INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Education has continued to evolve and extend its reach and coverage since the dawn of human history. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to develop a balanced personality, a sense of independence, and scientific temper in the individual. Every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of times.

In post independence India, education aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship and culture, to strengthen national integration and to develop the ideas of socialism, secularism, democracy etc.

When we speak about education, primary education comes the first and the foremost. This is because the programmes and practices of primary schools contribute in one way or another to the development of an individual. The individual’s future may depend heavily upon what he has gained from the primary school. An individual at his impressionable primary school ages acquire thought patterns and habits that will affect him throughout his life. Besides primary education is a pre-requisite for any further education.

Primary education is the largest single enterprise all over the world. So from the point of view of magnitude, from the
standpoint of psychological preparedness, from the sociological point of view, from economic necessities, from the philosophical background and in view of scientific enlightenment and humanism the role of primary education is extremely significant and crucial.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The success of any primary school system depends largely upon the teachers working in that school. Among the teachers the headmaster/headmistress occupy the pivotal role. The efficiency of the school largely depends upon the efficiency of the headmaster/headmistress. The professional efficiency of the heads of primary schools include his efficiency in planning, executing and evaluating the instructional programme, efficiency in rendering services to the staff and students, efficiency in the management of physical and financial resources etc.

But in Kerala the heads of primary schools have to perform different types of duties at a time which may affect their professional efficiency. They are supposed to do full time teaching work, plan and execute curricular and co-curricular activities, do routine class supervision and at the same time do all the clerical works. More over they have to keep in touch with parents, departmental officers and the public and are considered solely responsible for the success and failure of the institution.
This work overload may create stress in the heads of primary schools.

Stress has become a serious topic for discussion during the last two decades. High level of personal frustration and inadequate coping skills make the problem worse and have major personal and social costs.

Different scholars have different definitions for the concept of stress. According to Selye (1956) stress refers to a response of the organism to a noxious or threatening condition. According to Magnusson (1982) stress is an individual's psychic and somatic reactions to demands that approach or exceed the limits of his coping resources.

Despite the variability and diversity in the understanding and definition of stress researchers agree on the idea that stress is a subjective phenomenological experience of an individual. They have differentiated stress from stressor. Any change or stimulus that evoke stress is called a stressor. In other words if stress is the reaction of the organism to any force this force is the stressor which evokes a programmed reaction within oneself. So a particular stressor to an individual may not be a stressor to another individual.

When workers experience stress from occupational problems occupation itself become a stressor. Almost all jobs produce stress but some are more stressful than others.
Pines and Aronson (1988) observed that all work with people involves some degree of stress. Certain categories of human services such as medical, educational, social and psychological services share particular kinds of emotional stress.

According to Paine (1982) there are organisational features that lead to stress and burn out. He divides them to three categories namely: bureaucratic, administrative, and role in the organisation. The bureaucratic features include red tapism, paperwork and communication problems. Administrative features include rules and regulations, policy influence and participation. Role in the organisation include role conflict, role ambiguity and status disorder.

Human relations between employee and employer cannot be harmonious unless the interpersonal relations between employees, supervisors and management are improved. Zachariah (1983) reports that workers are seriously concerned with the treatment they get from the supervisors.

Many of the factors mentioned above are present in the occupational ecology of the primary school headmasters / headmistresses. The work overload, greater responsibility for others, crowded workspace, less attractive salary and meagre promotion prospects act as stressors. The investigator being a primary school headmaster himself felt that the level of stress
may influence the professional efficiency of the heads of primary schools.

On reviewing studies on stress the investigator found that studies on primary school teachers are very less with the heads of primary schools of Kerala being practically untouched.

Hence the present study attempts to explore the influence of stress on the professional efficiency of the primary school headmasters in Kerala.

**Possible outcomes**

The findings of the study are expected to yield the following outcomes:

i) They will help to find out the group differences in stress and professional efficiency of the heads of schools.

ii) They will help to identify the levels of stress among the heads of primary schools.

iii) The findings will help to find out the influence of sex, age, educational qualifications, teaching experience, marital status, locality of schools and management category of schools on stress and professional efficiency of the heads of schools.

iv) They will help to find the relationship between stress and professional efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.
The findings will be helpful to the policy makers and administrators in the field of education.

The findings of the study will be a background for further research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study is entitled as “A STUDY ON STRESS AND PROFESSIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE HEADS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KERALA”

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Operational definition of the key terms are given below:

a) Stress

In the present study ‘stress’ refers to a state of anxiety, heightened emotionality, and frustration that can be diagnosed from manifestations in physiological, psychological, occupational and socio-familial responses of an individual.

b) Professional Efficiency

The term ‘professional efficiency’ in the present study stands for the extent of accomplishment of the desired objectives of the different administrative as well as teaching activities to be performed by the heads of primary schools in Kerala.
c) **Heads of primary schools in Kerala**

In the present study the term ‘heads’ stands for the headmasters and headmistresses of primary schools.

The term ‘primary schools in Kerala’ denotes recognised primary schools in Kerala, offering classes from standard I to standard VII and functioning under Kerala Education Act and Rules.

**VARIABLES OF THE STUDY**

The present study is a survey of the extent of stress experienced by the heads of primary schools in Kerala and its influence on their professional efficiency. So Stress of the heads of primary schools is considered as the independent variable and their Professional Efficiency as the dependent variable for the study.

**Basal variables**

The basal variables selected for the study are sex, age, educational qualifications, teaching experience and marital status of the heads of primary schools and the locality and management category of schools in which they are working.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To compare the mean scores of Stress and Professional Efficiency for the selected sub-samples based on sex, age, educational qualifications, teaching experience and marital
status of the heads of primary schools in Kerala and the locality and management category of their schools.

2. To study the levels of Stress experienced by the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

3. To compare the percentages of heads of primary schools in Kerala experiencing different levels of Stress for selected sub-samples as mentioned above.

4. To compare the percentages of heads of primary schools in Kerala experiencing different dimensions of Stress for selected sub-samples based on the basal variables of the study.

5. To examine whether any association exists between (a) each of the basal variables and Stress experienced by the heads of primary schools in Kerala, and (b) each of the basal variables and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

6. To find out the relationship between Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala for the total sample and for the relevant sub-samples.

7. To compare the relationships between Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala for the comparable sub-samples.
8. To identify the most effective sub-set of dimensions of Stress which can predict the Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

9. To find out whether the variance-co-variation structure of Stress and Professional Efficiency of heads primary schools in Kerala can be expressed through linear combinations of the dimensions of Stress and Professional Efficiency.

10. To find out whether significant association exists between the set of dimensions of Stress and the set of dimensions of Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1) There will be significant difference in mean scores of Stress and Professional Efficiency for the selected sub-samples based on sex, age educational qualifications, teaching experience and marital status of the heads of primary schools in Kerala and the locality and management category of their schools.

2) There will be different levels of Stress experienced by the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

3) There will be significant difference in percentages of heads of primary schools in Kerala experiencing different levels of Stress for selected sub-samples as mentioned above.
4) There will be significant difference in percentages of heads of primary schools in Kerala experiencing different dimensions of Stress for selected sub-samples based on the basal variables of the study.

5) There will be significant association between (a) each of the basal variables and Stress experienced by the heads of primary schools in Kerala, and (b) each of the basal variables and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

6) There will be significant relationship between Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala for the total sample and for the relevant sub-samples.

7) There will be significant difference in relationships between Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala for the comparable sub-samples.

8) There will be a most effective sub-set of dimensions of Stress which can predict the Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

9) The variance-co-variance structure of Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala can be expressed through linear combinations of the dimensions of Stress and Professional Efficiency.
10) There will be significant association between the set of dimensions of Stress and the set of dimensions of Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala.

PROCEDURE IN BRIEF

a) Sample

The study was conducted on a sample of 275 heads of primary schools in Kerala. Stratified random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sample.

The sample was classified according to sex, age, teaching experience, educational qualifications, and marital status of the heads of primary schools and locality and management category of schools.

b) Tools used

The tools used for the study are the following:

1. Stress Inventory for Headmasters (SIH)

2. Professional Efficiency Rating Scale for Headmasters (PERSH)

The tools were prepared and standardised by the investigator with the help of his supervising teacher.
c) **Statistical techniques used**

The following statistical techniques were used for the analysis of the data.

(i) Test of significance for difference between means.

(ii) Estimation of percentages for total stress and dimensions of stress.

(iii) Test of significance for difference in percentages.

(iv) Biserial coefficient of correlation ($r_{bis}$) to find the association between dichotomized variables (sex, marital status, locality, management category) and the variables of the study.

(v) Chi-square test to find the association between educational qualifications and variables of the study.

(vi) Correlation analysis using Pearson's Product moment method ($r$)

(a) to find the association between the basal variables (age, teaching experience) and variables of the study, and

(b) to find the relationship between the variables of the study.

(vii) Test of significant for difference between $r$'s

(viii) Multiple Linear Regression Analysis.
(ix) Principal Component Analysis.

(x) Canonical Correlation Analysis.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The variables of the study were selected on the consideration that there may be a relationship between them in the dependent-independent manner. Both of the tools to estimate the variables are prepared and standardised by the investigator with the help of his supervising teacher giving due consideration to the theoretical aspects of the variables and the actual situations prevailing in the ecology of the population of the study.

The investigator took care to collect the data from almost all districts of Kerala and to give representation to the sub-samples selected for the study so that the findings would be more valid and reliable.

In order to make the study more comprehensive and effective the investigator has used proper statistical techniques. Test of significance for difference between means, percentage analysis and analysis of association between the basal variables and variables of the study were conducted. Pearson’s ‘r’ and Canonical Correlation Analysis were used to find the relationship between the variables of the study. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used to predict the dependent variable from the best sub-set of dimensions of the independent variable. Principal
Component Analysis was done for data reduction. The limitations envisaged for the present study are the following.

(i) The study is limited to government and aided primary schools in Kerala. Unaided primary schools are not considered for the present study because the nature of work of the heads of such schools is different from the work of heads of government and aided schools.

(ii) The present study was conducted in schools which are functioning under the 'Kerala Education Acts and Rules'. The schools affiliated to the agencies of the government of India do not come under the purview of the study.

Despite these limitations it is hoped that the study on Stress and Professional Efficiency of the heads of primary schools in Kerala will bring forth dependable findings useful for the primary education.

ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

The report of the study is organised in five chapters. The first chapter presents the need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, statement of the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The procedure, scope, and limitations of the study are also briefly discussed.

The second chapter consists of two sections. The first section contains a theoretical overview of stress and profession of
heads of schools. The second section is a detailed review of studies related to teacher Stress and Professional Efficiency of heads of schools.

The third chapter presents the methodology used for the study i.e. variables, tools employed, sample used, data collection procedure, scoring and consolidation of data and the statistical techniques used.

The analysis of the data is presented in the fourth chapter under two sections. The first section includes the descriptive analysis, analysis of group differences, analysis of percentages and analysis of association. The second section contains correlation analysis, multiple linear regression analysis, principal component analysis and canonical correlation analysis.

The fifth and final chapter deals with the major findings and conclusions of the study, educational implications and suggestions for further research in the area.