

# A Study on Teacher Stress: Causes, Types, and Management Strategies in the Educational System

Pradeep Sharma<sup>1</sup> and Trilock Chand<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor & Dean- Commerce, Department of Business Administration, University of Rajasthan, Rajasthan, INDIA.

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, University of Rajasthan, Rajasthan, INDIA.

<sup>1</sup>corresponding author: sharmadrpeekay@gmail.com



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## ABSTRACT

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape and overall societal development. However, increasing demands, heavy workloads, and challenging work environments often lead to significant stress among educators. This research paper explores the concept of teacher stress, its causes, and the various types of stress experienced by teachers, including eustress, distress, chronic stress, hyper-stress, hypo-stress, and acute stress. The study identifies key stressors such as administrative pressures, curriculum changes, student behavior, and lack of job autonomy. Furthermore, the paper discusses stress management strategies that teachers can adopt, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), exercise, relaxation techniques, self-talk, and social support. By understanding and addressing stress in the teaching profession, educational institutions can create a healthier work environment, ultimately enhancing teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

**Keywords-** Occupational Stress, Stress Management, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eustress.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In any educational system, a teacher is pivotal. The majority of the civilized world's civilizations have traditionally placed a high value on teachers. They are frequently referred to as Guru, Master, or Mentor. Teachers have always had to live up to the standards set by society at large in order to reach this position.

The caliber of a country's teacher has a significant impact on the standard of its educational system and its overall progress. Teachers should not be under any pressure to carry out such a massive duty. "The non-specific reaction of the body to any demand made upon it" is how Seyle (1956) described stress. Anything that forces the body to change might be considered a "demand." This includes danger, difficulty, and any other form of change. Instantaneous and automatic is the response. The tension that everybody feels is similar to the stress that teachers feel. When educators feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities or the demands of their profession, stress levels rise.

"Teacher stress" refers to any adjusting demand that necessitates coping behaviors from the educator. Research shows that teachers experience high levels of stress due to the following factors: long work hours, heavy workload, increasing class sizes, demands from new curricula and assessments, hostile work environments, students' disruptive behavior, threats of physical violence, parents' interference, bureaucratic red tape, repetitive paperwork, lack of job autonomy, and unpredictable service regulations.

## II. STRESS

The Latin term *stringere*, meaning "to draw tight," is the origin of the English word stress. An individual experiences stress when they are faced with a demand, opportunity, or resource that is directly tied to their wants, yet the outcome of which is viewed as crucial but also unpredictable (Cooper et al., 2002). Stress has been studied extensively in the field of medicine, where it is characterized as an imbalance

within the body. When trying to keep up with life's constant changes, the mind-body system experiences this strain. Employees report higher levels of stress in the workplace when they are worried about their jobs, have high expectations for their own performance, are adapting to new technologies, or are dealing with issues at home. Capalan et. al. (1984) offer a broader definition, arguing that stress can be caused by any aspect of the work environment.

### III. TYPES OF STRESS

- **Eu-Stress**

Good or positive stress, or eustress, lasts only a brief while. The kind of pressure a person feels just before they have to use their muscles to their full potential in order to get an immediate and decisive advantage in a competitive situation. When faced with unexpected challenges, the body goes into the fight-or-flight reaction, which prepares the muscles, heart, and mind for the strength needed, and causes Eustress.

- **Distress**

Negative outcomes are associated with distress, often called unpleasant stress. When the body and mind are subjected to this form of stress, they endure an unpleasant sensation as the typical routine is continually changed and adjusted. People whose stress levels are high tend to be in a state of distress.

- **Chronic (long term) Stress**

When routines are constantly disrupted week after week, it can lead to chronic stress. When people are unaware of the dangers of chronic stress and do nothing to alleviate it, the condition can worsen over time. When patients feel stuck in their misery and "troubles" there is no way out.

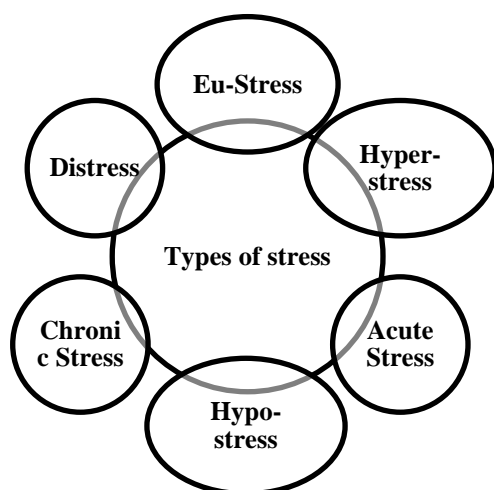


Fig 1.1: Types of stress

- **Hyper-stress**

When someone is put through more than they can handle, it can lead to hyper-stress, a form of negative stress. Someone can experience hyper-stress if they work

a demanding profession that pushes them to their limits. Individuals afflicted with hyper-stress frequently react to minor stresses with intense emotional outbursts.

- **Hypo-stress**

Hypo-stress rounds out the four forms of stress. The polar opposite of hyperstress is hypo-stress. Hypo-stress refers to a state of having an inadequate level of stress. Reason being, someone who is perpetually bored will have hypo-stress. Hypo stress is common among people whose jobs aren't physically demanding, like factory workers who do the same thing over and over again. Feelings of restlessness and inertia are symptoms of hypo-stress.

- **Acute (arise fast) Stress**

When you suddenly have to alter your usual habits, you may experience a form of stress known as acute stress. It typically entails a rapid and intense response of the body and mind to a major danger, difficulty, fear, or other stressors; nevertheless, it does not last long. A person's anxiety levels will spike during an acute reaction circumstance and then slowly go down afterwards

### IV. IDENTIFYING STRESS

Although it may be difficult to pinpoint exactly when you're under too much stress, there are telltale symptoms that you should be aware of. Even seemingly insignificant sources of stress, such as those associated with job, school, family, and friends, can have a cumulative effect on a person's mental and physical health.

Be on the lookout for the following symptoms if you suspect that stress is impacting you:

- Psychological symptoms like forgetfulness, anxiety, and problems focusing.
- Expressions of emotion like anger, irritability, moodiness, or frustration.
- Symptoms manifesting physically include hypertension, weight gain or loss, irregular menstrual cycles, changes in libido, and a predisposition to colds and infections.
- Poor self-care, neglecting interests, or substance abuse as a coping mechanism are examples of behavioural indicators.

### V. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS OVERLOAD

Recognizing when your stress levels are "out of control" or negatively impacting you is a vital skill to acquire. Any number of things can manifest as symptoms of stress overload. Everyone reacts differently to stress, and it has far-reaching effects on the brain, the body, and behavior.

Three common ways that people respond when they are overwhelmed by stress are:

1. An irritated or furious reaction to stress. Feelings of being too emotional, agitated, and unable to calm down are possible.
2. As a result of stress, one may become distant or sad. You become extremely withdrawn, unfocused, and emotionless.
3. Two types of stress responses: tens and frozen. Under duress, you "freeze" and become immobile. You can be feeling incredibly irritated beneath your seemingly paralyzed exterior.

## VI. CAUSES OF STRESS

Many factors can contribute to stress, including but not limited to: age, academic pressure, financial status, and environmental factors. There are three main types of stress: environmental, physiological, and psychological. To put it simply, environmental stress is a result of things like traffic, noise, pollution, and bad weather. The social aspects of life encompass a wide range of concerns and demands, such as meeting deadlines, managing finances, navigating work, maintaining relationships, and so on. Physiological changes occur throughout our lives at several stages, including childhood, puberty, adulthood, menopause, illness, and poor lifestyle choices such insufficient physical activity, sleep, and nutrition. Illnesses like tension headaches, strained muscles, and nervous breakdowns can be a physical response to things like environmental factors or peer pressure. Mental - mental

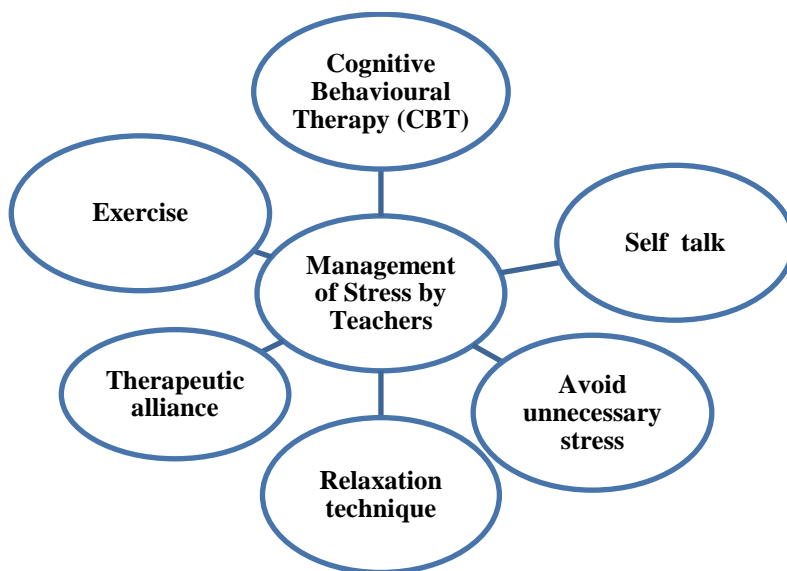
factors include our attitudes, beliefs, and ways of thinking, as well as our interpretations of and responses to stressful events. Factors like as academic pressure, work load, poverty, illnesses, natural catastrophes, environmental risks, and so on are lifelong, and as a result, many developing nations provide school mental health programs.

## VII. MANAGEMENT OF STRESS BY TEACHERS

In order to better manage the stress in one's life, stress management is a collection of strategies, programs, and treatments that aim to identify the causes of stress and implement measures to lessen their impact. Teachers may break the grip of stress and live healthier, happier lives with the support of effective management. Methods for dealing with stress are varied and comprehensive. These are a few ways that managers deal with stress.

### ➤ *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)*

This treatment modifies dysfunctional thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to treat issues and increase enjoyment. Motivating the patient to question skewed thinking and alter self-destructive habits are key tenets of the treatment. Consequently, educators can utilize this method in conjunction with a trained expert to recognize negative thought patterns and implement ways to counteract them.



**Fig 1.2: Management of Stress by Teachers**

### ➤ *Exercise*

Physical activity, such as exercise, enhances the capacity to sleep, which in turn lowers stress, and releases endorphins, a chemical in the brain that functions as a natural analgesic. To keep one's mind fit, exercise is essential. It boosts general cognitive function, increases alertness and attention, and decreases

weariness. When teachers are feeling overwhelmed and unable to focus due to stress, this can be a great aid.

### ➤ *Therapeutic Alliance*

This is the partnership between a patient and their healthcare provider. A therapist and client form a therapeutic alliance when they commit to working together in the hopes that the client will undergo positive

transformation. In order to better control his stress, a teacher can seek the advice of a therapist.

➤ **Relaxation Technique**

To alleviate stress, educators can use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, rhythmic movement, repetitious prayer, body scanning, and guided visualization. If teachers practice progressive relaxation, it may help them recover from some illnesses faster, feel less tired, and perform better in the classroom.

➤ **Body Massage**

The soft manipulation of tissues with the purpose of easing and healing is known as massage. More and more people are turning to this age-old healing technique as a drug-free, all-natural way to alleviate the stress and strain that comes with modern life. A full-body massage may calm nerves and invigorate the spirit in ways that go much beyond the massage itself.

According to Ucheagwu, Ossai and Ugokwe (2015), Massage has several health benefits, including lowering blood pressure, decreasing tension, increasing mobility, and increasing endorphin production. Managing stress can be as simple as getting out and about with friends and family. Participation in social activities, both large and little, should be a priority for teachers.

➤ **Avoid Unnecessary Stress**

One way to accomplish this is to alter one's response to the current situation. The four "As" that Ellis (2004) proposed as a means of dealing with stress are as follows: avoidance, alteration of the stressful circumstance, adaptation, and acceptance of what one cannot change. In order to mitigate the harmful effects of stress, educators might modify their responses to situations when they feel threatened, such as when students act unfairly against them.

➤ **Self-Talk**

What this means is that our feelings and actions are shaped by the constant dialogue we have with ourselves. One of the most effective ways to boost self-confidence and control negative emotions is through positive self-talk. A teacher's self-confidence, motivation, and output all increase when he develops a habit of positive self-talk (Boyes, 2018).

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The teaching profession plays an integral role in shaping the intellectual and moral development of society. However, the increasing complexity of the educational system and rising expectations place significant stress on teachers, affecting their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. This paper highlights that teacher stress arises from various factors, including long working hours, excessive workload, disruptive student behavior, administrative pressure, and lack of autonomy in decision-making.

Understanding the types of stress—eustress, distress, chronic stress, hyper-stress, hypo-stress, and acute stress—helps in identifying its impact on educators' overall health and performance. The study emphasizes that prolonged exposure to stress can negatively affect teachers' productivity, job satisfaction, and mental health, ultimately influencing the quality of education imparted to students.

Effective stress management strategies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), exercise, relaxation techniques, therapeutic alliances, and positive self-talk are crucial in mitigating stress among teachers. Additionally, social support systems, time management, and adopting a balanced lifestyle contribute to enhancing teachers' well-being and job performance. Educational institutions must recognize the importance of supporting teachers by creating a positive work environment, providing counseling services, and offering professional development programs to help educators cope with workplace stress.

By implementing comprehensive stress management practices, institutions can foster a healthier and more productive teaching environment, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of both teachers and students. Further research in this area can provide more insights into the evolving nature of teacher stress and the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms.

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