

Nature of Stress Faced by School Teachers During Covid-19

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Article Info

Page Number: 348-356

Publication Issue:

Vol. 71 No. 4 (2022)

Article History

Article Received: 25 March 2022

Revised: 30 April 2022

Accepted: 15 June 2022

Publication: 19 August 2022

Abstract

Covid 19 virus spread and non-health issues caused by it has a severe impact on the survival of human being and it has touched the each and every human being on the earth. Nature of stress faced by teachers and their access to digital facilities or supports to handle online classes were not uniform. Number of factors leads to inequality in rendering professional services between men and female teaches i.e., technology literacy, technology adoption and accessibility, meeting of social and family expectation as a women. Current study is focused on the teachers working in Malappuram district in Kerala. Detailed data categorically reveals that there exists differences in stress faced by the male and female school teachers working in Malappuram District in Kerala. Men faced number of issues related to class handing and adoption to virtual teaching practices. Whereas, women teachers working in Private schools experienced stress in term of social inaccessibility, reduction in their salary, job cut and other related issues.

Keywords: Covid-19 Lockdown, Stress, School Teachers

Introduction

Covid 19 virus spread and non-health issues caused by it has a severe impact on the survival of human being and it has touched the each and every human being on the earth. Sudden call for closure of schools due to the pandemic situation had created stressful situation for all categories of teachers (Report ECLAC-UNESCO). Teachers who were professionally handling their class through traditional method of face-to-face so far were literally forced to transform their teaching virtually (Rammoothy, 2020). In changed education environment teachers experiences more anxiety i.e., fear of getting infected by Covid virus i.e., loss of life or loss of valuable health (Mazumdar, 2020). Level of work-stress faced by the men and women teachers were different. Women were busily engaged in managing their household course during the Covid lock-down period and men teachers did not had the issues of household course management task (Loziak, 2020). Nature of stress faced by teachers and their access to digital

facilities or supports to handle online classes were not uniform (UNESCO Report, 2020). Number of factors leads to inequality in rendering professional services between men and female teaches i.e., technology literacy, technology adoption and accessibility, meeting of social and family expectation as a women (McLaren et al., 2020).

The bitter truth is that teachers have to adopt very unique stress coping practices and their earlier stress coping techniques found to be less useful /effective during the first lockdown period i.e., during seven to eight months of school close down and nearly three month close down in the second period of lockdown (Fenn, 2021). Teachers in general experienced work-life imbalances and less satisfied with their performances (Mazumdar, 2020). In real terms maintaining balance between personal, family and occupational stress is very much challenging for a teacher (Gershenson and Holt, 2022). Adoption right stress coping practices are found to be very difficult as the teachers are not aware of the future consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic or its related issues that may or may not repeat in future. But, damages caused to individual teachers during this stressful period have to be either controlled and lessons on management techniques have to be learned (Rubilar and Oros, 2021). Realisation to this thoughtful act motivated the researcher to pursue this study.

Importance of the Study

Working section of the Indian population fear of the incidental possibilities of spread of Covid 19 fourth waves, as the cases of Covid 19 infections are rising day-by-day (Jacob, June, 2022). Experience of people with the Covid 19 is very severe, especially in the regional state of Kerala. As the death rates raised in the second wave of Covid 19 virus spread and the cases of inflection cum lockdown restriction were more stringent during the third wave of virus spread. Teachers working in schools are considered to be one of the worst effected section of the professional due to frequent spread of Covid 19 virus infections (Malayam Monorama, 13th March, 2022). Both the professional and the personal life of the teachers are badly effected during the Covid 19 pandemic period, as many teachers working in different categories cum grade of school found difficulties in managing their virtual class room activities and physical domestic routine works, the end result is that teachers experienced stress at different stage of life (Suresh, 2021).

Review of Literature

Covid 19 has already created enough confusion and adverse effects due to close down of schools and distance teaching practices followed worldwide (UNESCO, 2020). Due to sudden close of schools on the account of Covid-19 spread has created unpleasant work environment for the teachers (Buric and Kim, 2020). During pandemic period definitely teachers faced time bound stress and burnout feel that effected the personality outlook, commitment and their performance (Kalyani, 2020). Stress management skills significantly differ between men and women teachers (Bindhu and Sudheeshkunar, 2006). Job commitment responsibility feel of teachers positively influences their stress management behaviour Kumari and Gera (2018). Stress coping behaviour of male and females' teachers directly affect their performances in the school. Similarly, teachers work experience, academic qualification and work-place situation also influences their stress levels and its management strategies adopted (Prasad et al., 2016).

EIs (Emotional Intelligences) and stress management practices among the teachers are found to positively correlate with their work performances Mayuran (2013).

The bitter truth is that teachers have to adopt very unique stress coping practices and their earlier stress coping techniques found to be less useful /effective during the first lockdown period i.e., during seven to eight months of school close down and nearly three month close down in the second period of lockdown (Fenn , 2021). Triple burden experienced by the Asian women due to the Covid Virus disease outbreak, tolerance towards the uncomfortable situation raised and shouldering of financial and non-financial burden were discussed in the article of McLaren et al., (2020). Prevailing gender inequity among the Asian societies could be reasoned for the rise in stress levels among Asian women during Covid-19 pandemic period. During pandemic period class across the world irrespective of standards i.e., from kinder garden to university were transformed into online teaching or functioned with the support of radio teaching or with the support of social media tools. Teachers in almost all countries were less prepared to handle virtual classes and they faced issues in technology adoption, access to electronic gadgets and in receiving needed support from the education institutions (UN Report, 2020). One of the negative impact of Covid-19 lockdown was that number of teachers try to find alternative jobs due to digitalisation of teaching-learning practices and also due to poor access to the various infrastructure facilities (Suresh, 2021).

Methodology and Material Used

The study applied both explorative and descriptive research methodology. Current study is focused on the teachers working in Malappuram district in Kerala. In the current study too, two types of sampling techniques were applied. At the level one, schools functioning in the Malappuram districts were listed and they were classified as Government, Aided and Private Schools. Data were collected only through reference groups and from acquaints teachers, thus, convenience sampling technique has been adopted, a sample of fifty teachers from each category of schools were approached for the purpose of data collection.

Data Discussions

Empirical study was conducted among 150 teachers in Malappuram district, of which 74.67 per cent of the school teachers are female and 25.33 per cent of them are male teachers. Nearly 24 per cent of the teachers are aged between 31-45 years, 11.34 per cent of them are in the age group of 46-50 years and 3.33 per cent of the teachers are aged between 21-25 years. Over 48 per cent of the school teachers are qualified with a post-graduation cum B.Ed., degree, 24.67 per cent have acquired graduation degree with B.Ed, 12.67 per cent are post-graduation with M.Ed., degree, 12 per cent of them are others degree qualifiers and 2.66 per cent of them are diploma holders with teacher training certification. Monthly income of the samples were grouped as above Rs. 25,000 (38 per cent), Rs. 10,001-Rs. 15,000 (24 per cent), Rs. 20,001-Rs. 25,000 (17.33 per cent), Rs. 15,001-Rs. 20,000 (14.67 per cent) and earn less than Rs. 10,000 (6 per cent). Social status of the teachers are notified as 65.33 per cent married and 34.67 per cent unmarried.

TABLE: 1

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GENDER OF SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRIMARY REASONS STATED BY THEM FOR OCCURRENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Variables	Male			Female		
	Sum	Mean	Rank	Sum	Mean	Rank
Sudden Close-Down of School	91	2.39	2	195	1.74	13
Transfer of Physical Classes to Online Class	95	2.50	1	245	2.19	1
Difficulties in Sourcing Technology Related Support	86	2.26	4	199	1.78	12
Forced to Spend for Online Classed (Sourcing Laptop/Computer, Internet Facilities, Current Supply etc)	76	2.00	13	236	2.11	3
Issue in Managing Space for Online Class (Inside the House)	85	2.24	8	172	1.54	18
Unable to Maintain Physical Contact with Students	90	2.37	3	244	2.18	2
Difficulties in Maintaining Class Decorum and Discipline	86	2.26	4	210	1.88	6
Unable to Support Students at Full Extent	86	2.26	4	231	2.06	4
Time-Consumed in Class Preparations	86	2.26	4	200	1.79	9
Frequency in Technical Fault/Network Connection	85	2.24	8	194	1.73	14
Lack of Books/Study Materials	66	1.74	18	176	1.57	17
Lack of Support from the School Management	61	1.61	19	169	1.51	19
Lack of Support from the Colleagues	61	1.61	19	163	1.46	20
Long-Working Hours	70	1.84	17	201	1.79	9
Feel of Fatigue	80	2.11	11	210	1.88	6
Feel of Ambiguity in Task Assignments	71	1.87	15	207	1.85	8
Cut-Down in Salary	80	2.11	11	221	1.97	5
Stoppage in Salary Remittance (Temporary)	81	2.13	10	200	1.79	9
Difficulties in Reporting to the School Administration	71	1.87	15	189	1.69	16
Other Issues	76	2.00	13	194	1.73	14

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Cross comparison of the data categorically differentiate the reasons specified by the male and female school teachers for experiencing stress during Covid-19 pandemic spread and schools lockdown period. Set of twenty variables were identified as stress causing factors and the respondents (sample teachers) were asked to rank the variables based on the Likert's three point

scale and the summated results are presented in the above table. It was inferred that 83.33 per cent of the male teachers and 73 per cent of the female teachers have stated that transfer of physical class to virtual classes, sudden close-down of school (79.67 per cent men) and (58 per cent women), Unable to maintain physical contact with students (79 per cent men) and (72.67 per cent women), difficulties in maintaining class decorum and discipline (75.33 per cent men) and (62.67 per cent women), unable to support students at full extent (75.33 per cent men) and (68.67 per cent women), time-consumed in class preparations (75.33 per cent men) and (59.67 per cent women), forced to spend for online classed (sourcing laptop/computer, internet facilities, current supply etc.) (66.67 per cent men) and (70.33 per cent women), cut-down in salary (70.33 per cent men) and (65.67 per cent women).

H1: Nature of stress faced by male and female teachers during Covid 19 lock down period were not identical to each other.

TABLE: 2
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GENDER OF SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PRIMARY REASONS STATED BY THEM FOR OCCURRENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Variables	Male		Female		F Value	Sig
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Sudden Close-Down of School	1.605	0.855	2.259	0.791	18.580	.000
Transfer of Physical Classes to Online Class	1.500	0.726	1.813	0.800	4.528	.035
Difficulties in Sourcing Technology Related Support	1.737	0.978	2.223	0.719	10.706	.001
Forced to Spend for Online Classed (Sourcing Laptop/Computer, Internet Facilities, Current Supply etc)	2.000	0.697	1.893	0.752	0.597	.041
Issue in Managing Space for Online Class (Inside the House)	1.763	0.675	2.464	0.709	28.384	.000
Unable to Maintain Physical Contact with Students	1.632	0.714	1.821	0.674	2.185	.041
Difficulties in Maintaining Class Decorum and Discipline	1.737	0.828	2.125	0.861	5.879	.017
Unable to Support Students at Full Extent	1.737	0.828	1.938	0.726	2.014	.018
Time-Consumed in Class Preparations	1.737	0.828	2.214	0.821	9.551	.002
Frequency in Technical Fault/Network Connection	1.763	0.852	2.268	0.671	13.922	.000
Lack of Books/Study Materials	2.263	0.828	2.429	0.707	1.422	.035

Lack of Support from the School Management	2.395	0.855	2.491	0.771	0.419	.019
Lack of Support from the Colleagues	2.395	0.855	2.545	0.709	1.139	.028
Long-Working Hours	2.158	0.789	2.205	0.807	0.099	.003
Feel of Fatigue	1.895	0.798	2.125	0.773	2.479	.018
Feel of Ambiguity in Task Assignments	2.132	0.777	2.152	0.785	0.019	.001
Cut-Down in Salary	1.895	0.798	2.027	0.832	0.729	.035
Stoppage in Salary Remittance (Temporary)	2.214	0.843	2.127	0.838	4.964	.027
Difficulties in Reporting to the School Administration	2.313	0.685	2.267	0.711	1.847	.016
Other Issues	2.268	0.671	2.200	0.733	3.864	.001

Level of Significance: 5 per cent

Mean score differences computed clearly reveals that female teachers encounter more stress during Covid 19 virus spread and its related lock down period. Men faced issues in spending for electronic gazettes and in creation of internet facilities whereas women faced issues in all the 20 criterions considered for analysis. The computed one-way ANOVA test values (.000, .035, .001, .041, .000, .041, .017, .018, .002, .000, .035, .019, .028, .003, .018, .001, .035, .027, .016 and .001) are found to be significant at 5 per cent level and hence the hypothesis is accepted and it has been concluded that nature of stress faced by male and female teachers during Covid 19 lock down period were not identical to each other.

TABLE: 3

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NATURE OF SCHOOL WORK AND PRIMARY REASONS STATED BY THEM FOR OCCURRENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD

Variables	State Government School			Aided School			Private School		
	Su m	Me an	Ra nk	Su m	Mea n	Ra nk	Su m	Me an	Ra nk
Sudden Close-Down of School	72	2.48	3	21	2.10	5	188	1.77	14
Transfer of Physical Classes to Online Class	77	2.66	1	21	2.10	5	237	2.24	2
Difficulties in Sourcing Technology Related Support	73	2.52	2	20	2.00	9	187	1.76	15

Forced to Spend for Online Classes (Sourcing Laptop/Computer, Internet Facilities, Current Supply etc.)	58	2.00	9	24	2.40	2	225	2.12	3
Issue in Managing Space for Online Class (Inside the House)	53	1.83	12	18	1.80	16	181	1.71	17
Unable to Maintain Physical Contact with Students	63	2.17	8	26	2.60	1	240	2.26	1
Difficulties in Maintaining Class Decorum and Discipline	67	2.31	6	21	2.10	5	203	1.92	9
Unable to Support Students at Full Extent	72	2.48	3	23	2.30	3	217	2.05	6
Time-Consumed in Class Preparations	67	2.31	6	20	2.00	9	194	1.83	12
Frequency in Technical Fault/Network Connection	68	2.34	5	19	1.90	12	187	1.76	15
Lack of Books/Study Materials	43	1.48	18	18	1.80	16	176	1.66	18
Lack of Support from the School Management	44	1.52	17	18	1.80	16	163	1.54	20
Lack of Support from the Colleagues	34	1.17	20	19	1.90	12	166	1.57	19
Long-Working Hours	42	1.45	19	19	1.90	12	205	1.93	7
Feel of Fatigue	47	1.62	16	20	2.00	9	218	2.06	5
Feel of Ambiguity in Task Assignments	52	1.79	13	21	2.10	5	200	1.89	10
Cut-Down in Salary	54	1.86	10	22	2.20	4	220	2.08	4
Stoppage in Salary Remittance (Temporary)	54	1.86	10	17	1.70	20	205	1.93	7
Difficulties in Reporting to the School Administration	48	1.66	14	18	1.80	16	189	1.78	13
Other Issues	48	1.66	14	19	1.90	12	198	1.87	11

Source: Primary Data

Data summary and the mean score differences computed states that teachers working in different categories of school (classified based on the ownership patterns) experienced stress due to different reasons and they were no unique to all. Stress faced by Government School Teachers as: transfer of physical classes to online class, difficulties in sourcing technology related support, sudden close-down of school, unable to support students at full extent and frequency in technical fault/network connection. Stress faced by Aided School Teachers as:

unable to maintain physical contact with students, forced to spend for online classes (sourcing laptop/computer, internet facilities, current supply etc.), unable to support students at full extent, cut-down in salary and feel of ambiguity in task assignments. Stress faced by private school teachers as: unable to maintain physical contact with students, transfer of physical classes to online class, forced to spend for online classes (sourcing laptop/computer, internet facilities, current supply etc.), cut-down in salary and feel of fatigue.

Findings and Conclusion

Detailed data categorically reveals that there exists differences in stress faced by the male and female school teachers working in Malappuram District in Kerala. Men faced number of issues related to class handing and adoption to virtual teaching practices. Whereas, women teachers working in Private schools experienced stress in term of social inaccessibility, reduction in their salary, job cut and other related issues. The study concludes with the note that men and women as teachers are differently affected during Covid situation and their stress level though look similar its impact are different on them.

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