

Temporary Job and Permanent Stress

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Abstract

In daily life we all are stressed-knowingly or unknowingly. As rightly said by a great philosopher Epictetus, that “People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them.” So it can be understood that stress by nature has become a part and parcel of everyday life and in today’s cut throat competition, nobody is truly stress free. Seeing the condition of society it feels like nobody on this planet is stress free so the teachers are. Only those who are either not born or are dead are stress free. Stress is a very serious problem as it impairs one’s capabilities and have direct adverse impact on performance. If stress is not tackled properly on time it may lead to many emotional and physical problems. Teachers especially those who are appointed on temporary bases or on contractual bases are always work under stress, because of their status of being temporary. Although their job is temporary but stress becomes permanent. This paper is an attempt to suggest some ways to manage stress among temporary or contractual teachers also this paper explains significant impacts of stress on the body and how to take these stress levels down to a manageable point.

Keywords: Stress, Pedagogical, Intrapsychic sector, Temporary job and Permanent Job.

Introduction

Education is most important tool for holistic development of individual and the society. It has been universally accepted that the quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The level of knowledge of the citizens depends upon the dynamic education system. Education is imparted by teachers. If the teacher is stress free he will be energetic and mentally healthy, so by being stress free he will be more effective which is good for the educational institute/school. Although, the quality of education depends upon planners, educationists and administration but the most significant factor is the quality of the teacher. This means excellent and efficient teachers can change the fate of the nation. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953) report stated so well that-“we are convinced that the most important factor in the contemplated educational reconstruction is the teacher, his personal qualities, his educational qualifications, his professional training and the place that he occupies in the community.” Teachers form the crux of the education system of every country, acting as social engineers and regarded as custodians of the future (Basu, 2013).

The teachers are the real makers of a nation and their work is not only to teach but also to guide the students, which would develop farsightedness and vision among students. Therefore, the teachers play leading role in our society by not only helping individuals grow, rather it develops their level of skills and knowledge. But unfortunately teachers are exposed to stress which has become one of the major causes of their ill health. They are unable to pay much attention towards the future of their students because their own future is uncertain. A person who himself is worried can never solve the problems of others. This holds good for the teachers who are appointed on temporary or contractual basis.

Literature Review

The review of literature is divided into four groups. These groups are the studies related to the definition of stress, followed by defining permanent and temporary jobs, further the studies related to the teachers under stress are summarised followed by effects of stress on teachers and possible means to cope up with stress.

Stress

According to Selye (1956)-“stress is the psychological response of the body to physical and psychological demands.”

In the words of Lazarus & Folkman (1984), “stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one’s cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one’s interaction with the environment.” According to Eysenck (2001) “stress occurs when the perceived demands of a situation exceed the individual’s perceived ability to handle those demands.” In the opinion of Atkinson & Hilgard (2003), “stress refers to experiencing events that are perceived as endangering one’s physical or psychological well-being. These events are usually referred to as stressors and people’s reactions to them are termed as stress responses.”

In the views of Dash (2004), “stress refers to any adjustive demand that requires and adaptive response from us.” On the basis of the above cited definitions, we can say that stress is tension experienced in the physical, mental,

and emotional realms as a response to environmental events that are perceived as threatening. It should be kept in mind that, constant stress can cause many problems and unless handled, can add to the stress of another situation (Ruffin, 2009).

Permanent job

Permanent job is defined as being in a job that is a permanent or being in a job which is regular and where job security is there. They are full-time, permanent employees of the government. They are governed by strict entry and qualification norms. They are covered by a range of welfare benefits and get a other after retirement benefits. They can be promoted from a teacher to a head teacher and even a supervisor/administrator/teacher trainer, Chairman, Dean.

Temporary job

Temporary job is a job which is temporary in nature and uncertainty is attached to this job as compared to permanent job. Teachers appointed on contract basis by the local body. They are not entitled to any welfare or other benefits. They are not eligible for promotion and are appointed for a specific period. Their appointment has to be renewed every year. In some cases they are not entitled to get salary in the summer and winter vacations. This means their job breaks every year which makes them stressed even after years of honest services to the institution. They are not entitled for medical leave and other leave to attend seminars and conferences for their academic growth.

Teachers under stress

Emphasizing the importance of teachers, National Policy on Education (1986) stated that, “the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers.”

Teachers perform different types of responsibilities in serving the institution.

The social scientists have identified following three sectors of life in which stress originates.

- (i) Job & Organisation (ii) Social setting, and (iii) Intrapsychic sector

By job and organisation, we mean the working environment, which includes working conditions, working atmosphere of organisation, relation with co-workers and employer’s attitude etc. Social setting refers to social surrounding, social contacts, social relations, social attitudes etc. and Intrapsychic sector, means his own temperament, values, wealth, health, talents etc.

This means that Intrapsychic sector (temperament, values, health, talent etc.) has direct effect on social setting and both these sectors (Intrapsychic and social setting) have direct effect on organisational climate. This implies that, if the teacher, performing pedagogical role (Curricular developer, instructor and researcher) has good and cooperative temperament, his relation with his colleagues will also be good and there will be a healthy working environment. Teachers will be stress free; they will give their best performance, and institutions will achieve its target.

On the other hand, due to poor working climate, long working hours, poor infrastructural facilities, insufficient pay, lack of social recognition, role ambiguity, poor relation with colleagues, autocratic organisational climate, and most important job insecurity the teachers will always be in stress and they will never be in a position to deliver their best. Teacher stress often affects the teacher’s ability to function effectively (Blase, 1986). Teachers are continuously exposed to high levels of stress, cutting across all cultures (Cooper & Kelly, 1993; Gaziel, 1993; Reglins Reitzammer, 1997; Chan 1998; Mokdad, 2005). Greater levels of stress burden are associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes as reported by various researchers (Pearlin et al., 2005; Graham et al., 2006; Chandola et al., 2008; O’Donnell et al., 2008; Vaananen et al., 2008; Yarnell, 2008; Figueredo, 2009).

Research has shown that along with servicemen, social workers and linguists, teachers have surfaced at the start of the new millennium as the most afflicted with rising stress. Most alarming is that 30% of all novice teachers are leaving the profession of teaching. Annual teacher attrition rate is increasing when compared with other occupations. The Annual teacher attrition rate in India is 53% which means that 53% of teachers switch their jobs every year. There are 2,59,099 contract teachers in India. Of these, 65% are men and 35% women. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for an overwhelming proportion of contract teachers (Ramachandran & Pal, 2005).

Temporary or contractual employment is associated with greater, job insecurity more risk since contract end dates are explicitly specified in the beginning, and also employment protection is less in such contracts which means they know the date of expiry of their jobs in advance resulting in greater job insecurity which can have negative effects on psychological well-being.

Previous research has established a clear link between temporary employment and psychological problems and detrimental effect on mental well being (Burchell, 1999; Anakwe et al., 2000; Bardasi & Francesconi, 2004; Beard & Edwards, 1995; Virtanen et al., 2005; Taylor, 2006; Gash et al., 2007; Dawson & Veliziotis, 2013) have

reported this trend.

Research consistently shows higher job insecurity is there among temporary employees for instance Rigotti et al, (2009) showed that *temporary workers experience more job insecurity than permanent workers* and research has indicated job insecurity as one of the most common sources of job stress (Cartwright & Cooper 2002; Coetzer & Rothmann 2007; De Bruin & Taylor 2006; Labuschagne et al. 2005; Martin 2005; Rollinson 2005). Research has also indicated that experiencing high levels of stress may lead to feelings of anger, anxiety, depression, nervousness, irritability, tension, hypersensitivity to criticism and mental blocks (Cartwright & Cooper 2002; Martin 2005). As a result this may lead to lower job performance, boredom, low self-esteem, inability to concentrate and make decisions, burnout and job dissatisfaction among temporary teachers. Research has also indicated a relationship between stress and absenteeism (Coetzer & Rothmann 2007; Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert & Nell 2008) indicating the mental and physical absence of teachers from their working environment. Feelings of job insecurity are more and job satisfaction is less among temporary employees as compared to their counterparts in permanent employment as shown by the studies of (Origo & Pagani, 2009; Green & Heywood, 2011; Chadi & Hetschko, 2013). Likewise a study by Mazaheri (2014) proved that permanent employee had higher levels of job satisfaction than temporary employees. Job insecurity has been found to associate with reduced levels of job satisfaction (Ashford et al., 1989 cited in Anwar et al., 2011). Temporary employees are not satisfied from their jobs. Therefore, all the teachers appointed on temporary or contractual basis are more vulnerable to stress. Besides, temporary employment is associated with job insecurity, work hazards, poor working conditions and negative health consequence (Burchall, 1994; Klein Hesselink & Van Vuuren, 1999; Parker, et al, 2002). Temporary employees had higher level of occupational stress in comparison than their permanent counterparts Mazaheri (2014). Benavides et al., (2000) as cited in Silla et al., (2005) also found that temporary workers reported higher stress than permanent ones.

In a large meta-study, Virtanen et al. (2005), De Cuyper, Notelaers and De Witte (2009) and Quesnel-Vallee, DeHaney & A. Ciampi (2010) and Ehlert, C., & Schaffner, S. (2011) suggested that mental health of individuals in temporary jobs is lower as compared to individuals with permanent jobs. Job insecurity create stressful event in such a way that the employee cannot perform properly temporary teachers are the victims of this situation. Given that temporary employment is associated with higher job insecurity and that previous research has established the link between insecurity and well-being. Job uncertainty is linked with harm health (Jick, 1985; Hartley et al., 1991 Barling & Kelloway, 1996 all cited in Anwar et al., 2011).

Effects of Stress

Nowadays stress is the main cause of numerous physical and mental health problems. Psychological and social stress adversely affects many systems of the body including the immune system (Ader & Cohen, 1984, Cohen, Tyrrell & Smith, 1993)

Continuous stress can induce risky body-mind disorders. Disorders such as, anxiety attacks, tension, sleeplessness, nervousness and muscle cramps can all result in chronic health problems. In addition, they may affect our immune, cardiovascular and nervous system. Stone et al (1987) have reported that body's immune system is impaired by high degree of stress.

Teachers are also human being, if they are continuously and regularly working under stressful conditions, whatever the reasons are it will definitely affect their physical and mental health. It may be due to the organisational climate or social setting. Teachers are generally found in specific type of occupational stress. It is "the experience by a teacher of unpleasant emotions such as tension, frustration, anger and depression resulting from aspects of his work as a teacher." Kyriacou (1987). Teachers' lives are adversely affected by stress leading to physical ill health (WHO, 1986, Mokdad, 2005) and mental ill health (Fletcher & Payne, 1982, Finlay Jones, 1986, Beer & Beer, 1992). Job insecurity is one of the major causes of stress among teachers. Therefore, temporary teachers are more vulnerable to stress related diseases.

A teacher working in stressful condition may suffer from certain diseases such as ulcer, diabetes, heart problems, hypertension, depression, anxiety, sleep disorder and suicidal tendencies etc.

Coping with stress

According to Selye "Complete freedom from stress is death."It means, not a single human can be stress free on this planet. However, the level of stress may differ from person to person. A number of social scientists have established in their researches that stress is very effective cause of physical and mental illness. They have suggested many measures too to cope with stress. However, these measures are unable to keep a person stress free for a long period of time, because these stresses are strong and novel. Following are few important stress management techniques as advised by experts-

- a) Relaxation
- b) Cognitive restructuring
- c) Stress inoculation training

- d) Medication and hypnosis
- e) A good sense of humour
- f) Eat balanced diet
- g) Get complete sleep
- h) Exercise regularly
- i) Self esteem
- j) Company of trustworthy people
- k) Self-confidence etc.

Conclusion

It is often said that the existence of temporary job is beneficial. In a way it is considered as a launching pad or sometimes stepping stone to currently unemployed teachers. It helps in searching for better jobs that they deserves. It provides them with opportunities and learning experiences. Temporary work facilitates individual unemployed workers to move from unemployment status to permanent job status, that is, temporary work acts as a stepping-stone towards regular job. It provides them opportunities to gain job experience and acquire permanent positions easily but authors believe that this short (As it is perceived, although it sometimes may convert into very long period) waiting period is temporary but it gives stress which is permanent, giving birth to permanent physical and mental problems. Although, the job is temporary but stress is permanent. Lower job security in temporary job can lead to mental stress and therefore worsen mental health. Mental stress due to the lack of job security can have serious and long lasting negative effects on well being and health of those teachers who stay in temporary employment for a longer time period. If there are long-term negative effects, they may offset positive employment effects or undo the positive things associated with temporary job.

Implications

As temporary teachers are experiencing high levels of stress due the nature of their job, which is responsible for various health and mental problems. This indicates the need for interventions in strengthening and reinforcing temporary teacher's self-confidence and positive attitude, and weakening the stress creating factors. The first step towards handling stress is to acknowledge its existence. Recognising the manifestation of stress among temporary teachers and identifying the major stressors could go a long way in ameliorating the menace of stress while designing suitable stress coping mechanism for temporary and contractual teachers. Teachers in higher education should be appointed through General Selection Committees. Regular appointments should be made; practice of temporary or contractual basis of employment should be discontinued immediately. Stress management training should be provided to the teachers in general and temporary or contractual teachers in particular.

Some other measures which could prove beneficial to teachers in coping with stress are-improving self esteem, build self confidence, hardiness training, building emotional intelligence competencies, developing a good sense of humour, eating balanced diet, sound sleep, meditation, exercising regularly, taking help of supportive friend circle, cultivate hobbies, developing effective communication skills, engaging in creative and activities, setting priorities and seeking professional help, if necessary. These coping strategies need to be incorporated on a priority basis so that the temporary teachers are well prepared to deal with job stress (Reddy, & Anuradha, 2013). These measures can go a long way in reducing stress and managing situations and improving the effectiveness of the temporary teachers. Research has indicated that emotional intelligence can be developed and improved (Sala, 2001). So there is a need for incorporating emotional intelligence skills in teacher preparation programmes. It is emotional intelligence which helps in understanding emotions and feelings of others and self and also helps in reacting appropriately to these emotions. Temporary teachers can benefit from learning how to deal with their emotions. This will help them in imbibing the necessary skills for emotion regulation. Efforts should also be made for increasing and developing more hardy attitudes in the temporary teachers. Hardiness is a learnable trait and it can be learned (Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). Hardiness training not only increases hardy attitudes and actions, but also improves performance and health (Maddi, Kahn & Maddi, 1998).

As teachers are back bones for an educational institution. Institution should take different steps to enhance the satisfaction of their employees. Teachers should be hired on permanent base not on temporary or contract; if these are hired on temporary or contractual base their performance should be recognised and appreciated by different incentives.

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