

## **FACTORS CAUSING STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG COLLEGE TEACHERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DEGREE AND PG COLLEGES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Once believed to be a low-stressed profession, 'teaching' was the most pleasant occupation with less workloads and more flexibility. But today, studies reveal that the teachers undergo a high amount of stress specially the university teachers. Teaching is such a kind of unique profession in which the expectations of student's guardians are very high regarding to the student's educational progress, future carrier and about the establishment of the personalities of students along with education (Wilson, 2002). The present pilot study was conducted to identify the factors causing stress among the faculty of Graduate and Post Graduate colleges in Hyderabad, administering a questionnaire. A few coping strategies used by the faculty members to combat stress are also reviewed. Through the conclusions drawn from this study, it can be suggested that the management of the colleges should focus on three things, causes of stress, effects of stress and remedial measures, to reduce the occupational stress of the faculty members. Care should be taken to identify the potential of the faculty members and recognize all of them to be equally important for the student development in particular and college development at large. This research is useful for not only the faculty members but also for the management and administration of colleges and for the students to some extent.*

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Emotional Stress, Coping Strategies, Stress Management.

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### **Introduction**

Stress as defined by many is a condition which every human being undergoes at different situations in their lives. With regard to the stress among the school teachers and faculty of colleges and specially faculty of professional colleges is increasing day by day and becoming alarming. In reference (1) in her study on occupational stress among employees from different careers found that doctors and teachers are highly stressed as compared to the employees from other professions. With the world's technological advancement, many challenges are being posed to the faculty to update themselves with all types of changes which are technical, technological and methodological in nature. Teaching is such a kind of unique profession in which the expectations of student's guardians are very high regarding to the student's educational progress, future carrier and about the establishment of the personalities of students along with education (Wilson, 2002).

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research is conducted to explore the following objectives:

- To find out the existence of occupational stress among college teachers in Hyderabad.
- To explore the major causes of stress among the college teachers.
- To recommend a few coping strategies.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study is limited to the teachers of Degree and PG colleges which is a part of other major study with greater sample size.

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### **Sample Size of the Study**

100 (Degree and PG colleges equally distributed.)

### **Limitations**

Few Teachers of Degree and PG colleges were consulted and their opinions only are taken for concluding the study.

### **Literature Review**

**Professional stress:** Stress is an extrinsic or intrinsic desire to change the make a balanced life pattern (Selye, 1978). Stress also defined as the exterior, supervisory, individual or internal desire of any human being which forces to diversify the life pattern according to the dynamics of surrounding (Nayak, 2008).

Professional stress is the stress happens at the workplace or during the operational activities; it is a physio-psychological feedback of certain stimuli. Factors of professional stress can be behavior of superior, co worker, performance activity or may be due to environmental factors (Nayak, 2008).

### **Consequences of Stress**

Professional stress may result in disturbances in individual's life and also may affect his relations in social life. This may affect the reputation of the organization as the stressed employee may perform poorly which may directly or indirectly harm the students.

Stress affects the individual psychologically which results in health problems. This kind of stress may occur due to heavy workload, working conditions, management's philosophy towards employees etc. This may lead to absenteeism and poor performance on the part of the employees.

Stress causes teaching staff low motivation level results in low performance on the work site and motivate them to retire and there may be some other domestic problems which forces employees to retire from the job or it may force a teacher to remain stick with the organization due to any reason which leads toward any lose which can occur by leaving existing institute (Wilson, 2002).

### **Factors Causing Stress**

Studies indicate that two of the major causes are work overload and lack of proper communication between teachers and students (Wilson, 2002).

Poor behavior of students, lack of proper working environment, lack of pleasant relations with the colleagues and the work overload are the major causes of the stress in teaching staff (Wilson, 2002).

In the earlier studies of stress Johnstone (1989) find some of the factors influencing emotionally and mentally. These psychological factors include; expectation, worry, accountability and feelings of pleasure.

Stress stimulating factors that are specially associated with teaching staff are:

- Job design
- Workload
- Work life balance
- Communication
- Performance appraisal
- Role ambiguity
- Training and development
- Job insecurity
- Lack of management support
- Skill underutilization
- Effort reward imbalance
- Tools and equipment

On the other hand quality and quantity of performance, time pressure for the work and the casual dealing with the people are also determined as the prime factors of the stress creation during performance (Nayak, 2008). According to Johnstone et al. (1989) explored some other factors of stress for teaching staff are:

- Behavior of students to work poorly, behave poorly or don't work.
- Poor working environment or relations with colleagues.
- Workload or overload or tough routine work.
- Poor culture of colleges to work.

Travers and Cooper (1996) explored the top five causes of job stress due to which all the problems occur. These include;

- No support from government side.
- Low uncertainty or consistency in a job.
- Lack of information system for the implication of changes.
- Lacking of teachers respect.
- Leading toward national curriculum.

#### **Demographic Factors and Stress**

- Age
- Education
- Occupation and position
- Experience
- Type of family
- Organizational factors and stress
- Work stressors
- Role stressors
- Personal development stressors
- Interpersonal relationship stressors
- Organizational climate

A teacher can only perform his part the best when he tries to give some thoughtful knowledge to his students (Bain, 2004).

Teachers must be appreciated to get a good start by seeking the help from others. It is from those professions where no particular kind of training is there but college teaching is somewhat skilled (Brent & Felder 2000).

Teachers have to work on other aspects as how to learn for working in a group setting, how to deal with other ones and how to interact with matters to get them solved in a proper manner (Brent & Felder, 2000).

They do it all but with stress. They try their level best to equate their activities that are related to their research projects, teaching profession and domestic life. This is not easy to acquire these habits in a shorter span of time (Brent & Felder, 2000).

#### **Research Methodology**

The major need for the study is to identify the factors causing stress among the faculty of colleges. 30 colleges in the districts of Hyderabad and Secunderabad are considered for the study from which 100 teachers are taken for sample.

#### **Sample Size: 100**

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling technique is used to select the sample.

#### **Primary Data**

A structured Questionnaire and personal interview methods are used to gather the primary information from the respondents.

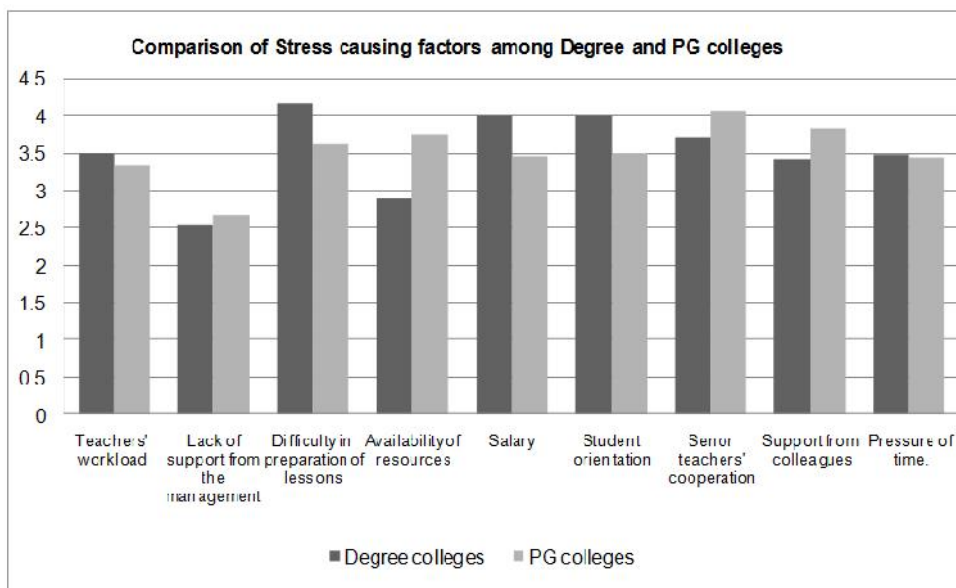
#### **Tools for Analysis**

Data is analyzed by using standard deviation method. In the demographic information that has been extracted from the sample which includes factors such as, age, education, experience, type of institution etc, descriptive statistics are used to analyze the data. Likert's 5 point scale is used that ranges between 5 (strongly agree) and 1 (strongly disagree). Moreover, level of significance for this study is 5% that is 0.05.

Research findings are as follows:

Stressors	Type of Institution					
	UG Colleges		PG Colleges			
	Means	S.D	Means	S.D	t-value	p-value
Teachers' Work load	3.50	0.746	3.34	0.718	0.894	0.374
Lack of support from the management	2.54	1.006	2.67	.816	.008	.993
Difficulty in preparation of lessons	4.16	.805	3.62	1.019	2.846	.005
Availability of resources	2.89	1.233	3.75	1.164	0.663	0.509
Salary	3.98	1.014	3.45	0.903	1.626	.107
Student orientation	3.98	1.160	3.50	0.990	0.540	0.590
Senior teachers' cooperation	3.71	0.967	4.07	1.149	1.672	.980
Lack of support from Colleagues	3.41	.058	3.84	1.010	2.059	.042
Pressure of time	3.48	1.191	3.43	1.169	-.211	.833

The results of the above table indicates that the mean score for UG colleges is 3.50 and the PG colleges is 3.34 and the standard deviation is 0.746 and 0.718 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is 0.894 and 0.374 respectively. This clearly states that teacher's workload is one of the major stress causing factors in UG and PG colleges. The other stressors identified for the study such as salary (mean scores 3.98 and 3.45, SD 1.014 and 0.903), Lack of support from the management (mean scores 2.54 and 2.67, SD 1.006 and 0.816) Lack of support from colleagues (mean scores 3.41 and 3.84, SD 0.058 and 1.010) cooperation from senior teachers (mean scores 3.71 and 4.07, SD 0.967 and 1.149), availability of resources (mean scores 2.89 and 3.75, SD 1.233 and 1.164), pressure of time (mean scores 3.48 and 3.43, SD 1.191 and 1.169), Student orientation (3.98 and 3.50, SD 1.160 and 0.990), Difficulty in preparation of lessons (mean scores 4.16 and 3.62, SD 0.805 and 1.019) respectively for UG and PG colleges, indicate that the difficulty in lesson preparation causes more stress among the teachers as compared to the other factors. The next factor causing more stress is the students' orientation and their attitude towards their teachers.



### Discussion of the Study

Stress is one of the major factors which are usually considered in the working organization now a day (Wilson, M. 2002). Factors or causes of the stress are explored by Pestonjee (1992) which are performance, individual development, interpersonal associations and the organizational environment causing above mentioned stress (Nayak, 2008). From the study, it is evident that teachers encounter a major difficulty in preparing for the lessons which leads to stress. It is found that the students' attitude towards the teacher and their orientation towards their study greatly influence the teachers. It depends on the students whether they are serious about their studies or less serious or not at all serious. This may

lead to differences between the teachers and students thereby cooperation between them starts deteriorating. Such conditions cause stress to the teachers to a great extent. At the time of collection of data many of the teachers opined that lack of support from the senior teachers, management and also the colleagues cause a lot of psychological stress which may enhance their stress levels. Many also opined that though they enjoy their work low salary demotivates them and subsequently they start disliking their job and become lethargic.

#### **Suggested Coping Strategies**

- Professional identity should be provided to the teachers
- More interaction with students should be facilitated
- Develop support network with the help of the senior teachers and other colleagues
- Accept senior teachers' mentoring
- Resolve differences with the department if any
- Physical exercises
- Spending quality time with the family
- Time management
- Spirituality in some cases
- Worthwhile rewards and recognition

#### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

The following suggestions are recommended by the study:

- Preparation for the lessons is the major cause of stress. Therefore the college managements should provide relevant study material for the teachers in the form of case studies, magazines and journals.
- Every college teacher should be given their space to prepare thoroughly for their lessons for the given class of students
- The teachers' workload must be set according to their level of employment so that they get ample time for their research and other activities
- Students should be made aware of the teachers' inclination towards their development and train them to respond to such activities accordingly.
- The academic resources like teaching aids (Audio & Visual) should be provided according to the teachers' need and also provisions like Internet facility, labs and libraries need to be addressed in time
- Proper scheduling of the academic year or the semester should be done to ensure in time completion and revision of the prescribed syllabus.
- Cooperation between the senior and junior faculty should be encouraged by the management
- Further research is recommended in the areas of 'factors causing stress and coping strategies among the college teachers.'

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