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Salient Stressors of Teachers Employed in Private Schools in Andhra Pradesh, India

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Abstract. Traditionally, teaching has been considered a noble profession. However, it has become one of the most physically and intellectually demanding service occupations in the present day. Particularly, teacher stress harms both their health and their students' learning and performance. Stressors for teachers might vary depending on the type of school administration. Although studies have established the stressors experienced by teachers in public schools, relatively little research has been conducted on the stressors experienced by teachers in private schools. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the most significant stressors affecting teachers in private schools. It employed an explorative qualitative research design using convenience sampling. Twenty-one school teachers (nine males and twelve females, mean age of 32, and average teaching experience of 7.5 years) participated in semi-structured telephone interviews that were recorded with a call recorder. The audio data was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, yielding five significant themes: concerns with compensation; poor work environment; demands from parents, students, and management; interpersonal problems at work; and excessive workload. The results revealed the presence of workplace bullying and jealousy in schools, as well as new sources of stress for instructors, such as student evaluations. In addition, the report highlighted how teachers' financial restrictions and administrative responsibilities were exacerbating their stress levels and recommended administrative initiatives, such as psychological interventions for the teachers' well-being.

Keywords: salient stressors; teachers; private school; workplace; teachers' well-being

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1. Introduction

Concern over teacher stress is rising globally as it jeopardizes teachers' ability to function well at work (Kidger et al., 2016; Shkëmbi et al., 2015). A comprehensive analysis indicated that teacher stress has increased by 12.6% to 50.6% in China, Brazil, the United States, India, and Spain (Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al., 2021). Furthermore, numerous studies have demonstrated the negative effects of stress on teachers' physical and mental health (Desouky & Allam, 2017; Yang et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2020). In addition, exhausted teachers frequently express anger during lessons and provide inadequate support for students (Chang, 2009; Høglund et al., 2015). This may negatively affect students' perceptions of teachers. Overall, stress has a substantially negative impact on teachers' professional, physical, and psychological domains, and this must be addressed. Numerous stress management strategies, such as mindfulness-based stress management (Prochilo et al., 2021), stress reappraisal management (Liu et al., 2019), and stress mindset intervention (Crum et al., 2013), have been documented in the literature. However, in order to apply effective stress management strategies, it is necessary to identify the core causes of teachers' stress (Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2002; Wettstein et al., 2021).

Global studies revealed that high-stakes' accountability, a heavy workload, prolonged work hours, fewer holidays, poor remuneration issues, and intense monitoring were the leading causes of teacher work stress in both private and public management schools (Kaur & Kumar, 2019; Kosalai & Maheswari, 2018; Shkëmbi et al., 2015; Skinner et al., 2021; Viac & Fraser, 2020). Nevertheless, the most critical issue is that stressors for teachers might vary by region. For instance, the school system in the United States stressed high-stakes accountability for teachers, whereas in England, teachers endure intense scrutiny and heavy workloads (Viac & Fraser, 2020; Von der Embse et al., 2016).

1.1 Teacher Stress in India

In India, the majority of prior studies concentrated on understanding teacher stress with pertinent aspects such as socio-demographic characteristics, job satisfaction, job burnout, work-life balance, and organizational commitment (Kaur & Kumar, 2019; Kumar et al., 2019; Rana & Soodan, 2019; Zaheer, 2016). Furthermore, Kang and Sindhu (2015) investigated and identified the following key stressors of university professors: inadequate teacher competency; poor student quality; lack of control; difficult, monotonous, and demanding jobs; an uncomfortable working atmosphere; and a dearth of resources (Kang & Sidhu, 2015). A distinct set of research studies centered on comprehending the stressors of school teachers. Recent research of urban school teachers in Delhi City found that 28% of participants experienced high levels of stress and highlighted work overload, excessive administrative tasks, and inadequate compensation as significant stressors (Kaur & Kumar, 2019).

1.1.1 Stress among private and government school teachers in India

According to earlier studies, teachers employed by public and private schools experienced different degrees of stress. For instance, Bhuvanewari et al. (2020) examined the occupational stress experienced by teachers in both government

and private schools in Chennai. They reported that private school teachers experienced higher levels of moderate stress than government school teachers (Bhuvaneshwari et al., 2020). A study using data from a national sampling survey in 2011–2012 on "Employment and Unemployment" revealed that teachers working in private schools experience more financial difficulties and unfavorable working conditions, such as less accessibility to paid leave, pension, and health benefits, than teachers in government schools (Chudgar & Sakamoto, 2021).

1.2 Growth of Private Schools in India

India enacted new regulations in 1991 as part of the Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG) movement, which significantly supported expanding the private school education system. Particularly, economic emancipation extended the market's reach in the health and education sectors, which raised income by drawing more students to private schools (Venkatanarayanan, 2015). However, between 1980 and 2011, this led to a 7.1% increase in private schools and a steep 8% decline in public schools (Venkatanarayanan, 2015). Over time, private schools were classified into "private-aided" and "private-unaided". Private-aided schools receive some support from federal agencies and operate in accordance with government standards. However, private-unaided schools are entirely governed by a personalized management system that establishes their own rules and regulations (Kingdon, 2020). The study included teachers from both private-aided and private-unaided schools.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

Over 3.3 million teachers were employed in private schools (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020), which provided the education service and employment, and alleviated the pressure on public sector schools. On the other hand, the school administration forced teachers to exert enormous amounts of effort while making do with minimal resources (Chudgar & Sakamoto, 2021). Nevertheless, the aforementioned studies indicated alleviated stress levels among private school teachers (Bhuvaneshwari et al., 2020; Chudgar & Sakamoto, 2021; Kaur & Kumar, 2019). However, in India, there is insufficient evidence to determine precisely what stressors teachers currently face in private schools. First, this study sought to determine, for the first time, the contemporary stressors experienced by teachers in private schools. Second, in contrast to previous studies which used quantitative methodology to identify stressors (Kang & Sidhu, 2015, 2015), the current study used an explorative qualitative research design, which reflects the underlying factors behind subjective experience (Flick, 2014). Overall, the study aimed to investigate and identify the salient stressors of teachers working in private schools. This would aid in designing interventions and policies for the well-being of the teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Sample and Participant Selection

An explorative qualitative research design was adopted whereby participants were recruited using convenience sampling. The study comprised Telugu-native teachers who were currently employed at private schools and who had at least

one year of teaching experience. Part-time teachers at private schools and those who were not prepared to devote sufficient time for the interview were excluded.

A total of twenty-one participants (nine males and twelve females) were included, among whom six were primary and sixteen were secondary school teachers. All teachers were employed in private schools located in various districts of Andhra Pradesh, which was placed among the top ten states with more private schools in India (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). The participants' mean age was 32 (SD = 6.4, Min=22, and Max=45), with an average of 7.5 years of teaching experience (SD=5.08, Min=1, and Max=16).

2.2 Procedure and Data Collection

The study was conducted in compliance with the ethical principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration of 1972 and was approved by the ethical review board of the Central University of Karnataka.

Initially, the researcher approached the participants over the phone, providing brief information about the study's goals and participant rights, such as the freedom to express one's opinions without restriction, and a confidentiality guarantee. Subsequently, oral consent was obtained and to accommodate the teachers' schedules, an availability slot was booked for their participation in a personal telephonic semi-structured interview. Furthermore, with the participants' permission, all interviews were recorded using a phone recorder. Concerning the literature review, a set of semi-structured interview questions that were intended to explore and identify the stressors of teachers were developed and validated by experts who were proficient in educational psychology. The questions have been professionally translated into Telugu to obtain local authenticity. In order to build rapport with the participants, the first few questions were centered on a brief introduction of the participants that covered socio-demographic information, teaching experience, and their path as a teacher. Thereafter, questions pertaining to the major objective of the study were addressed. Only the researcher, who was fluent in the participants' language, conducted the interview with each participant, which lasted 15 to 30 minutes on average.

2.3 Data analysis

The voice notes of each interview were transcribed verbatim into text and data saturation was discussed by researchers throughout the ongoing process until saturation stage was reached. The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis, a six-stage methodology that aids in identifying and classifying key themes in the data (Table 1) (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The researchers carefully read each text throughout the analysis to become familiar with the content. Then initial codes were generated which featured the objective of the research forming preliminary themes and sub-themes. Each preliminary theme and its associated sub-themes were thoroughly examined, finalized, and defined to capture the essence of the data. Finally, a report was produced (Braun & Clarke, 2012), which was re-validated by three external experts to ensure objectivity in the data analysis.

Table 1: Generated themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1 Issues with remuneration	1.1 Deferred pay 1.2 Deduction from salary versus lack of incentive 1.3 Low salary versus job turnover
2 Poor work environment	2.1 Feeling of helplessness 2.2 Overwhelming monitoring 2.3 Unequal work distribution
3 Demands from parents, students, and management	3.1 Blaming teachers 3.2 Suppression of emotions 3.3 Unrealistic expectations from management 3.4 Demanding marks 3.5 Feedback from students versus feelings of job insecurity
4 Interpersonal issues in the workplace	4.1 Unsupportive attitude 4.2 Spreading gossip and rumors
5 Excessive workload	5.1 Classwork plus office work 5.2 Time-bound works 5.3 Exhaustive notes and exam sheet corrections 5.4 Overcrowded classes

3. Results and Discussion

Teachers are primary contributors to the learning and development of the students and play a crucial role in structuring their personality. Nevertheless, they were insulted by the school administration, parents and students. They were least appreciated for their efforts in modifying behaviors of students, yet, highly recognized for stake accountability.

The major stressors of teachers in private schools of India were identified and categorized into five major themes: (a) Issues with remuneration, (b) Poor work environment, (c) Demands from parents, students, and management, (d) Interpersonal issues in the workplace, and (e) Excessive workload with specific sub-themes (See Table 1).

3.1 Issues with Remuneration

3.1.1 Deferred pay

Private schools have a unique management structure and do not operate in accordance with government regulations. The timing of the salary payments would thereafter be decided by management. The majority of the teachers voiced their displeasure with the salary payment delays. This was discernible from their tone in the audio recording.

Likewise, PT shared that: *“Most often, we have issues with our salaries, particularly when they are not paid on time. This affects our logistics and pre-planned events.”*

Additionally, it raised the likelihood of teachers' experiencing logistical problems. Deferred pay can be associated with delay discounting that increases

stress among teachers (Malesza, 2019). It can decrease teaching efficiency and affect students' learning negatively (Katete & Nyangarika, 2020).

3.1.2 Deduction from salary versus lack of incentive

Teachers expressed their discontentment with management over the decision to withhold a portion of their pay as a penalty for taking too much time off, showing up late, or neglecting to take care of admissions. Moreover, they are not paid extra for working on holidays.

Mr. PO indicated: *"Our remuneration will be decided at the time of joining. When we arrive late, they may reduce our pay by a certain amount, but they won't give us any extra money, even if we work on Sundays"*.

Teacher RN pointed out that: *"We typically have to process 'n' number of student admissions each year at our institution. It is a challenging and frustrating procedure. However, it is obligatory. If we don't complete the work, our pay will be withheld."*

When implicating incentive as a motivating factor and deducting salary as punishment, the teacher lacks motivation to teach while being penalized on a disciplinary basis can increase job dissatisfaction (Sattar et al., 2010). Similarly, emotional exhaustion occurs in the case of forced work that results in frustration and irritation among the employees (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002).

3.1.3 Low salary versus job turnover

Teachers have indicated that they believe their jobs are problematic owing to low salaries. Secondly, they sought employment at a school that offers a negotiable income. For instance, according to SV:

"One of the reasons which makes teachers worried and feel work as a burden is less compensation."

Teacher VY declared: *"I will join whichever school will pay a handsome income"* while Teacher PR reportedly stated, *"I left XXX school & joined YXX school since I was getting a poor income, which was not a good financial support for me,"* describing how teachers admitted to switching schools owing to low wage difficulties.

Previous studies indicated that inadequate salary was one of the common stressors in the workplace (Mouza & Souchamvali, 2016; Turnage & Spielberger, 1991). However, it is essential to understand the root cause of the stressor.

3.1.4 Administration of remuneration

Privatizing the educational sector has given significant relief to the government. However, there is no good governance on matters pertaining to teachers and their emolument. Every state in India has implemented a pay commission for teachers working in public schools (Kingdon, 2010). However, there is no such a commission for private management schools. Additionally, the market-determined wage, or the ratio of demand to supply of newly graduated teachers in the labor market, determines the private teachers' pay. As a result, graduates

are frequently willing to accept employment at lower pay levels, which can degrade teaching quality (Kingdon, 2020; Singh & Sarkar, 2015). Therefore, there is an urgency to reform the administration of the salary of private school teachers to ensure job satisfaction and lower stress related to pay difficulties.

3.2 Poor Work Environment

3.2.1 Feeling of helplessness

Teachers stated that they had to adhere to management's rules and regulations. Teacher PT said with helpless tone: *"Things will be alright if we work in accordance with management. Otherwise, some other person can fill our job. Students are not supposed to be reprimanded or physically punished. The things we desire to achieve are not possible. We must carry out the tasks that management assigns to us. We have nothing in our possession, either right or wrong. We must comply with it."*

Teacher SV mentioned that: *"Weekend class engagement is required, particularly for students in the tenth class. We cannot deny the rule passed by the school. If necessary, we must work on Sundays as well."*

Teachers are forced to follow the management's directions otherwise they risk losing their jobs; therefore, they have no choice but to do so. They claimed that working at private schools restricted their freedom and discretion, which indicates low job autonomy that is detrimental to their psychological well-being (Clausen et al., 2022).

3.2.2 Overwhelming monitoring

Classes in private schools were inspected and observed by the management team. A few teachers were able to recall instances in which they had been scolded and humiliated by superiors. They communicated their disappointment and displeasure in their tone.

Teacher AK explained as follows: *"If a teacher commits a mistake, the director madam used to summon that teacher to the office and reprimand her as if she were reprimanding a young child. She makes us feel inferior. I have the impression that "is this a school?" It seems like children dread their teachers while teachers fear management."*

Teacher SM reported: *"Despite the fact that we work effectively, we are constantly discouraged and criticized by others. We experience extreme discomfort. They say things like, 'Madam, today why you didn't teach this subject', and 'Madam, why did that girl earn less marks?' I mean, regardless of our best efforts, why do they still criticize us?"*

Teacher PD shared the following: *"Our principal monitors the classrooms on a regular basis. He used to occasionally go to classes and glance over the students' notes. He will lecture us if he discovers any faults in it."*

Overwhelming monitoring can increase stress among the staff members due to various factors such as fear of being negatively judged, and the perception of low levels of job autonomy (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

3.2.3 Signs of workplace bullying

Furthermore, teachers had to obey the management's unreasonable orders and put up with the lack of independence at work. They were interrogated, criticized, and humiliated to an extreme degree, which verges on the notion of workplace bullying (Einarsen et al., 1998). Moreover, the results of the current study suggest that "excessive monitoring" may be an indication of workplace bullying in private schools. Future research studies are needed to determine the presence of workplace bullying in schools as it jeopardizes the well-being of an individual (Nauman et al., 2019).

3.2.4 Unequal work distribution

Teachers clarified that on average, a few teachers might work longer hours than other teachers in certain areas.

Ms.SR shared the following: *"They must choose a replacement teacher if a teacher resigns. But the management used to assign us that teacher work and expect us to complete it, which caused us to lose all of our free time. For that particular subject, they would swap out teachers to save money."*

Other teachers indicated that at some private schools, work would be spread among teachers to manage unforeseen circumstances (such as the departure of a teacher), impacting on their leisure time in a way that inconvenienced them.

3.3 Demands from Parents, Students, and Management

3.3.1 Blaming teachers

During the interviews, teachers mentioned the pressure from parents in a tone of dismay and sadness.

Teacher RH said that: *"Parents used to blame teachers for their blunders. On some occasions, people have thrown books on our faces. No matter what they say, we shouldn't act or speak in any way. But they ask us things like 'We pay fees, why is my child not doing well in school?'"*

Teacher KU indicated: *"In order to acquire better outcomes, parents must watch over their kids and make them work at home. But instead of doing that, they blame us for their child's poor performance."*

They addressed the irrational and unsupportable claims made by parents who held teachers solely accountable for their children's inadequate academic performance. Teachers also said that parents hold them accountable for properly paid fees concerning their child's desired academic performance. Indian parents are overly concerned about their children's academic performance. This could be due to social comparison and social pressure which they face in social gatherings (Deb et al., 2015). This would eventually be displaced on the teachers through blaming them. However, future studies could confirm these findings.

3.3.2 Suppression of emotions

A few teachers expressed their sadness and disappointment as parents lodged complaints against them.

Teacher PR mentioned that: *“Parents used to occasionally get involved and file complaints against the teacher. We experience pain and sadness. We struggled greatly and were unable to do anything at that moment.”*

Teacher PV stated that: *“Some parents used to complain about us to the management. If the parent is adamant and fierce about the matter, management gives priority to the parent and doesn't give us an opportunity to defend our stance.”*

Additionally, they are forced to remain silent about it and are not given the chance to explain themselves. They have to restrain their feelings in a way. This could lead to frustration among the teachers, which could eventually affect their psychological well-being (Vander Elst et al., 2012).

3.3.3 Unrealistic expectations from management

Parents' financial contributions in the form of tuition fees allow private school administration to operate. They want to satisfy the parents, who fervently desire better performance of their children. Teachers explained that the administration expects them to deliver outstanding student achievement or else they risk losing their jobs.

For instance, teacher ML explained that: *“As a teacher, if your student's outcome is good, then you can continue at any private school. However, you will be forced to leave that school if your students do poorly.”*

This could be another factor of stress, which is directly related to job insecurity that could impact negatively on teachers' well-being (Clausen et al., 2022; Vander Elst et al., 2012).

3.3.4 Demanding marks

The majority of teachers highlighted how management, parents, and students emphasize and demand grades. While some parents used to pressure management to enhance their child's performance, others were firm and demanded grades for their children's work.

Teacher VY explained that: *“In reality, marks are the question that administration, parents, and students consistently pose. I encounter various schools where the problem is with the grades.”*

Teacher KY recalled that: *“We used to talk about student performance during parent-teacher meetings. When it came to their children's marks, some parents used to be very strict. They demand us to add more marks to the exam papers and make corrections”*

Teacher SV mentioned that: *“In some circumstances, the student failed to perform consistent with his expectations. That student's parent pressurizes management to improve student's performance, thereby management put pressure on us”*

3.3.5 High-stake accountability environment

From the above quotes, it can be inferred that teachers have been appointed and portrayed as solely accountable persons for students' academic performance. In

private management schools, the majority of the teachers acknowledged feeling stressed out by the environment of high-stakes accountability. Inevitably, high-stake tests create intense pressure on both teachers and students (Ballard & Bates, 2015). In addition, a past study on private education in North India showed that the school administration placed the least importance on the students' education quality and gave priority to meeting the expectations of parents (Johnson & Bowles, 2010). It is therefore essential to educate parents on prioritizing conceptual learning and holistic learning for students rather than concentrating solely on their academic success.

3.3.6 Feedback from students versus feelings of job insecurity

Teachers gave an explanation of the shift in private school trends, highlighting that hiring decisions are based on student feedback. They mentioned the value placed on student feedback on their lessons. Additionally, they stated that management would take students complaints against teachers seriously and take immediate action to address them. They are under pressure to ensure the students' favorable feedback. If they receive negative feedback, management would initially let them know; however, if it persisted, they would be fired.

Mr. PV reported: *"Based on feedback from students, management may remove teachers who usually come to class without preparation and who lack clarity in the lesson"*.

Teacher RV said that: *"We have to perform a demonstration in class before joining in a school. We will be able to join in that school, only if the students like our demonstration"*

Teacher BN remarked that: *"In my perspective, a teacher would be stressed when he gets comments such as; students did not comprehend their class or they complained against a teacher on displaying partiality during evaluation"*.

3.3.7 Emergent stressor as feedback from students

The position of a teacher in a private school depends on student feedback, which puts pressure on teachers to perform better. In addition, receiving unfavorable criticism about a teacher's performance results in a range of negative feelings (such as sadness, remorse, and self-blame), which can be stressful (Cohen et al., 2001; Du et al., 2018). It is perfectly acceptable to raise a student's performance. However, administrators must also comprehend the fundamental characteristics of the individual variances that exist among students and how they learn. Teachers have a better chance of influencing how feedback is viewed and applied in order to accomplish the institutional goal that will impact future of the private school teacher.

3.4 Interpersonal Issues in the Workplace

3.4.1 Unsupportive colleagues

The teachers disclosed the presence of interpersonal problems at the school. They voiced concerns about ego battles among co-workers in the workplace. For instance, teacher TN indicated the following: *"I was young when I joined the school. However, the principal assigned me in-charge duties, which were not taken into consideration in front of senior teachers. They used to criticize me for everything I did and complain to the principal."*

Senior teachers in particular used to feel uneasy around new teachers, which eventually led to their complaining. Their voice notes had a dissatisfied undertone.

3.4.2 Creating gossip and rumors

Some teachers claimed that because superiors singled them out, their colleagues were jealous of them. They also used to propagate rumors and gossip about them that had a negative impact on them.

Miss RT shared that: *"[A] few teachers would disagree with us if we adhered to certain rules on class management, note-taking, and paper preparation. They make every effort to spread rumors against me and complain to superiors. In these circumstances, I become anxious."*

Similarly, Mr. PD expressed the view that: *"The senior teachers feel envious of the junior teachers. Through spreading stories and gossip, they attempt to portray younger teachers in a bad light in front of the principal"*.

Perceived negative gossip at the workplace can have a negative effect on the self-concept, self-evaluation and work behavior of an employees (Kong, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to monitor and manage it in an organizational setting.

3.4.3 Presence of workplace jealousy

As indicated above, teachers reported having interpersonal problems with their co-workers in the schools because they were spreading rumors and gossip concerning the victimized teacher. This is clearly a sign of workplace jealousy, a term Vecchio introduced in 1995 (Vecchio, 1995). However, confirmation studies are needed to verify the presence of workplace jealousy among school teachers. Previous studies on workplace jealousy were conducted in the industry-organization sector rather than in the education-organization sector (Kim et al., 2013; Vecchio, 2000). The study's result highlighted the critical need for more research on workplace jealousy in the educational sector and how it relates to teaching effectiveness and student achievement.

3.5 Excessive Workload

3.5.1 Classwork plus office work

Private management schools run through individualized administration. Teachers described how they have to manage classwork and staff work, which sometimes makes them anxious. Nonetheless, some of them indicated that they would balance both office and classwork by utilizing their leisure hours.

Teacher ML shared that: *"Usually, when we finish our classwork, immediately management will throw office work & ask us to finish it"*

Teacher KY expressed that: *"I used to take 7 classes and in leisure periods, I used correct notes. Furthermore, sometimes I have to do office work during my leisure period"*

3.5.2 Time-bound work

Teachers mentioned receiving tight deadlines from management to complete office tasks, complete syllabi, and submit reports. In those circumstances, they claimed to feel overworked.

For instance, Teacher RN explained: *“Management used to occasionally request information and reports from students. They set deadlines for teachers to complete that assignment. We experience more workload during those time”*.

Mr PO and Mr RV mentioned that: *“They will give us some time & we just need to complete that work within that time”, “They asked us to complete the syllabus as fast as possible”*

3.5.3 Exhaustive notes and exam sheets corrections

Teachers stated that in private schools, there would be more sections as well as more students in each section. They are accountable for correcting examinations and note sheets. They occasionally used to be exhausted from correcting the exam papers and notes of the overwhelmingly large number of students. During the interviews, a few teachers vented their frustration.

Teacher BN shared that: *“Every day, I must give homework and revise their notes. Prepare for the lessons concurrently. For me, it is challenging”*

Teacher KM said: *“I receive seven bundles of exam-answer sheets for correction because I teach seven classes. I need to finish correcting all of those papers in three to four days. Each session has between 30 and 40 students. I find it difficult to correct them all at once.”*

Teacher PR mentioned: *“While correcting answer sheets, I used to get angry by reading the written blunders of the students. I feel irritated during that period.”*

3.5.4 Overcrowded classes

Traditionally, the management group assigns teachers' class timetables. Owing to their intense class schedules, teachers claimed they did not have enough free time. A few teachers expressed signs of fatigue in dealing with continuous classes.

In this regard, Ms. KU indicated that: *“I used to teach Maths General and Maths IIT for second, third & fourth grade students. Each class has three sections. Overall, I have to take nine classes per day, which is heavy for me”*.

Another teacher, Ms. RH, shared that: *“School has eight teaching hours, of which we continually teach for six hours, and two hours of study hours. We are fully packed with classes”*. In addition, Ms. SM said that: *“We get strained by the increased number of classes”*.

Managing the excessive workload is an on-going challenge for teachers. They specifically mentioned the tremendous burden brought on by the demanding classes, doing both office and classroom work, having tight time frames, and

correcting test and notebook sheets. According to several studies, these were common stressors that teachers experience (Brady & Wilson, 2021; Kang & Sidhu, 2015; Viac & Fraser, 2020). From the perspective of the job-demand resource theory, when the job demands exceed the provided resources, it results in stress among the employees (Bakker et al., 2004; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). To prioritize, there is a need to enforce strict teaching hours strictly for school teachers, similar to those of university teachers, to ensure their wellbeing.

4. Conclusion

The study explicated the stressors of private school teachers in India. It also highlighted the hardships of private school teachers in the working environment. It further urges the administration to implement a pay-governing mechanism and fixed work timings, as well as the monitoring of the quality of education. Furthermore, the study highlighted the intense focus of parents and management on students' academic performance, thereby making teachers accountable and pressurizing them. In extreme cases, they were threatened with being fired from their jobs, resulting in job insecurity. Therefore, the study recommends the formulation of a policy for private school teachers that can help them in obtaining minimum job security and other allowances.

5. Limitations, Implications and Recommendations

5.1 Limitations

The research has a few limitations. As previously mentioned, the data was gathered with a semi-structured telephone interview that only recorded voice notes and did not include the participants' facial expressions and hand movements. The latter could aid in data processing and coding, thereby enhancing the objectivity of the data. Second, the results cannot be broadly generalized owing to the nature of qualitative research. Reliability is more significant than generality because it is context specific.

5.2 Practical Implication

Through identifying the salient stressors of teachers, the school authorities could be able to provide a tailored intervention for teachers that could enhance their mental health, despite their workload. Nonetheless, they could conduct frequent meetings within the school, whereby teachers could openly discuss various issues they face. Through these meetings, they could share their problems that might be similar to those of other teachers, which could reduce the stress.

5.3 Research Implication

The study elucidated the signs of workplace bullying and workplace jealousy in private management schools. It can be the basis for future quantitative studies in this area. Nevertheless, the study identified a few covert coping mechanisms (such as emotion suppression and blaming parents) used by teachers at their workplaces. This can aid in deriving a new stress-coping modality for teachers. The study's findings also revealed a new influence of student feedback on teachers' levels of stress, which still needs to be investigated thoroughly.

5.4 Recommendations

The study strongly recommends that policy makers formulate a policy for private teachers with regard to their remuneration, job security and other allowances.

5.5 Acknowledgments

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5.6 Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this current study.

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