



A Critical Analysis Of The Stress Inducing Factors In Special and Inclusive Education System

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate stress inducing factors in a working environment for special educators in Pakistan. In this country, three systems of Education at present operate 1. Normal schools 2. Special Education Schools and 3. Inclusive Schools. In the last named special students of only the lower classes are accommodated. Problems associated with work environment in Pakistan are wide ranging and have very severe effect on the personality of the person, especially when working with children in special setting or in inclusive settings with mental retardation or physical impairment. Dealing with the special person is a stress producing work, to deal with them needs mental agility and analytical abilities and skills which can be produced through education training skills and supporting agencies. It was hypothesized that subjects who work with special children are facing more mental stress than the subject working with inclusive education children. The sample consisted of forty special teachers, twenty from each category. Findings suggested that teachers very often feel stress due to professional demands and ambiguous job description, parental pressure, non-supportive behavior and lack of student motivation. Teachers working in mainstream inclusive education setting feel less stress.

Keywords :

1. INTRODUCTION

Many special educators spend more time each day working physically or mentally than in any other activity. Those people who work with special children have to spend more time in their planning activities. Teaching and dealing with different behavior problems, can be identified as stress inducing or producing mental tension or working conditions adapting to it could be costly not only for the Special Educator but even for others related to that person; such as family members or even those for whom the person works. We have to identify exactly what makes a job or work stressful or hazardous to one's mental or physical health?

There are many occupations that look very easy, joyful or stress free from outside yet the experience of the worker may be different and how he or she feels about it is also very

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important to know. Occupational stress may be defined as the conditions in which same factor or combination of factors at work interacts with the worker or disrupts his or her psychological or physiological homeostasis. Margolic of Kroes 1974 says that stress on the job is most likely to occur when there is a poor fit between person and environment. This can happen when the job makes demands beyond the worker's abilities (overload) or when worker's needs are frustrated by a stimulating job (stimulus under load) some jobs are felt overloaded when unexpected work or unrelated work which were not initially mentioned in job description are included, As in a special school setting he or she is also expected to visit homes or do physical labor with special children such as shifting a physically special child from wheel chair to class seat etc. These types of overloads are the basic reason for increased level of stress and dissatisfaction which directly affects performance level

Some level of stress need not occasion complaint, they produce or develop a working level or push the person to face challenging conditions but excess of this tension producing condition can induce high level mental or physical tension which is not good for creative minds and leads to physical or mental disorders. Physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs are necessary to fulfill for good health but in addition as human beings we also need a social environment to enrich our abilities for fruitful work.

The recent studies indicate that the major cause of mental or physical stress is an individual's inability to cope with the stress (Shaw Bensky & Dixon 1981). More often teachers' experience excessive clerical work time pressure, and over-crowded class rooms, additional supervisory duties, dissatisfaction with salary, interruptions during the school day. However maintenance of standards and the implementation of individualized instructions appear to cause lesser degree of stress (Schmedab Nagata 1982) not only these factors but some personal factors such as personality habits, physical conditions, family circumstances and educational or professional command on situations also affect personal performance. Some of the factors which are identified for special educators are workload, lack of perceived success, amount of direct contact with special children, programme structure and role clarification (M. Waseem 1993)

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The special objective of the study was to investigate the factors in special and inclusive education settings which lead to stress, and suggest steps to avoid or minimize them. For an analysis it was found that the following lines of inquiry were preliminary:

1. To study the difference in level of stress among the teachers working with special children in special schools and in inclusive education schools
2. To inveterate the job related factors producing effects on performance level of both categories of special teachers.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study was selected using two sample frames the teachers at the schools of special children and the teachers working in inclusive education. As both are thought to be very energy consuming, twenty teachers from each categories were selected randomly and structured questions were given to them to get their responses. Questionnaires were set around eight parameters which are supposed to produce a stressful situation for the teacher. The total number of special schools in Karachi is eighteen and inclusive schools are only three. Since the working condition of teachers catering only to special children in inclusive schools resemble the working condition of instructors in special schools. We need to inquire whether a mainstreaming process requires the same teacher to cater to normal and special children, and whether special children of a lower class cause less stress

than special children in a higher class. Thus the present study is an exploratory study to discover how far teachers working with special persons are affected by the environmental factors and to explore those factors which can produce mental stress on them.

4. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

- There is a relationship between teachers experience and stress.
- Teachers working with special institute children feel more stress than the teachers working in inclusive settings.
- Professional teachers have more coping skills with stress than the non professional teachers.
- Environmental factors in special educational institutions are more stressful than in inclusive schools.

Data

Table-1
Stress due to parental pressure
 *L= Low stress, M= Medium stress, H=High stress

	Teachers in Special Schools			Teachers in Inclusive Schools		
	L	M	H	L	M	H
Parents of my students are a source of concern for me	1	2	6	2	2	1
Parents disinterest cause concern	0	1	6	0	2	3
Parents think I am not doing a satisfactory job	0	0	2	1	1	3
Parents complaint to Administration	0	2	0	0	2	2
Total	1	5	14	3	7	9

Table-2
Stress due to non availability of resources

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Things are not provided at time	1	1	6	1	4	4
Less resources give stress	1	1	4	1	2	3
Concern at non availability of resource person	0	4	2	0	2	3
Total	2	6	12	2	8	10

Table 3:
Stress due to time management

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Paper work needs much time	1	1	5	2	3	2
Class assignment is not completed in time	0	2	2	1	1	2
Difficulty felt in organizing working time	0	0	4	1	2	1
Need to work at home	0	1	4	1	2	2
Total	1	4	15	5	8	7

**Table 4:
Stress due to interpersonal conflicts**

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Feel incompetent	1	1	3	0	2	1
Feel helpless	0	2	2	0	0	1
Left all other activities to complete my work	0	0	2	1	1	2
Family members are angry with me	1	1	3	1	0	3
I feel exhausted	0	0	4	1	2	5
Total	2	4	14	3	5	12

**Table 5:
Stress due to employee-admin. relation**

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Difficulty in working relation	2	2	0	2	1	1
Extra work demand by administration	0	0	4	2	1	5
No appreciation of work	0	3	4	0	2	0
No chances of promotion	2	1	0	1	0	2
Favoritism of administrator	0	0	2	1	2	0
Total	4	6	10	6	6	8

**Table 6:
Experience**

Experience	L	M	H	L	M	H
0-2 Years	1	2	1	3	3	0
3-5 Years	4	4	1	1	1	1
6-8 Years	3	1	0	8	1	0
Above 8 Years	3	0	0	2	0	0
Total	11	7	2	14	5	1

**Table 7:
Professional qualification**

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Professionally Trained	4	4	0	9	0	1
Untrained	2	5	2	5	4	0
Done certificate course	1	0	2	0	1	0
Total	7	9	4	14	5	1

**Table 8:
Student Behavior**

	L	M	H	L	M	H
Class Discipline	0	0	4	1	1	0
Non-Responsiveness	2	3	2	0	1	6
Lack of motivation	1	2	2	3	3	2
Hyperactivity	0	0	4	2	1	2
Total	3	5	12	6	6	10

Table 9:
Psychological, emotional and physical symptoms

Symptoms	L	M	H	L	M	H
Complaining to others	4	4	12	2	10	8
Frustration	0	2	18	3	6	11
Anger	10	4	6	8	2	10
Perennial worry	6	8	6	5	6	9
Depression	5	3	12	8	6	6
Constant tension	3	7	10	8	8	4
Feel like resigning the job	3	7	10	14	4	2
Feel like giving up the profession	11	2	7	10	4	6

5. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

- Results in table 1 indicate that in both the systems, in special schools and in inclusive school system, parental pressure is the most stress inducing factor while parental disinterest is also an important factor.
- Results in table 2 indicate that the non-availability of resources is a factor producing tension or stress among both the groups.
- Results in table 3 indicate that heavy paper work is an important factor for producing stress among both the groups.
- Results in table 4 indicate that interpersonal conflicts are high-level stress producing factor for teachers of special schools while teachers in inclusive schools feel medium level stress due to interpersonal conflicts.
- Table 5 shows that extra work demand is the most high stress producing factor in inclusive schools.
- Results in table 6 show that in both the groups' teachers with experience are less affected by stress or tension than the teachers with less experience.
- Results in table 7 show that teachers in inclusive schools having professional training are less affected by stress situation than by the teachers in special schools who are not trained.
- Table 8 indicates that student's class in discipline and hyperactivity produces stress in teachers of special schools while non-responsiveness is the stress producing factor for teachers in inclusive schools.
- Table 9 shows that teachers who are working in special schools are highly frustrated, they mostly complain to others, feel depressed while teachers working in inclusive schools have been computed as less frustrated.

6. CONCLUSION

All these results clearly show that those working with special children in special school setting develop more stress and frustration as compared to those working in inclusive school setting. Therefore we need to consider these factors and try to improve working conditions in special schools, if we want our children to have good teachers or good

working environment as prolonged stress can lead to a wide range of serious disorders.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Employees, especially teachers who are working with special children should know in advance very clearly about the demand of work so orientation program should be included in their training programme.
- Realistic goals should be set, for both teachers and students to minimize stress and tension
- Duties should be divided according to physical & mental capabilities
- Rest & recreation should be given annually & it must be compulsory
- Such tasks such as extra paper work and clerical duties should be delegated to non teaching staff
- Emphasis should be given to team work. Involving whole staff in discussion and planning will improve stressful environment
- Medical checkup of the staff working with special persons should be done regularly
- Inclusive education system should be encouraged and applied for special persons.

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Anjum Bano Kazimi

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