

STRESS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY FEMALE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THEIR LOCALITY AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS IN WEST BENGAL

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INTRODUCTION:

In the field of education, stress is an important factor that is extensively researched. Still, it is important to understand the different elements causing this stress, particularly the socioeconomic and environmental conditions in which these teachers work. The difficulties faced by female teachers could be made harder by elements like local culture, socioeconomic standing, and institutional support in India, where disparities in socioeconomic status are vast and areas differ greatly in terms of development and resources. In terms of their surroundings and socioeconomic status, this study intends to investigate the stress that female higher secondary school teachers in West Bengal suffer from, with a focus on the relationship between stress and their feelings of security and insecurity. By understanding the ways in which these variables interact, the study seeks to clarify the broader problems that these teachers encounter and provide suggestions for reducing stress and improving both their professional and personal well-being.

STRESS :

The impact of stress on higher secondary female teachers is far-reaching, affecting not just their mental and emotional well-being but also their physical health, professional productivity, and social life. Chronic stress can lead to a variety of mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. The emotional toll of stress can affect a teacher's ability to stay motivated, focused, and engaged in their work. Teachers may become disengaged from their students and their responsibilities, which ultimately affects their performance in the classroom. Stress is known to have detrimental effects on physical health, contributing to problems such as headaches, digestive issues, high blood pressure, and sleep disturbances. The long-term physical toll can affect a teacher's overall well-being, making it difficult to perform daily tasks efficiently. The stress-related health issues not only affect the teacher but also impact her family and students. Stress can lead to burnout, where teachers feel emotionally drained and incapable of performing their roles effectively. Teachers experiencing burnout may disengage from their work, exhibit low levels of motivation, and show a decline in teaching performance. This can lead to negative impacts on the students' learning outcomes and affect the overall quality of education in the school. Prolonged stress can lead to job dissatisfaction. Teachers who feel overwhelmed, unsupported, and undervalued are more likely to leave the profession or seek career changes. The high turnover rates among teachers are often linked to stress, and this can result in a loss of experienced educators, negatively affecting the education system. Chronic stress can spill over into personal life, affecting relationships with family members, friends, and colleagues. The pressure of balancing work and family can lead to conflicts at home, feelings of guilt, and a sense of isolation. Teachers may feel that they are neglecting their personal needs and relationships due to the overwhelming demands of their profession.

LOCALITY AND FEMALE TEACHERS IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

A vital field of research in education is the relationship between locale and female instructors in high school. Locality not only affects the physical environment in which teachers work but also influences their social interactions, professional challenges, and overall well-being. In the context of higher secondary education, the experiences of female teachers can vary widely based on whether they are located in urban, suburban, or rural localities. Furthermore, the socioeconomic and social characteristics of the locality have a significant impact on how individuals work, what resources are available, and how the community perceives education. There are various ways in which the locality of a school impacts the lives of female teachers in higher secondary education. The discussion will cover how different types of localities (rural, urban, and suburban) influence the work environment, challenges faced, opportunities for professional development, and teacher satisfaction. We will also explore the specific challenges faced by female teachers based on their locality, with a focus on factors such as gender roles, societal expectations, access to resources, and work-life balance.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND FEMALE TEACHERS IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

Socio-economic status (SES) is a broad concept used to define an individual's or group's position within a society, based on a combination of factors such as income, education, occupation, and the social environment in which they live. It is a key indicator of an individual's or family's access to resources and opportunities and significantly influences their quality of life. SES can be used to explain disparities in health, education, and overall well-being. SES is typically measured through a combination of key elements. Firstly, the amount of money an individual or family earns plays a significant role in determining their socio-economic position. Higher income generally provides access to better healthcare, education, and housing, while lower income may limit these opportunities. Secondly, the level of formal education an individual has completed is another important indicator of SES. Higher education levels often correlate with higher-paying jobs, increased job security, and improved overall quality of life. Thirdly, the type of work a person engages in is another critical determinant of SES. Occupation not only determines income levels but also reflects social status and prestige. Professionals, skilled workers, and people in higher management positions typically enjoy higher SES compared to those in unskilled or manual labor roles. Fourthly, wealth, including property ownership, savings, investments, and other assets, can be a strong determinant of socio-economic status. It reflects the ability of individuals or families to accumulate resources over time and provides economic stability. Finally, the neighborhood or community in which individuals reside also impacts their socio-economic status. People living in affluent areas typically have access to better educational institutions, healthcare services, and social networks, contributing to their overall SES.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:

The significance of the teaching profession, especially at the higher secondary level, cannot be overstated. Teachers, as the bedrock of any educational system, are entrusted with shaping the future of students and, by extension, society. In West Bengal, a state with a diverse socio-economic landscape, female teachers, particularly at the higher secondary level, face a unique set of challenges that have far-reaching implications for their well-being and professional performance. Among these challenges, anxiety, feelings of security and insecurity significantly affect their ability to do their jobs effectively. This research is essential to understanding the relationship between stress and security perception, and insecurity, and the socio-economic and locality factors influencing female teachers in West Bengal, thereby

contributing to the development of strategies to enhance their working conditions, well-being, and job satisfaction.

Female teachers are increasingly seen as essential to the educational development of any society. In India, and more specifically in West Bengal, women occupy a significant portion of teaching positions, especially at the higher secondary level. However, they face numerous challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives, particularly they are expected to perform various activity within their families and communities. The burden of social expectations and professional demands can lead to elevated levels of stress, negatively affecting their work efficiency and mental well-being. Educators are responsible for preparing the younger generation for adulthood, their well-being is critical to the quality of education provided.

Stress among female teachers is thus crucial, as it will provide insights into the factors that affect their performance, both in the classroom and in other aspects of their professional lives. Understanding these issues will allow for the identification of targeted interventions that can improve their working conditions and enhance their effectiveness in the classroom. Stress is significant factors that influence the well-being and job performance of teachers. In the context of female teachers at the higher secondary level in West Bengal, stress may arise from a variety of sources, including workload, job demands, societal expectations, and the professional environment. Research has shown that excessive stress not only affects teachers' physical and mental health but also impacts their job satisfaction and overall effectiveness in the classroom. Female teachers, in particular, may face heightened stress due to their dual roles as both professionals and caregivers, which can be especially burdensome in socio-economically disadvantaged environments.

The locality in which a teacher works can significantly influence their stress levels, feelings of security, and job satisfaction. In West Bengal, the state's diverse geographical and socio-economic makeup presents a range of challenges for teachers. While urban areas often provide better infrastructure and access to resources, teachers in rural areas are confronted with a different set of challenges, such as a lack of basic amenities, limited professional support, and social isolation. Female teachers in rural areas may also face gender-specific challenges, including societal expectations around traditional gender roles and fewer opportunities for professional advancement.

Socio-economic status (SES) plays vital role in shaping the experiences of female teachers. Teachers from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face additional stressors due to financial instability, lack of professional opportunities, and difficulties in balancing work and personal life. For female teachers, socio-economic challenges are often compounded by societal expectations that they assume primary responsibility for caregiving and domestic duties. This dual burden can lead to heightened stress and feelings of insecurity, especially in households where the financial resources are limited.

In the context of West Bengal, where there is a stark contrast between urban and rural SES, female teachers from economically disadvantaged families may also face social discrimination, which exacerbates feelings of insecurity. Furthermore, low SES can limit access to professional development opportunities, reducing the chances for career growth and perpetuating feelings of job insecurity. Understanding how socio-economic status intersects with feelings of security and insecurity is needed that address the unique needs of female teachers from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Gender plays a pivotal role in determining the level of stress and insecurity experienced by female teachers. Female teachers, particularly in patriarchal societies like India, often face

unique challenges that their male counterparts may not encounter. These challenges include balancing work with family responsibilities, dealing with societal expectations about their roles as caregivers, and experiencing gender-based discrimination in professional settings. In West Bengal, where traditional gender norms still influence social dynamics, female teachers may face additional barriers to job satisfaction and career progression.

Gender-related issues, such as sexual harassment in the workplace, can contribute to feelings of insecurity and stress among female teachers. Moreover, societal expectations around women's roles may affect their self-esteem and sense of security in the workplace. These factors make it essential to study the experiences of female teachers separately from male teachers, as their stressors and feelings of insecurity are often more pronounced.

Finally, the justification for researching stress among female instructors in upper high school in relation to their locality and socio-economic status in West Bengal is rooted in the need to improve the well-being and professional satisfaction of teachers, who are central to the educational system. By identifying the stressors and barriers that female teachers face, particularly those in rural and low socio-economic backgrounds, this research aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, school administrations, and other stakeholders to address these challenges. Ultimately, this study will contribute to a more supportive and productive environment for female teachers, ensuring that their roles effectively and educational development of the state.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem addressed in this study is the stress among +2 female school teachers in West Bengal, in relation to their locality and socioeconomic status. Despite their critical role in the education system, female teachers, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and rural areas, face various stressors that affect their well-being and professional performance. The problem of the study has been stated as follows: **“Stress among higher secondary female school teachers in relation to their locality and Socio - Economic Status in West Bengal.”**

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:

Stress:

Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. The study has revolved around the stress. Job stress is the physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job do not match the capabilities.

Locality:

Locality means relating to or belonging to a place. Locality refers to the geographical area or setting in which the teacher works, which can be urban and rural. In the context of this study, locality will be operationalized as the teacher's work environment (i.e., whether the school is located in an urban, or rural area). The study will investigate how the type of locality (e.g., access to resources, societal norms, availability of support systems) influences the stress levels and feelings of security or insecurity experienced by female teachers.

Socio-economic status:

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of a person's or family's position in society based on a combination of social and economic factors, primarily income, education, and occupation. It is often categorized as low, medium, or high and reflects access to resources, social standing, and opportunities. This will be measured by gathering data on the teachers'

annual income, educational qualifications, family income level, and the type of employment contract (e.g., permanent or contractual). Teachers will be categorized into low, middle, or high socio-economic groups based on these parameters.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1- To study the relationship between stress and socio-economic-status of higher secondary female school teachers.
- 2- To study the difference between urban and rural higher secondary female school teachers in connection to their stress.
- 3- To study the difference between high and low higher secondary female school teacher's socio-economic-status in connection to their stress.

Hypotheses of the Study

Hypothesis of the study were as follows.

Hyp-1- There exists significant relationship between stress and socio-economic-status of higher secondary female school teachers.

Hyp-2- There exists significant difference between urban and rural higher secondary female school teachers in connection to their stress.

Hyp-3- There exists significant difference between high and low higher secondary female school teacher's socio-economic-status in connection to their stress.

Delimitation of the Study:

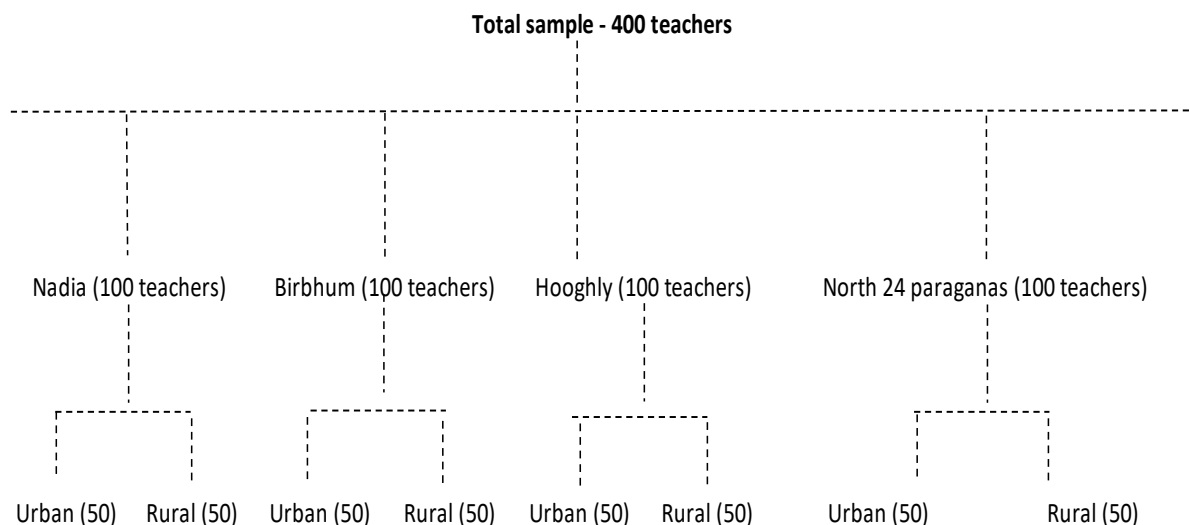
- 1- The study is delimited to a specific group of female teachers.
- 2- The study is delimited to a specific group of higher secondary school female teachers.
- 3- The study is delimited to higher secondary school female teachers of west Bengal state only.
- 4- The study is delimited to 2 psychological variables such as stress, socio-economic status.
- 5- The research is delimited to 400 hundred samples only.
- 6- This study is delimited only to correlational and descriptive statistical techniques.
- 7- study is delimited to sample of 400 higher secondary female teachers of different higher secondary schools from four districts i.e. Nadia, Birbhum, Hooghly and 24 Parganas (N) in the state of West Bengal .

Methodology: In the present study the researcher selected descriptive survey method for investigation of this research work in four districts of West Bengal.

Population: In the present study, the researcher has focused on all the higher secondary school female teachers from Urban and Rural areas of high, middle, and low SES in relation to their stress in the state of West Bengal as the population of the study.

Sample:

Schematic representation of the sample:



Tools used for study:

1-Stress scale for teachers (2021) constructed & standardized by Ibrahim Hanif (Phd Education, Aligarh Muslim University & Dr.Gunjan Dubey.

2- Socio-economic Status Scale developed and standardized by R.L. Bharadwaj (2006).

Statistical techniques used:

Researcher used Pearson coefficient correlation in order to measure relationship among variables and also used t-test statistical techniques in order to know the difference among variables.

Main Findings:

1-Higher secondary female teachers' stress levels and their socioeconomic position are significantly positively correlated. Higher secondary female teachers' stress levels were evaluated by the Pearson correlation coefficient in terms of quantitative variables. Stress and high school female teachers' socioeconomic status (SES) have a multifaceted relationship, with research indicating a positive correlation between lower SES and higher stress levels. Studies show that female teachers, especially those from lower-income backgrounds, experience significant occupational stress, which can be exacerbated by factors like salary, workload, and societal expectations, potentially impacting their mental health and job performance.

4- Higher secondary school female teachers will have higher stress than rural secondary school female teachers is not retained. Research suggests urban female higher secondary teachers generally experience lower levels of occupational stress than their rural counterparts, although some studies show no significant difference or even higher stress in urban areas depending on the factors considered. Rural teachers may face increased stress due to challenges like poorer resources and socio-economic factors, while urban teachers might struggle more with issues like administrative support or heavy workloads. Factors influencing stress for both groups include work-life balance, job security, administrative support, and relationships with colleagues.

5- Higher secondary school female teachers will have low SES than high stress higher

secondary female school teacher's socio-economic-status is not retained. Higher secondary female teachers with lower socio-economic status (SES) generally experience higher levels of occupational stress compared to their high-SES counterparts due to factors like lower salaries, fewer financial resources, and potentially greater demands from insufficient work resources, according to studies on the topic. Conversely, high-SES teachers often have greater access to resources and may benefit from higher-paying institutions, which can alleviate some sources of stress, although work-related demands and work-life balance challenges can still be significant stressors for both groups.

Educational Implication:

These days, teaching is a very difficult job. A teacher could encounter physical, emotional, or mental stress as a result of these stresses. Their performance also gets affected by job instability. Teachers' performance decreased daily as a result of their fear of being terminated. They don't perform well enough to meet the requirements. Teachers said that they sometimes became aggressive with their pupils and made the decision to leave their jobs. They claimed that they experience physical or mental stress as a result of all the work at school. Therefore, it was found that there were several factors that caused excessive problems with the teaching-learning process and negatively impacted instructors' effectiveness.

The findings suggest that female secondary school teachers at private schools experience extremely high levels of stress. The purpose of the five questions was to measure instructors' stress levels. Teachers said that their jobs in schools are too difficult and that teaching is a demanding profession. They carry out several tasks and other responsibilities assigned by management. Teachers additionally said that they sometimes put in plenty of time at school. It was discovered that a number of variables, such as assignment deadlines, time constraints, a lack of resources, inadequate pay, school administration, and misbehaviour by pupils, increase teacher stress. While carrying out these duties, teachers also expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of dedication to their work because of their inadequate salary. The institution's administration failed to supply enough instructional materials. Teachers also expect management to act consistently and consistently.

A female teacher's socio-economic status (SES) significantly impacts education by influencing access to resources, opportunities for professional development, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction, which in turn affects teaching quality and student outcomes. Improving female teachers' SES through adequate pay, better work conditions, and support systems fosters greater dedication, morale, and professional growth, leading to more effective teaching and a positive influence on students' educational experiences and societal progress.

- This study can help us to understand the reasons of high and low level of socio-economic status among secondary school female teachers towards their work.
- This type of research will help the governments and general public with vital information for finding the ways of improving the socio-economic status of female teachers and maintain their attitudes towards work.
- The education planners and administrators need to provide female teachers with the best possible facilities to boost their morale. This will ultimately improve the quality of education. Career development opportunities and giving regular promotion of female teachers will make difference in satisfaction with their level of socio-economic status.

- So as to strengthen higher secondary schools both functionally and structurally with policy in action, the government should properly implement educational policy by looking after to the needs and welfare of female teachers in higher secondary schools on a global, local, national, and regional level.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES:

The study was limited to higher secondary schools in a few West Bengal districts. Only this specific spot was included in the study's generalisation. The analysis makes the following suggestions.

Multiple studies such as this study indicates that female new teachers had high levels of job stress, whereas older teachers have less stress. Previous research indicates that self-efficacy and self-assurance are important factors in female teachers' job stress due to their lower stress levels. Reducing stress among female educators contributes to a pleasant educational setting for all students and helps up the advancement of the nation by developing the next generation as a social and economic resource. Employees are employed for a limited number of hours each day, therefore their time pressure must be used wisely. When they begin to feel overloaded and stressed, they are able to establish routines, establish lists, create plans, and effectively apply optional time pressure. Therefore, understanding the primary sources of job stress and using ways to reduce it may control the level of occupational stress to an important extent.

Based on the study, teachers are very concerned and frustrated with their salaries when compared to other places like Delhi and Mumbai. Surprisingly, the future scope includes studies on the stress levels of other state teachers and also studies on fair and equitable policies on decision-making in sensitive areas of state government policies for teachers, which will improve teacher satisfaction.

Professional development initiatives aimed to help educators control stress at work.

It is advised that actions be taken to increase the knowledge of teachers' rights, obligations, and legal requirements that are periodically put into force, especially for younger teachers who are women.

More autonomy in making professional judgments must be given to female teachers.

It is essential to empower female educators by giving them the opportunity to step into positions of authority.

Women who are interested in developing their careers in the education industry need to be more conscious of the institutional obstacles.

Raising awareness of the constraints faced by female educators in families and communities is also important.

Rather than considering that teaching is inclusive, teacher training programs should focus on the various backgrounds, viewpoints, and objectives of women.

Teacher remuneration and working conditions needs to be reviewed in line with other similar professions in the public sector.

The creation of forums for female teachers is essential so that they can collectively discuss on better pay and working conditions in schools.

It is important that women teachers must also be empowered by enabling them to take Leadership responsibilities.

For women who wish to grow their professions in the education sector, there is a need for a greater understanding about institutional obstacles.

Instead of considering that teaching is inclusive, teacher training programs ought to focus on the various experiences, viewpoints, and objectives of women.

Teacher remuneration and working conditions needs to be reviewed in line with other similar professions in the public sector.

The creation of forums for female teachers is essential so that they can collectively discuss on better pay and working conditions in schools.

For women who wish to advance their professions in the education sector, there is a need for a greater understanding about institutional obstacles.

Further, it is necessary to increase awareness of the obstacles faced by female educators in families and communities.

Teacher remuneration and working conditions needs to be reviewed in line with other similar professions in the public sector.

The creation of forums for female teachers is essential so that they can collectively Discuss on better pay and working conditions in schools.

It is essential to empower female teachers in higher secondary schools by providing them the opportunity to assume leadership roles.

Higher secondary school girls who seek to advance their careers in the education sector need to be more aware of institutional limitations.

Families and communities need to be educated fully aware of the limitations faced by female instructors in upper secondary schools.

Instead of considering that instruction is inclusive, teacher training programs should take account of the various backgrounds, perspectives, and goals of women.

Teacher remuneration and working conditions needs to be reviewed in line with other similar professions in the public sector.

The creation of forums for higher secondary school female teachers is essential so that they can collectively discuss on better pay and working conditions in schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

1. In this study, multiple variables such as age, teaching experience, designation, academic qualifications, professional qualifications, marital status, type of family, and the medium of instruction are not taken into consideration.
2. For the interpretation, computations were made variable-wise, within-variable-wise, and factor- and dimension-wise.
3. One of West-Bengal 5 districts, were the only region the research covered geographically. 5. Only limited secondary schools in the selected districts of West Bengal state are included in the current study.
4. The scope of the current study is limited to 3 psychological variables..

CONCLUSION:

Teaching has become a more challenging profession worldwide. It is a profession where every day radical changes occur in the educational system. Female high school teachers experience higher levels of stress due to challenges in both the “greedy” institutions demanding time and energy. This paper was an attempt to work out stress among female high school teachers of West-Bengal. The studies conducted by the researcher have revealed that the teaching profession is no more the profession of a little stress. This study therefore seeks to identify stress management mechanisms used by female high school teachers. The study findings indicated that more the use of stress management mechanisms, lesser was the stress. All the stress management mechanisms were negatively correlated with the stress.

The objective of this investigation was to examine the degree of stress experienced by female teachers in West Bengal, India. As the education system changed over time, female instructors today face an expert level of stress, despite promising implications and methods for future studies. Teachers have found it difficult to adjust to the latest innovations. Additionally, it is observed that teachers who are beginning teaching as a second career need to have positive, confident, and self-confident so as to begin to succeed. In contrast, women who select teaching as their first profession originally feel anxious but eventually become at ease. Numerous causes contribute to an increase in stress, and there are ways to manage it. In certain situations, high levels of stress experienced by female teachers may have negative effects on their mental health, and they may leave their jobs in order to achieve little calmness.

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