the pandemic due to a lack of preparedness and experience in terms of digital competencies and remote learning pedagogical methods. For others, there is uncertainty on the impact of remote education on academic progress as it has been reported that students experience higher levels of psychological distress due to the pandemic. In this new context, the particularities of each student are now visible to some teachers and this can be a cause of stress and feelings of helplessness. Female teachers have also had to face the consequences of previously existing gender disparities concerning care and household chores that unequally augmented their demands and responsibilities.

### **Theoretical Background**

From the point of view of life quality, we can distinguish three major areas which are in close interaction with each other. Physical health, mental health and social health contribute together to the subjective health of the individual (Kopp and Piko, 2006). Health consciousness, the role of environmental effects as well as the individual's attitude system and mental disposition equally appear in maintaining or losing life quality. There has been a significant transformation in the health concept of psychology as well which can be connected to the emergence of positive psychology. The formulation of "normality", however, was also previously an important issue, given its significance concerning defining mental illness, although, similar to medical approaches, for a long time it meant the lack of psychiatric disease. Previously the concept of health was attached to "normality" in accordance with the medical approach and meant the lack of psychiatric disease. Positive psychology already approaches from subjective wellbeing rather than deficit and disease. In this study the emphasis is on mental health.

## **Teacher and mental wellbeing**

Teachers' mental wellbeing is not a personal matter since it has a great impact on the efficiency of education provides a model for the coming generation and may influence the psychological wellbeing of the next generation even in the long term. Detecting the factors determining teachers' wellbeing is therefore of crucial importance as they may provide an appropriate basis for reconsidering the framework of the training and continuing training or specifically for planning interventions to support mental health (Salavecz et al., 2006).

Hascher and Waber (2021) in their systematic review found that teacher's well-being is correlated to teaching-effectiveness, student outcomes, school improvement, and educational reforms. It also associated other psychological constructs, such as satisfaction, resilience, flourishing, stress and burnout.

Rogers et al. (2013), in: Borb\_ath and Horv\_ath, (2021) found that the most successful teachers were the most personality-centred teachers and identified the positive teacher-student relationship as the key to students' success; for this they postulate a teacher with an appropriately functioning, mentally healthy personality and psychological wellbeing.

Dewe and Cooper (2012) examined the connection between work and wellbeing. In their interpretation, wellbeing is a dynamic condition that allows the individual to achieve their potential, to pursue productive and creative work, to build strong and positive relationships with others and to contribute efficiently for the sake of the organisation, the community. This conception of wellbeing includes tasks that are essential for teachers to accomplish their job efficiently, thus teachers whose psychological wellbeing is low are according to Dewe & Cooper unable to fulfil their tasks or at least with lower efficiency i.e., the efficiency of their pedagogical work will decrease (Dewe, Cooper, 2012; R\_ethy, 2016), and this may lead to burnout or even career leave (Goddard & O'Brien, 2006; Parker et al., 2012).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is "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. The abilities are the following:

- Wellbeing experienced in the physical, mental and spiritual areas
- Savouring, the ability to create, feel, maintain and increase positive experiences

- creative-executive efficiency while the individual is able to change and shape the environment and themselves even during changed circumstances in order to achieve their aims
- Self-regulation which through attention and consciousness management enables the individual to control their emotions and thereby their behaviour persistently even during difficulties
- Resilience which helps fast adaptation to crises and recovery.

These abilities enable the individual to cope with stress, to select and apply efficient coping strategies, to control behaviour, and, through the possibility to experience, maintain and create positive emotions, to feel good in an ever-changing world full of challenges. Insufficient functioning of any of the abilities appears as a task for development by mental hygiene at both individual and institutional level.

### **Significance of the study**

To contribute to the growing literature on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health of the teachers, this study turned its focus to the analysis of teachers' mental health in the workplace. More specifically, this study sought to identify the specific actions and behaviors that teachers reported using as coping strategies to maintain their mental health. Studying this variable is important since stress and burnout are related to negative outcomes for teachers. Studying this variable may also help establish comparisons with findings from previous studies in pre-pandemic conditions, as well as those from other cultural settings during the pandemic. Online learning using ICTs is certainly not new; however, using these methods while living in a state of emergency and confinement is certainly novel. Thus this study will add valuable information to develop future interventions that help to restore and maintain mental health of teachers at workplace.

### **Implications of the study:**

Although teaching is commonly recognized as a stressful occupation, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges. Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were experiencing high rates of poor mental health. Poor mental health results in teachers experiencing high levels of burnout and leaving the field

Available data from early evaluations of teachers during the COVID crisis point to stress arising from pandemic-related changes to their work. These data are briefly summarized below.

### **Decreased Student Engagement and Teacher Sense of Success**

- Teachers estimated that, on average, only 60% of students were engaged in remote learning on a regular basis, with wide gaps in perceived engagement along racial and socioeconomic lines, mainly due to resource disparities
- Teachers working in tribal area schools and in schools where technology is not available reported that their students were less likely to have the technology required to access online learning resources and, consequently, less likely to regularly engage in remote learning activities.

Obtaining and maintaining student engagement is essential as it is a predictor of both short-term academic achievement and successful school completion. As such, it is not surprising that a majority of teachers experienced a decline in their sense of teaching success during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Increased Workload and Decreased Engagement**

- As compared to the year before the pandemic, 77% of teachers indicated an increased workload.
- More than 60% of teachers not enjoyed their job during COVID-19 as compared to a year ago.

### **Financial Stress from Inadequate Pay, Compounding Debt or Reduced Savings**

Studies indicated that insufficient pay to warrant the risks of COVID-19 was the number one reason teachers left the profession during the pandemic. Specifically, data suggest that many teachers are not paying their bills and contributing to saving at pre-COVID levels. One third of teachers in a recent survey held a second job in addition to teaching.

Teachers' mental health has a direct impact on our teaching workforce as well as the students and communities they serve. Teachers who are well are more effective as instructors, behaviour managers, mentors, and role models. Teachers who are well show up more consistently for students, who are then more likely to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviourally.

As was the case prior to the pandemic, many of the new contributors to teachers' poor mental health due to COVID-19 are at the systems-, not teacher-level. As such, it is imperative for school leaders to consider systems-level, teacher-led approaches to identifying and addressing contributors to teachers' poor mental health. Total Worker Health approaches,

such as the Healthy Workplace Participatory Process, offer a feasible and effective way to identify school-specific areas for improvement.

## Conclusion

It is of crucial importance to prepare teachers for maintaining their mental health and find creative solutions to crisis situations both at individual and institutional level. This study suggested that the education board, school counsellors, and psychologists in society must address and work on teacher mental health in order to provide healthy society at large. This study presents a snapshot of the mental health reported by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving, and other challenges seem ahead. Future research might include efforts to understand the psychological impact of returning to face-to-face teaching which will provide further information on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on teachers and students to get a wider picture of today's new normal education and to develop supportive strategies to enhance teachers' well-being in future pandemics or emergency confinements.

## References

- Bir\_o, E., 2014. *Studies on the Mental Health of Students in Higher Education. Short Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. University of Debrecen, Debrecen.*
- Brackett, M., & Cipriano, C. (2020). *Teachers are anxious and overwhelmed. They need sel now more than ever.* <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-04-07-teachers-are-anxious-and-overwhelmed-they-need-sel-now-more-than-ever>. EdSurge.
- Braun, S. S., Roeser, R. W., Mashburn, A. J., & Skinner, E. (2019). *Middle school teachers' mindfulness, occupational health and well-being, and the quality of teacher-student.*
- Braun, S. S., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Roeser, R. W. (2020). *E\_ects of teachers' emotion regulation, burnout, and life satisfaction on student well-being.* *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 69, 101151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2020.101151>.
- Coronavirus: Which Countries have Confirmed Cases?; 2020. Available from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/countries-confirmed-cases-coronavirus-200125070959786.html>. [Last accessed on 2023 April 05].
- Greenberg, M. T., Brown, J. L., & Abenavoli, R. M. (2016). *Teacher stress and health effects on teachers, students, and schools.* Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Centre, Pennsylvania State University.
- Hascher, T., Waber, J., 2021. *Teacher well-being: A systematic review of the research literature from the year 2000-2019.* *Educ. Res. Rev.* 34.
- Johnson, S., Cooper, C., Cartwright, S., Donald, I., Taylor, P., & Millet, C. (2005). *The experience of work-related stress across occupations.* *Journal of Managerial Psychology.* <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940510579803>.
- Keyes, C.L.M, Waterman, M.B., 2003. *Dimensions of Well-Being and Mental Health in Adulthood.* In: Bornstein, M., Davidson, L., Keyes, C.L.M., Moore, K. (Eds.), *Well- Being: Pozitive Development Across the Life Course.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Yersey, pp. 477–497.

- Keyes, C.L.M., Shmotkin, D., Ryff, C.D., 2002. *Optimizing well-being: the empirical encounter of two traditions*. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 82 (6), 1007–1022.
- Kohls, E., Baldofski, S., Moeller, R., Klemm, S.L., Rummel-Kluge, C., 2020. *Mental health, social and emotional well-being, and perceived burdens of university students during covid-19 pandemic lockdown in Germany*. *Front. Psychiatr.* 12, 643957.
- Parker, P., Martin, A., Colmar, S., Liem, G.A., 2012. *Teachers' workplace well-being: exploring a process model of goal orientation, coping behavior, engagement, an burnout*. *Teach. Teach. Educ.* 28 (4), 503–513.
- Sanetti, L. M.H., Cavallari, J., & Dugan, A. (2021, May). *Teacher mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic*. Storrs, CT: UConn Collaboratory on School and Child Health. Available from: <http://csc.h.uconn.edu/>.
- Segumpan, R. G., & Bahari, F. (2006). *Teachers' job stress and human resource development: The malaysian experience*. In R. G. Lambert & C. J. McCarthy (Eds.), *Understanding teacher stress in an age of accountability* (pp. 163{178). Information Age Publishing.
- World Health Organization. *Coronavirus disease 2019. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak situation*; 2020. Available from: [https:// www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019). Accessed March, 2023.