

## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG TEACHER EDUCATORS

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### **Abstract :**

*Stress among teacher educators has the potential to impact their own performance, achievement level of the student's teachers, and even the education system. The present study aims at finding out the level of occupational stress among the teacher educators in relation to gender, subject streams, and nature of job. Occupational Stress Index was used to collect data from a random sample of 52 teacher educators. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation and t test were employed for the analysis of data. The results revealed that teacher educators experienced moderate level of occupational stress. No significant differences were indicated regarding occupational stress among teacher educators in relation to gender, and subject streams while significant results were observed in relation to nature of job.*

**Key Word : Occupational stress, Teacher educators, Gender, Subject stream, Nature of job.**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

Stress had become a pervading feature of human life since time immemorial. With the evolution of science and technology it has increased manifold and today no man is left unaffected with its devastating consequences. It is not that the stress is the result of today's life but its reference can be traced back in ancient text in the form of Dukha (Pain), Klesa (Affliction), Kama (desires), Atam and Ashambara (self and ego), etc. It has been recognized that certain amount of stress is desirable and productive whereas excessive stress can damage a person's self and can ruin his life. It is a term often equated with force, pressure or strain which when exerted can alter the structure of an object. It is defined as an individual's state of mind in an encounter of a demanding situation or any constraint in the organization which she feels harmful or threatening for her/ him self. Stress, in an occupation

too, has become an important issue however its level or degree may vary according to the professional and personal circumstances. Organizational stress, which is also called professional stress, is the interaction between working conditions and the worker such that the demands of work exceed the ability of the worker to cope with them (Ross & Altmaier, 1994). Teaching like many other professions is progressively becoming a stressful occupation (Hepburn & Brown, 2001; Johnson et. al., 2005) as teachers have to shoulder multiple roles and responsibilities keeping in mind the deadlines. These roles may include as an assessor, planner, curriculum developer, information provider, role model, facilitator, and resource generator. The responsibilities may include planning lessons, effective teaching, class supervision, maintenance of discipline, evaluation, assessment and accountability of student performance or achievements, conducting co-curricular activities, etc. Despite performing these roles and responsibilities they have to be cordial with the administration, principal and colleagues on the one hand and on the other hand, they have to take due care of their family life. Keeping a balance in all these situations often leads to increase in stress thus, affecting their physical and mental health.

The events and situations that produce stress are called stressors. Stressors that interfere with teacher efforts can be student apathy, student disruption or indiscipline, poor student attendance, low achievement, large number of students in a class, heavy paper or prep work, indifferent attitude of colleagues, obtrusive administrator, ineffective leadership of principals, denial of opportunities for professional development, low salary, unsatisfactory relationships with students, non involvement in decision making, accountability of student progress, fatigue, frustration, helplessness, stagnation, boredom, and loss of motivation or enthusiasm and unsupportive parents, etc. (Blase, 1986; Travers & Cooper, 1996; Pithers & Sodon, 1998; Butt et al., 2005). All these stressors are various job conditions or compulsions that generally a teacher encounters while working in an institution and often they are uncertain in dealing with them. As a result, it leads to disinterest, negligence, bitterness, and absenteeism among teachers, the learning environment of the teacher gets affected and thus, prevents achievement of educational goals. Ultimately, the teacher is left with no other alternative than leaving the profession thus, creating shortage of qualified and talented teachers.

Studies conducted by Tuettemann & Punch (1992), Blix et al. (1994), Abouserie (1996), Hardie-Boys (1996), Ryhal & Singh (1996), Dunham (1998); Kyriacou (1989, 1998, 2001), Guglielmi & Tatrow (1998), Pitchers & Soden (1998), Griffith et al. (1999), Lewis (1999),

Rudow (1999), Upadhyay and Singh (1999), Pandey & Srivastava (2000), Kinman (2001), Kyriacou (2001), Pandey & Tripathi (2001), Virk et al. (2001), Hastings & Bham (2003), Chalmers (2004), Kyriacou and Chien (2004) Tnetteman & Punch (2005), Rashmi (2006), Reglin and Reitzammer (2008), Olaitan et al. (2010), Eres & Atanasoska (2011), Shernoff et al. (2011), Kayastha. & Kayastha (2012), Yadav & Verma (2012) suggest that teachers regardless of what level they teach experience high levels of stress however, the factors or stressors may vary. In some extreme cases, they may suffer from burn out as well (Seldman & Zager, 2001).

We cannot eliminate stress but can try to manage or cope with it to an optimal level. To keep the teacher at bay from stress it becomes pertinent to scan out ways to minimize the stress levels. A stress free teacher can teach effectively in the class room and can provide better quality of environment to make schools a challenging and interesting centre for the students. A teacher teaching in a teacher training institute has to prepare future teachers and if the teacher educator is stressful s/he no doubt will directly or indirectly transduce that stress to the student teachers also which can further hamper the future students who come in their contact, after placement. Thus, the investigator selected the problem to find the level of occupational stress among teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges so that imperative steps can be taken to enable these teachers to handle stress more effectively through positive coping mechanism. Even after reviewing the related literature it was felt that although numerous studies had been conducted at the international level in the area of teacher stress (primary, secondary or tertiary levels) but at the national level the stress related studies and that too focusing upon teacher educators are very rare.

#### **HYPOTHESES :**

The purpose of the study is to analyse the occupational stress among teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges of Hoshiarpur District in relation to gender (male\ female), subject stream (science \ arts) and nature of job (permanent \ adhoc). Based on this objective, following hypotheses has been formulated for testing:

- 1) There will be high level of occupational stress among teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges.
- 2) There will be no significant difference in occupational stress of male and female teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges.
- 3) There will be no significant difference in occupational stress of science and arts teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges.

- 4) There will be no significant difference in occupational stress of permanent and adhoc teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges.

## **MATERIALS AND METHOD :**

### **Population**

The population of the study consisted of all the teachers teaching in the B.Ed colleges of Hoshiarpur District. There are about seven educational colleges in this district and the total number of teacher educators is 104.

### **Sample**

A random sample of 52 teacher educators was selected from these colleges that constituted about 50% of the total population. While selecting the sample due consideration was given to factors such as gender, subject stream and nature of job.

### **Tools**

Occupational stress level was measured by using Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava & Singh (1981). This standardized tool consisted of 46 items each to be rated on five point scale. Out of these 28 were true keyed and 18 were false keyed. The scoring of the true keyed items was done as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The scoring for false keyed items was reversed. The split half and Cronbach's alpha co-efficient reliability was noted to be 0.93 and 0.90 respectively.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The data collected through the tool was subjected to statistical analysis and results were drawn out. Mean and standard deviation of the total sample and relevant sub samples was computed and group comparisons were done by applying t tests.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS :**

The scores of the total sample were distributed into various levels to assess respondents with high occupational stress (156-230), moderate stress (123-155) and low occupational stress (46-122). The mean calculated for the whole sample was found to be 138.03 which fall in the moderate level category. This indicated that teacher educators of educational colleges of Hoshiarpur district had moderate level of occupational stress. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. Moderate or optimum level of stress is considered desirable or productive instead of high stress level which hampers the physical as well as mental health of the person. Moderate levels of stress may motivate an individual or improve performance, efforts for work,

diligence and stimulate creativity (Steers, 1981; Schermerhorn et al., 2000; Little et al., 2007). Teacher educators of the sample experienced moderate level of stress may be due to the reason that they might be well aware of stress and its implications and whenever they faced stressful situations they tried to manage or cope with it accordingly. It is also possible that the participants did not accept themselves as stressed as they get satisfaction from their job (Atkinson, 1994). Results of Dhanalakhsmi (2008), Eres & Atanasoska (2011), Johannsen (2011) are in line with study that participants experienced moderate level of stress.

**Table 1. Comparisons of Variables for Occupational Stress**

Sub- Samples	Total (N)	Mean (M)	Standard deviation ( $\sigma$ )	t- value
Male	26	136.88	6.76	1.54
Female	26	139.31	5.92	
Science	26	139.15	6.12	1.09
Art	26	137.29	8.90	
Permanent	26	141.54	1.34	4.54*
Adhoc	26	133.42	1.87	

\* Significant at 0.01 level.

The result of t-test of significance of the means (Table 1) applied to each group indicate that neither male and female nor science and art teacher educators differ significantly in their occupational stress scores as the values of t-test applied are found to be insignificant at both the levels (0.05 and 0.01). While the t value for the permanent and adhoc teacher educators showed significant variation in their occupational stress scores.

On comparing the mean scores of male & female teacher educators (Table 1), it is found that occupational stress score of female teacher educators is higher than those of male teacher educators. It means although there is no significant difference in occupational stress of male and female teacher educators yet the level of occupational stress in case of female teacher educators is higher as compared to their counterparts. The high occupational stress score of female teacher educators can be due to the fact female teachers have to compete with their male counterparts to prove their capability as it is a male dominated society. They have to exert more to prove their efficiency and sometimes have to sacrifice their professional

ambition in favour of the family. Even they have to share their time fulfilling their responsibilities both at work place and with the duties and responsibilities towards their family also. Thus, stressful situations arise both at home and office front. Studies by Singh & Sehgal (1995); Aminabhavi & Triveni (2000); Van Dick & Wagner (2001); Kyriacou & Chien (2004); Johannsen (2011) highlighted that no differences existed between the stress levels of female and male teachers whereas in studies conducted by Payne & Furnham (1987); Palm Foster (2000); Santiago et al., (2008) it was found that females were more stressed than males. Borg et al. (1991); Lath (2012); Yadav & Verma (2012); and Jeyaraj (2013) concluded in their studies that male teachers were more stressed than their counterparts.

Table 1 also reveals that the mean occupational stress score of teacher educators of science stream is higher than arts stream suggesting that although there is no significant difference in occupational stress among teacher educators in relation to subject stream but the level of occupational stress in case of science teacher educators is higher as compared to their counterparts. The reason can be attributed to the fact that science as a subject is perceived as a difficult subject by the students and teachers has to struggle hard to change their perception causing more stress to them. Overloaded science syllabus is another cause of stress among science teachers. Moreover, science subject needs more prior preparation for conducting experiments, dealing with facts and phenomenon's thereby increasing the work load or stress in science teachers. Hoover et al. (1982) have also contended that science teacher face lot of pressure than non science teacher. Study by Jeyaraj (2013) contradict the results suggesting that majority of art teachers experienced more stress than science teachers

The mean score of adhoc teacher educators is higher than permanent teacher educators and the difference of means is also significant (Table 1). This suggests that permanent teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges of Hoshiarpur District have more access to job security, less accountability, less workload, provision of facilities like promotions, grade revisions, increase in daily allowances time to time, leave facilities like casual, extraordinary, medical, maternity, study, etc., general provident fund facility, regular salary, and much more. The adhoc teacher educators are more stressed due to the reason that they may be held more accountable, given less facilities and provisions, no job security, more workload, etc. Therefore, they find their jobs more stressful. Stress levels may also be high in teachers who have a worry of their future. Result of Pabla (2012) is also in agreement with the findings that adhoc teachers experienced more stress than permanent teachers.



## CONCLUSIONS :

The results of the study lead to draw out following conclusions:

- Teachers teaching in B.Ed colleges experience moderate level of occupational stress.
- Male and female teacher educators showed insignificant variation in occupational stress indicating that no differences exist in occupational stress levels based on gender.
- Science and art teacher educators showed insignificant variation in occupational stress indicating that no differences exist in occupational stress levels based on subject streams.
- Permanent and adhoc teacher educators showed significant variation in occupational stress indicating that differences do exist in occupational stress levels based on nature of jobs.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS :

Technological advancements had brought so many revolutions all over the sphere including the education system. These revolutions had posed numerous challenges for the teaching community thus, generating lot of stress for the teachers. Teacher stress has to be seriously dealt otherwise it can have detrimental emotional, cognitive, physiological, and behavioural impact on their health, work, and personal lives further accelerating a gamut of problems in the education system. In order to prevent the teacher of adverse consequences the policy makers, stake holders, educationists, administrators, managements must find ways to lessen their stress levels such as providing congenial working environments, less work load, job securities, maximum provision of facilities, etc. They must also be familiarized with the various coping strategies to be followed whenever they experience stress like, exercise, meditation, walking, listening to music, yoga, social networking, etc.

The study can be replicated on a larger sample and on teachers of other institutions. Comparisons can be drawn with the teacher educators studying in other universities also taking into account other demographic variables such as marital status, socio-economic status, age, teaching experience, residential backgrounds, education level, etc. to quote a few.

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