

Burnout Syndrome in Government School Teachers

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Abstract

Burnout is intimately related to and often used interchangeably with the term stress. It was *Freudburger* who coined the term burnout; burnout syndrome is a result of prolonged stress, primarily- characterized by physical, emotional and attitudinal exhaustion. Different psychologists conceptualize it differently; prominent among them are Cherniss, Meier and Maslach. This study was conducted to gauge the magnitude of burnout syndrome among teachers who are working in government schools of Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Findings are reported from the sample of 52 teachers working in 13 schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, this article shows that how much teachers are affected in the dimensions of burnout viz; emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP) and personal accomplishment (PA).

KEYWORDS: Burnout syndrome, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal accomplishment, Teachers

Introduction

Life is a race and every human wants to be ahead of his counterparts, his struggle for this starts right from his birth and ends with him, some people become use to this system and work harder for their success, but some people get frustrated from this rat race and feel callous, become emotionally exhausted, same thing is happening with teachers, sometimes they feel emotionally deprived, Frustrated, powerless, Hopeless, Detached and Being trapped and even felt that they are failed at what they are doing. When a person feels low and has lost faith in him, it is known as burn out. It was Freudenberg (1974), who conceived the term Burnout, he stated that “*Burnout occurred in highly motivated individuals who react to stress by overworking until they collapsed*”, and Maslach (1981) stated that “*An individual’s response to chronic everyday stress rather than to occasional crisis.*” However Maslach, (1982) argued that there are three core aspects of Burnout, which are commonly included in all, are:

- Emotional Exhaustion,
- Depersonalization
- Feeling of low personal Accomplishment.

Actually burnout is a state of prolonged stress resulting in emotional drain, low self-esteem and self concept and severe depression, Emotional Exhaustion is a state where emotional resources are worn-out and the person is unable to give his maximum at the psychological level, Depersonalization is the feeling of an individual that he has lost his identity. The clear awareness that everything one feels, says or does come from oneself is

partially or entirely missing and Reduced Personal Accomplishment refers to the tendency to evaluate oneself inferior to others, particularly with regards to one's work with client. Studies have shown that role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload as the chief causes of burnout. Capel and Susan, s. (1987); Dabrowski (1991); Mishra and Sahu (1993); Kijai, Jimmy, Totten, Donald L. (1995); Sermon, (1995). While, Capel and Susan, s. (1987); Henry (1993); Shrivastava, Poornima (1994); H.M. Kashinath (1996); Ushashree (1993); Ghorpede, Jai; Lackritz, Jim and Singh, Gangaram (2007) has found relationship between burnout and demographic variables such as sex, age, marital status and years of experience.

One of the most frustrating aspects of teaching is that it is a thankless job, a teacher looking to do an excellent job of getting student to learn and his efforts may never be noticed, much less appreciated, even if test score are reviewed, they are subject to interpretation by the administrator; and people well aware of the fact that friendly administrator make friendly interpretation and unfriendly administrator make unfriendly ones, Besides teaching, they have to perform different jobs at the school level, they have to perform election duties, census duties etc., even right to education act does not come with breather of these additional tasks performed by the teachers, these extra duties makes them hassled and they feel frustrated, helpless which leads to stress and burnout.

Objectives of the present study

- To assess the degree of burnout among teachers

Methodology

Participants in this study were teachers of schools run by the municipal corporation of Delhi. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used to gauge the magnitude of burnout among teachers of MCD schools; it is the most widely used tool to measure the magnitude of burnout syndrome. The MBI is a 22 item likert-type rating scale. Items are written in the form of statements about personal feelings or attitudes. The frequency scale is labelled at each point, ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (everyday). The MBI is designed to assess the three aspects of the burnout syndrome – emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. Each aspect is measured by separate sub - scales. Detail of the sub-scales and number of items are shown in the below mentioned

TABLE – 1

Range of Scores and no. of Items

Factors	No. of Items in MBI	High	Moderate	Low
Emotional Exhaustion	09	30 – above	18 – 29	0 – 17
Depersonalization	05	12 – above	6 – 11	0 – 5
Personal Accomplishment	08	0 – 33	34 – 39	40 – above

Administration of the Scale

The MBI is a self reporting instrument; subjects were requested to read the instructions carefully and then respond to the questions. They were encouraged to answer each item freely and frankly. It was emphasized that no item should be ignored. There was no time limit; however, it took about 15 to 20 minutes to complete it.

Procedure of Data Collection

For the study, the researcher selected 13 MCD schools on random basis and administered the MBI to four randomly selected teachers in selected MCD schools of central zone of Delhi.

Analysis of Data

Teachers' responses were then scored in accordance with the scoring key, based on their scores for MBI; they were categorized as having high, moderate and low level of burnout.

In the present study, the investigator used appropriate statistical techniques available for treatment of the data. In order to analyze the data with accordance to the objective, scores of each teacher were noted against each sub scale of the tool. In order to study the status of burnout their mean and standard deviation were computed. Qualitative analysis on the basis of percentage has also been done.

Study of Burnout Syndrome in Teachers

The objective of the present study was to assess the degree of burnout in teachers, for this teachers scores on MBI has been categorized in three dimensions which are give below

- Emotional Exhaustion (EE)
- Depersonalization (DP)
- Personal Accomplishment (PA)

As per the manual the level of the above dimensions were worked out. The details are given in Table – 2.

Table – 2
Burnout Syndrome in Teachers

S.NO.	Dimensions of Burnout	Mean	SD	Level
1.	Emotional Exhaustion	11.68	8.44	Low
2.	Depersonalization	6.84	4.44	Moderate
3.	Personal Accomplishment	33.29	9.55	Moderate

On comparing the results (shown in table – 2) from MBI norms, researcher finds that teachers experienced low level of burnout in terms of Emotional Exhaustion (EE), as its mean score is 11.68, teachers experienced moderate level of burnout in terms of depersonalization (DP) and personal accomplishment (PA), as their mean scores are

6.44 and 33.29 respectively.. The same results have also been illustrated through Figure - 1.

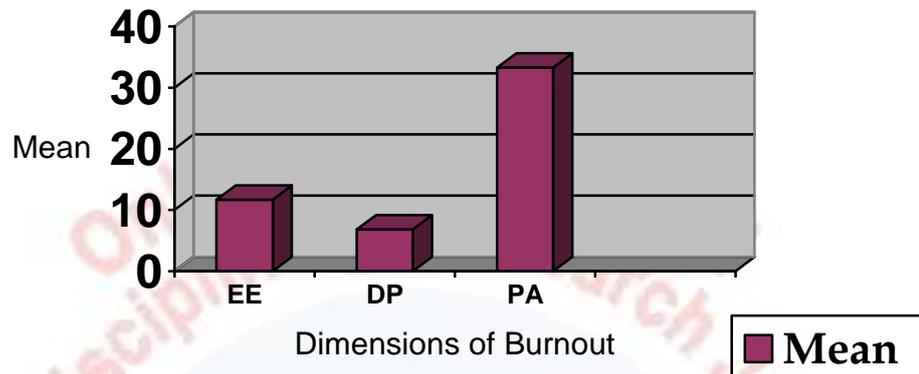


Figure - 1
Burnout Syndrome in MCD Teachers

Descriptive Analysis of the Data Related to Burnout Syndrome in Teachers

In order to support the whole story stated above, a descriptive analysis of the dimensions of burnout syndrome viz. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment is also given in tables 3(a), 3(b), 4(a), 4(b), 5(a) and 5(b).

Descriptive Analysis of Responses of Teachers with Regard to Emotional Exhaustion

Descriptive analyses in terms of level of emotional exhaustion of teachers have also been worked out and the same is given in table 3(a).

Table 3(a)

Item Wise Analysis of Emotional Exhaustion

Statements/ responses	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	everyday
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	26(50)	24(46)	2 (4)	-	-	-	-
I used up at the end of the work day.	24(46)	18(35)	2 (4)	-	8 (15)	-	-
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on job.	30(57)	14(27)	4 (8)	-	4 (8)	-	-
Working with people at school all the day is really a strain for me.	30(57)	14(27)	-	-	8(15)	-	-

I feel burnout from my work.	34(65)	-	12(23)	6(11)	-	-	-
I feel frustrated by my job.	4 (8)	26(50)	2 (4)	10(19)	2 (4)	8(15)	-
I feel I am working too hard on my job.	4 (8)	26(50)	-	2 (4)	-	8(15)	12(23)
Working with people at school directly puts too much stress on me.	32(62)	6 (11)	-	2 (4)	12(23)	-	-
I feel that I am at the end of my rope.	30(57)	8 (15)	12(23)	-	2 (4)	-	-

From table 3(a), it is observed that about 50 % teachers stated that they never felt drained from their work, whereas 46 % said that they feel drained few times a year, rest of the rest of the results regarding this item are not worthy. In response to the second statement, 46 % of teachers said that, they never feel used up at the end of the day, whereas 35 % felt like this few times a year, rest of the results related to this item is negligible. In response statement number three, 58 % teachers said that, they never feel tired when they get up in the morning for going to the job, whereas 27 % teachers feel like this a few times in a year, rest of the results with respect to this item are not note worthy. It is also observed that, 58 % teachers never feel strain when they work with people in school, whereas 27 % teachers feel strain a few times in a year. From the responses of teachers, it is observed that, 65 % teachers never feel burnout, whereas 23 % feel burnt out once in a month. It can be observed that, about 50 % teachers said that they never get frustrated from their job. In response to the statement number eight, 62 % of teachers responded that, they were never feel stressed as they work with people at school, whereas 23 % experienced stress once a week. The responses to the statement number nine related to emotional exhaustion shows that, 58 % teachers never feel that they are almost finished as they are at the end of their rope, whereas 23 % teachers feel it once in a month. The responses of teachers have also been analyzed in terms of percentage of teachers falling under various categories emotional exhaustion. The same has been shown in Table 3(b).

Table – 3 (b)

Level of Emotional Exhaustion in Teachers

S.NO.	MBI interval	N	Percentage	Level of Emotional Exhaustion	Level of Burnout
1.	0 - 17	17	65.4	Low	Low
2.	18- 29	5	19.2	Moderate	Moderate
3.	30 and above	4	15.4	High	High
	Total	26	100		

From the Table 3(b), it may be noticed, that about 65 % of teachers fall under low level of emotional exhaustion, whereas 19.2 % of them fall under moderate level of

emotional exhaustion, and 15.4 % teachers fall under high level of same dimension. The results have also been represented diagrammatically in the following figure.

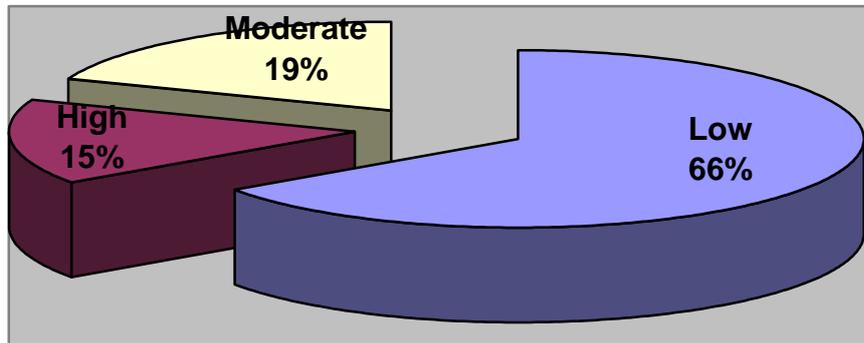


Figure - 2
Level of Emotional Exhaustion in Teachers

Descriptive Analysis of Responses of Teachers with Regard to Depersonalization

Descriptive analyses in terms of level of depersonalization of teachers have also been worked out and the same is given in table 4(a).

Table 4(a)

Item Wise Analysis of Depersonalization

Statements/ responses	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a	Everyday
I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects.	30(57)	18 (35)	4 (8)	-	-	-	-
I have become more callous towards people since I took up this job.	16(31)	18(35)	6 (11)	2 (4)	-	6(11)	-
I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	14(27)	12(23)	10(19)	12(23)	-	2 (4)	2 (4)
I don't really care what happens to some students.	18(35)	16(31)	8 (15)	6 (11)	-	2 (4)	2 (4)
I feel students blame me for some of their problems.	34(65)	14(27)	-	-	-	2 (4)	2 (4)

From Table 4(a), it may be observed that, about 58 % teachers stated that they never treat student as impersonal object, whereas 35 % said that they felt like this about students a few times in a year, rest of the rest of the results regarding this item are not worthy. In response to the second statement, 35 % of teachers said that, they feel callous a few times in a year, whereas 31 % of them never felt like this, rest of the

results related to this item is negligible. In response of statement number three, 27 % teachers said that, they had never experienced that, this job is hardening them emotionally, whereas 23 % teachers each, feel like this, a few times in a year and a few times in a month. It is also observed that, 35 % teachers said that they always care to the students, whereas 31 % teachers said they neglect students a few times in a year, rest of the results with respect to this item are not note worthy. The responses to the fifth statement, related to the depersonalization shows that, 62 % teachers never feel that students blame them for their problem, whereas 27 % teachers feel that students blame them but that is happened a few times in a year. The responses of teachers have also been analyzed in terms of percentage of teachers falling under various categories depersonalization. The same has been shown in Table 4(b)

Table –4(b)

Level of Depersonalization in Teachers

S.NO.	MBI interval	N	Percentage	Level of Depersonalization	Level of Burnout
1.	0 – 5	9	34.6	Low	Low
2.	6 – 11	12	46.2	Moderate	Moderate
3.	12 and above	5	19.2	High	High
	Total	26	100		

Table 4(b) reveals that, 34.6% of teachers fall under low level of depersonalization, whereas 46.2 % teachers fall under moderate level of depersonalization and there were 19.2 % teachers who fall under high level of depersonalization. The above given percentage distribution is shown in the figure 3.

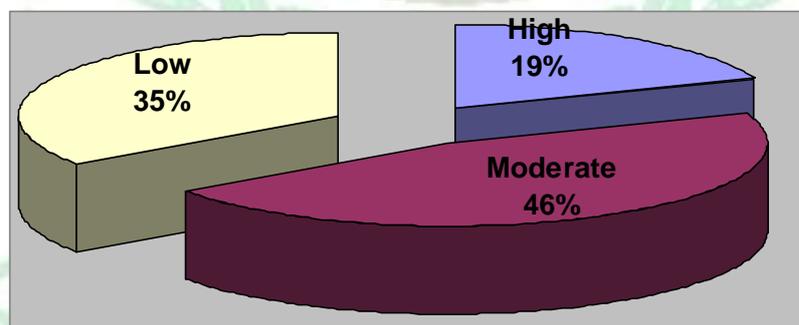


Figure - 3

Level of Depersonalization among Teachers

Descriptive Analysis of Responses of Teachers with Regard to Personal Accomplishment

Descriptive analyses in terms of level of personal accomplishment of teachers have also been worked out and the same is given in Table 5(a).

Table 5(a)

Item Wise Analysis of Personal Accomplishment

Statements/ responses	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
I can easily understand how many students feel about things.	-	-	10(19)	12(23)	12(23)	12(23)	6(11)
I deal very effectively with the problems of my students.	-	-	4 (8)	10(19)	14(27)	16(31)	8(15)
I feel I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	-	-	-	14(27)	18(35)	18(35)	2 (4)
I feel very energetic.	-	-	4 (8)	12(23)	10(19)	14(27)	12(23)
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my students.	-	-	4 (8)	6 (11)	10(19)	18(35)	14(27)
I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my students.	-	-	4 (8)	10(19)	12(23)	22(42)	4(8)
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	-	-	2 (4)	6 (11)	12(23)	12(23)	20(30)
I my work I deal with emotional problems very calmly.	-	-	2(4)	12(23)	2 (4)	8 (15)	28(53)

From table 5(a), it is observed that there are 23 % teachers in three categories, as, a few times in a month, once in a week, and few times in a week, they understand the feelings of the students, whereas rest of the results regarding this item are not noteworthy. In response to the second statement, 31 % of teachers said that, few times a week they deal effectively with the problems of the students, whereas 27 % felt that at least once in a week they deal with the students effectively. The other results related to this item are negligible. It is also observed that, 35 % teachers feel that once in a week, they are able to influence others lives through their work and same percentage of teachers feel like this a few times in a week. From the responses of teachers, it is observed that, 27 % teacher feels themselves energetic for few times in a week, whereas 23 % teachers give their responses in favour of everyday. It may also be observed that, about 35 % teachers feels exhilarated a few times a week, whereas 27 % feels exhilarated every day. In response to the statement number seven, 38 % of teachers feel everyday that, they have accomplished many worthy things in the job,

whereas 23 % like it once in a week and same percentage of teachers feel like this few times a week. The responses to the statement number eight related to personal accomplishment shows that, 53 % teachers feel that, almost every day they deal with emotional problems very calmly, whereas 23 % feel like this few times in a month. The responses of teachers have also been analyzed in terms of percentage of teachers falling under various categories personal accomplishment. The same has been shown in Table 5(b)

Table 5(b)

Frequency Table of Frequency of Personal Accomplishment in Teachers

S.NO.	MBI interval	N	Percentage	Level of Personal Accomplishment	Level of Burnout
1.	40 and above	4	15.3	High	Low
2.	34 – 39	20	77	Moderate	Moderate
3.	0 – 33	2	7.7	Low	High
	Total	26	100		

Table 5(b) reveals that the sample of teachers taken for the study has 15.3 % teachers who experienced low level of burnout in terms of personal accomplishment, 77 % teachers of the sample experienced moderate level of burnout and 7.7 % teachers experienced high level of burnout in this dimension of burnout. It is shown in figure 4 below.

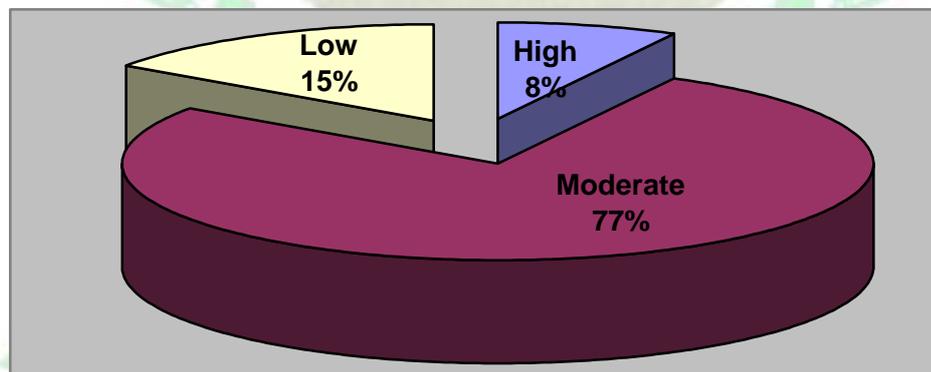


Figure - 4
Personal Accomplishment in Teachers

It implies that the sample of the present study had 7.7 % teachers who evaluate themselves as inferior to others and does not have confidence in themselves.

Implications

The foremost purpose of any research is not only to explore the felt problem but also to provide fresh knowledge which can help in understanding various issues related to the problem and provide solution for the same. Teacher's burnout plays an important role in teaching profession. Although burnout found to be relatively low on emotional exhaustion, moderate on depersonalization and personal accomplishment sub – scales of Maslach Burnout Inventory for teachers, the results of the investigation combined with the results of other studies do provide practical information that can be used in different areas of education.

The results of the present study indicate that the phenomenon of burnout does exist as a problem in MCD school system. The fact that a few teachers have been found to manifest high and moderate level of burnout implies that teachers in MCD schools experiencing burnout. This deserves serious attention. The problem may seem small at this point, but may assume disproportionately high dimensions in future and hence it need due attention to squeeze this evil in the blossom. There is thus a pressing need to re-examine the entire school system and redefine the terms and conditions from the point of view of the teachers. All those concerned with the school system including teacher educators, administrators, planners, policy makers and teachers themselves must work as a team to help not only those teachers who are experiencing high burnout but also to prevent the low burnout group from regressing to high burnout level.

Conclusion

Stress by and large puts too much pressure on an individual physically and psychologically as a result prolonged stress individuals felt burnt out, it means after sometime individuals felt themselves as empty, devoid of motivation and often does not see any hope of positive change in his situation. accordingly on the basis of above findings we may conclude that all the M.C.D primary school teachers experienced low level of burnout in dimension of Emotional Exhaustion, they experienced moderate level of burnout in terms of depersonalization, and teachers experience moderate level of burnout in terms of personal accomplishment. But percentage wise analysis indicate that there were few teachers who experienced high level of burnout in all the three dimension viz. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

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