

Anxiety and Perceived Stress among Primary School Teachers in Rural Area Engaged in Online Teaching During COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the study was to examine the level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic. **Settings and Design:** A comparative study with simple two group design on primary school teachers in rural areas in Nashik district, Maharashtra, India. **Material and Methods:** The total sample of 30 primary school teachers in rural area (15 male Teachers and 15 female teachers) from the rural areas of Nashik District. The age group of the sample was 40 to 50 years. The data was collected by online mode (Google Form) for avoiding physical contacts as per the government guidelines of physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) by Hamilton (1959), Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon Cohen (1988) were used for data collection. **Statistical Analysis:** Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used for observing the level of anxiety and stress and Student's t-test was used for finding gender difference. **Results:** The Mean and SD of anxiety the mean and SD of males (M = 42.27, SD = 6.14) and female (M = 42.80, SD = 3.97) and the t value 0.260 was found to be statistically not significant. The Mean and SD of mean of males (M = 34, SD = 2.80) and female (M = 33.73, SD = 2.76) and t value 0.261 was found to be statistically not significant. **Conclusions:** Primary schools teachers in rural area experience the high level of anxiety and perceived stress while engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic. There were no gender difference in terms of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Anxiety, Perceived Stress, Male & Female Primary School Teachers, Rural Area, COVID-19

The total educational system from primary to higher education has been collapsed during this covid-19 pandemic not only in India but across the world. The corona disease is a highly infectious disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, which is originated in Wuhan city of China. The covid-19 spread rapidly across the world. The Covid-19 pandemic

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locked the people in homes in all around the world. Each and everyone field is affected because of this corona pandemic and for stopping the financial, educational, social and many more losses government gives the directions to adapt the new technology - online methods for overcoming from losses.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected each and every area and one of the most important area is educational area. As per the government directives for controlling the spread of this disease Schools and Colleges are remain close till the situation is in control but for controlling students educational loss government gives the instructions to schools and colleges to adapt online teaching and assessment methods for students progress during this pandemic situation therefore the all schools are using online teaching methods. While using these online teaching methods teachers are facing various problems therefore researchers are interested to examine the level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic

The covid pandemic has introduced a new normal term in the field of education which emphasizes use of online education platforms. Across the world all the educational institutions from primary to higher education are using online ways of teaching learning and evaluation. This is a transformation phase in education. Online learning is not only applicable to curricular activities but also to extracurricular activities in schools and colleges. It's a challenging task which has imposed lots of demands on students as well as on teachers.

Like other teaching methods, online teaching has its own merits and demerits which are related to aspects such as efficiency, time and space accessibility, attendance of students, change in teaching and learning styles, issues of attention and concentration, technological issues, sense of lack of classroom feeling and training for teachers etc. Schools and colleges in India used to follow face to face or traditional methods of teaching and learning, covid pandemic made them to use and adapt to the new technology. In the current scenario, educational institutions don't have any other option but to adopt to these digital platforms of online education. P. Sahu (2020) highlighted in his review study the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on the education and mental health of students and academic staff. Online teaching is negatively impact on teachers' mental health. (Steven Blackburn - June 2, 2020)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hypotheses

- H1: There would be high level of anxiety among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.
- H2: There would be high level of perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.
- H3: There would be no gender difference in terms of level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Variables

Research Variables

- 1) Anxiety
- 2) Perceived Stress
- 3) Gender

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Controlled Variables

- 1) Age of the teachers: The teachers who are participated in this study were between 40 to 50 years of age.
- 2) Geographical area: The teachers were selected only from working in rural area schools in Nashik district.
- 3) Type of School Teachers: Primary School Teachers
- 4) Experience: More than 8 years

Method

To study the level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic. For that purpose, researcher decided to use the survey research design. Considering the hypotheses, the comparative research was found to be the most suitable design, to serve the aims of the research. The data was collected by online mode (Google Form) for avoiding physical contacts as per the government guidelines of physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) by Hamilton (1959), Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon Cohen (1988) were used for data collection.

Sample

It was a convenient sampling. The total sample of 30 primary school teachers (15 male teachers and 15 female teachers) from the rural areas of Nashik district. The age group of the sample was 40 to 50 years.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion of a sample was dependent on following criteria:

1. Those teachers who are serving in primary schools.
2. Those teachers who are working in primary schools located in rural areas.
3. Those teachers who are using online teaching methods during Covid-19 pandemic.

Tools

- **Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) by Hamilton (1959):** This scale is based on the five-point rating scale contains 14 items; each items define a series of symptoms measures both psychic means mental agitation and psychological distress and somatic anxiety means physical complaints related to anxiety. Each item is score from 0 (not present) to 4 (sever) the score for whole scale is ranging from 0-56 which score <17 indicate mild severity, score 18-24 indicate mild to moderate and score 25-30 indicate moderate to severe. This test is applicable to any age group and having high reliability and validity.
- **Perceived Stress Scale by Sheldon Cohen (1988):** The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) consist 10 items which measures the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. The scale is based on five point rating scale ranging from 0-40 score which indicate higher score higher the perceived stress and lower the score lower the perceived stress. The age group of the test is 18+ and above and having high reliability and validity.

RESULT & INTERPRETATION

H1: There would be high level of anxiety among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

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Table 1 Shows Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Anxiety among primary school teachers (N = 30)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Anxiety	Male Teachers	15	42.27	6.14
	Female Teachers	15	42.80	3.97

Table 1 shows the gender wise Mean and SD of anxiety For the obtained values in above table the mean of males and females male (M = 42.27, SD = 6.14) and female (M = 42.80, SD = 3.97) This indicated that both the male and female experience the high level of anxiety in online teaching. This finding suggests that primary school teachers both male and female in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic experience high level of anxiety because this is new to them and they are not familiar with this teaching mode and they are fearful to these technological tools. Primary classes' students are very small to control them and grasp their attention and make them attentive it is very challenging to teachers these reasons make anxious to teachers.

H2: There would be high level of perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 2 Shows Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Perceived Stress among primary school teachers (N = 30)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Perceived Stress	Male Teachers	15	34	2.80
	Female Teachers	15	33.73	2.76

Table 2 shows the gender wise Mean and SD of perceived stress. For the obtained values in above table the mean of males and females male (M = 34, SD = 2.80) and female (M = 33.73, SD = 2.76). This indicated that both the male and female experience the high level of perceived stress in online teaching. This finding suggests that primary school teachers both male and female in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic experience high level of perceived stress.

H3: There would be no gender difference in terms of level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 3 Shows t-value for gender difference of level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic (N = 30)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-Value	Sig
Anxiety	Male Teachers	15	42.27	6.14	.260	NS
	Female Teachers	15	42.80	3.97		
Perceived Stress	Male Teachers	15	34	2.80	.261	
	Female Teachers	15	33.73	2.76		

Table 3 shows the gender difference in terms of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers. The Mean and SD of anxiety in above table the mean of males and females males (M = 42.27, SD = 6.14) and females (M = 42.80, SD = 3.97) and the t value 0.260 was

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found to be statistically not significant. This indicated that both the male and female experience the same level of anxiety among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Mean and SD in above table mean of males ($M = 34$, $SD = 2.80$) and females ($M = 33.73$, $SD = 2.76$) and the t value 0.261 was found to be statistically not significant. This indicated that both the male and female experience the same level of perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is high level of anxiety among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.
2. There is high level of perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.
3. There is no gender difference in terms of level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area engaged in online teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Implication

The Present research study will be helpful to educational setting for understanding the effects of online teaching methods on teachers. This online teaching method is totally new in Maharashtra and it is stressful and anxious for primary school teachers in rural areas particularly. This study can be beneficial for teachers and schools to understand the psychological impact of online teaching methods and the various coping methods to overcome from this anxiety and stress. In terms of excessive anxiety and stress schools can attempt to sensitize teachers and enlighten them about the various coping methods from this anxiety and stress. So, with the help of this kind of research we can identify teacher's problems and give them a proper help so the health issues can be substantially reduced. These teachers can cope up from these issues with the help of supportive psychotherapies and counseling. Yoga, meditation and physical exercises can also be helpful.

Strength of the Study

This study focused on level of anxiety and perceived stress among primary school teachers in rural area using online teaching during covid-19 pandemic. Online teaching method is new for primary school teachers in India and they are not familiar with this mode of teaching, specifically in rural area it creates so many problems and teachers are experiencing anxiety and stress while using this new mode of teaching. This study gives an insight to other researchers for focusing on various other psychological factors associates with this new teaching mode. This study highlighted some interventions which can be useful to teachers form coping this anxiety and perceived stress.

Limitations of the study

Small sample group, types of college, age group of the sample, mood or bias during self-report of behavior and other confounding factors such school and government policies, work pressure, personal issues, internet connectivity issues, students attention and interest related issues and some psychological reasons.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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