CHAPTER - I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the process of education, curriculum and evaluation, syllabus and textbooks, the teachers’ play supreme role. The teachers occupy a vital position in the entire system of education. In teaching profession maximum females are employed. The educational system can work effectively only when we have efficient, active and skillful teachers. The teachers carry out this job of molding and shaping the life of students effectively, but at the same time face stress as they mostly deal with young children who are difficult to handle. Young students are extremely energetic, enthusiastic and active. So it is difficult to retain their interest and concentration in academics.

In recent years, no professional group has earned criticism as frequently or as intensely as teachers. The list of grievances is long and probably, more often than not, justified. Society perceives the present generation of teachers as mercenary, unprofessional, irresponsible and lacking in devotion which teachers of previous generation were reputed to possess. If this is really true, it must be a matter of great concern. Something must be seriously wrong somewhere if a big chunk of the community completely lacks any motivation and commitment to its profession. It is rather shocking to think that persons are engaged in doing something which has no meaning for them, and not even getting any sense of satisfaction and self worth. It has been observed that the efficient and effective functioning of any organization depends primarily on the quality and commitment of its human resources. The same applies for the school system. The core transactions of formal education take place where teachers and students meet; but books and articles guiding teachers on their pedagogy and behavior in class, and empirical studies on the attitude outlook and ethos of teachers as a group are rare.

The sociology of teaching is of comparatively recent growth and has yet to emerge as a coherent and systematic field of enquiry. Many sociologists, following the earlier lead of psychologists, have made their investigations primarily child-centered and the teacher has been virtually ignored.
The teacher is as important as the child in the educative process as the teacher carries out the role of shaping the life of students efficiently, along with that the teacher has to face many ups and downs while dealing with young students. Hence there is need for systematic study of the problems and concerns of teachers. Waller (1932) has observed in his classic, 'The sociology of teaching' that most of the innovative programs are for the rehabilitation of teachers' apathy and teachers' resistance, because the right attitude and involvement, the mental health and job-satisfaction of the teachers are essential conditions for the success of any school programmers.

1.2 GROWING CONCERN ABOUT TEACHERS

Burnout level of teachers

At present, one commonly accepted definition of burnout is the three-component conceptualization introduced by Maslach (Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Jackson (1986). “Emotional exhaustion as the first component is characterized by a lack of energy and a feeling of loss of emotional resources, also often accompanied by feelings of frustration. The second component, depersonalization (often called cynicism), is characterized by the coping strategy of emotional distancing. The third component, the gradual attrition in the productivity and work efficacy, includes feelings of incompetence as well as a lack of achievement”. A newer and different approach has been recently proposed by Kieschke and Schaarschmidt (2008). “This approach specifically addresses teachers’ burnout in a broader framework of work and health-related experiences and behaviors”. Based on research on teachers’
psychological health, burnout is described as a combination of low professional commitment, low subjective significance of work, and low professional ambitions in the persons concerned. Teachers who experience burnout report low satisfaction with work, whereas the ability to distance oneself from work is limited. With reference to coping resources, burnout is follows resignation tendencies, low levels of offensive coping, and lowered mental stability. Moreover, teachers who are experience burnout characterize themselves as exhausted and experience manifold challenges (Schaarschmidt & Fischer, 2001; Voltmer, Spahn, Schaarschmidt, & Kieschke, 2011). Within these two approaches, “burnout has been addressed as an individual status characterized by certain experiences and self-perception of behavior”. Less effort has been made to know more about teachers’ real performance in different emotional-cognitive stages of job exhaustion.

Very recently, however, teachers and their problems have been attracting a great deal of attention in the West, especially in the U.S.A. Teacher stress and burnout, have become burning topic and also increasing public and professional matter of concern. Newspaper, magazines, T.V. shows etc. have been carrying items and stories on teacher burnout. The concept of burnout (in Danish ‘udbrændthed’) “began as a "grassroots" description of prolonged occupational stress among human service workers, where formerly engaged employees gradually get overwhelmed of emotional exhaustion, loss of energy, and withdrawal from work”. This description was introduced in the mid 1970’s by two researchers of American, Herbert Freudenberger (1974) and Christina Maslach (1976), who further described the phenomenon. Thus, the burnout concept was developed from field observations – not from theory. Burnout can be described as “a condition resulting from a continuous draining of a person's energy resources” (Melamed et al 2006). “Chronic strain without recurrent physical and mental recovery can lead to illness, disease and burnout. Common symptoms in burnout are (physical and psychological fatigue), emotional exhaustion, cognitive weariness, sleep disturbances, depression, and anxiety” (Schaufeli and Enzmann, (1998) Grossi et al 2005). Insufficient sleep has been presented as an important factor and can both precede and coincide with burnout (Ekstedt et al 2006). “Severe burnout is associated with a considerably increased risk for all-cause sickness absence” (Toppinen-Tanner et al 2005). “Long-term sick-leaves
in Sweden have increased due to behavioural and mental disorders from the late nineties, especially in women” (National Social Insurance Board 2004).

Maslach originally described “burnout as a condition related to work and especially prevalent in occupations where clients have to be catered to frequently. The burnout concept has since been expanded to include all professions” (Maslach 2001). “Studies show that organizational and work related situations lead to stressful, untenable positions and probably also to burnout” (. Lindblom et al. 2006, Härenstam et al. 2005, Kompier 2006). “The sources of stress for the school teachers are heavy workload, delayed salaries, duties other than teaching, lack of co-operation from head and colleagues, political interference, students’ misbehavior and negative community attitude” (Gmelch, 1983). All these stress factors have an impact on the physical and mental well being of the teachers. Thus stress has been found to have long lasting impact on the emotional health of primary school teachers.

Major sources of information have been the professional organization like the “National Education Association of Secondary School Principals” and “American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education”. In addition to a number of articles that have been appearing in professional journals, some have been dedicated entirely to such issue issues. “NEA (1979) made teacher burnout the central theme of their convention at Detroit where it became a major issue of discussion and a resolution was adopted to encourage local affiliates to work with local school authorities for developing programmers’ which facilitate the recognition, prevention and treatment of stress related problems.” McGuire, the 1979 president, “underscored the importance of implementing this resolution in his statement that mental and physical stress was driving thousands of sensitive, thoughtful and dedicated American teachers out of the class-room, that stress was leading to teacher burnout and the problem is threatened to reach fever pitch if it was not checked soon”.

In the 1979 NEA’s nationwide Teacher Opinion Poll, one third of teachers surveyed said that if they were ‘starting all over again’, they would not choose to become teachers. In addition, only 60% of teachers reported that they planned to remain in the teaching profession until retirement and this in spite of the rising unemployment and recession in U.S.A.
Mark and Anderson (1978) found that “only 59% of teachers last more than four years in the classroom”. “It is also notable that a substantial proportion of teachers, 41% in New York and 56.7% in Chicago—reported physical and mental distress as a direct consequence of their work”. (Cichon and Koff, 1978; Stress, 1980).

“The First National Conference on Teacher Stress and Burnout was sponsored by 'Learning' magazine and the 'Learning Institute' and took place in New York City in April, 1980”. However, the phenomenon of burnout is not confined to American teachers alone.

“The impact of stress and burnout on the quality and consistency of education can be easily imagined and is clearly serious”. As Sarason (1977) points out, "If it becomes increasingly the case that professionals experience a widening discrepancy in work between expectations and satisfactions, the negative consequences for their lives will have ramifications far beyond the spheres of their individual existence".

At the same time, most teachers are still caring, involved in their work and perceive themselves as effective in their roles. Studies have revealed that only 10%-20% of teachers in U.S.A. are affected by burnout. There are many more who find a meaning in their work. Victor Frankl's theory that an individual who finds a meaning in life can withstand any amount of stress may help us to understand why some teachers in the same distressing situations do not burnout.

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Unfortunately, there seems to be a dearth of research in India in the areas of teacher motivation, teacher morale, role conflicts and anxiety of teachers. Moreover, there have yet been very few studies on teacher stress or teacher burnout. There is an urgent need for research into the psychological and social aspects of the teaching profession. In the face of growing public criticism, we should try to understand why young, enthusiastic teachers turn into bored and aloof professionals in a few years time, why many of our teachers are apathetic and uninvolved and make no effort to improve their scholarship and skill while some others, placed in the same working milieu, are enthusiastic, committed and show a constant desire to grow professionally. We should be concerned about the potential consequences, in general such declining
public confidence in the field of education, and in particular the teaching community, may have on the self-esteem and the professional self-image of the teachers.

Teachers are much maligned but not much attention has been given in research to the status and role, the concerns and anxieties, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of Indian teachers in the face of growing public criticism, social pressures and poor economic returns.

The teaching profession is unique in certain ways and as such is concerned with certain stress related conditions more or less peculiar to it. Teachers in the past were considered a special breed, unlike their fellow men. The stereotype persists to some extent ever today. Besides, while some have designed teaching as the `greatest calling', others subscribe to George Bernard Shaw's 'He who can does and he who cannot, teaches'.

It has been estimated that teachers typically make more than four hundred decisions a day. They dispense acceptance, rejection, praise and reproof on a wholesale basis. It is doubtful that many occupations or professions can lay claim to such a distinction. It is sobering to think that any one of these decisions may have either a short or long range positive or negative influence upon a given student. In the western societies, the teaching profession is one of the highest risk areas as far as violence is concerned. In the U.S.A., it is estimated that during a school year as many as 65,000 class-room teachers are physically attacked by students and many more are threatened and harassed. Fortunately, in India the situation has not become so bad, at least in schools. However, teachers in India are increasingly facing a condescending attitude from both pupils and parents, especially in the cities.

The absence of a job-turn-over high and drop-out rate among Indian teachers does not mean that stress and burnout are not experienced by them. It may be due to entirely different reasons like fear of taking risks and lack of alternative job opportunities. It is difficult to believe that they do not experience stress and are not get frustrated and even disillusioned with their school life under the existing school situations and societal conditions. It is also rather cynical to say that in India one takes to school teaching only as a last resort and no sensitive, dedicated, idealistic person joins the profession; or that, it is irrelevant to think of burnout in Indian teachers because they were never 'lighted up' or 'fired up' since burnout pre-supposes a certain
amount of initial enthusiasm, idealism and dedication that has been progressively lost in the course of teaching.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Questions were formulated to serve a guiding light in the research process. It is a pivot around which the investigation revolves, limiting thereby the field of investigation to a specific target and also determining the observation to be made and ones to ignore. It provides specific direction to research and prevents collection of useless and exercise data. Research question specify the “type of data required” and “the type of method of data analysis” to be used. After analyzing the literature, the researcher still had some following questions, which is investigated by researcher in present study -

These questions arise in the mind of the researcher

1. Should there be differences in burnout among teachers in relation to their occupational stress, mental health problems and socio-economic status?

2. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their occupational stress, marital status and age group?

3. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their mental health, marital status and age-group?

4. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their occupational stress, teaching experience and academic qualifications?

5. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their mental health, teaching experience and academic qualification?

6. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their occupational stress, type of school and location of school?

7. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their mental health, type of school and location of school?

8. Should there be difference in burnout among school teachers in relation to their occupational stress, sex and residence?
9. Should there be difference in burnout among teachers in relation to their mental health, sex and residence?

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After going through the research question the problem has been as follows:

“Burnout among teachers with reference to their mental health, occupational stress and socio-economic status”

1.6 CHAPTER DESIGN

There are five chapters in the proposed research work. The details of these chapters are as follows:

1. Chapter one: Conceptual Framework
2. Chapter two: Review of related literature
3. Chapter three: Research Methodology
4. Chapter four: Data Analysis and Interpretation
5. Chapter five: Summary, major findings and recommendations

1.6.1 Plan of the Study

The study has been composed into five chapters. These chapters are discussed hereunder:

The first chapter of the present study reflects a thread of idea that would be followed through the presentation. The present chapter precedes understanding teachers’ burnout; it is widely prevalent in the profession of teaching. Its aim is to locate the research study in the global, Indian and regional context. Second chapter is a description of the literature relevant to different dimensions such as burnout, mental health occupational stress and socio-economic status. It gives an overview of what has been said, who are the key authors, what are the hypothesis, type of questions to be asked and which methods and methodologies are appropriate and useful etc. thus secondary resources shows a way to the researcher how to proceed in primary research effectively. Third chapter more specifically answers why we took the
research study, how to define the research problem, type of data collected and which particular method has been followed, and the relevance of the particular technique. The fourth chapter seeks to the evaluation of teachers’ burnout. It deals with the analysis and interpretation of data and the impact on mental health, occupational stress and socio-economic status. The fifth chapter deals with the results of the present study, findings and further suggestions. Major findings based on data analysis have been presented in summarized form. Furthermore, this chapter concludes and provides suggestions and presents the direction for further research.