

Occupational Stress and Family Adjustment

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Abstract: *The role of education is the important factor for the development of a nation. It is only education through which the change on a grand scale in the society can be achieved. While food, clothing and shelter are the basic needs, education is also the basic need of human life. The progress of society and the development of an individual go hand in hand. It is universally accepted that any country needs a higher priority towards its educational development, so that it ensures its quality to produce the right kind of persons to the country. Science and technology improves the effective utilization of the natural resources while education is concerned with the development of human resources. In this context of modern society, the process of education is not merely to impart knowledge but to develop desirable habits, interests, attitudes and skills which help the individual to lead a full and worthwhile life.*

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Family Adjustment, School Teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

The teacher has a major role in the educational development. Gandhiji remarked that “No country can make any progress without good teachers”. The role of the teacher in the educational system is recognized everywhere and at all levels. The Education Commission (1964-66) in India has emphasized the importance and the role of the teacher in the following words, “Of the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to the national development, the quality and competence and characteristics of the teachers are undoubtedly the most significant”.

Nothing is more important than securing a significant supply of high quality recruits to the teaching profession, providing them with the best possible professional preparation and creating satisfactory conditions of work in which they can be fully effective.

It has been rightly said in the report of Commonwealth conference (1974) that in order to be competent, the teacher must have knowledge of child development, of the material to be taught and suitable methods of teaching in it, the culture of the pupils and of some interest of his own. His skills must enable him to teach, advise and guide his pupils, community and culture with which he is involved, his attitudes should be positive without being aggressive, so that example is likely to be followed as he transmits explicitly and implicitly the natural aims and ideals and moral and social values.

II. TEACHING PROFESSION

“Teaching is one of the noble professions” that can change the course of “life of mankind”. It is an art of grooming younger generation in order to make them fit in various aspects ranging from personal life to professional front.

Under the existing cultural norms and values working women have to make an adjustment with the family members but the members are not expected to make such adjustment.

But pursuing a career successfully without the support of the family is definitely a distinct reality for them. In some families members are broadminded and supportive but in many families it is not so. How does a day start from them? The tension begins right from the break of dawn. Nursing mothers leave behind their wailing babies and gulp down a few bits of foodstuff in between several chores and rush off to the work spot

As a result, working women are torn between the dual commitments and the outcome is they face many problems. Being married or single, a woman depends on the family. It may not be exactly economic dependence, but emotional dependence.



III. BACKGROUND OF STRESS

We are living in what has been called “an age of turbulence, an age of anxiety and stress”, where man’s ability to cope with his environment is being taxed in new and unprecedented ways. Other generations have faced threat, peril and anxiety, that stresses that confront us today. Current emotional pressures are more subtle, more intangible, more pervasive. Man is now faced with a world of increased complexity in which his adjustive capacities are strained; there is no way to fight back.

One finds “stress” everywhere whether it be within the family, organization or any other social or economic activity right from the time of birth till the last breath drawn an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. This issue has been rising up with the advancement of the present century which has been called “an area of growing complexities and pressure”.

The basic opinion of “stress” is that, it is fundamentally a psychological phenomenon with immediate and direct physiological manifestations as well as an experience of discomfort.

Based on pestonjee’s approach (1987) “it is natural and healthy to maintain optimum level of stress” and “success, achievements, higher productivity and effectiveness call for stress”. When stressors are left unchecked and unmanaged, they can create problem in performance and do not adjust with their family as well as the environment.

IV. MEANING OF STRESS

Stress is usually thought of in negative term caused by something bad. For example a college student is placed on scholastic probation, a loved one is seriously ill or the boss gives a formal reprimand for poor performance is a form of distress. But there is also a positive, pleasant side of stress caused by good things called ‘eustress’, for example, when an employee is offered a job promotion at another location. This later term was coined by the pioneers of stress research from the Greek eu, which means ‘good’. In other words, stress can be viewed in a number of different ways and has been described as a most imprecise word in the scientific dictionary.

DEFINITIONS OF STRESS

Grinker and Spiegel’ (1945) definition on stress refers to any circumstance that threatens or is perceived to threaten our well being and thus tax our adaptive capacities.

The Modern theorist who has contributed most on stress is Lazarus (1966 & 1971) who points out, that both environmental stimulus and the reacting individual are vital elements in the stress process.

Manson (1975) has defined as (i) An environmental stimulus (stressors) often described as a force applied to the individual. (ii) As an individual psychological or physical response to such an environmental force (strain) (iii) As the interaction between these two events.

Martens (1982) has defined as stress being a process that involves the perception of a substantial imbalance between environmental demand and response capability, under conditions where failure to meet demand is perceived as having important consequences and is responded to with increased levels of state anxiety.

SOURCES OF STRESS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TEACHERS

There are many sources which cause stress. Major sources of stress in the school setting are broadly classified into following categories:

- **Poor motivation in Pupils:** Pupils' poor attitude towards school and the lack of motivation has consistently been identified as major source of stress. (Laughlin, 1984; Payne and Furnham, 1987). Indeed, it is probably the effort involved in teaching such pupils on a regular basis that forms the single most important source of stress.
- **Pupils Indiscipline:** Indiscipline among pupil, as another source of stress, in which a tense and highly unpleasant exchange of words/actions between teacher and pupil can take place. Such exchanges are at times extremely stressful.
- **Poor working condition:** Poor working condition of teachers include inadequate equipment, poor staff room facilities and teaching at split-site school.



- **Quantitative Overload:** According to Hans Seyle (cited in Sutherland and Cooper, 2000), a certain level of arousal is needed for optimal performance, but when the arousal exceeds our ability to meet the demand placed on the employee, a feeling of burnout is experienced. In contrast, when employees are not challenged or stimulated by a job, or do not believe that their contribution is valued; feelings of boredom, apathy and poor morale are experienced.

V. MEANING OF OCCUPATION

According to Oxford Dictionary Occupation is a type of job that needs special training or skill, especially one that needs a high level of education; the medical/legal/teaching etc. profession/occupation. The teaching profession looks for individual with specific skills and knowledge of methodology.

MEANING OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress an environmental condition or event in that causes strain. It is the work related to psychological and physical changes that occur in an individual which adversely affects the productivity of the employee and his satisfaction. The factors such as resentment against superior, disagreeable working conditions, fatigue, occupational hazards, excessive competition or anxiety over possible employment.

DEFINITIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Beetir and Newman (1980) defined job stress as a situation where in job related factors interact with a worker to change his or her psychological or physiological condition such that the person is forced to deviate from mental functioning.

Khan (1987) defined work stress as an impact of several factors associated with work that result in a reaction that adversely affect physical, psychological and mental performance of a normal employee.

Baum (1990) defined as occupational stress as the body's physical, mental and chemical reactions to job circumstance that frightens, excite, confuse, endanger or irritate

Noish (1999) defined as occupational stress is a state of arousal that involves both the mind and body in response to demands made upon a person by the varying working conditions.

TEACHER'S OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Over the last ten years, there has been a steady increase in interest in occupational stress among school teachers, such that level of discussion and research currently taking place makes teacher stress one of the major areas of attention within education. While great strides have been made in understanding the nature of stress in teaching and the major sources of stress facing teachers, we still have some way to go in developing strategies and techniques for reducing levels of stress in schools.

First, however, we need to be clear about what is meant by the term teachers' stress. According to Chris Kyriacou, "Teachers stress refers to the experience by the teachers of unpleasant emotions such as anger, tension, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness, resulting from aspects of their work as teachers". In essence, he defines teacher stress as an unpleasant emotional state of them.

Teachers are daily facing various demands; if the teacher perceives that meeting certain demands will be difficult or impossible, and that failure to do so, will affect their physical well being, then the teacher is likely to experience stress. Such demands are at times self-imposed and imposed by others. In order to meet such demands, the teachers are dependent on their skill and strategies and the degree of control that they may have in dealing with circumstances.

Beehr and Newman (1978) defined job stresses as a condition wherein job-related factors interact with the worker to change (disrupt or enhance) ones psychological or physiological conditions such that the person (mind and/or body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning.

Teacher stress has been viewed as an interactive process which occurs between teachers and their teaching environment which leads to excessive demands being placed on them and resulting in physiological and psychological distress (Forlin and Hattie, 1996).



DEFINING THE FAMILY

Families are defined as special variants of intimate relationship systems for which the maintenance of boundaries, privacy, closeness, and permanence are crucial, albeit empirically more or less variable, defining elements. This definition not only includes nontraditional family forms found in modern society but also focuses on a genuine psychological perspective; that is, how and to what extent people influence each other and are influenced by the relationship context in which they are living. In addition, it takes into account the dynamic nature of the co-developing individual-family unit by explicitly considering the possibility that a person might be part of a series of quite different intimate relationship system across his or her life course.

THE FAMILY AND HEALTH

There is ample evidence that people living in a long-term (usually marital) relationship are, on average, physically and psychologically healthier than single, divorced, or widowed person. For instance, the data suggest that in the United States the death rates of unmarried people are up to 50 percent (females) or even 25 percent (males) higher than for married people. Causes of death with a strong behavioral component (e.g., lung cancer, suicide, accidents) have a particularly high incidence rate for unmarried people. Moreover, clinically diagnosed personality dysfunctions (e.g., anxiety, depression) are also more likely to be found among this group.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

In some cases the family itself may become a health risk. In Western societies this is especially true for children and women, increasingly also for older family members, whose personal integrity can be violated by physical maltreatment and sexual abuse. The expression and definition of domestic violence is different from country to country; the same holds true for corresponding laws, criminal statistics, and estimated numbers of unknown cases. Despite these differences, there is consistent evidence that domestic violence is rapidly increasing in the Western industrialized nations, quite apart from the growing neglect of children in economically deprived Third World countries.

DEFINITIONS OF FAMILY

According to Mac Tver and Page, "Family is the most important primary group in the society. The Family is a group defined by a close relationship, sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the production and upbringing of children"

According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, "The family is an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood or legal ties. It has been a very resilient social unit that has survived and adopted through time".

CONCEPT OF ADJUSTMENT

The Dictionary meaning of the word adjustment is to fit, make suitable adapt, arrange, modify, harmonize or make correspondent. Thus when we make an adjustment between two things, we adapt or modify one or both of them to correspond to each other.

Adjustment is a process that helps a person to lead a happy & contented life while maintaining a balance between his needs and his capacity to fulfil them. Most activities of living organisms are calculated to make them more comfortable and peaceful in their relationship with the environment.

DEFINITIONS OF ADJUSTMENT

According to Warren (1934), Adjustment refers to, "any operations whereby an organism becomes more favourably related to the environment".

According to Gates and Jersild (1948), Adjustment as, "a continuous process in which a person varies in his behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment".



CONCEPT OF FAMILY ADJUSTMENT

Family is the source of greatest satisfaction and security to its members. The relationship among the family members and their ways of behaviour play a leading role in the adjustment of a child. All problematic and delinquent behaviour is the result of that adjustment and maladjustment to a great extent is the product of faulty bearing and uncongenial atmosphere at home.

IMPLICATIONS OF STRESS ON TEACHING COMMUNITY

The role of present day teacher is gradually becoming more complex in view of increasing awareness among the pupil and academic competition. Also when there are many sudden changes take place both in content areas and methodologies of teaching, traditional outlook towards teaching needs to be refined.

Towards this direction, a good teacher must find time to remain reasonably updated. Besides, teachers have to compete with machines to make his teaching lively and informative. Students from better socio-economic groups and family background come prepared in the classrooms and at times they are more informed than the teachers. The challenges the teacher has to face have thus gradually become subtle, multi-faceted and numerous.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A study on Occupational Stress and Family Adjustment among Men Teachers in Nilgiris District”

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

According to the view of the investigator the term Occupational stress refers to the scores obtained from the Occupational stress index contracted and standardized by A.K. Srivastava and A.P. Singh.

FAMILY RELATION

According to the view of the investigator the term Family Adjustment refers to the scores obtained from the Family Adjustment index contracted and standardized by Vishwa Vijaya Singh.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives are set in the present study:

- To find out the level of Occupational stress of men teachers is moderate in nature.
- To find out the level of Family Adjustment of men teachers is moderate in nature.
- To find out the significant difference in Occupational stress of men teachers based on their age.
- To find out the significant difference in Family Adjustment of men teachers based on their age.
- To find out the significant difference in Occupational stress of men teachers based on their marital status.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study is carried out with the following hypotheses

- The level of Occupational stress of men teachers is moderate in nature.
- The level of Family Adjustment of men teachers is moderate in nature.
- There is no significant difference in Occupational stress of men teachers based on their age.
- There is no significant difference in Family Adjustment of men teachers based on their age.
- There is no significant difference in Occupational stress of men teachers based on their marital status.

VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to paucity of time the researcher has limited the sample to,
The study is confined to Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu State only.
A sample of 150 men teachers was taken for the study.



VII. CONCLUSION

The first chapter is concerned with the conceptual frame work of the problem chosen for the study. The discussion of occupational stress and family adjustment and has been presented to highlight the conceptual positions with which this study has been planned and conducted.

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