

Burnout and Retention Among the Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Burnout is closely connected with negative effects on people's psychological well-being which can in turn have a huge impact on a person's personal and professional life. Speaking of teacher burnout, it is such a phenomenon when teachers feel mentally and emotionally exhausted due to various stressors like heavy workload, emotional tiredness, lack of support in the workplace and so on. Numerous earlier researches have looked into a variety of factors that resulted to teacher burnout. By applying a descriptive survey method, this particular study has tried to cover the various factors that might lead to teacher burnout and have potential impact on their personal and professional well-being and development. The sample consisted of 80 teachers, who responded to a self-structured questionnaire having 22 items with three alternatives (always, sometimes, never) based on their own experiences. Data analysis has showed that excessive workload and financial pressures primarily contribute to the psychological stress. Along with that unhealthy conditions, imbalance in the work life and insufficient professional development opportunities effects the well being of the teachers too and also diminishes educational outcomes. And it calls for urgent need of targeted interventions and exploration of the efficacy of such interventions across diverse educational contexts. The result advocates for policy and practice interventions to foster teacher resilience and improve retention rates. Stakeholders are encouraged to implement these strategies to create healthier work environments and sustainable teaching careers.

Keywords: *Teacher burnout, teacher retention, well-being, workload, stressors*

Burnout is a common outcome of ongoing stress that never goes away. Most people experience stress at work at some point. Work pressure and excessive demands on strength, energy, and resources are to blame for this. Herbert Freudenberger coined the term 'Burnout' in the 1970s to describe the effect of high ideals and severe stress in caregiving professions such as nursing and medicine.

Teacher burnout is a serious problem which is especially common among educators and is characterized by heavy workload, emotional tiredness and decreased personal success. A major concern for the profession is indicated by a study that reported a 19.7% burnout rate among teachers in a particular region of Italy. The study defined teacher burnout as a work-related syndrome arising from perceived instability between demands and resources,

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particularly due to intra- and interpersonal interaction, leading to occupational stress (M. Shailaja et al., 2020).

Although there are many interconnected aspects, workload is the main contributing factor to teacher burnout. Teacher's psychological well-being and professional performance are strongly affected by immense stress that comes from daily heavy workloads and overbearing duties (Vladut and Kallay, 2011). Furthermore, persistent stressors like outside demands, lack of support make burnout among teachers more common. Study has found that teachers face challenges such as large class sizes, inadequate support and bureaucratic overload which exacerbate stress and burnout. The provision of social support and improved coping skills are associated with lower levels of burnout (Greenglass, 2007). Researchers who tried to identify factors that contribute to burnout and work engagement in higher educational institutions found that the pressure to balance teaching with additional responsibilities such as research and administrative tasks contributes to emotional exhaustion. Depersonalization is another crucial element of burnout in which educators may emotionally distance themselves from their responsibilities in the profession, a sign of a more serious issue in the educational field (Quattrin et al., 2010). Furthermore, the duties of the teachers are not limited to teaching, administrative work and research work but various other tasks and responsibilities imposed by the government which they are bound to follow. Due to which engaging in continuous professional development may become quite distressing for them.

Teacher burnout has significant effects on both teachers' personal and professional life including psychological stress, lack of motivation at work, emotional exhaustion, low professional accomplishment etc. This psychological condition, 'burnout' could occur due to various stressors such as students' disruptive behavior in the classroom which directly affect teacher's occupational well-being leading to a feeling of detachment from the job. The consequences of burnout aren't just limited to emotional distress, this can also lead to physical illness which can profoundly have an impact on the teacher's overall health condition. Studies found that anxiety and stress can arise from burnout and have a significant impact on teacher's emotional well-being and also have a negative impact on the relationship with students, colleagues and even with the family members (Vladut and Kallay, 2011). Burnout is closely linked to various mental health conditions like anxiety and depression which can severely impact the teacher's personal life and their effectiveness at work (Seth Alka, 2016). When teachers reach a point where they start having a feeling that they can't continue with the factors that lead to burnout they may leave the field. Teachers are said to be the backbone of a society who prepare the students to become functioning members of the society and ensure a Nation's social and economic upliftment. That is why sustaining a healthy workforce when it comes to teaching, addressing these issues are very crucial. With proper strategies and support at both individual and school level teachers can combat these symptoms of burnout and increase retention in the field of education.

In India, from the post-Independence era till now all the committees, commissions and policies have been focusing on achieving quality education through various reforms in teacher education. Teachers play a pivotal role in building a strong and developed nation by preparing students with all the qualities they need to prosper in their life and make their own contribution towards the nation. But in the present scenario, we can see that a lot of factors like high student-teacher ratio, excessive workload, lack of improvement in working conditions, less opportunity for professional development, no financial and emotional support to the educators have led to the issue of burnout and retention in this noble profession. Studying this particular issue will help to inform government policies and

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initiatives to improve the overall working conditions for the teachers which will prove to be a significant step towards achieving quality education and to strengthen the whole education system of India.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the various factors that lead to teacher Burnout.
2. To study how teacher Burnout is impacting their personal and professional well-being and development.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive Survey method has been used for conducting the study. The sampling method that has been used by the investigators was the Purposive sampling method. A total of 80 teachers were selected as samples for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was prepared with four alternatives that are-Always, sometimes, never and the teachers were asked to choose the alternatives based on their experience.

RESULTS

Objective 1: To study the various factors that lead to teacher Burnout.

Table 1: Factors of teacher burnout

Factors	Always	Never	Sometimes
Excessive workload	45 56.25%	1 1.25%	34 42.5%
Relationship with Colleagues	38 47.5%	15 18.75%	27 33.75%
Lack of support from administration	29 36.25%	8 10%	43 53.75%
Poor working conditions	2 2.5%	9 11.25%	48 60%
Limited autonomy	19 23.75%	10 12.5%	51 63.75%
Challenging student behaviour	21 26.25%	20 25%	39 48.75%
Lack of appreciation	19 23.75%	25 31.25%	36 45%
Isolation	12 15%	35 43.75%	33 41.25%
Family problems	24 30%	26 32.5%	30 37.5%
Financial pressure	37 46.25%	28 35%	15 18.75%

From Table 1, it is evident that teacher burnout is a significant concern, with 56.25% of teachers reporting excessive workload as a primary cause. Additionally, 42.5% of teachers indicated that excessive workload sometimes contributes to their burnout. Interpersonal relationships also play a role, as 47.5% of teachers identified strained relationships with colleagues as another factor. A lack of administrative support was cited by 53.75% of teachers as a major contributor to burnout. Working conditions further exacerbate the issue, with 60% of teachers attributing their mental and physical fatigue to poor working

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conditions, while 63.75% pointed to a lack of autonomy and freedom as a key stressor. The evolving challenges faced by students, which often translate into tensions within educational institutions, also add to teachers' stress levels. Moreover, 23.75% of teachers reported feeling unappreciated for their efforts, emphasizing that acknowledgment from administrators could significantly boost morale. Feelings of workplace isolation were reported by 41.25% of teachers, which negatively impacts their productivity. Balancing work and family life presents another challenge, with 30% of teachers struggling due to familial issues and financial pressures, making it difficult to maintain a peaceful mindset at work. Moreover, studies have found that 50-70% of teachers report feeling overwhelmed by their workload as a significant contributor to burnout. A considerable lack of administrative support is another single biggest factor of anxiety in the profession (Kamal et al., 2021). It is also found that sometimes teachers feel lack control over their teaching practices, contributing to burnout (Samantha James, 2024). The burnout problem in the teaching profession does not only affect the teacher's productivity but also negatively impacts the student's academic development due to less time given to each student for personalized feedback and lack of time in lesson planning (Sharma S, 2025).

Objective 2: To study how teacher Burnout is impacting their personal and professional well-being.

Table 2: Teacher burnout and its impact on personal and professional life

Statements	Always	Never	Sometimes
Experience anxiety because of work	56 70%	3 3.75%	21 26.25%
Sleep deprivation	24 30%	15 18.75%	41 51.25%
Lack of time for exercise	66 82.5%	3 3.75%	11 13.75%
Emotional outburst	25 31.25%	42 52.5%	13 16.25%
Irritation at home	45 56.25%	21 26.25%	14 17.5%
No time for family gathering	29 36.25%	13 16.25%	38 47.5%
Less contacts with the friends	15 18.75%	25 31.25%	40 50%
No time for professional development	58 72.5%	4 5%	18 22.5%
No time for reflection on thoughts	41 51.25%	16 20%	23 28.75%
Improper work life balance	61 76.25%	12 15%	7 8.75%
Unhealthy competition with colleagues	64 80%	4 5%	12 15%
Demotivation in continuing the work	48 60%	13 16.25%	19 23.75%

The table reveals that a significant portion of teachers faces various stressors and challenges impacting both their professional and personal lives. Many (70%) teachers experience

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anxiety due to work and the majority of teachers (82.5%) struggle with a lack of time for exercise as their scope of duty is not limited to classroom activities but regular lesson planning, continuously assessing the students' improvements, planning new instructional strategy to improve teaching learning process and administrative duties, because of which they experience high level of stress. This continuous cycle of stress leads to sleep deprivation and increases the cortisol level in the body leading to other health issues. It is evident that people who engage themselves in moderate physical activities feel energized in their work throughout the day and result in better sleep at night. Furthermore, as the teachers are overburdened with extra activities, they feel irritated and exhausted at home too which is identified with 76.25% reporting ongoing issues in balancing work and personal life, while 36.25% consistently miss family gatherings, this can result in lack of motivation to continue with the profession. Additionally, 80% of teachers feel unhealthy competition with colleagues, this is one of the causes of depressive mood which is positively associated with emotional exhaustion (Skaalvik et al., 2020) and it can eventually make them (60%) feel demotivated to continuing the work. A substantial number (72.5%) also lack time for professional development and 51.25% do not have time for reflecting on their thoughts, when work overload leaves little room for relaxation, no time for engaging in different professional development courses or pursuing own hobbies, no time for self-reflection as well, it decreases their job satisfaction and they feel demotivated to continue the job. Furthermore, home and social life are very important for psychological well-being of a person but many teachers (36.25%) reported for not having family gathering time and a large percentage (50%) have less contact with friends. Less emotional contact with family members or no contact with friends means having no ways to release stress or gain different perspectives from the people they are close with, which are the significant factors linked with burnout symptoms. Workload of elementary school teachers are high ($M= 3.13$, $SD= 0.38$) as the teachers have average ability to cope with their stress level ($M= 2.81$) and less administrative support is provided from the school ($M=2.59$), this leads to emotional exhaustion which is one of the main contributors to burnout (Jomuad et al., 2021). These findings indicate the high levels of stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction that many teachers are experiencing, underscoring the need for better support systems and improved work conditions. In a study of university teachers around 86% reported moderate to high levels of professional burnout and about 60% of teachers experience stress and anxiety because of it (Anuradha et al., 2020). A study which explored the relationship between burnout, occupational stress and coping strategies have stated that high levels of stress and burnout cause serious damage to both students' academic achievement and development as well as damage to relationship between teachers, students and parents (Xhelilaj et al., 2021).

DISCUSSION

Teacher burnout is a serious and complex phenomenon that needs deep understanding of the causes underlying it and proper initiatives to deal with it. However, many previous studies have written about the various factors that lead to teacher burnout and studies are also there which have tried to provide strategies to reduce burnout level. As knowledge of this challenging phenomenon increases, the aim of the current study was to learn about the various factors associated with teacher burnout and its significant impacts on personal and professional life of teachers.

Studies done earlier have shown that in post pandemic increased workload have aggravated teacher's stress level leading to burnout (Zbanca et al., 2024). It has been identified that significant predictors of burnout include management system, administrative support, teachers' autonomy and mental health (Tim Pressley, 2021). Furthermore, large classroom

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size and diverse students' needs and inability to provide individual attention to them contributes to emotional exhaustion, in that case implementing mentorship programs for students and professional development can be helpful to mitigate burnout (Scott, 2019). A study surveyed 332 teachers and revealed a strong positive association between workload and burnout and highlighted the need for supportive policies to enhance teacher retention emphasizing that a positive work environment can mitigate burnout's adverse effects (Sunny Shah et al., 2024). Maslach Burnout Theory developed by Christina Maslach identifies three components of burnout which are emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. The theory states that addressing workload demand, fostering community and ensuring fairness in work can mitigate burnout. Again, Job Demands Resources Model assesses how job demand and resources can affect the employee well-being and states that burnout occurs when the demands of the job are higher than the resources available to meet them. Here, increasing job resources (e.g. better facilities in the working environment, time for professional development, mentoring programs etc.) and managing job demands can reduce the burnout level. Elton Mayo's Human Relation Theory also states the importance of better interpersonal relationships, supportive communication, collaboration and recognition in work life. According to his theory employees feel motivated to work where they feel they are growing and being productive. So, teacher burnout can also be caused when schools fail to provide such an environment where teachers can expect a positive collaborative environment and a place for their productivity.

The results of the current study have revealed that teachers think excessive workload as the primary cause of burnout followed by other factors such as lack of autonomy and freedom in this profession, poor working conditions etc. A recent study also revealed the level of burnout among the teachers based on the indicators; overwork, teacher engagement and less compensation and found that the level of burnout is seen to be highest in the overwork indicator with a mean of 3.41, indicating that work overload is the significant contributor to their stress (Leslie B. Canete, 2025). Demotivation in continuing the work is another significant factor, with 60% showing a tendency to discontinue with the profession. The other studies have also found that many teachers feel underpaid in this profession for the number of duties they have to perform along with teaching, which can reduce motivation and job satisfaction. A cross-sectional study of public secondary school teachers reported high job demand with 37.4% of overall prevalence of burnout level and emotional exhaustion being another factor which had a mean score of 58.05 (SD = 28.61) on a scale of 0 to 100 (Belay et al., 2023). In the present study, results have shown that along with these, many other significant stressors are impacting teacher's personal and professional life. It is found that many teachers have no time to engage with any physical exercise and professional development and are also struggling with issues like improper work life balance. All these can cause deterioration of their physical health with time which in turn affect them mentally and emotionally. Along with these, all the significant impacts that are mentioned in the tables, indicates that teachers are experiencing high levels of burnout which is impacting the retention rate in this profession.

This complex issue needs different approaches to address the root causes and retention strategies must consider different initiatives to promote well-being of teachers. As the study has found that excessive workload is the primary cause of teacher burnout, because of which a significant percentage of teachers experiences anxiety in this job, the government should focus on limiting excessive workload by reducing their additional non-teaching duties such as paper work, election duties, various other examinations duty etc. The present study will provide some valuable insights to the school administrators on this issue. They should be

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concerned with providing a more democratic and flexible environment in the schools and conducting workshops and counselling sessions for the teachers also, so that a step can be taken towards their mental well-being. Although earlier policies and NEP 2020 have focused on reducing excessive workload and emphasized Continuous Professional Development of the teachers, coordination between state and institution is needed for proper implementation. Additionally, for ensuring Continuous Professional Development and technology integration in the government schools, regular funds should be provided by the government, so that policies do not only stay on paper but fully realized practically. Even though policies are formulated and various provisions are made but there are still some schools and administrators who resist the new changes because of hierarchical traditional structure and teachers' voices are not always heard in the decision-making process, in such cases the teachers may feel undervalued and it can be a psychological trigger to the burnout issue. Therefore, regular monitoring in the policy implantation process should be emphasized. The present study will help the other researchers to carry out comparative studies between the urban and rural or private and public setting or to identify any other context-specific factors which may influence Burnout among teachers. The study concludes that addressing the main causes and its potential impact on overall development of teachers will be helpful in promoting well-being and retention of the teachers, enhance professional efficiency of teachers and improve the overall educational outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

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