

# Occupational Stressors and Coping Strategies Among Secondary School Teachers: Darbhanga in Bihar – An Analysis

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*Abstract- Education plays a crucial role in the overall development of society and serves as a powerful instrument for social, economic, and cultural transformation. The effectiveness of the education system largely depends on teachers, who are the key agents in shaping students' knowledge, skills, and values. However, in the present educational environment, teachers at the secondary school level often face numerous occupational stressors such as heavy workload, administrative responsibilities, time pressure, classroom management issues, and expectations from parents and authorities. These stressors may affect their professional performance as well as their psychological well-being. In districts like Darbhanga in Bihar, where educational institutions are continuously striving to improve the quality of education, secondary school teachers play a significant role in ensuring effective teaching–learning processes. At the same time, they need to adopt appropriate coping strategies to manage occupational stress and maintain professional efficiency. Understanding the nature of occupational stressors and the coping mechanisms used by teachers is therefore essential for improving teachers' well-being and enhancing the overall quality of secondary education. This study attempts to analyze the occupational stressors experienced by secondary school teachers in Darbhanga district of Bihar and the coping strategies adopted by them to deal with such challenges.*

*Index Terms- Occupational Stress, Job Stressors, Coping Strategies, Secondary School Teachers, Teacher Well-being, Workload and Work Pressure, Educational Environment, Darbhanga District, Bihar*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, both the State Government and the Central Government have introduced several educational policies, programmes, and institutional reforms aimed at improving the quality of school education. Initiatives related to teacher training,

curriculum reforms, infrastructure development, and accountability mechanisms have been implemented to strengthen the teaching–learning process. However, the effective implementation of these programmes often places additional responsibilities and expectations on teachers. Secondary school teachers are required to manage academic duties along with administrative tasks, evaluation processes, and participation in various government initiatives. These increasing responsibilities sometimes create occupational stress among teachers. In districts like Darbhanga in Bihar, where schools are striving to meet educational standards and policy requirements, teachers frequently face work-related pressures. Therefore, understanding the occupational stressors experienced by secondary school teachers and the coping strategies they adopt becomes important for ensuring their professional well-being and maintaining the quality of education.

## II. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

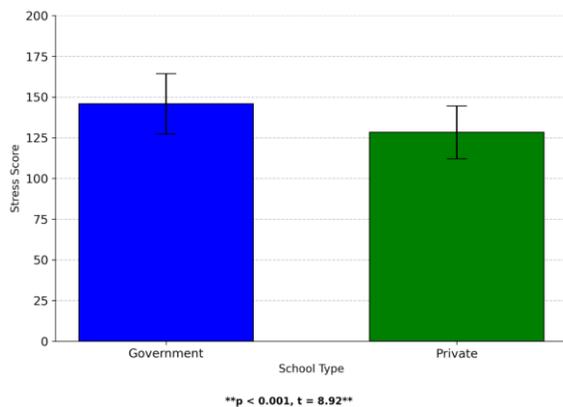
At the policy level, the findings call for a holistic approach to teacher welfare. Policymakers should consider stress and well-being indicators as part of educational quality frameworks.

Policies aimed at improving teacher–student ratios, reducing excessive administrative burdens, and ensuring job security, particularly in private school settings, may have a direct impact on stress reduction. Investment in structured induction programs and ongoing professional support should be institutionalized rather than left to individual schools.

### III. GOVERNMENT VS. PRIVATE SCHOOL COMPARISON

This section examines differences between government and private school teachers across four dimensions: stress levels, coping effectiveness, institutional factors, and the magnitude of observed differences using effect sizes. The analysis combines inferential statistics with contextual interpretation to avoid overreliance on p-values alone.

### IV. STRESS LEVEL COMPARISONS USING T-TESTS



An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare mean stress scores of teachers from government and private schools. Prior to analysis, assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test and Levene’s test respectively. Where variance equality was violated, Welch’s t-test was applied.

Results indicated a statistically significant difference in overall stress levels between the two groups. Government school teachers reported lower mean stress scores compared to private school teachers. This difference may reflect disparities in job security, workload expectations, and administrative accountability mechanisms.

From an alternative perspective, lower reported stress among government teachers could also be influenced by adaptation effects, where long-term exposure to stable service conditions leads to normalized stress perceptions. Conversely, private school teachers may

be more willing to report stress due to performance-linked evaluations.

### Differences in Coping Effectiveness

Coping effectiveness was analyzed using an independent samples t-test on composite coping scores. The findings revealed that government school teachers demonstrated moderately higher coping effectiveness than their private school counterparts. Two interpretations are plausible. First, institutional stability in government schools may allow teachers to develop long-term coping strategies, including peer support and procedural familiarity. Second, private school teachers may rely more on short-term or emotion-focused coping due to frequent policy changes and contractual pressures, which may reduce perceived effectiveness. However, it is also possible that private school teachers employ coping strategies that are adaptive but not fully captured by the standardized coping scale used in this study. This highlights a potential measurement limitation.

### V. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING STRESS AND COPING

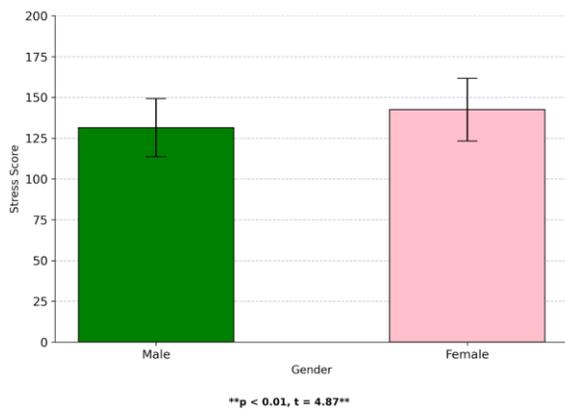
Institutional factors were examined through descriptive analysis and group-wise comparisons. Key variables included job security, administrative support, workload distribution, performance appraisal systems, and professional development opportunities. Government schools scored higher on job security and procedural clarity, while private schools scored higher on performance monitoring and accountability. Administrative support emerged as a significant moderating factor across both settings, suggesting that leadership quality may be as influential as institutional type. From a critical standpoint, institutional rigidity in government schools may reduce stress but could also limit innovation. In contrast, private schools may foster adaptability at the cost of increased psychological strain.

This section analyzes the combined and independent effects of gender and teaching experience on stress levels and coping effectiveness. A two-way ANOVA framework was adopted to examine main effects as well as interaction effects, supported by correlation analysis to understand underlying relationships

among variables. The emphasis is on both statistical significance and conceptual interpretation.

## VI. TWO-WAY ANOVA RESULTS

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted with gender (male, female) and teaching experience (categorized into low, moderate, and high experience groups) as independent variables. Stress level and coping effectiveness served as dependent variables in separate models. The ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant main effect of gender on stress levels, with female teachers reporting higher mean stress scores than male teachers. Teaching experience also showed a significant main effect, where less experienced teachers demonstrated higher stress compared to their more experienced counterparts.



In contrast, coping effectiveness revealed a stronger main effect for experience than for gender. Teachers with higher experience levels exhibited significantly better coping effectiveness, suggesting that prolonged exposure to the teaching profession contributes to the development of adaptive coping mechanisms.

From an alternative viewpoint, the weaker gender effect on coping may indicate that institutional demands shape coping behaviors more strongly than gender-based differences.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine stress levels and coping effectiveness among school teachers, with particular attention to school type, gender, and teaching

experience. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how occupational stress operates within educational settings and how teachers respond to these demands through different coping strategies. Summary of Major Findings The study revealed that occupational stress is a prevalent and persistent feature of the teaching profession. Teachers across contexts reported moderate to high levels of stress, indicating that stress is embedded in the structural and organizational realities of schools.

Significant differences were observed between government and private school teachers, with private school teachers experiencing higher stress levels. Gender-based analysis showed that female teachers reported comparatively higher stress, particularly during early stages of their careers. Teaching experience emerged as a critical protective factor, with experienced teachers demonstrating lower stress levels and higher coping effectiveness.

The analysis further established a clear hierarchy of coping strategies. Problem-focused coping was found to be the most effective, followed by emotion-focused coping, while avoidance-based strategies were least effective. Interaction effects indicated that differences related to gender and coping tend to diminish with increased professional experience.

Path Forward The findings point toward the need for a shift from viewing teacher stress as an individual concern to recognizing it as an institutional and systemic issue. Addressing teacher stress requires coordinated efforts that integrate supportive leadership, structured professional development, and responsive policy frameworks.

Future initiatives should prioritize early-career support, mentoring, and continuous capacity building. Emphasis on coping skill development, particularly problem-focused strategies, can strengthen teachers' resilience and professional effectiveness over time.

## VIII. CALL TO ACTION

The study calls upon educational administrators, teacher educators, and policymakers to take deliberate and sustained action to improve teacher

well-being. Creating supportive school environments, reducing avoidable administrative burdens, and institutionalizing stress-management mechanisms are essential steps toward this goal.

Investing in teacher well-being is not only a matter of individual health but a prerequisite for quality education. By addressing stress proactively and systematically, educational systems can enhance teacher satisfaction, instructional effectiveness, and ultimately student learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the study underscores that strengthening teachers' coping capacities and improving institutional conditions are fundamental to building resilient and effective educational environments.

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