



A Study of Occupational Stress and Professional Challenges among Secondary School Teachers Working in Remote Areas: A Theoretical Perspective with Reference to NEP 2020

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the level of occupational stress and the professional challenges faced by secondary school teachers working in remote areas. Teaching in remote locations presents unique difficulties such as lack of infrastructure, limited access to resources, isolation, and increased workload, which contribute significantly to stress among teachers. The study adopts a descriptive survey method and includes a sample of secondary school teachers from remote regions. Standardized tools were used to measure occupational stress, along with a self-structured questionnaire to identify professional challenges. The findings indicate that teachers experience moderate to high levels of occupational stress, largely influenced by poor working conditions and lack of institutional support. The study highlights the need for policy interventions, improved infrastructure, and teacher support systems to enhance teacher well-being and effectiveness.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Professional Challenges, Remote Areas, Secondary School Teachers, Educational Stress.

Many people think that teaching is a wonderful job, but it can also be very stressful, especially in rural places where instructors have to deal with a lot of different problems at work. This theoretical article looks at the causes and effects of job stress on secondary school teachers who work in rural areas. It does this by using well-known psychological and educational theories. The study also looks at how the National Education Policy 2020 can help with these problems. It shows that a lack of infrastructure, professional isolation, insufficient resources, and a heavy administrative load are all big causes of stress. The research says that following the NEP 2020 rules can help teachers feel better, lower their stress levels, and boost their students' learning.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Professional Challenges, Remote Areas, Teachers, NEP 2020, Theoretical Study.

1. Introduction

Education is a key part of a country's growth, and instructors have a big impact on how society will be in the future. But the conditions under which teachers operate are often different from one area to another. Teachers who labor in remote and rural locations encounter problems that are not common in cities.

Stress at work is becoming a bigger problem for teachers. It means the stress on the mind and body that comes from employment obligations that are too much for a person to handle. Teachers in rural places face extra stressors such as bad

infrastructure, not enough teaching and learning resources, bad connectivity, and being alone socially.

These problems not only impact teachers' professional performance but also impair their psychological well-being, resulting in burnout, discontent, and diminished effectiveness. So, it's important to look at occupational stress from a theoretical point of view and look for remedies at the policy level.

2. Conceptual Understanding of Occupational Stress



Occupational stress is a multifaceted notion that encompasses the interplay between personal attributes and environmental influences. Teachers deal with a lot of stress from different things, like their workload, time pressure, student conduct, and administrative duties.

In isolated regions, stress gets more complicated because of:

- Limited institutional support
- Scarcity of resources
- Increased role expectations
- Lack of professional recognition

Expectations for roles have gone up. Not being recognized as a professional Stress in teachers sometimes shows up as emotional tiredness, less motivation, and less happiness with their jobs. Long-term stress can lead to burnout, which is bad for both teachers and pupils.

3. Theoretical Bases of the Study

3.1 Transactional Model of Stress

The Transactional Model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) elucidates stress as a dynamic interplay between the individual and the environment. This paradigm posits that stress arises when individuals perceive the demands upon them as surpassing their coping abilities. In situations where instruction is done from a distance:

- Teachers see problems with infrastructure and too much work as sources of stress.
- Not having ways to cope makes you more vulnerable
- Long-term exposure causes long-term stress

3.2 Job Demand–Resource (JD-R) Model

The JD-R model says that stress comes from an imbalance between the demands of the job and the resources that are available.

- Job demands: a lot of labour, administrative tasks, and instructing students of different grades.
- Job Resources: training, infrastructure, and assistance from the institution In remote places, a lot of work and not enough resources make for a stressful work atmosphere that can lead to burnout and worse performance.

3.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory suggests that individuals must satisfy their basic and psychological needs to function effectively.

Teachers in remote areas often face:

- Difficulty in meeting basic needs (transport, housing, safety)
- Lack of social interaction and belongingness
- Limited opportunities for professional growth

Unfulfilled needs contribute significantly to occupational stress and dissatisfaction.

Maslow's theory posits that individuals must fulfil their fundamental and psychological needs to operate properly.

Teachers in rural places typically have to deal with:

- Trouble fulfilling basic necessities including safety, transportation, and housing
- Not being able to engage with others and feel like you belong
- Few chances to move up in your career

Unmet needs are a major cause of stress and unhappiness at work.

3.4 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's theory distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators.

- **Hygiene Factors:** Salary, working conditions, infrastructure
- **Motivators:** Recognition, achievement, growth



In remote areas, poor hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction, while lack of motivators reduces engagement and job satisfaction.

3.5 Social Isolation Theory

Teachers in remote areas often experience social and professional isolation due to geographical barriers and lack of interaction.

This isolation results in:

- Reduced collaboration
- Limited knowledge sharing
- Increased feelings of loneliness

Consequently, isolation becomes a major contributor to occupational stress.

4. Professional Challenges in Remote Areas

Teachers working in remote areas encounter multiple professional challenges that significantly affect their work and well-being. These challenges can be broadly categorized as follows:

4.1 Environmental Challenges

- Poor school infrastructure
- Lack of electricity and basic facilities
- Limited access to technology

4.2 Organizational Challenges

- Heavy workload and multiple responsibilities
- Lack of administrative support
- Insufficient training opportunities

4.3 Social Challenges

- Cultural and linguistic barriers
- Lack of community support
- Professional isolation

4.4 Personal Challenges

- Work-life imbalance
- Emotional exhaustion
- Reduced motivation and job satisfaction

5. Linkage with NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 provides a comprehensive framework aimed at improving the quality of education and teacher development in India.

5.1 Teacher Empowerment

The National Education Policy 2020 is a complete plan to raise the standard of education

and teacher training in India. **5.1 Teacher Empowerment**

NEP 2020 stresses the independence and freedom of teachers. This fits with the JD-R model, which says that more freedom might help lower stress.

5.2 Continuous Professional Development (CPD) The guideline says that teachers must go to training sessions on a regular basis. This helps with:

- Improving skills and abilities
- Lowering stress that comes from not being ready Encouraging self-confidence and grow thin one's career

5.3 Infrastructure Development The policy makes it clear that schools require better infrastructure, especially in rural and distant locations. Better amenities can make the setting less stressful and make it easier to work.

5.4 Use of Technology

NEP 2020 encourages digital learning and online platforms. This can:

- Help teachers feel less alone
- Give teachers access to resources for teaching
- Make it possible for people to work together and net work professionally

5.5 Focus on Equity and Inclusion

The goal of the policy is to close the gap between schools in cities and schools in the country. Better fairness means better distribution of resources, which lowers stress for instructors in remote places.

6. Discussion

The theoretical research indicates that educators in rural areas encounter occupational stress due to a variety of interconnected factors. The primary cause of stress among individuals is the imbalance between job demands and available resources. The Transactional Model looks at how things are perceived, while the JD-R model looks at how things are structured. Maslow's and Herzberg's theories demonstrate how people



might be unhappy when their needs aren't met and their work environment isn't good. The National Education Policy 2020 addresses many of these issues by providing teachers more power, strengthening infrastructure, and helping teachers improve their skills. But in order for these perks to actually help teachers in remote areas, they need to be put into operation properly.

7. Educational Implications

- Improvement of infrastructure in remote schools
- Giving teachers and students enough resources to study and teach
- Training and development programs on a regular basis
- Setting up procedures to help teachers
- Using technology in school

8. Conclusion

Stress at work for secondary school comprehension teachers in rural places is a complicated problem that comes from a mix of environmental, organisational, and personal causes. Theoretical approaches offer a more profound of the origins and effects of stress. The National Education Policy 2020 gives a robust foundation for dealing with these problems by giving teachers more control, building better infrastructure, and giving them professional assistance. If these steps are put into action correctly, they can greatly lower stress and improve the quality of schooling in remote places.

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