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***A Study to find out Organizational Stress among Special Education Teachers in Govt. Special Education Centers in Punjab***

**ABSTRACT**

*The aim of the study was to find out the factors which create stress among special education teachers teaching in government special education centers in Punjab. The study was related to the SET of Govt. Special Education Centers in Punjab. Punjab province is comprised of 9 divisions. Due to limited time and resources, the study was delimited to GSECs of Gujranwala division. Qualitative research approach had been used to conduct this study. Data was collected from 14 SETs of all specialization regarding disabilities from six GSECs. Open ended interview schedule was used as data collection tools. Through thematic analysis it was found that teachers working as SETs are facing a number of factors those created stress among them. They identified stress in four main areas as administrative stress from department as top of the list, acceptance from colleagues, extra duties in the centers, attitudes of parents, medical threats of Covid-19 and Dengue and financial burden too. They were in demanding a comprehensive roadmap and long term plan to overcome these types of stress. They further demanding flexible response from divisional level administration to accommodate immediate issues within division level too.*

**Keywords:** Stress, SETs (Special Education Teachers), GSECs (Govt. Special Education Centers), Covid-19, Dengue.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. What is Stress and Organizational Stress?**

Stress refers to any pressure or force exerted either by one person or many on another or on one's self beyond his or her tolerable limit. It can be due to work, family or personal demands and problems and even health difficulties (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Sometimes, stress is described as organizational stress in an organizational context meaning stress results when employees believe their central environment or the demands placed on them are beyond their ability to handle. Organizational stress affects both the quality of life of workers and their performance; stress causes burnout, lack of morale and job satisfaction (Selye 1976).

### **1.2. Some information about Organizational Stress in teaching professions.**

It is unfortunate that teaching is considered one of the most stressful occupations mainly because of the amount of stress that is required. Teachers work under pressure due to overload of work, demands to attend to the feelings and attitudes of students, inadequate equipment, and difficult working conditions which cause stress among teachers (Kyriacou, 2001). The current study shows that stress levels are even higher amongst Special Education Teachers (SETs) due to the job description which entails working with students with disabilities, lack of preparedness, the degree of difficulty involved in handling classes for students with these challenges and physical stress from the students. Also, SETs encounter administrative difficulties, social pressure, and questions related to the communication with parents to deal with additional sources of stress.

Specific stressors may include burnout, lack of support from colleagues and inadequate professional development in the teaching assignments for SETs employed in GSECs; all these areas may significantly decrease the quality of experiences offered by the SETs to learners as well as greatly reduce job satisfaction levels in the organization. A great deal of job related stress has been found to ultimately reduce teacher effectiveness by contributing to burn out, truancy and low work productivity, it therefore imperative to unravel the causes of stress in the teaching profession and ways of addressing the problem therefore (Akinbode, 2012).

### **1.3. Why Stress should be studied among Special Education Teachers (SETs)?**

The identification of organizational stress amongst SETs is significant because it has an influence on the achievement of special education programmes and the health of tutors. In an educational system of a given country, clients' performances depend on the quality of teaching. Thus, it can be assumed that when stress level in SETs is high, its impact can be detrimental not only for teaching actions, engagement of students and outcomes of special education projects. Moreover, it was found that special education teachers spend time with students with higher needs which not only generates extra load of work, along with increased levels of stress emotionally and in some physical aspects (Goh, 2016).

Furthermore, limited attention has been given to studying organizational stress in SETs and especially in the regard to the government-operated special education centers in Punjab where SETs may experience such difficulties as lack of resource provision, administrative support, and influence of regional epidemics including the Covid-19 pandemic. Through an analysis of the stress sources in SETs, this study seeks to pinpoint factors that negatively contribute to the performance of teachers while giving suggestions for changes.

#### **1.4. Simplified Historical Background of Punjab Territory and the Concentration on the Gujranwala Area**

It is the second largest province of Pakistan in terms of population, constituted with nine divisions and all of them has their own problems regarding education system. The Government Special Education Centers (GSECs) in the Punjab province deal with educating the disabled and special needs children and this job means that the teachers who are going to handle these children should be highly trained and motivated. However, these self employed teachers, as a set, are on a crucial position of the current education system and yet, they experience the following stress factors.

Consequently, this study focusses only on the GSECs that operate in the Gujranwala division of Punjab been adopted because of its geographical position and the fact that it contains masses of government-established special education centers. Due to the harsh reality of conditions teachers in various parts of the country, it is necessary to extent the findings of stress factors existing in this division and ways to overcome them. This research also explores the context of Covid-19 – the unfolding pandemic and the ongoing equally deadly Dengue health crisis which has compounded challenges faced by SETs and hampered their efficient functioning.

#### **1.5. Theoretical Framework.**

The Theoretical Framework of this study is the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Richard S. Lazarus and Susan Folkman, 1984. By the use of this model, stress is viewed as arising from an individual's perception that an event or situation is threatening, demanding or beyond one's control, and that available resources to cope with the event are inadequate. The model postulates that appraisal and coping are the identifying factors defining the stress reaction.

In view of the various stressors constituting SETs, this framework may be useful in understanding how teachers cognitively appraise stressors at their workplace such as administrative demands, disease risks (Covid-19 and Dengue), or interrelating with colleagues or parents. It also proposes which organisational support and successful coping strategies are necessary for decreasing stress levels and enhancing wellbeing of teachers.

Furthermore, among Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (1959) there are some dominant sources of job content stress. Herzberg identified that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two factors. Organizational hygiene requirements such as working conditions, wages and clerical support and organizational motivations such as incentives, recognition, promotions and challenge. Concerning the hygiene factors of SETs, showing concern for Administrative support and even working conditions to reduce stress and hence enhancing job satisfaction for increased productivity to support SET's work.

#### **1.6. Statement of the Problem**

Organizational stressors present in the working environment of Special Education Teachers/trainers in the Punjab province working in the GSECs undermine their professional productivity thereby affecting their professional and personal health. This stressors include specious pressure from the administrative, lack of support form the colleagues, extra burden, negative attitudes from the parents, health threats like Covid-19, Dengue and financial stress. Although stress has recently gained much attention as a major concern in the teaching profession and especially SETs, little research evidence exists on stressors specifically operating within the context of GSECs in Punjab, especially in the Gujranwala division.

This study aims to narrow this gap through a cross-sectional survey that examines the sources of organizational stress among SETs and propose possible solutions in the Gujranwala division. The result of the study will be beneficial for policy recommendations concerning the working

conditions of SETs consequently the quality of education being offered to children with disabilities in the region.

### **1.6. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To know about those stress factors that are imposing stress on Special Education Teachers (SETs) working in Government Special Education Centers (GSECs) in Gujranwala division of Punjab.
2. To explore how these stressors. Administrative issues, interactions with the colleagues, parental attitudes, threats to health, and financial challenges affect the level of stress and productivity of SETs.
3. How GSECs might reduce its SETs' stress level and enhance working conditions in view of the stress factors highlighted.

### **1.7. Research Questions**

In line with the objectives, the following research questions guide this study.

1. The objective of this study is to identify the nine major organizational stressors that influence the Special Education Teachers (SETs) employed in the Government Special Education Centers (GSECs) in Gujranwala division of Punjab.
2. Where and how do SETs in GSECs experiences of administrative, social, and health related stress originate?
3. Based on the analysis of stress in GSECs of Punjab and working conditions of SETs the following recommendations could be suggested.

### **1.8. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to SETs in GSECs of the Gujranwala division in Punjab province of Pakistan only. Due to time and resource constraints, this study is limited to this geographic region. Although these findings may be generalizable to other areas of Punjab or similar contexts, attention to Gujranwala as a context highlights the realities of SETs in this division. The study has low internal validity due to a small number of SETs observed, 14, thus reducing the generalization potency of the results. However, due to the exploratory nature of the study there is a possibility of bias in the interpretation of the responses though every measures has been taken to ensure quality data was gathered and analysed.

### **1.9. Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research is the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The study hypothesises that; organisational stress of SETs depends on the following; administrative issues, interactions with other colleagues, parents and health risk factors, financial burdens and student loans. The framework also indicates the appropriateness of coping strategy and the organizational support system that may help to decrease the pressure and improve the quality of SET's life.

### **1.10. Significance of the Study**

Thus, the present study is considered important as it uncovers the problem of organizational stress among SETs and reveals specific factors fostering stress in the GSECs in Punjab. Locating these stressors will enable the study to recommend intervention measures aimed at enhancing SET working conditions, hence the work satisfaction, decrease in burnout, and overall better performances by students with disabilities. The study will also offer directions to

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policy makers, administrator's leaders in education to work towards enhancing supportive working environment for SETs.

### **1.11. Definition of Terms**

- Stress. A feeling of tension or stress while facing problems or in response to pressure.
- Organizational Stress. Stress referring to conditions that emanate from work demands and the physical and social context within which people work.
- Special Education Teachers (SETs). Teachers specially trained to deal with learners with physical, mental, and learning impairments.
- Government Special Education Centers (GSECs). Schools which have been set by the government and aims at offering specialized education and care for children with disability.
- Gujranwala Division. Explanation of one of the nine districts in Punjab, Pakistan where the study is set.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Stress at Learning Institutions**

Job stress is common in schools hence affecting teachers both academically and emotionally. Often understood as the work-related psychological, emotional, and even physical stress, burnout is a critical factor in managing job satisfaction (Kyriacou, 2011; Greenberg, 2011). Of all the identified stressors, teachers' workload, learner management, and relationship with classmates and teachers or educators, and other administrator's causes stress to them (Leka et al., 2011). Stress results in burn out and healthcompromised workers who deliver suboptimal performances (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2017). Teachers all over the world are affected by these pressures. Teacher stress leads to poor attendance, low morale and early retirement (Cooper & Quick, 2017). According to Schultz et al., 2012, the mentioned impacts require efficient stress prevention measures to be applied.

### **2.2 Sources of Stress for Teachers. A Global and Regional Analysis.**

Stressors differ across system, but have similarities globally. Some of these stress sources include overloaded working schedule, students' behavior and lack of adequate necessities (Bennett et al., 2019). A big global concern is workload; teachers are under pressure to prepare lessons, to mark students' assignments, and perform professional duties without enough administrative help (Greenberg, 2011). Further, difficult student behaviors cause stress when no efficient measures are being employed to handle this aspect in schools (Kyriacou, 2011). In areas such as Punjab, lack of infrastructure, cramped classrooms, and relative dearth of supplies can have an impact on teacher stress especially those working in public institutions. In addition, student concern, instructional difficulty, and poor learning environment exacerbate the emotional and professional demands of special education teachers in the region because of poor support, training, and infrastructure (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

### **2.3 Special Considerations In Special Education.**

SETs have been described to contain higher stress than other teachers since they are presumed to have extra obligations particularly on running EBD students. Such difficulties demand almost daily adaptation of lessons and individualized instructions, which in turn result in emotional fatigue and burnout (Hakanen et al., 2021). Stressors include emotional demands which refer to dealing with difficult students and handling interactions (Schultz et al., 2012). SETs continue to operate under inadequate resource provisions; worse in regions such as the developing Punjab region. Many teachers are ill-prepared, undersupported, and under-

resourced, and they systematically fail to deliver for students while their lack of proficiency makes them feel ineffectual (Leka et al., 2011; Kyriacou, 2011). Essential sources of colleague and administrative support that can help decrease stress levels remain inadequate, leaving all the teaching staff overwhelmed and lonely (Selye, 2010).

Such problems are particularly evident in Punjab's Government Special Education Centers (GSECs). The teachers work under pressure, relatively large class sizes, high levels of individualization for each class, and severe student learning disorders on the other hand, the level of preparation and training is very limited. These challenges, together with systematic marginalization, create pressure, and high demands on SETs (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2017).

## **2.4 Conclusion.**

Vulnerable self-directed stress is common internationally with teachers experiencing demand-related, workload, behavioural and resource stresses in educational settings. Special education teachers are particularly at risk due to their specificity of their responsibilities and conditions of the working environment required to meet needs of students with disabilities. In Punjab, stress is magnified by low resources, facilities, and training in interpersonal relations all the years when the GSECs are on function. Alleviating these stressors is dawn imperative to supporting teacher health and to specializing quality instruction to students with learning disabilities. Prevention strategies for these assignments can assist build instructor strength and promote proper instructional success.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This study used a qualitative research methodology to assess organizational stress of Special Education Teachers (SETs) in Government Special Education Centers (GSECs) in Gujranwala division. The choice of a qualitative design was made based on the fact that it can help to get deeper understanding of participants' experience and their view on the problem in particular and on the world in general (Creswell, 2014).

The author had restricted this study to the Gujranwala division since it captured heterogeneity of urban and rural educational environment and was geographically convenient for the researcher. It allowed the enough delineation of contextual stress factors peculiar for this region, as Patton (2002) pointed out.

Participants completed semi-structured opened-ended interviews about the program and knowledge acquired. In this way, participants incorporated SETs from various GSECs and varied opinions are represented. The current study used purposeful sampling technique whereby participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected and had prior experience in organizational stress (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Conducted face-to-face, they took around 30-45 minutes each and were audio recorded once participants agreed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and this involved the following.(samples) This method entailed getting to know the data set, assigning codes to segments, categorization of themes, and refining these themes with respect to the assertions of the study goals.

The ethical issues formed a core foundation of the whole research process of this study. Participants offered their consent voluntarily and were told about anonymity and confidentiality. There was an appropriate conduct of ethical consideration throughout the study in the collection and analysis (Silverman, 2013).

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This methodology gave a broad picture of stress factors in relation to SETs in the Gujranwala division and formed the frame for finding out the solutions to these problems.

### **4. Findings**

In this chapter we are reporting certain data collected from the Personal Interviews conducted with 14 SETs from six GSECs in Gujranwala division of Punjab. Thematic analysis identified six major stressors affecting SETs. Organizational pressure, social rejection, workload, parental behavior, disease risks (COVID-19 and Dengue), and finances.

#### **1. Administrative Pressure**

Poor communication, lack of resource provisions and a lack of professional development opportunities from administrative bodies were cited as common by SETs. Overwhelming paperwork, organizational delays and performance pressures without support made staff to develop frustrations and helpless feelings. These challenges greatly compound the level of teacher burn out and dissatisfied working conditions.

#### **2. Non-Acceptance by Colleagues**

SETs complained of being excluded within the general system of education, this they said was due to poor inter teacher relationship or lack of empathy from general education teachers. Huge numbers reported job devaluation and hierarchical impenetrability that lead them to be isolated. Solving such problems might be associated with establishing casual relationships and providing the team-like organization of teachers.

#### **3. Additional Responsibilities**

Apart from teaching, SETs were overloaded with non-teaching assignment such as organizers of various occasions, record keeping on the students, and linkage between parent teachers. These responsibilities detracted from their concentration on class operations and produced work-life conflict, which raised their stress levels of stress.

#### **4. Parental Attitudes**

Lack of understanding and parental support were named as major barriers. Some parents failed to acknowledge that their child required Special Education and or services and this placed these parents and their child in the SETs even more under pressure. Such attitudes prevented the use of Individualized Education Plan, IEP, and interfered with student behavior in class.

#### **5. Health Threats**

The COVID-19 and Dengue outbreaks also contributed to the stress of SETs where Issues of safety and health on the new learning environments known as classrooms were of concern. Coping with remote teaching, wearing personal protection gears while teaching, as well as the learner's emotional problems during the pandemic worsened teacher's anxiety.

#### **6. Financial Burdens**

SETs were able to claim that he/she could not afford increased costs of living because the salaries being offered were considered low and could not suffice their needs. Most believed that they are paid less than what they hoped or deserve for all the effort that go in performing their duties.

### **Key Findings**

All in all, the findings of this research lead to the conclusion that stress factors exist and run rampant within SETs in the Gujranwala divisions affecting their overall, personal and professional health and satisfaction levels. The key stressors identified include.

1. Lack of support and massive pressure at workplaces especially for the administrative personnel.
2. A failure to be accepted by peers and the hiding and lessening of special education positions.

3. The extra academic responsibilities that distort normal working and living conditions for teachers.
4. Factors relating to parent that inhibit the provision of special education practices.
5. Challenges related to health issues emanating from Covid-19 and Dengue make up a list of factors that contribute to teacher's anxiety.
6. Economic strains resulting from low wages paid in comparison to the expectations of a certain position.

Such insights are evidential in enhancing understanding of stress concerned to SETs and stress the importance of support systems to remedy such challenges. The consequences that stem from the results listed above will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, under the focus on the possible prevention and policy suggestion.

## 5. Discussion and Implications

This chapter assesses the implications of stressors revealed in findings of chapter four about stressors faced by SETs in GSECs of Gujranwala Division. It also brings all these stress factors into relation with comparable matters in other professions and educational settings and addresses the call of teachers for systematic organization and administrative concern.

### The Truths about Stress and What These Facts Mean to Teachers

The article discusses six main stress sources experienced by SETs. Administrative pressure, non-acceptance by peers, receiving extra tasks over other employees, parents' attitudes towards SETs' profession, threats to health, and financial difficulties; the stressors affect SET's health, efficiency, and job satisfaction degree in different ways.

1. **Administrative Pressure:**  
SETs endure considerable pressure because of ineffective communication, bureaucracy, and unsupportive administrators. ; Rituals of practice and documentations frustrate health workers and make them lose interest and commitment. The results are consistent with international research indicating that administrative stress weakens job satisfaction and strengthens turnover intentions (Kyriacou, 2011).
2. **Non-Acceptance by Colleagues:**  
General education teacher exclusion results in isolated and job insecure SETs. Lack of collegial support harms the team work, staff's mental health, and the level of their engagement. Annually, it is stated that there is a need for a more extensive school climate that will involve professionals without leaving them alone, feeling out of place (Bennett et al., 2019).
3. **Additional Responsibilities:**  
Organizational activities including management of events and general administrative work interfere with SETs teaching efforts and contribute to poor work-life balance and thus negative affect on teachers' burnout levels (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). These responsibilities reduce their capacity to offer quality education to disabled students enroll in various learning institutions.
4. **Parental Attitudes:**
5. If there is constant negative or uncooperative parenting behaviour, this has large stress impact during IEPs and on classroom behavioural management. It is argued that direct intervention approaches between teachers and parents of the student with special needs require enhancement (Schultz et al., 2012).
6. **Health Threats (COVID-19 and Dengue):**  
Other related health risks while on duty during COVID-19 and during Dengue outbreaks affected SETs' stress levels further. The four key elements that have made



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teaching more complicated include; Teachers stressed for developing proper health measures and leaders' support to reduce such concerns (Hakanen, et al., 2021).

### **7. Financial Burdens:**

Paying workers low wages do not exactly cope with increasing costs of living as well as other expectations that accompany extra jobs that can demoral build up a worker. These effects underscore the logical relationships between economic stressors and levels of burnout and life dissatisfaction (Kyriacou, 2011).

## **A Comparison with Other Professions**

Whereas worries about administrative demands, heavy work load and health concern, and money matters are general in many professions, those containing parenthood's perception and special education peculiarities are unique to SETs. The aspect of cross-system collaboration with parents and teachers globally is poorly rated, and in fact is a significant component in BEST's stress minimisation for SETs (Schultz et al., 2012).

## **What teachers require and the administrative measures that are needed for successful implementation?**

There is a clear call to action by SETs for the need for a structured plan to manage their stressors, as the administrative strategy has to be stretchy. Students and teachers asked for enhanced intergroup communication, more resources, staff development, and less teaching load. It also underlines the necessity of improving health protections and reasonable reimbursement so as to get individual satisfaction and staff retention.

### **Conclusion**

Consequently, this study provides vivid description of stressors of SETs in the Gujranwala division. The mentioned challenges should be solved by improving administrative services, cutting teachers' non-teaching responsibilities, improving communication between teachers and parents, improving health measures, and paying teachers fairly. The adoption of such measures can enhance the perception of job satisfaction as well as work as a mechanism of combating staff fatigue in order to ensure delivery of quality education to students with learning disability.

### **8. Recommendations:**

In this chapter, the following recommendations have been made to help reduce stress of SETs in GSECs in Gujranwala division. It is hoped that by pursuing recommendations pertaining to administrative, interpersonal, workload, parental, health, and financial issues, SETs' overall quality of life, morale, and employment stability will be improved as well as education of students who have special needs.

#### **1. Mitigating Administrator Burden**

SETs claim to be highly stressed due to the increased paperwork; including communications which appear unclear; and an overall lack of professional development. Key recommendations include.

- Minimizing Bureaucracy. Automating jobs and the level of paperwork performed by employees.

- **Enhancing Communication.** Setting out the harmony of administrators and SETs on the same scale of perception so as to remove misunderstandings.
- **Professional Development.** The bi-annual staff development to ensure SETs acquire training on stress management, time management, and how to handle behaviors.

## 2. Development of Interpersonal Relations

Employers of SETs reported that their staffs were isolated and not accepted by other faculty members in certain propinquity settings. Proposed strategies include.

- **Collaborative Initiatives.** Promoting team work by adopting group scheduling of activities, use of peers counselors and cross betting on departments.
- **Anti-Stigma Programs.** Sensitizing the public on the existing SET roles and encouraging the necessary respect for the roles.
- **Recognition Programs.** Providing feedback measures to identify SET implementations and encouraging appreciation of SET support.

## 3. Authoring other responsibilities.

The two important sources of stress in SETs are; Apart from teaching responsibilities. Recommendations include.

- **Role Clarity.** Avoiding role overload of the teachers by clearly defining their roles and responsibilities.
- **Task Delegation.** Delegating some secretarial work to the subordinates so that SETs can justify their contract by teaching.
- **Time Management.** That incorporated adequate time allocation and compensatory provisions for those bearing other responsibilities.

## 4. Engaging Parents.

Parents are usually unfavourable to the efforts made by SETs. Strategies include.

- **Parent Education Workshops.** Giving information to parents about special education and his or her child.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings.** Includes coordination of communication and cooperation on the students' performance.
- **Parent Networks.** Organising parents' support groups in order that they can exchange experiences and ideas.

## 5. Improving the Strength of Health and Financial Assistance.

Stresses to health and struggle to finance also add the pressures faced by SETs. Recommendations include.

- **Health Safety Protocols.** Provision of appropriate personal protective tools and equipment, observation of cleanliness in the health facility as well as general health instructions.
- **Health Insurance.** Making it just as important to make sure that teachers are covered in as much detail as possible.
- **Financial Incentives.** A review of salary structures in organizations, the adoption of performance bonuses and the availability of emergency funds.

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The following measures will be embraced with an aim of decreasing stress levels, increasing job satisfaction and SETs retention. This will promote effective support system of teacher trainers for supporting SETs learner for better educational achievement of these learners.

## **7. Conclusion**

### **7.1 Summary of Findings and Their Significance**

This study aimed at identifying organizational stress among the special education teachers teaching in the GSECs across the Gujranwala division of Punjab. This paper reveals some striking causes of stress among SETs namely; administrative stress, social non-acceptance and all kinds of workload besides SETs feel pressured by parental perception about their jobs, infections such as Covid-19 and Dengue and also financial stress.

The study also reveals that commitment to administrative stress was the most predominant source of strain among SETs. From the results the sources of stress for teachers were. Heaviness of paperwork, Lack of administrative support and confusion from head offices. However, employers' rejection also shaped the workplace as a lonely workplace thus increasing stress. Other job stressors that also made the work life of the teachers stressful included other duties, negative parental attitudes, and health threatening factors. Last but not the least; staking concerns were highlighted as a worthy mention area of discussion because of many teachers labelled incompetent and anxious due to the low financial capacity and support accorded to SETs.

The presented results are valuable as they reveal the complexity of stress experienced by SETs and its possible consequences for social and emotional state of the teacher, as well as quality of teaching-learning process for students with special needs. It is recommended to manage these stress factors which are critical in the general organization of GSECs and teachers' job contentment and delivery of special education.

### **7.2 Call for Immediate and Long-Term Interventions to Address Stress Among SETs**

Considering the nature and intensity of stress factors revealed in this research study, it is necessary to outline short-term and long-term measures to reduce the stress level of SETs. Emergency measures should be directed at the nuances which create the most pressure. Excess of paperwork, non-acceptance by peers, and health risks. These can be done through management's more contentious message, at the policy level, to delete many procedural steps, and the implementation of health safety measures for ongoing health threats including Covid-19 and Dengue.

Nonetheless, more systematic transformations are required to develop a lasting framework for SETs. This includes policy reforms at the provincial and divisional levels that may address issues to do with balanced workload and distribution of tasks, professional learning and teaching support and financial plans for teachers. Furthermore, enhanced cooperation and mutual understanding between the teachers as well as with parents, parents will help to eliminate social exclusion of SETs and create more favorable working conditions.

It must be noted that the development of a clear plan for managing teacher stress is not only relevant to protect the SETs, but also future of special education in Punjab. Thus, the improvement of teacher's mental health and job satisfaction should be the priority of educational authorities that can lead to the idea that SETs will be able to offer quality teaching services to students with special needs hence serving the interests of everyone in society.

### 7.3 Conclusion

Consequently, the present study an affirmation of the exigency to implement both short and long term solutions to the multiple stressors faced by the Special Education Teachers working in the Government Special Education Centers across the Gujranwala division. Using a research lens, the present study has emphasized that meaningful changes in teacher stress require policy-level changes and improvement in workplace relations, better support structures for teachers and addressing health and financial well-being, all of which could be implemented more effectively at higher levels of analysis. In the long run, such attempts will not only improve the standard of living of SETs but also improve students with special needs in Punjab education system. This means that the findings of this study and the recommendations should be considered to enhance the conditions for practicing special education teachers.

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