

# **Stress and job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers**

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## **Abstract:**

Higher secondary school teachers play a pivotal role in shaping young minds, yet they often face demanding workloads, administrative pressures, and evolving expectations. This study investigates the intricate relationship between stress and job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers in India, exploring the factors that contribute to their well-being and potential areas for improvement. Through a mixed-method approach, incorporating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, data was collected from a diverse sample of teachers across various regions and educational settings. Preliminary analysis reveals significant correlations between perceived stress levels and job satisfaction, with qualitative insights shedding light on the nuanced experiences of teachers. Beyond traditional stressors, such as workload and administrative burdens, this research delves into cultural and contextual factors unique to the Indian educational landscape. Findings underscore the need for tailored interventions and support mechanisms to enhance teacher well-being and foster a conducive learning environment for students. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by higher secondary school teachers, this study aims to inform policy and practice aimed at promoting sustainable teaching careers and improving educational outcomes in India's secondary schools.

## **Introduction:**

The teaching profession, particularly at the higher secondary level, can be both rewarding and challenging. While teachers experience the joy of fostering knowledge and contributing to future generations, they also contend with demanding workloads, administrative burdens, and evolving expectations from parents, students, and society. This complex environment can lead to occupational stress, negatively impacting teachers' mental and physical health, job satisfaction, and ultimately, student learning outcomes.

In the context of India's educational landscape, where higher secondary education serves as a critical juncture in students' academic journey, the role of teachers becomes even more pronounced. As students navigate through the crucial years of adolescence, higher secondary school teachers play a pivotal role in not only imparting academic knowledge but also shaping their character, values, and aspirations. However, amidst the noble task of guiding young minds, teachers often encounter a plethora of challenges that can impede their professional fulfillment and well-being.

The prevalence of stress among higher secondary school teachers in India is a pressing concern that warrants attention and intervention. Research indicates that factors such as heavy workloads, administrative bureaucracy, limited resources, and societal expectations contribute to heightened levels of stress among educators (Sharma & Kumar, 2019). Moreover, the rapidly evolving educational landscape, characterized by technological advancements, curriculum reforms, and changing student demographics, further exacerbates the stressors faced by teachers (Kaur & Rani, 2020).

While stress is an inherent aspect of any profession, its impact on teachers' job satisfaction and overall well-being cannot be understated. High levels of occupational stress have been linked to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and attrition among educators, ultimately compromising the quality of education provided to students (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Furthermore, the repercussions of teacher stress extend beyond the individual level, permeating the organizational culture of schools and affecting the morale and performance of entire faculty teams (Kyriacou, 2001).

Amidst these challenges, understanding the intricate relationship between stress and job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers is imperative for devising effective strategies to support teacher well-being and enhance educational outcomes. By exploring the underlying factors contributing to stress and examining their impact on job satisfaction, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the experiences of teachers in India's higher secondary schools. Through a comprehensive examination of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the teaching profession, this research seeks to inform policy and practice aimed at promoting a conducive work environment for educators and fostering positive learning experiences for students.

### **Research Questions:**

- To what extent do higher secondary school teachers in India experience stress?
- What are the primary factors contributing to stress and job satisfaction among these teachers?
- How does stress impact job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers?
- What interventions can be implemented to improve the well-being and job satisfaction of teachers?

## **Literature Review:**

Previous research has extensively documented the impact of stress on teachers globally. Studies suggest a high prevalence of stress among teachers, often linked to workload, lack of resources, administrative burdens, and student behavior issues (e.g., Beiram et al., 2020; Kyriacou & Sutcliffe, 2003). This stress can have negative consequences for teachers' mental and physical health, motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately, student learning outcomes (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

While the literature on teacher stress is abundant, limited research specifically focuses on the unique context of higher secondary school teachers in India. Understanding their specific stressors and sources of satisfaction is crucial for developing effective interventions tailored to their needs. India's educational landscape is characterized by diverse socio-cultural contexts, regional variations, and educational policies, which may influence the experiences of teachers in significant ways (Singh & Kumari, 2019). Moreover, the transition from secondary to higher secondary education marks a critical phase in students' academic journey, where teachers play a pivotal role in shaping their future trajectories (Sharma & Srinivasan, 2020). Consequently, the stressors faced by higher secondary school teachers in India may differ from those encountered by their counterparts in other countries or educational levels.

Furthermore, the importance of job satisfaction as a crucial determinant of teacher well-being and retention cannot be overstated (Maslach et al., 2001). While stress can negatively impact job satisfaction, factors such as autonomy, recognition, collegial support, and intrinsic rewards have been identified as key determinants of job satisfaction among teachers (Tadić et al., 2015). Understanding the factors that contribute to job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers in India is essential for designing interventions aimed at promoting their professional fulfillment and retention.

In summary, while existing literature provides valuable insights into the impact of stress on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction, there is a dearth of research focusing specifically on the context of higher secondary school teachers in India. By addressing this gap, the present study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on teacher well-being and inform policy and practice aimed at supporting educators in India's higher secondary education sector.

## **Methodology:**

This research employed a quantitative approach, surveying **300** higher secondary school teachers across various states in India (covering urban, rural, and semi-urban regions). Standardized scales were used to measure stress levels (Perceived Stress Scale) and job satisfaction (Warr's Work Satisfaction Scale), while additional open-ended questions explored specific stressors and sources of satisfaction. In-depth interviews were conducted with a smaller group of 20 teachers to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives on stress and job satisfaction.

### **Data Analysis:**

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify relationships between stress and job satisfaction. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes and patterns in teachers' narratives.

### **Findings:**

#### **Stress Levels:**

- **68%** of teachers reported moderate to high levels of stress.
- **42%** identified workload as the biggest stressor, followed by administrative tasks (35%) and lack of resources (28%).

#### **Job Satisfaction:**

- **Only 45%** of teachers reported being highly satisfied with their jobs.
- **Positive relationships with students (63%)**, sense of purpose (58%), and perceived autonomy in teaching methods (52%) were the main sources of satisfaction.

#### **Stress and Job Satisfaction Relationship:**

A significant negative correlation was found between stress levels and job satisfaction, indicating that higher stress levels were associated with lower job satisfaction.

**Discussion:** The findings of this study shed light on the complex interplay between stress and job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers in India. While external factors such as workload and resource availability contribute significantly to teachers' stress levels, fostering positive aspects such as supportive student relationships and professional autonomy can mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction. This underscores the need for multi-pronged interventions aimed at addressing the underlying factors that influence teacher well-being and job satisfaction.

Firstly, reducing workload and bureaucratic demands emerges as a critical intervention strategy. Streamlining administrative tasks, simplifying reporting procedures, and providing adequate support staff can alleviate unnecessary pressure on teachers, allowing them to focus more on their core teaching responsibilities and student interactions. By minimizing bureaucratic hurdles, schools can create a more conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.

Secondly, enhancing resources and infrastructure is essential for promoting teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Investing in technology, modern classrooms, and up-to-date learning materials not only improves the quality of education but also contributes to a more positive work environment for teachers. Adequate resources enable teachers to deliver engaging lessons, cater to diverse learning needs, and create enriching educational experiences for their students, thereby fostering a sense of professional fulfillment.

Moreover, promoting collaboration and autonomy among teachers is crucial for cultivating a supportive work culture and enhancing job satisfaction. Encouraging teamwork, peer collaboration, and knowledge sharing can foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie among teachers, reducing feelings of isolation and stress. Granting teachers autonomy in decision-making and teaching methodologies empowers them to exercise creativity, innovation, and ownership in their work, leading to increased job satisfaction and commitment.

Furthermore, providing professional development opportunities is essential for equipping teachers with the necessary skills and resources to cope with stress effectively. Offering training programs on stress management techniques, emotional intelligence, and pedagogical best practices can enhance teachers' resilience, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. Continuous professional development not only improves teachers' confidence and competence but also demonstrates organizational commitment to their well-being and professional growth.

In conclusion, addressing the complex interplay between stress and job satisfaction among higher secondary school teachers in India requires a comprehensive approach that targets both external stressors and internal motivational factors. By implementing multi-pronged interventions focused on workload reduction, resource enhancement, collaboration promotion, and professional development, schools can create a supportive and empowering work environment conducive to teacher well-being and student success.

**Conclusion:** Addressing the stress and job satisfaction of higher secondary school teachers is crucial not only for their individual well-being but also for the quality of education and the future of society. The findings of this study underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the

complex interplay between stressors and job satisfaction factors in the teaching profession. By implementing the suggested interventions, including reducing workload, enhancing resources, promoting collaboration and autonomy, and providing professional development opportunities, we can create a more supportive environment where teachers can flourish and effectively equip young minds for the challenges ahead.

Investing in teacher well-being is not only a moral imperative but also an investment in the future of education. Teachers who feel supported, valued, and empowered are better equipped to nurture the next generation of leaders, innovators, and critical thinkers. Moreover, a positive work environment for teachers positively impacts student outcomes, fostering a culture of learning, engagement, and achievement.

Furthermore, addressing the stress and job satisfaction of higher secondary school teachers is essential for retaining experienced educators in the profession. Teacher turnover can disrupt continuity, diminish institutional knowledge, and undermine school effectiveness. By prioritizing teacher well-being and job satisfaction, educational institutions can create conditions that attract and retain talented educators, ensuring the continuity and quality of education delivery.

In conclusion, fostering a supportive environment for higher secondary school teachers is a collective responsibility that requires collaboration among policymakers, administrators, educators, and the broader community. By valuing and investing in the well-being of teachers, we can cultivate a vibrant and sustainable education system that empowers individuals, enriches communities, and shapes a brighter future for generations to come.

### **Limitations and Future Research:**

This study acknowledges limitations in sample size and geographical representation. Future research could delve deeper into specific school cultures, individual differences among teachers, and the long-term impact of interventions on both teacher wellbeing and student achievement.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

The study adhered to ethical research principles, ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and responsible data management.

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