Chapter-II
Review of Relevant Literature
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Causal Factors of Stress In Teachers

Many theories and models have been outlined about stress and coping, of course some of them have undergone certain empirical validation, but still some of them need testing. In the present context, the interest of the researcher lies in the influence of job strain and social family role stress on coping behavior. While reviewing the literature, the researcher’s aim was to go through various studies of stress and coping behavior as an attribute of teachers’ personality.

There are unquestionably a number of causal factors of stress in teachers. Although stress always involves a transaction between the individual and their environment (Cox, 1978), for heuristic purposes we can divide causal factors in teacher stress into three broad areas: (i) factors intrinsic to teaching, (ii) cognitive factors affecting the individual vulnerability of teachers and (iii) systemic factors operating at the institutional and political level.

The existence of factors other than those intrinsic to teaching can be demonstrated by cross-national comparisons of teacher stress. Travers and Cooper (1997) surveyed 806 teachers in England and France about stress and found substantially different responses. 22% of sick leave in England, as opposed to 1% in France was attributed to stress.

There was substantial agreement between the English and French teachers as to the sources of pressure; both groups citing classroom discipline, low social status and lack of parental support. However,
English teachers reported more problems with long hours, overwork and political interference.

(1) Factors Intrinsic to Teaching: Research has suggested that a number of stressors are intrinsic to teaching. In the Travers and Cooper (1997) study, workload and long working hours emerged as particular issues for English teachers as opposed to their colleagues in France. When they questioned British teachers across all educational sectors high workload, poor status and poor pay emerged as three of the seven major source of stress—the others being systemic in origin. A study by Male and May (1998) of learning support coordinators in Further Education colleges goes on to illustrates the importance of these factors. 35 coordinators were assessed for burnout, stress and health. Overall mixed evidence for heightened stress in this group emerged, but there was strong evidence for work overload and excessive working hours, associated with emotional exhaustion.

A factor related to workload is role overload, which takes place when an employee has to cope with a number of compelling roles within their job. A study by Pithers and Soden (1998) has highlighted role overload as a significant stressor in teachers. Strain was found to be average in both national groups, but there were high levels of stress with role overload emerging as the major cause.

Some research has identified a cyclical pattern in the effects of overwork, contingent on the academic year. Kinnunen and Laskmen (1989) assessed 142 teachers by repeated self-report during the autumn and spring terms of an academic year. It was found that recovery from stress occurred each weekend during the spring term, but that by the end of the longer autumn term weekend recovery no longer took place.
Classroom discipline is also a significant source of stress. Lewis (1999) examined teachers’ estimations of stress arising from being unable to discipline pupils in the way they would prefer. Overall, maintaining discipline emerged as a stressor, with those worst affected being teachers who placed particular emphasis on pupil empowerment.

A study of 1000 student teachers (Morton et al., 1997) revealed that classroom management was their second greatest source of anxiety, the greatest being evaluation apprehension.

The phenomenon is currently under-researched in qualified teachers, although there is a modest body of research on student teachers. Capel (1997) questioned student PE teachers following first and second teaching practices on their levels and sources of anxiety.

(2) Cognitive Factors: A substantial body of contemporary research has examined the cognitive factors affecting individual susceptibility to stress amongst teachers. Chorney (1998) investigated self-defeating beliefs by asking 41 teachers to identify what they must do to be a good teacher. Endorsement of these beliefs was widespread in the sample and significantly associated with high levels of stress. In another study by Bibou-Nakou et al. (1999) the role of attributions was examined. There was a significant association between internal attributions and symptoms of burnout; suggesting that teachers who blame themselves for difficulties are more vulnerable to stress.

Self-efficacy has also been researched as a cognitive vulnerability factor. Friedman (2000) examined the self-reports of newly qualified teachers and described his findings as the ‘sheltered dreams of idealistic performance’ (2000:595). In another study Brouwers and Tomic (2000) used structural equation modeling to analyse the relationships between
self-efficacy and burnout in 243 secondary school teachers.

The direction of the causal relationship between self-efficacy and stress symptomatology is particularly significant as it suggests that cognitive interventions designed to improve self-efficacy may mediate the effects of stress.

The greatest volume of contemporary research concerning cognitive vulnerability to teacher stress relates specifically to individual differences in coping style. In one recent study Griffith et al. (1999) questioned 780 primary and secondary school teachers, aiming to assess the associations between stress, coping responses and social support. High levels of stress were associated with low social support and the use of disengagement and suppression of completing activities as coping strategies. Interestingly, stepwise multiple regression revealed that coping style not only mediated the effects of environmental stressors, but also influenced teachers’ perceptions of their environment as stressful. This is significant as it suggests that some of the stressors associated with teaching may not be inherently stressful but act as stressors only in transaction with coping style.

Given the sound base of evidence for cognitive factors underlying individual vulnerability to teacher stress and the strong empirical base of cognitive-behavioral therapy, it is theoretically likely that CBT-based interventions may be effective in teacher stress. However, electronic searches of psycho INFO, ERIC and the British Education Index revealed no outcome studies for CBT in the context of teacher stress.

(3) Systemic Factors: In this context the term ‘systemic’ is used to denote a broad cluster of organizational factors that are not intrinsic to the nature of teaching, but rather dependent on the climate of the educational institution or the wider context of education including the political domain.
At the level of the institution, factors such as social support amongst colleagues and leadership style were found to be important in affecting levels of stress. Dussault et al. (1999) assessed isolation and stress in 1110 Canadian teachers and, as hypothesized, found a strong positive correlation. In another study Van Dick et al. (1999) questioned 424 teachers from across all German sectors about their work stress, social support and physical illnesses. It was found that social support had both a direct positive effect on health and a buffering effect in respect of work stress.

Leadership style has also emerged as a significant organizational factor. Harris (1999) assessed teacher stress and leadership style in three American primary schools using the Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers.

Hoel et al. (1999) surveyed English teachers and found that 35% reported having been bullied by a manager in the last five years, as opposed to an average of 24% across all occupational sectors. Cooper interpreted this in terms of managers failing to cope with workloads and resorting to bullying as a maladaptive coping strategy.

Borg (1990) reports that up to one third of teachers perceive their occupation as highly stressful. Compared to the general population, teachers are at risk for higher levels of psychological distress and lower levels of job satisfaction (Schonfield, 1990).

Considering the vast literature of generic stress management and that concerning the etiology of teacher stress, the volume of research into interventions to combat teacher stress is miniscule. Psych NFO, ERIC and British Education Index searches revealed only two studies in the last five years. In one of these, Hall et al. (1997) examined the effect of human relations training on teacher stress. Teacher stress can lead to alienation,
apathy and absenteeism, which eventually interfere with student achievement (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

Griffith et al. (1999) questioned primary and secondary school teachers, aiming to assess the associations between stress, coping responses and social support. High levels of stress were associated with low social support and the use of disengagement and suppression of competing activities as coping strategies. Interestingly, stepwise multiple regression revealed that coping style not only mediated the effects of environmental stressors, but also influenced teachers' perceptions of their environment as stressful. This is significant as it suggests that some of the stressors associated with teaching may not be inherently stressful but act as stressors only in transaction with coping style.

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Max et al. (1999) has observed the influence of workplace conditions on teachers' job satisfaction. Results show that female teachers were more satisfied with their professional role as a teacher than were their male counterparts. Teachers who stayed in the profession longer were less satisfied with their professional role. Work place conditions positively affected teacher satisfaction. Administration control was the most important followed by teaching competence and organizational culture. Significant interaction between teacher background characteristics and workplace condition occurred.

In their study, Narayanan et al. (1999) have revealed both
similarities and differences in stressors and coping techniques reported across occupations. Inter-personal conflict, work overload and time wasters were common across all occupations. Lack of control and work over load were reported as major stressors by the clerical group and interpersonal conflict as a major stressor by the academic and sales groups. Gender differences were also found.

A different approach to assessing the relationship between coping strategies and teachers stress was employed by Admirral et al. (2000). It was concerned with active vs passive responses to disruptive behavior in the classroom. A strong relationship emerged between a coping style involving active behavioral intervention and teacher satisfaction, and a weaker relationship with pupil time on task was also evident.

In the United States, thirty-nine percent of teachers leave the profession in the first five years (Department of Education’s Staffing and Schooling Survey, cited in Ingersoll, 2001).

Although each teacher has a unique personality and therefore will find some idiosyncratic coping methods for negotiating stress, two key stress reduction strategies are recommended in current studies. First, social support appears to be one effective means of reducing stress (Schonfield, 2001). Having close, trusting relationships with colleagues boosts teachers’ ability to alleviate negative emotions and reduce stress responses. Second, Roger (1995) work on controlling negative emotions demonstrates that reducing emotional rumination also improves teachers’ ability to alleviate stress. Other studies have found that taking direct action to solve problems and using relaxation techniques have helped reduce stress (Kyriacou, 2001). However, studies recommending these techniques tend to have methodological limitations, thus evidence for their usefulness is weak.
On a personal level teacher stress can affect health, well-being and performance (Larchick & Chance, 2002). Large numbers of teachers report high levels of stress (Jarvis, 2002). The purpose of this paper is to reflect on a search for a more accurate picture of teacher stress and effective coping strategies. Worldwide surveys reveal widespread concern about the effects of stress on teachers’ sense of well-being and their willingness to stay in the profession.

**JOB STRAIN**

Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Tosi and Tosi (1970) in the sample of school teachers observed significant negative relationship between role stress (role conflict and role ambiguity) and job satisfaction. In several other studies also inverse relationship between role stress and job satisfaction was noted, however, role ambiguity was observed to be comparatively more effective in causing deterioration in job satisfaction of the employees.

There are unquestionably a number of causal factors in teacher stress. Although stress always involves a transaction between the individual and their environment (Cox, 1978), for heuristic purposes we can divide causal factors in teacher stress into three broad areas; factors intrinsic to teaching, cognitive factors affecting the individual vulnerability of teachers and systemic factors operating at the institutional and political level.

Walshok (1981) examined the sex difference in the degree of negative relationship between job stress and satisfaction. The results indicated that women and men showed quite different levels of job satisfaction for the same jobs. The working women were found more satisfied with their jobs as compared to the male.
Jagdish (1984) and Srivastava and Jagdish (1983) reported that stress arising from various aspects of job, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, under participation, intrinsic impoverishment, poor peer rotation, unpredictability, insecurity, group pressures, supervisory styles, etc., negatively correlate with employees job satisfaction.

Role stress, job tension, job satisfaction in relation to job level, length of service has been studied by Indian researchers (Kumar, 1986; Singh, 1990) among different occupational groups.

Significant interaction is found in the personal characteristics (mental and physical) and occupational stress of teachers (Anand, 1997). In recent years, several studies have dealt with dual-role conflict of working women in India (Agarwal 1994; Kala Rani, 1976; Sinha, 1987). Comparatively, only a few have researched on work-related stressors of women professionals (Ghadially & Kumar, 1989; Tharakan, 1992). Moreover, there is an urgent need to focus on ‘woman’s perspective’ vis-à-vis studies on working women (Gaur, 1996). Thus the study aimed at identifying the work-related stressors experienced by women in four professions, namely, teachers, doctors, bank-officers, and bureaucrats. These professions were chosen on the basis of the entry of women into them. Women have entered comparatively later in banking and civil services, whereas teaching and medicine have been two of the earlier professions chosen by women.

Travers and Cooper (1997) found that lack of government support, lack of information about changes, constant change and the demands of the National Curriculum as among the greatest sources of stress in teachers. These ‘trickle-down’ systemic factors act in addition to and feed into the
dynamics of individual organizations (Jennings & Kennedy, 1996).

Travers and Cooper (1997) found that workload and long working hours emerged as particular issues for English teachers as opposed to colleagues in France. When Travers and Cooper (1997) questioned British teachers across all educational sectors high workload, poor status and poor pay emerged as three of the seven major sources of stress – the others being systemic in origin.

A study of 1000 teachers (Morton et al. 1997) revealed that classroom management was their second greatest sources of anxiety, the greatest being evaluation apprehension. Of all the stressors reported, classroom management anxiety was the only one that did not decline following teaching practice. Capel (1997) questioned student teachers following first and second teaching practices on their levels and sources of anxiety.

A factor related to workload is role overload, which takes place when an employee has to cope with a number of competing roles within their job. Pithers and Soden (1998) highlighted role overload as a significant stressor in teachers. They assessed levels of strain, organizational roles and stress in 322 Australian and Scottish vocational and FE lecturers. Strain was found to be average in both national groups, but there were high levels of stress with role overload emerging as the major cause.

Lewis (1999) examined teachers’ estimations of stress arising from being unable to discipline pupils in the way they would prefer. Overall, maintaining discipline emerged as a stressor, with those worst affected being teachers who placed particular emphasis on pupil empowerment.
Upadhaya and Singh (1999) found that the executive as well as the teachers experienced moderate level of stress, the executive experienced more stress than teachers did. The results revealed that a significant difference between these two groups was on the experience of stress on factors such as role overload, intrinsic and status variable.

Lapp Jonid et al. (2000) examined the impact of a yearlong educational intervention program design to reduce the stress of secondary teachers and school staff. Results shows that the majority of teachers were stressed with more than 1/3 experiencing high level of stress. The delivery of multiple brief educational interventions had a small but positive impact on reducing stress.

Tang et al. (2001) examined the mental health outcomes of job stress among Chinese teachers in Hong Kong. Results of the structural equation modeling analyses on the cross-sectional data at time (T1) show that stress resource factors of self efficacy and productive attitude were negatively related to burnout; which in turn had a direct effect on negative mental health. Stress resource factors were also directly linked to mental health status of teachers.

Winfield et al. (2001) pointed out that psychological distress was highest and job satisfaction lowest among academic staff engaged in both teaching and research. In general, university staff reported high levels of autonomy and social support from colleagues. However those engaged in both teaching and research reported increased pressure arising from funding cuts to universities resulting in heavier teaching loads and greater difficulty in securing research funds. The results are discussed in relation to the
Demand-Control and Person-Environment fit models of job stress.

Teacher’s stress is a real phenomenon and is associated with problems of recruitment, health and retention of teachers. Research has shown that teacher stress is reliably associated with a number of variables, including those intrinsic to the job, individual cognitive vulnerability and systemic factors. There are however important gaps in our understanding of teacher stresses most notably regarding effective interventions. The current research base is not adequate to allow us to devise effective programmes to reduce teacher stress. This is critical as there are sound reasons for believing that standard clinically based stress-management strategies such as CBT will not be effective against teacher stress.

SOCIAL FAMILY ROLE STRESS

Role is defined as the position a person occupies as determined by expectations from a significant person, including the person himself (Pareek, 1976). Since the role consists of expectations, which the role occupant has from his own role, and expectations by different significant persons who work and interact with the role occupant, there are likely to be several conflicts or stresses. The stress caused by the various conflicts in the expectation, or post-expectation processes, can be called role stress.

Role stress (often referred to as role stressors) refers to the work or family conditions that are associated with feelings of role strain (or alternatively, distress). Because of lack of consistency in the usage of the terms role stress and role strain, they are no longer in general usage. With respect to the job (family) role, the term role stress has been superseded by the term job (family) stressors, or more generally by the term job (family)
It is interesting that the parameters of stress arising from social and family situations have not been adequately emphasized. This aspect in recent years has been ardently advocated and it is suggested that the insight into role stress could be developed by incorporating the influences within as well as outside the work (Bhagat, 1983).

Invancevich and Matteson (1980) identify extra organizational stressors such as societal/technological change, the family, relocation, economic and financial conditions, etc. Long or short-term family crisis may act as significant stressor for the employees.

Davidson and Cooper (1981) highlighted the influence of organizational and extra organizational factors on the individuals at work. Their multidimensional approach acknowledges that stress at work can also affect an individual at home and social environment and vice-versa.

The concept of role involves the self, the other roles, the expectations held by the other roles and the expectations held by the self, which have built-in potential for conflict or stress. Many dimensions of stress related to the roles that an individual plays within and outside the organization have emerged. It has helped in the understanding of the sources from which stress emanates but it has also added to the terminological confusions. A closer scrutiny would reveal that role conflict, ambiguity and overload have frequently been studied as antecedents of occupational stress (Brief & Adelag, 1976; Ivancevich, Matteson & Preston, 1982; Rosse & Rosse, 1981).

Luthans (1987), taking an open-system perspective advocates that
job stress is not just limited to the things that happen inside the organization or during the working hours.

Amongst the various extra organizational sources of stress the social and family stressors have been examined more closely because of their great impact on personality development. Though the family may not itself be the source, it can be the unit within which stressors emerge interact and exert a significant impact on people (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1987).

Vachon (1987) provides a significant information that role stress does not only have its impact within the organization but also outside the organization i.e., in the family and other segments of socio cultural conditions. This contention seems to get validated by sen’s (1981) study that concludes that women experience more role stress as compared to men. Akhtar & vadra (1990) pointed out that there are many sources of stress with in the organization, which are directly or indirectly related to the outside events. Cooper (1981) pointed out that stress at work can affect the individual in home as well as in the society in which he lives.

Role stress may occur not only during one’s official professional job but may also result from the fact that professionals are often expected to continue to perform their role when they are outside the organizational setting (Vachon, 1987).

Thakar and Misra (1999a,b) studied that despite stress these women are not only dealing effectively with their environment but are also adapting to it. They report that though employed women experienced more hassles and received lesser support than their unemployed counterparts, they enjoyed better well-being.
Teacher’s stress is a much talked phenomenon, however there is little consensus between different professional groups regarding its sources, effects, or how to cope with it. Based on a review of research, it can be concluded that the stress of a teacher is a real phenomena and that high levels are reliability associated with a range of casual factors including those intrinsic top teaching and individuals’ vulnerability. Limitation with the current research base of teacher’s stress is identified. We have a responsible understanding of the sources of teacher stress but little known about the mediating impact of stressors. This study is aimed at identifying the influence of job strain and social family role stress on coping strategies among teachers.