

Occupational Stress Management Strategies of Teachers: A Study of Three Provincialised Colleges in Tinsukia District

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ABSTRACT:

The word “Stress” is hard to define. In simple words, stress occurs when a person's responsibilities exceed his capabilities, leading to several issues and disorders such as nervousness, forgetfulness, poor concentration, hypertension, anxiety, frequent irritation and also a variety of physical symptoms such as fluctuating blood pressure, sudden headache, fast heartbeat etc. Therefore, this paper aims to find out the factors causing stress among the teachers and the strategies adopted by them towards leading a stress-free life.

Key words: *Occupational Stress, Stress Factors, Coping Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION:

The word “Stress” is hard to define. In simple words, stress occurs when a person's responsibilities exceed his capabilities, leading to several health issues and disorders. Stress doesn't necessarily bring negative changes in anybody's life. It might also bring some favorable impact in our lives. For instance, we tend to work more and fast when we are under pressure. So, the interpretation of the concept of stress differs from person to person. Stress can lead to several issues which include nervousness, poor concentration, hypertension, anxiety, irritability and also a variety of physical symptoms such as fluctuating blood pressure, sudden headache, fast heartbeat etc. Therefore, stress should be controlled on time, because it is believed that a stress-free person always perform better than a stress-full person. Different people take different management strategies to deal with stress. Some try to manage stress by being positive in their assigned activities and approach; while others criticize their institutions/organizations, more specifically their bosses / managers/ superiors for assigning them responsibilities. Vijayadurai,J. and Venkatesh,S. (2012) in their research study revealed that the majority of the respondents feel under stress due to excessive workload, efforts being unrecognized, lack of participation in decision making etc. However, they try to overcome stress through proper communication; by keeping positive attitude; doing regular exercise etc. Sabherwal, Naina et al.(2015) in their study showed that poor relations with workmates, lack of regular breaks, long working hours, harassment by staff, poor pay prospects, pace and intensity of change and limited access to training are the major causes of stress among the teaching faculty members. Gupta, Vibhuti et al. (2015) conducted a study on occupational stress amongst faculty members with the help of previous literatures. The existing literatures revealed that insufficient recognition and reward, job insecurity, inadequate salary, inadequate participation in management, poor standard of students, role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload etc. are stress-causing factors. Areekkuzhiyil,Santhosh (2014) revealed that the relationship among colleagues, work environment, autonomy in work, role conflict, job security and remuneration, and non-academic works are the factors responsible for stress among teachers. Kaur, Rupinder et al. (2013) in their

study showed that remuneration and other benefits followed by working conditions, relations with colleagues, job security and workload are the major factors causing stress among them.

Like any other profession, teaching profession is also not free from stress. The role of teachers is not confined to classroom deliberation only; they are to perform several other activities which keep them occupied both physically and mentally. Teachers generally have to deal with several challenges in the classroom such as indiscipline, poor behavior, absenteeism, difference in their I.Q. level etc. To overcome these challenges, they try to adapt to the effective and interesting ways of teaching; they continuously update their skills and knowledge with the latest syllabus and technology. If a teacher is under stress, it will have some reflections in his classroom teaching and towards his family life also. The present study aims to identify the factors causing stress among the teachers working in the Provincialised Colleges of Tinsukia District and the strategies adopted by them towards leading a stress-free life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Teachers work hard in moulding & shaping the behavior of the students; they even work harder in building their overall personality and guide them in choosing their right career from time to time irrespective of remuneration, job security, social recognition etc. Many times, their efforts remain unrecognized and unrewarded; they are not paid as per their workload; their personal problems remain unnoticed and unsolved etc. If a teacher is under stress, it will have some reflections in his classroom teaching and towards his family life also. A teacher, when under stress cannot give his best to the students. Therefore, the ultimate sufferers will be the students. Hence, stress should be controlled on time. The literatures reviewed by the researcher show the factors responsible for stress are: work overload, job insecurity, work-home conflicts, inadequate remuneration, improper social status; lack of motivation, lack of participation in decision making etc. are affecting their performance in work, leading to several health issues and mental disorders. To deal with these factors, they follow different means and ways such as by being positive in their approach; by exercising regularly; through yoga and meditation; by reading motivational books and listening to music; by spending leisure time with the family etc. Thus, there is a necessity to study the factors responsible for stress and their coping strategies.

OBJECTIVES:

The present study is conducted to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To study the demographic profile of the college teachers.
2. To find out the factors responsible for occupational stress.
3. To study and identify the stress coping measures among college teachers.

SCOPE:

The scope of the study is restricted only to the teachers of three provincialised colleges of Tinsukia District namely, Tinsukia Commerce College, Women's College, Tinsukia and Digboi

Mahila Mahavidyalaya. Therefore, the inferences drawn from this study apply only to the teachers of these colleges and not to any other place.

Methodology of the study:

The present study aims to study occupational stress management strategies of teachers working in the Provincialised Colleges of Tinsukia District. As per the records of Directorate of Higher Education, Assam, the following colleges are covered in Tinsukia District of Assam affiliated to Dibrugarh University:

1. Tinsukia College
2. Women's College, Tinsukia.
3. Tinsukia Commerce College
4. Doom Dooma College
5. Digboi College
6. Digboi Mahila Mahavidyalaya
7. Margherita College
8. Sadiya College
9. Ledo College

Three colleges have been selected from the mentioned colleges based on the convenience of the researcher. The following table showing the names of selected colleges and the number of working teachers:

Name of the Colleges	No. of Teachers	
	Sanctioned	Non-sanctioned
1.Tinsukia Commerce College	8	14
2. Women's College, Tinsukia.	29	20
3.Digboi Mahila Mahavidyalaya	22	14
Total	59	48

Source: Administrative Block (Field Survey)

Data Collection:

The primary data have been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to all the teachers (107no.s) working in the three Provincialised Colleges of Tinsukia District. However, only 73 questionnaires have been received from the respondents. That is why the study is confined to only 73 college teachers working in the provincialised degree colleges of Tinsukia District.

Period of Study:

The study was conducted during the period February to March, 2019.

RESULT & DISCUSSION:

Table 1 showing the Demographic Profile of Teachers in Tinsukia District

Sl. No.	Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Age	Below 25 years	01	1.37
		25-35 years	32	43.83
		36-45 years	16	21.92
		46-55 years	17	23.29
		Above 56 years	07	9.59
		Total	73	100
2.	Gender	Male	27	37
		Female	46	63
		Total	73	100
3.	Marital Status	Married	40	54.79
		Unmarried	33	45.21
		Total	73	100
4.	Educational Qualification	Post Graduate	36	49.31
		Post Graduate with M. Phil.	17	23.29
		Post Graduate with Ph.D.	13	17.81
		Post Graduate with both M. Phil. and Ph.D.	07	9.59
		Total	73	100
5.	Number of years with the College	0-4 years	25	34.25
		5-10 years	17	23.29
		11-15 years	6	8.22
		16-20 years	5	6.85
		21 years & above	20	27.40
		Total	73	100
6.	Nature of Employment	Sanctioned	36	49.32
		Non-sanctioned/ Contractual	37	50.68
		Total	73	100
7.	Designation	Associate Professor	19	26.03
		Assistant Professor	54	73.97
		Total	73	100
8.	Daily Time spent in the College	1-3 hours	03	4.11
		4-6 hours	46	63.01
		Above 6 hours	24	32.88
		Total	73	100
9.	Number of classes taken daily	1-2 classes	4	5.48
		3-5 classes	67	91.78
		6 classes & above	2	2.74
		Total	73	100

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from Table 1 that out of 73 respondents, 1.37% of the respondents are below 25 years of age, 43.83% belong to the age group of 25-35 years, while 21.92% belong to the age group of 36-45 years, 23.29% (46-55 years), 9.59% (Above 56 years). It is clear from the study

that 63% of the respondents are female; while 37% of them are male. It is also clear from the study that the majority (54.79%) of the respondents is married, while 45.21% of them are unmarried. Out of 73 respondents, 49.31% of them are post graduates followed by 23.29% (Post graduate with M.phil.), 17.81% (Post graduate with Ph.D) and 9.59% (Post graduate with both M.phil. and Ph.D). The study also finds that 34.25% of the respondents have been working in this college for 0-4 years, while 27.40% of them have 21 and above years of experience and 23.29% of them have 5-10 years of experience. It is also clear from the study that 49% of the respondents are sanctioned, while remaining 51% of them are working on contractual basis. As far as the designation of the respondents is concerned, 74% of them are working as assistant professors while 26% of them as associate professors. The study reveals that the majority (64%) of the respondents spend 4-6 hours daily in the college, followed by 33% (above 6 hours) and 4% (1-3 hours). It is also found that 92% of the respondents take 3-5 classes every day.

Table 2 showing the factors causing occupational stress among college teachers:

Factors	Mean Score	Rank
1. Inadequate Remuneration (applicable in case of contractual teachers)	1.81	1
2. Imbalance between workload and remuneration. (applicable in case of contractual teachers)	2.38	2
3. Insufficient faculty members in the department.	2.38	2
4. Poor performance of the students.	2.56	3
5. Less chance of renewal of service after the break in service (applicable in case of contractual teachers)	2.89	4
6. Lack of opportunities for professional growth.	2.90	5
7. No scope for increment in salary	2.94	6
8. Difficulty in giving equal attention to students due to large class size.	3.01	7
9. Less scope for promotions in job.	3.11	8
10. Inability to concentrate in self-development activities due to excessive workload.	3.16	9
11. Inability to devote time to family	3.16	9
12. Unfair workload.	3.25	10
13. Difficulty in maintaining discipline in class.	3.30	11
14. Job insecurity	3.34	12
15. Insufficient time for rest and recreation.	3.48	13
16. Imbalance between professional and personal life.	3.51	14
17. Inability to attend social occasions.	3.56	15
18. No professional interaction among colleagues.	3.60	16
19. Non-existence of mutual understanding among colleagues.	3.68	17
20. Insufficient time to prepare for the next classes.	3.71	18
21. No encouragement regarding research work.	3.73	19
22. Unpleasant working environment.	3.74	20

23. No freedom of decision making relating to one's subject.	3.89	21
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Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the above table that inadequate remuneration is the main factor causing stress among the contractual college teachers, followed by imbalance between workload and remuneration, insufficient faculty members in the department and Poor performance of the students.

Table 3 Showing Implications of Occupational Stress:

Implications	Mean Score	Rank
1. Tiredness after returning from college.	2.62	1
2. Inability to sleep due to thoughts linked with job.	2.90	2
1. Forgetfulness	3.33	3
2. Frequent indigestion problem	3.42	4
3. Frequent headache	3.5	5
4. High blood pressure	3.5	5
5. Frequent irritation	3.63	6

Source: Field Survey

It appears from the above table that tiredness after returning from college, inability to sleep due to thoughts linked with job, forgetfulness are the major implications of occupational stress on the health of the college teachers.

Table 4 Showing the Measures Taken by Individual to Overcome Stress:

Measures	Mean Score	Rank
1. Maintaining positive attitude.	1.66	1
2. Listening to music.	2.15	2
3. Spending leisure time with family.	2.38	3
4. Reading motivational books	2.42	4
5. Sound sleep	2.74	5
6. Exercising regularly	2.77	6
7. Yoga and meditation	2.94	7

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the above table that the majority of the respondents maintain positive attitude in their approach and listen to music to overcome stress. They also spend leisure time with family and read motivational books to reduce stress as found in this study.

Table 5 Showing the Measures Taken by the Management to Overcome Stress:

Measures	Mean Score	Rank
1. Encouraging faculty members for higher studies.	2.19	1

2. Encouraging staff for attending orientation and refresher courses	2.25	2
3. Conducting periodical performance appraisal/ feedback	2.36	3
4. Recognizing employees' efforts and appreciating their performance.	2.46	4
5. Paying attention to employees' problems	2.57	5
6. Providing recreational facilities to the teachers.	2.94	6
7. Rewarding employees' loyalty and honesty.	3.45	7

Source: Field Survey

It appears from table 5 that the management encourages faculty members for higher studies and encourages the staff for attending orientation and refresher courses and also conducts periodic performance appraisal/feedback for their employees. It is quite clear from the data that the management do not reward their employees' for their loyalty and honesty.

FINDINGS:

The findings of the study include the following:

1. It is found that the majority of the respondents (43.83%) belong to the age group of 25-35 years.
2. It is clear from the study that 63% of the respondents are female.
3. It is also clear from the study that the majority (54.79%) of the respondents is married, while 45.21% of them are unmarried.
4. It is found from the study that the majority (49.31%) of the teachers are only post graduates, followed by 23.29% (Post graduate with M.phil.), 17.81% (Post graduate with Ph.D) and 9.59% (Post graduate with both M.phil. and Ph.D).
5. It is also clear that 33.33% of the respondents have been working in this college between 0-4 years, while 23.33% of them have 21 and above years of experience.
6. The study also found that the ratio between sanctioned and son-sanctioned/ contractual is almost 50:50.
7. As far as the designation of the respondents is concerned, 74% of them are working as assistant professors while 26% of them as associate professors.
8. The study reveals that the majority (63%) of the respondents spend 4-6 hours daily in the college, followed by 33% (above 6 hours) and 4% (1-3 hours)
9. It is also found from the study that 92% of the respondents take 3-5 classes every day.
10. It is clear from the study that inadequate remuneration is the main factor causing stress among the contractual college teachers, followed by imbalance between workload and remuneration, insufficient faculty members in the department and Poor performance of the students.
11. It is also clear from the study that tiredness after returning from college, inability to sleep due to thoughts linked with job, forgetfulness are the major implications of occupational stress on the health of the college teachers.

12. It is clear from the above table that the majority of the respondents maintain positive attitude in their approach and listen to music to overcome stress. They also spend leisure time with their family and read motivational books to reduce stress as found in this study.
13. It is found from the study that the management encourages faculty members for higher studies and encourages the staff for attending orientation and refresher courses and also conducts periodic performance appraisal/feedback for their employees. It is quite clear from the data that the management do not reward their employees' for their loyalty and honesty.

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that inadequate remuneration, imbalance between workload and remuneration and less chance of renewal of service after the break in service are the major factors causing stress among the contractual college teachers in particular. Insufficient faculty members in the department and poor performance of the students etc. are the main factors causing stress among the teachers in general; thereby leading to tiredness after returning from college, inability to sleep due to thoughts linked with job, forgetfulness etc. on the health of the college teachers. However, the majority of the respondents maintain positive attitude in their approach and listen to music to overcome stress. They also spend leisure time with their family and read motivational books to reduce stress as found in this study. It is clear from the study that the management encourages faculty members for higher studies and encourages the staff for attending orientation and refresher courses and also conducts periodic performance appraisal/feedback for their employees. However, management does not reward their employees' for their loyalty and honesty.

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