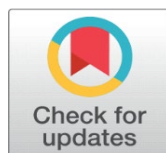


JOB STRESS AMONG PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.5147](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.5147)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

Himachal Pradesh, with its diverse topography and climatic zones, presents a distinct environment for physical education teachers employed in senior secondary schools. The present study investigates the extent and nature of job-related stress among 200 randomly selected physical education teachers (110 males and 90 females) from various government and private institutions across the state. Utilizing the Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984), the research examines differences in stress levels based on gender, school location (urban/rural), and type of institution (government/private). The findings indicate that female teachers generally experience higher job stress than their male counterparts, particularly in government schools, while male teachers in private schools report greater stress than female teachers in the same sector. The results highlight the need for targeted interventions to address occupational stress in this professional group.

Keywords: Job Stress, Physical Education Teachers, Senior Secondary Schools, Himachal Pradesh, Government And Private Schools, Urban-Rural Divide

1. INTRODUCTION

The state of Himachal Pradesh is characterized by a complex array of mountain ranges and valleys, resulting in significant variation in climatic and geographic conditions. The region encompasses zones from sub-tropical (450–900 meters) to warm temperate (900–1800 meters), cold high mountain (2400–4000 meters), and snow frigid areas (4000–6500 meters above sea level). Physical education teachers in this state are required to adapt to diverse working conditions, often in schools with varying levels of sports facilities and infrastructure.

Modernization and technological progress have transformed the professional landscape, introducing both advancements and new challenges. Occupational stress has emerged as a significant concern, with its origins rooted in both positive and negative life events, such as excessive workload, inadequate support, fear of failure, and unforeseen responsibilities (Ray, 2002). In the educational sector, and especially within physical education, these stressors are compounded by limited recognition, insufficient resources, and systemic undervaluation of the discipline.

Physical education teachers play a crucial role in fostering the holistic development of students—intellectually, socially, and physically (Lal, 2004). However, in India, and particularly in rural and mountainous regions like Himachal

Pradesh, physical education is often perceived as secondary to academic subjects. This perception leads to disparities in remuneration, professional status, and working conditions compared to teachers of other subjects. Sharma (2000) observes that, despite the evolution of physical education into a multidimensional field encompassing scientific, artistic, and pedagogical elements, it continues to struggle for legitimacy within the broader academic community.

Field visits to various schools in Himachal Pradesh revealed considerable differences in the resources and facilities available to physical education teachers. These observations, along with noted inconsistencies in job profiles, salary structures, and professional recognition, provided the impetus for the present study.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research was designed to systematically assess the occupational stress experienced by physical education teachers in senior secondary schools of Himachal Pradesh. The specific objectives were:

- 1) To determine the difference in job stress between male and female physical education teachers.
- 2) To compare stress levels between urban and rural male teachers.
- 3) To compare stress levels between urban and rural female teachers.
- 4) To analyze job stress among male teachers in government versus private schools.
- 5) To analyze job stress among female teachers in government versus private schools.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive and comparative survey approach was adopted to analyze variations in job-related stress among physical education teachers. This methodology facilitated the identification of statistically significant differences across demographic and institutional variables.

Sampling

The study sample consisted of 200 physical education teachers randomly selected from senior secondary schools throughout Himachal Pradesh. Of these, 110 were male and 90 were female. The participants represented a range of geographic regions and included teachers employed in both government and private institutions.

Instrumentation

The Occupational Stress Index (OSI), developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984), served as the primary instrument for data collection. The OSI is a validated tool widely used in Indian educational research to measure multiple dimensions of occupational stress, including role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility, workload, and peer relations.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were administered the OSI questionnaire, and responses were scored in accordance with the standardized manual. Statistical analyses, including the t-test and standard error of mean (SEM), were employed to examine differences in job stress across gender, school type, and location. Statistical significance was set at the 0.05 level.

4. RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Difference of Job Stress Among Physical Education Teachers

S. No.	Comparison	N (Group 1)	N (Group 2)	Mean (G1)	Mean (G2)	S.D. (G1)	S.D. (G2)	Mean Diff.	SEDM	t-value
1	Total Male vs Total Female	110	90	121.85	121.89	13.90	13.13	-0.04	1.73	-0.02
2	Rural Male vs Urban Male	56	54	120.73	123.01	14.53	13.24	-2.28	1.77	-1.28
3	Rural Female vs Urban Female	46	44	118.89	125.02	13.40	12.20	-6.13	2.71	-2.26*
4	Rural Male vs Rural Female	56	46	120.73	118.89	14.53	13.40	1.84	1.82	1.01
5	Urban Male vs Urban Female	54	44	123.01	125.02	13.24	12.20	-2.01	1.6	1.25
6	Govt. Male vs Private Male	70	40	121.08	123.20	14.73	12.34	-2.12	2.76	-0.76
7	Govt. Female vs Private Female	58	52	124.46	117.21	13.37	11.45	7.25	2.80	2.58*
8	Govt. Male vs Govt. Female	70	58	121.08	124.46	14.73	13.37	-3.38	2.51	-1.35
9	Private Male vs Private Female	40	32	123.20	117.21	12.34	11.45	5.99	2.84	2.10*

*Significant at 5% level

5. FINDINGS

- 1) The mean job stress for female physical education teachers is marginally higher than for males, but the difference is statistically insignificant. This suggests that both groups experience similar levels of occupational stress, with a slight tendency toward higher stress among females.
- 2) No significant difference in job stress is observed between rural and urban male teachers. Urban male teachers have a slightly higher mean score, but this difference is not statistically meaningful.
- 3) A significant difference is noted between rural and urban female teachers. Urban female teachers report notably higher job stress than their rural counterparts, indicating that urban environments may contribute to increased stress for female educators.
- 4) There is no significant difference in job stress between rural male and rural female teachers.
- 5) Among urban teachers, females have higher mean job stress scores than males, but the difference is not statistically significant.

- 6) Male teachers in government and private schools do not differ significantly in job stress, though private school males have a slightly higher mean score.
- 7) A significant difference is observed between government and private female teachers, with those in government schools experiencing greater job stress.
- 8) No significant difference exists between male and female teachers in government schools.
- 9) Among private school teachers, males report significantly higher job stress than females.

6. DISCUSSION

The present study aligns with earlier research highlighting the prevalence of occupational stress among physical education teachers, especially among women, those based in urban areas, and those employed in government institutions (Pal, 2001; Sharma, 2000). The higher stress levels among female teachers, particularly in urban and government schools, may be attributed to a combination of professional and social expectations, which often result in reduced personal time and increased responsibilities.

Urban environments introduce additional stressors, such as longer commutes, higher living costs, and greater institutional demands. These factors appear to disproportionately affect female teachers, as evidenced by the significant difference in stress levels between urban and rural females.

Government school teachers often contend with inadequate facilities and bureaucratic hurdles, which may contribute to elevated stress, particularly among female staff. In contrast, while private schools may offer improved infrastructure, the pressure to meet performance targets and assume multiple roles can increase stress, especially among male teachers (Mohan, 1997).

Despite their essential contributions to student development, physical education teachers frequently encounter undervaluation of their work. Societal perceptions that trivialize physical education as merely recreational undermine its complexity and significance, further contributing to occupational dissatisfaction and stress.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study underscore the need for comprehensive strategies to address occupational stress among physical education teachers in Himachal Pradesh. Interventions should be tailored to address the specific challenges faced by female teachers in urban and government schools, as well as male teachers in private institutions. Improving working conditions, providing adequate resources, and enhancing institutional support are critical steps toward reducing job stress in this professional group.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Policy Initiatives:** Educational authorities should prioritize upgrading infrastructure and resources for physical education, especially in government and urban schools.
- 2) **Professional Development:** Regular training and workshops focusing on stress management and professional skills should be organized for physical education teachers.
- 3) **Recognition and Support:** Institutional mechanisms should be established to acknowledge the contributions of physical education teachers and provide opportunities for career advancement.
- 4) **Gender-Sensitive Measures:** Support systems and flexible work arrangements should be developed to address the unique challenges faced by female teachers, particularly in urban and government schools.
- 5) **Awareness Campaigns:** Efforts should be made to shift societal perceptions regarding physical education, emphasizing its integral role in holistic student development.
- 6) **Access to Counseling:** Schools should facilitate access to mental health resources and counseling services for staff.

9. LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to senior secondary schools in Himachal Pradesh and may not be generalizable to other regions or educational levels. The reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias. Additionally, the cross-sectional design does not allow for assessment of changes in stress levels over time.

10. CONCLUSION

The research highlights the widespread presence of occupational stress among physical education teachers in Himachal Pradesh's senior secondary schools. While overall gender differences in stress are not statistically significant, female teachers in urban and government schools are particularly vulnerable. Male teachers in private schools also report elevated stress levels. These findings point to the necessity for targeted interventions and policy reforms to improve the professional environment for physical education teachers. Recognizing the essential role of physical education in student development, stakeholders must work toward creating supportive, resource-rich, and equitable working conditions for these educators.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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