Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers in South India

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Abstract

Background: Teachers especially working at university level are under a great deal of stress related to various occupational stressors. Occupational stressors contribute to organizational inefficiency, high staff turnover, absenteeism due to sickness, decreased quality, and quantity of practice, increased costs of health care, and decreased job satisfaction. When there is a prolonged experience of occupational stress, it leads to professional burnout.

Aims: The purpose of the present study is to investigate the occupational stress and the professional burnout of university teachers.

Methods: The locale of the study is Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh States of South India. The sample of the study is from 9 state universities selected through simple random sampling technique. A five point rating scales to assess the occupational stress and professional burnout of university teachers developed by the investigators was used. The data obtained through the rating scales were analyzed using the statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, Spearman’s correlation and multiple regression.

Findings: The results revealed that majority (74%) of the university teachers are experiencing moderate and high levels of occupational stress and 86 percent of teachers have professional burnout. Also, the analysis showed strong support for the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the occupational stress and professional burnout of university teachers.
Stepwise multiple regression analysis shows that the occupational stress has accounted 7.6 percent of variance to professional burnout.

**Conclusions:** The prevention and management of workplace stress requires organizational level interventions, because it is the organization that creates the stress. Further, several stress management techniques such as emotional intelligence training, cognitive behavioral management techniques, social supportive systems, counseling services, yoga and sports activities should be introduced. Success in managing and preventing stress will depend on the culture in the organization. At university level, the culture of openness and understanding, rather than of criticism, is essential.

**Key words:** Occupational stress, professional burnout, university teachers, India

**Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers in South India**

The globalization and privatization of the education system in different countries and in India forced the higher education to be more competent so as to produce the stakeholders with better knowledge, accommodativeness, skills and competencies which are essential for survival in the world market. In tune with this, the Indian higher education system had undergone rapid changes in terms of expansion, privatization, marketization, curricular reforms and pedagogical innovations. These changes have challenged the universities in terms of quality education, shortage of faculty of high caliber, ineffective teaching methods, outmoded curricular and evaluation system, lack of appropriate reading materials, poor infrastructure facilities, faulty administration, faculty admission criteria, inability to attract and retain talented minds and absence of academically conducive atmosphere. Further, the increasing role played by latest knowledge, skills, innovation and research in economic growth and development, the emergence of the information society and the need for quality education results in increased pressure on the higher education system and teachers in particular. These factors in-turn adversely affects the quality of our higher education system and creates various stressors and strain in teachers which further deteriorates their performance. Continuous stress leads to strain which in turn make the individual to burnout in their workplace which further brings in job dissatisfaction.

Occupational stress is defined in different ways over the years. In the Guidance on Work-related Stress issued by the European Commission in 2002, work-related stress is defined as ‘a pattern of emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse and noxious aspects of work content, work organisation and work environment’ (p.7); the main emphasis is on the workplace as the source of stress. The United States National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, on the other hand, in its 1999 publication entitled ‘Stress at Work’, defines work-related stress as ‘the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker’ (p.6), and
expresses the view that working conditions are a primary factor, but that personal factors are also influential. Thus, by considering the purpose of the present study, the investigators refer to university teachers occupational stress as a negative emotional state experienced by them out of challenged organizational structure and climate, inadequate personal and professional efficiency, strained intra and interpersonal interactions and, environmental factors existing within the university in which they are working.

Sources of Occupational Stress in University Teachers
Over the past 20 years there have been major reductions in government funding of public universities, and reports have appeared in recent research literature of studies examining stress in university staff in different countries. Examples include Blix, Cruise, Mitchell, and Blix (1994); Gmelch, Wilke and Lovrich (1986); Hogan, Carlson, and Dua (2002); and Richard and Kriehok (1989) in the United States; Abouserie (1996); Bradley and Eachus (1995); Daniels and Guppy (1992); Kinman (2001); and Wilkinson and Joseph (1995) in England; Dua (1994); Winefield and Jarrett (2001); and Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, and Hapuarachchi (2002) in Australia; Boyd and Wylie (1994) in New Zealand; and Taris, Schreurs, and Van Iersal-Van Silfhout (2001) in the Netherlands. All of these studies have found that academic stress has become a cause for concern as a result of increased work pressures and reduced support. In the early 1990s, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching sponsored an International Survey of the academic profession in which 14 countries participated (Australia, Brazil, Chile, England, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, and the United States). The data were collected from 1991–1993. According to (Altbach, 1996, p. 4-5),

For a number of years, the professoriate has been undergoing change and has been under strain almost everywhere. Fiscal problems for higher education are now evident in all of these fourteen countries . . . . In most of the nations, the somewhat unprecedented phenomenon of increasing enrolments has been allowed to supersede allocated resources . . . . At the same time, professors in a number of countries are being asked to be explore entrepreneurial - for example, in bringing research grants and contracts to their institutions.

In the tertiary sector the causes of stress are overwhelmingly reported to be structural and organisational, rather than interpersonal (Kinman, 2001). Stressors consistently identified in the research literature are workload and time pressure, research, educational change, management styles, re-organisation and restructuring, and inadequate resources (Dua, 1994; Winefield and Jarrett, 2001; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi and Boyd, 2003). These findings were corroborated in the first phase of a longitudinal study of Australian university staff which employed focus group methodology to examine the causes, consequences and moderators of stress (Gillespie et al., 2001). In the U.S., Hogan, Carlson and Dua replicated in part Dua’s 1994 study, with similar results. No major differences emerged in these studies between the stressors reported by academic staff, and those of other staff. The UK study (2005) concluded that, “occupational stress in university
staff is widespread and lends further support to the growing evidence that universities no longer provide the low-stress working environments they once did” (Tytherleigh, et al, 2005, p. 54). In particular, they found that academic staff were stressed by co-workers not pulling their weight, lack of control over decisions affecting their jobs, lack of resources, not being informed about job relevant information, work interfering with home and personal life, insufficient time to do their jobs at the quality level the academics felt necessary, and the level of their pay and benefits.

Consequences of Occupational Stress
The worker’s response to work stress can be either psychological, physical or both (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Kristensen, 1996; Santos & Cox, 2000), and is usually categorised as being acute, post traumatic, or chronic. National surveys in the United Kingdom (Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper & Ricketts, 2005) and Australia (Winefield et al., 2002) have reported a serious and growing problem of academic work stress with several deleterious consequences including decreased job satisfaction, reduced morale and ill health for academic staff. The consequences of stress may be of: emotional manifestations – feelings of undefined anxiety, dissatisfaction, depression, fear and frustration and low self-esteem with a possible extreme result being burnout; behavioural manifestations - behavioural problems such as appetite disorders, excessive smoking and alcohol and / or drug abuse, violence or inability to sleep, plus possible displays of withdrawal symptoms (i.e. absence and resignations from the profession); physiological manifestations - heart disease, psychosomatic illness, fatigue and depleted energy reserves (Milstein and Golaszewski, 1985). Fimian and Santro (1981) claimed that emotional manifestations are often precursors for behavioural and physiological manifestations of stress in teachers, and so these should never be seen as discrete in nature.

A more extreme result of long-term effects of teacher stress is burning out syndrome. Maslach and Jackson (1986) defined burnout as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one’s emotional resources. Depersonalization refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to other people, who are usually the recipients of one’s service or care. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one’s feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work. Pines (1982) identified four dimensions of the environment which could prevent or promote burnout i.e. (a) the psychological, i.e. autonomy and activation; (b) the physical; (c) the social and; (d) work environment.

Studies by Westerhouse (1979) and Schwab (1981) have shown that role conflict and role ambiguity were significantly related to teacher burnout. Cooley and Laviki (1981) concluded that individual, social-psychological and organizational factors were all strongly associated with burnout and that it was important, therefore, to study all of these factors together rather than individually. Lowenstein (1991) found that burnout was caused by a lack of social recognition of teachers, large class sizes, lack of resources, isolation, fear of violence, lack of classroom control, role ambiguity,
limited professional opportunities, and, a lack of support.

**Rationale for the Study**

In light of the fact, it was found that there is paucity of research linking occupational stress and professional burnout of the university teachers in Indian context. For example, there are studies conducted by Amirtagowri and Thiagarajan (2005); Kaur (2005); Kumar (2007); Reddy (2007); Chopra and Gartia (2009); Reddy and Poornima (2009); Balabaskar (2010) and; Poornima (2012) which focused on occupational problems / stress of teachers working in primary, secondary and special schools. The studies by Azeem and Nazir (2008) limited their research to investigate the level of professional burnout among the university teachers and found that they are having high levels of emotional exhaustion. Pandey and Tripathi (2001) examined the level of perceived occupational stress and burnout in 56 engineering college male teachers. Srivastava and Pandey (2000) examined the relationship between role conflict and tension among 100 university employees. Vijayalakshmi (2004) studied the influence of teaching cadre, level of college, type of college and management on the stress of 220 women teachers. Thus, the few studies available in Indian context do not exclusively focus on the occupational stress and professional burnout of the university teachers. The present study is an endeavor to investigate the occupational stress and professional burnout of the university teachers.

**Objectives of the Study**

- To identify the number and percentage of university teachers with low, moderate and high levels of occupational stress.
- To identify the number and percentage of university teachers with low, moderate and high levels of professional burnout.
- To find out the relationship between the dimensions of occupational stress and professional burnout of university teachers.
- To study how far and to what extent the dimensions of occupational stress predicts the dimensions of professional burnout of university teachers.

**Methodology used in the Study**

Survey method is used in the study. The study was conducted from May 2008 to May 2011 with the financial support of University Grants Commission, New Delhi, India.

**Tools used in the Study**

For the purpose of the study, the investigators developed and used the following tools.

- Rating Scale to assess the occupational stress of university teachers – developed and validated by the investigators.
- Rating Scale to assess the professional burnout of the university teachers – adapted and modified the tool developed by Reddy (2007).

Occupational Stress Rating Scale comprises of 50 statements assessing four dimensions (organizational structure and climate, professional and personal efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions and environmental factors) of
occupational stress. Professional Burnout Rating Scale consists of 20 statements assessing emotional exhaustion, de-personalization and personal accomplishment of the university teachers. Each item in both the scales was rated with five gradations. The reliability of the Occupational Stress Rating Scale (0.83) and Professional Burnout Rating Scale (0.87) has been established using Split-half method. The content validity, face validity and intrinsic validity has also been established for the developed tools.

**Locale and Sample of the Study**
The area of the study encompasses two States in South India i.e. Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) and Tamil Nadu (T.N.). For the purpose of the study, the investigator randomly selected 9 State universities (5 universities from A.P. State and 4 from T.N. State) with general specialization. All the teachers working in the faculties of Humanities, Social sciences and Science in the sample universities were taken as the sample of the study. A total of 1500 rating scales were administered to the university teachers working in all the 9 university faculties i.e. Humanities, Social sciences and Sciences. Among 1500 rating scales administered, only 1020 were returned because of absence and out of 1020 only 955 are usable resulting in the response rate of 66 %.

**Statistical Techniques Used in the Study**
The collected data were analyzed using statistical techniques such as mean, SD, mean ± 1 SD, correlation and stepwise multiple regression analysis with the help of SPSS package. The results are tabulated and are discussed hereunder.

**Results and Discussion**

**Number and Percentage of University Teachers with Low, Moderate and High Levels of Occupational Stress (OS)**

To know the number and percentage of teachers falling under low, moderate and high level of occupational stress and professional burnout, mean and SD of occupational stress and professional burnout scores have been calculated, sample wise. By using mean ± 1 SD, the occupational stress scores and professional burnout scores of university teachers have been divided into three levels i.e. low, moderate and high. Accordingly, occupational stress scores 3.49 and above are categorized as high, 2.02 to 3.48 are moderate and 2.01 and below are low. Similarly, the teachers with professional burnout scores 2.70 and above are categorized as high, 1.34 to 2.69 are moderate and scores 1.33 and below are categorized as low. The number and percentage of teachers falling under each group have been worked out and are presented in table-1 and 2.

Table-1 shows the number and percentage of university teachers experiencing low, moderate and high levels of occupational stress aroused out of organizational structure and climate, personal and professional efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions, environmental factors and occupational stress as a whole.
From table-1, it is observed that the majority of teachers working in the universities of south India experience moderate and high levels of occupational stress due to organizational structure and climate (84.72 %), personal and professional efficiency (60.10 %), intra and interpersonal interactions (62.09 %), environmental factors (62.52 %) and occupational stress as a whole (73.93 %). Subsequently, 19.27 percent of teachers owing to organizational structure and climate dimension, 39.90 percent of teachers owing to personal and professional efficiency, 37.38 percent of teachers owing to intra and interpersonal interactions, 37.49 percent of teachers owing to environmental factors and 26.07 percent of teachers owing to occupational stress dimension as a whole, experience high level of occupational stress.

An inter comparison of the dimensions in which the teachers experience stress reveals that more number of teachers experience moderate level of stress due to their organizational structure and climate at the university level. Similarly, the organizational structure and climate is causing higher levels of stress to more percentage of teachers (19.27 %) followed by environmental factors dimension of occupational stress (15.92 %).

From the above, it is concluded that, majority (73.93 %) of the university teachers are experiencing moderate and high levels of stress. The results of the study by Alghar (2008) and Rajeswari et al. (2008) on school teachers; Reddy (2007) and Poornima (2012) on special education teachers; Melendez and de Guzman (1983) and Kanta Rao (2010) on university teachers are consistent with the present findings, where the majority of the respondents experience moderate and high levels of occupational stress. Also, the study by Abouserie (1996) in tertiary sector found that 74.1 percent of the university teaching staff was moderately stressed, and 10.4 percent severely stressed. Further, organizational structure and climate at university level is the major stressor contributing to the teachers stress, as more percentage of teachers...
are experiencing moderate and high levels (84.72%) of stress due to this dimension. In the remaining dimensions of occupational stress i.e. personal and professional efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions, environmental factors and occupational stress as a whole, around 60 percent of teachers experience moderate and high levels of occupational stress.

**Number and Percentage of University Teachers with Low, Moderate and High Levels of Professional Burnout (PB)**

Table-2 depicts the number and percentage of university teachers experiencing low, moderate and high levels of professional burnout due to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and, professional burnout dimension as a whole.

**Table-2: Number and Percentage of Teachers Working in the Universities with Low, Moderate and High Level of Professional Burnout**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Burnout Dimensions</th>
<th>Number and Percentage of Teachers with Low, Moderate and High Levels of Professional Burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low (17.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion (PB₁)</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalization (PB₂)</td>
<td>142 (14.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment (PB₃)</td>
<td>166 (17.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Burnout as a Whole</td>
<td>127 (13.30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Number mentioned in the brackets are in percentage*

It is noted from table-2, the majority of the university teachers experience moderate level of professional burnout due to emotional exhaustion (68.38 %), depersonalization (66.07 %), personal accomplishment (64.82 %) and, professional burnout as a whole (70.88 %). High level of professional burnout was experienced by 19.06 percent of university teachers due to depersonalization followed by 17.80 percent teachers owing to reduced personal accomplishment, 16.02 percent due to professional burnout dimension as a whole and, 14.35 percent due to emotional exhaustion. Further, the minority of the university teachers experience low level of professional burnout due to emotional exhaustion (17.28 %), depersonalization (14.87 %), personal accomplishment (17.38 %) and professional burnout dimension as a whole (13.30 %).

From the above, it can be understood that more number of university teachers are have moderate level of burnout due to their emotional exhaustion (68.38 %) followed by depersonalization (66.07%) and reduced personal accomplishment (64.82%). Similarly, more number of teachers burnout levels are high due to depersonalization (19.06%) followed by personal accomplishment (17.80%) and emotional exhaustion (14.35%).
Relationship between the Dimensions of Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers

To find out the relationship between occupational stress and professional burnout of university teachers, correlations have been worked out and presented in table-3.

Table-3: Correlation between the Dimensions of Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.S.</th>
<th>P.B.</th>
<th>Emotional Exhaustion</th>
<th>Depersonalization</th>
<th>Personal Accomplishment</th>
<th>Professional Burnout as a Whole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Structure and Climate</td>
<td>0.199**</td>
<td>0.241**</td>
<td>0.217**</td>
<td>0.252**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and Professional Efficiency</td>
<td>0.169**</td>
<td>0.212**</td>
<td>0.210**</td>
<td>0.227**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra and Interpersonal Interactions</td>
<td>0.198**</td>
<td>0.185**</td>
<td>0.185**</td>
<td>0.219**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td>0.241**</td>
<td>0.230**</td>
<td>0.232**</td>
<td>0.271**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Stress as a Whole</td>
<td>0.230**</td>
<td>0.248**</td>
<td>0.241**</td>
<td>0.276**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Significant at 0.01 level / **p<0.01

From table-3, it is clear that the first dimension of the occupational stress i.e. organizational structure and climate has significant and positive relationship with all the dimensions of the professional burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion (0.199), depersonalization (0.241), personal accomplishment (0.217) and professional burnout as a whole (0.252) as the calculated r-values are significant at 0.01 level. Similar type of relationship is observed between all the other dimensions of occupational stress i.e. personal and professional efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions, environmental factors and occupational stress as a whole and the dimensions of the professional burnout i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and professional burnout as a whole. Thus the stated hypothesis, ‘there is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of the occupational stress and the dimensions of the professional burnout of the teachers working in the universities of south India’ is accepted.

From the results, it is observed that the university teachers reporting high occupational stress owing to organizational structure and climate, personal and
professional efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions, environmental factors and occupational stress as a whole will report higher level of professional burnout because of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and professional burnout as a whole. For example, the university teachers reporting higher level of work stress owing to intra and interpersonal interactions will also report higher level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and professional burnout as a whole and vice versa.

From the above, it is summed up that all the occupational stress dimensions - organizational structure and climate, personal and professional efficiency, intra and interpersonal interactions, environmental factors and occupational stress as a whole are significantly and positively related to each of the dimensions of the professional burnout - emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and professional burnout as a whole. As the relationship between these dimensions is positive, the higher the occupational stress, the higher will be the professional burnout among university teachers. The results of Wu et al. (2008) on doctors; Pandy and Tripathi (2001) on engineering college teachers; Reddy (2007) on special education teachers; Kaur and Kaur (2007); Misra (1986) on secondary school teachers and Idris (2009) on Malaysian university teachers supported the present findings, where significant positive relationship was found between the occupational stress and professional burnout.

**Prediction of Independent Variables (OS Dimensions) to the Dependent Variables (PB Dimensions) of University Teachers**

In order to explore which of the specific dimensions of occupational stress were important predictors of professional burnout, stepwise multiple regression analysis were undertaken with each of the dimensions of professional burnout as the dependent variable and each of the dimensions of occupational stress as the independent variables. The results of the analysis are presented in table-4.

**Table-4: Prediction of Independent Variables (OS dimensions) to the Dependent Variables (PB dimensions)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>$\beta$ Coefficient</th>
<th>Individual Contribution of the Variable ($R^2$)</th>
<th>% Wise Individual Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PB$_1$</td>
<td>OS$_4$</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB$_2$</td>
<td>OS Total</td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>6.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OS$_3$</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>6.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB$_3$</td>
<td>OS Total</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB Total</td>
<td>OS Total</td>
<td>0.276</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>7.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table-4, it is evident that the occupational stress dimension - environmental factor (OS$_4$) has accounted for 5.8 % of the variance in emotional exhaustion (PB$_1$); whereas, occupational stress as a whole (OS Total) and intra and interpersonal
Occupational Stress and Professional Burnout of University Teachers

interactions (OS₃) of occupational stress dimension accounted for 6.1 % and 6.6 % of the variance respectively in depersonalization (PB₂). In the third dimension of professional burnout i.e. reduced personal accomplishment (PB₃), occupational stress as a whole (OS Total) has accounted for 5.8 % of variance, when professional burnout as a whole (PB Total) is taken into account, occupational stress as a whole accounted for 7.6 % variance.

This result suggests that there is a need to cope with the stressors arousing out of the environmental factors to reduce emotional exhaustion to certain extent. Likewise, the stressors owing to occupational stress as a whole and intra and interpersonal interactions have to be focused to control professional burnout evoked from depersonalization of university teachers. Further, the stressors of occupational stress as a whole should be considered in order to prevent professional burnout evoked out of reduced personal accomplishment and professional burnout as a whole.

**Implications of the Study**

As majority of the university teachers are experiencing stress due to organizational structure and climate, it is paving way to follow stress reduction interventions. The interventions like changing the work environment will reduce the stressors arising out of the organizational structure and climate of the university departments in which the teachers are working. Also, the university teachers are challenged with work overload. This may be because of understaffing. It is observed that in many of the State and Central universities in India, 40 percent of the teaching posts are vacant and are not filled. This can be checked out by filling up the vacancies in the university departments and recruiting adequate supportive staff. Further, the university administration should provide adequate facilities to carry out the teaching-learning and research activities. Moreover, the university administration and head of the respective departments should involve the staff during decision making process and supervisory activities must be supportive to discharge the responsibilities of junior staff than showing authority over them. In addition, opportunities for promotion and career development shall be arranged. Similarly, the rules and regulations should be relaxed to promote autonomy in workplace. Objectivity and transparency should be observed in staff selections and promotions so as to develop work ethics, which is one of the essential aspects to reduce stress among the staff at the universities in India.

Several researches has been conducted to reduce stress in teachers such as introduction of stress management programmes, say for example emotional intelligence training which helps the teachers to be self aware of the abilities and skills required for the range of roles, responsibilities and demands of their work, manage emotional reactions to specific situations and people, accurately pick-up on emotions in other people and react to others emotions and understanding others needs and, socially skilled enough to use awareness of one’s own emotions and the emotions of others to manage interactions successfully. Also, Steel (2001) suggested for introducing staff support for teachers through supervision in the field of education. Supervision in other helping professions has been successful in providing support, changing perceptions, managing emotions and coping with stressful situations and in so doing has improved relationships with others and work performance.
In addition to these, the cognitive behavioural programme to enhance teacher stress management shall be taught to overcome stress. In this technique, the individual is encouraged to reappraise or restructure the stressful situations so that they are no longer stressful by removing cognitive distortion such as over-generalizing, magnifying and personalization and introducing assertiveness training (Travers and Cooper, 1996). Further, the Employee Assistance Programs or Counseling Services shall be adopted by the university administration apart from organizing yoga classes and sports activities regularly to reduce the stressors in university teachers.

With regard to the professional burnout, the majority of the university teachers are experiencing moderate and high levels of burnout. For this, the university should develop mechanisms to detect the stressors causing strain in university teachers. Further, in order to reduce professional burnout, Greenglass and Burke (2003) suggested for social support, where it is seen as the exchange of information leading a person to believe that he/she is cared for. It can also involve provision of information, tangible, practical and for emotional help. Social support may also moderate the impact of stressors on burnout so as to assist people with high stress to cope better.

Thus the colleagues and the head of the department should be motivated to support the teachers adequately in their teaching and research activities in order to reduce burnout. Further, the administration should be supportive and facilitative than authoritative. Also, low self-efficacy is a central factor in the etiology of burnout (Cherniss, 1990). High self-efficacy was associated with lower emotional exhaustion, less cynicism, less depression and anxiety (Greenglass and Burke, 2000). Thus there is a need to improve the self-efficacy of the university teachers which acts as a personal resource, reflects the persons optimistic self-beliefs about being able to deal with critical demands by means of adaptive actions. It can also be regarded as an optimistic view of one’s capacity to deal with stress (Greenglass and Burke, 2003).

In order to reduce burnout caused due to reduced personal accomplishment, the university teachers should be motivated to set goals and should be supported to achieve the goal. The work should be allotted in such a manner that suits to their skill and interest which will give scope to accomplish the task which in-turn will improves their optimistic behaviour. Also, involving the university teachers in group discussions and decision – making process will enhance their social interaction which will lead to accomplish the task allotted.

Further, the results revealed significant positive relationship between occupational stress and professional burnout. Thus to prevent professional burnout of the university teachers, their occupational stress should be checked from time to time. Also, occupational stress has predicted the professional burnout of the university teachers which once again recommend the policy makers, national bodies, university administrators & teachers and researchers to work towards managing the stressors causing prolonged stress in university teachers which in turn prevent their burnout.
References


