

## **ABSTRACT of PhD Study**

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**Title: A Study of Resilience to Stress and Burnout among Government School Teachers**

### **ABSTRACT**

The present study was inspired by the growing phenomenon of stress and burnout among teachers. The focus of the study, however, was not to merely identify the magnitude and nature of these constructs among teachers. The study aimed to look at teacher stress and burnout from the lens of preventive and promotional mental health and addressed the constructs of stress and burnout from the perspective of effective coping and building resilience as the main thrust areas. The study is located in the discipline of mental health and positive psychology, and embedded in the locale and context of Government Schools of Delhi. The objectives of the study were: 1) to find out the level of stress and burnout experienced by Government School teachers of Delhi; 2) to find out the level of different types of coping strategies employed by these teachers to build their resilience; 3) to investigate how Government School Teachers of Delhi build their resilience by identifying the personal attributes of teachers, finding out the role of organization, role of milieu and role of life experiences of teachers in development of resilience in them and; 4) to formulate/suggest coping strategies for building resilience among Government School teachers of Delhi.

The design of the study had both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. However, the study was primarily qualitative in nature with respect to the main aim. It intended to explore the phenomenon of resilience in Government School Teachers in-depth. Teachers' own self-reporting and narrations were used to ascertain their personal and professional journey in the profession of teaching in order to find out how they build resilience.

The study was carried out in two phases. The first phase of the study was an exploratory survey of 137 teachers where the main aim was to ascertain the extent and magnitude of stress and burnout among them along with levels of their coping. Second phase of the study, the main part of the study, aimed at probing deeper into the experiential world of the sample of teachers identified from the first phase. It concerned itself with the perceptions, views and lived experiences of the teachers so as to understand the phenomenon of development of resilience to stress and burnout.

The population was identified as all the secondary and senior secondary teachers teaching in Government Schools of Delhi run by Delhi Administration. The initial sample for the first phase of the study consisted of 137 teachers teaching in different Government Schools of Delhi. Sample for phase II was a subset of phase I sample. It was a purposive sample identified from phase I. Based on the findings of phase I of the study, two groups of 10 teachers each were identified viz., those demonstrating high degree of resilience labelled as 'more resilient' teachers and those displaying low degree of resilience labelled as 'less resilient teachers'. The criteria for identification of these teachers for phase two was based on the scores obtained by these teachers on stress, burnout and coping scales administered to them in the first phase of the study.

In Phase I, sampled teachers' stress, burnout and coping levels were found out by using three standardized tools viz., Teachers' Occupational Stress Scale (TOSS) by Sajid Jamal and Abdul Raheem (2007); Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educator's Survey (MBI-ES) by Christina Maslach, Susan E. Jackson and Richard L. Schwab (1996) and; Coping Strategies Scale by A.K. Srivastava (2001) respectively. A thematic, semi-structured and open ended interview schedule was designed for interaction with teachers in phase II of the study.

Findings revealed that almost 50% teachers (50.36%) in the sample reported above average stress levels, while for the remaining majority (44.52%) stress levels were average. Regarding levels of burnout, sampled teachers were found to suffer from low levels of burnout in the dimensions of 'Depersonalization' and 'Personal Accomplishment' of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). On 'Emotional Exhaustion' dimension, however, moderate levels of burnout are experienced by them. As far as coping levels were concerned, the overall level of Approach Coping in the sample was found to be moderate, while the level of avoidance coping was found to be low. The study revealed that the personal attributes and competencies most often associated with resilient teachers include the broad categories of social competence, metacognition, autonomy and a sense of purpose and belief in bright future. The study also highlighted the critical role played by organization, milieu and relationships in enhancing teachers' resilience. Teachers' resilience appeared to be built and promoted through fostering mutual, encouraging, and empowering relationships within these domains. It was with the support of significant relationships developed by these teachers, both in their personal and professional lives, with their students, colleagues, friends, and family that their resilience appeared to be enhanced. Nurturance of these relationships also built their self-esteem and positive teacher identity. Thus, what emerges is that to build resilience it is more important to strengthen the relationships than increasing an individual's strength. The crucial message from the analysis of this dimension is that everyone surrounding the teachers plays an active role in building their resilience. Based on the findings, some coping strategies were formulated for development of resilience among Government School Teachers of Delhi. These were broadly divided into four categories viz., Behavioural Coping Strategies, Cognitive Coping Strategies, Lifestyle Management Strategies and Psycho-social Strategies.

