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# SYSTEMIC STRESSORS AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFICIENCY: A MIXED-METHODS ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN WEST BENGAL

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## ABSTRACT

The paper tries to explore statistically the connection between stress from external factors in the work environment and how teachers perform in West Bengal's educational system. We used a mixed-method design, involving a sample of 104 teachers. We collected data through convenient clustering and purposive sampling in five densely populated districts. For the quantitative analysis, we used Pearson correlation tables and chi-square cross-tabs, along with inductive theme-based qualitative analysis. The study reveals serious system issues. Eighty-six percent of the surveyed teachers have moderate to high stress levels, with an average stress level of 0.62 (SD = 0.24). Contrary to popular belief, higher stress levels are not linked to working overtime, as teaching hours did not significantly correlate with stress. However, non-teaching duties turned out to be a major source of work-related stress. Stress leads to inefficiency in the institution and is significantly related to skipping classes ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$) and poor syllabus coverage.

**Keywords**: Teacher Stress, Non-academic Workload, Econometric Analysis, Mixed-Methods, West Bengal.

## INTRODUCTION

Among all the existing professions, teaching is one that is demanding. Teaching as a profession is distinctive due to its unique combination of skills required for nurturing students. The skills include intellectual, emotional and social from macro perspectives, though there might be various micro skills existing as well within teachers that vary across individuals. For shaping the minds of students who are the future generations, the performance of teachers is quite vital, and the way of instructional delivery has a direct impact on the quality of education. The teaching profession is at many times distinguished by high levels of workplace stress, which can negatively impact teachers' performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. Bhattacharjya and Choudhuri (2024) showed that stress comes significantly from working

conditions, which in turn adversely affect job satisfaction and performance. A huge workload, limited access to resources, and high expectations from students and other stakeholders are only some of the challenges that schoolteachers face in West Bengal. The education system in West Bengal is regulated by various rules and regulations, which might sometimes be the cause for stress for the teachers. Literature shows that almost one-third of teachers and administrators in privately managed institutes in West Bengal experienced high levels of work-related stress, indicating substantial workload pressure, (Bhuin, 2017). On the other hand, from the perspective of social and economic context in West Bengal, the state has a diverse student population and heterogeneous levels of infrastructure that might further increase the challenges faced by teachers. Stress for teachers is due to the academic works, non-academic responsibilities, and administrative duties. As pointed out by Wang (2024), educators need to balance pedagogical duties and administrative functions, including planning, instruction, grading, and record keeping. The existence of the diverse and demanding responsibilities leads to a strong correlation among elevated stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. It impacts the teachers' well-being and also affects student outcomes and overall school performance. Thus, understanding these stressors is crucial for achieving a healthier work environment improvement of the quality of education which is imparted.

The current paper focuses on exploring and analysing the impact of stress at workplace on the performance of the teachers in West Bengal. The main focus is on the workload, use of time, and financial gain verses the stress suffered. We aim to identify the factor which is responsible for the stress at workplace, Further; we aim to investigate the impact of the workplace stress on the performance of the teacher in terms of class performance, coverage of syllabus, preparation for the class and also on their personal life. The findings of the work are expected to provide an insight into the challenges faced by the teachers in West Bengal. This could encourage policy interventions in terms of reduction of workplace stress as a way to improve the performance of the teachers. This can help to develop targeted strategies to support teachers and to enhance the overall quality of education in West Bengal.

To analyze the connection between stress and teaching effectiveness, the current research uses the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model as the theoretical framework (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). According to the JD-R model, any occupation can be divided into two elements – job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to the characteristics of one's work, which involve constant physical or mental strain. These include a significant amount of classes, managing classrooms, and other job demands created by the administration. Job resources can be defined as the physical, social, or organizational means of helping to achieve organizational objectives, reducing job demands, and facilitating employees'

growth and development. Job resources used in the present research will include financial benefits, organizational support, and professional autonomy. If the structural job demands exceed the job resources on a persistent basis, the process of energy depletion takes place resulting in poor health outcomes, high burnout, and inefficiency. In contrast, providing strong job resources promotes greater engagement and commitment among staff members. The research hypothesis suggests that increasing administrative job demands leads to the exhaustion of the teachers' energy reserves, creating a spill over effect, such as a decreased syllabus cover rate and more frequent absences.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Previous studies have demonstrated that teaching is a job that is generally acknowledged as having a high level of stress which can have a negative effect on performance and wellbeing. Research has started to explore factors on a personal, institutional and environmental basis that creates this stress and its effects. Previous research indicates that several factors relating the teachers' personal characteristics as well as their work environment contribute to the stress experienced by teachers and its influence on their classroom effectiveness. The example of using stress and school teachers' performance as variables showed a negative (a higher stress level was related to lower job performance) showing the relationship of the variables. This illustrates the impact of stress as a personal problem where it has a direct impact in education. Specific aspect studies of work related stress are studied in further research. The researchers discovered that teachers tend to have moderate levels of stress with workload demands being one of the main reasons for their stress (Sarabia&Collantes, 2020). They also found evidence that the teaching performance is affected by gender and professional role—female teachers and those with higher positions, as in their study, tend to achieve more relatively. In a study by Chowdhury et al. (2025) the authors show that mental health has been a significant factor determining teachers' job satisfaction. The study showed that especially in the context of India and particularly West Bengal stress is a dominating factor. The findings of their research indicate that ensuring psychological wellbeing of the teachers is critical to both job satisfaction and satisfaction with performance. Studies by Chahar and Bhardwaj (2025) found several stressors, like emotional exhaustion, classroom management trouble, administrative problems, and lack of appreciation as important factors impacting the performance of teachers.

The burden of non-academic responsibilities is another important factor that emerges in literature. Based on a study conducted by Paramanik and Barman (2025) it has been revealed that overburdened workload in non-educational activities has a significant impact on the lives of the teachers of secondary schools in West Bengal. This extra workload reduces class time

available for key teaching and reduces stress levels. In general, the previous studies uniformly indicate that there is significant relationship between stress at work and instruction abilities of teachers. Across studies, factors like heavy workload, administrative duties, and inadequate institutional support come up frequently, as seen in recent studies such as Wang's (2024) and Bhuin's (2017) works in this area.These include heavy workload, administrative responsibilities, and insufficient institutional support, which are frequently cited in multiple studies, including Bhattacharjya and Choudhuri (2024) and Wang (2024). Based on these findings, a need for focussed intervention in the reduction of the stress and improvement in the conditions of work arises, especially in structural and institutional influenced areas of West Bengal. But, there are some limited empirical researches, which include mixed methodology that looked at the synergic effect of non-academic, time utilization, financial stress on teachers' performance in the backdrop of West Bengal. This study is an attempt to fill the gap.

After reviewing previous literature, it becomes clear that the positive relationship among classroom hours (CT), occupational fatigue and the direct hours of non-academic demands that affect the academic stream (AM) are well established; however, the systemic stresses of exogenously imposed, non-academic demands require a path analytic framework. Figure 1 specifies a conceptual framework that is grounded in the basic principles of the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model, which form the basis for this investigation. This model uses a diagram to show the internalisation of external workload stresses and how it manifests into decreasing external benefits and finally into actual consequences of the stress, in the form of lack of efficiency or inability to retain teachers in their jobs.

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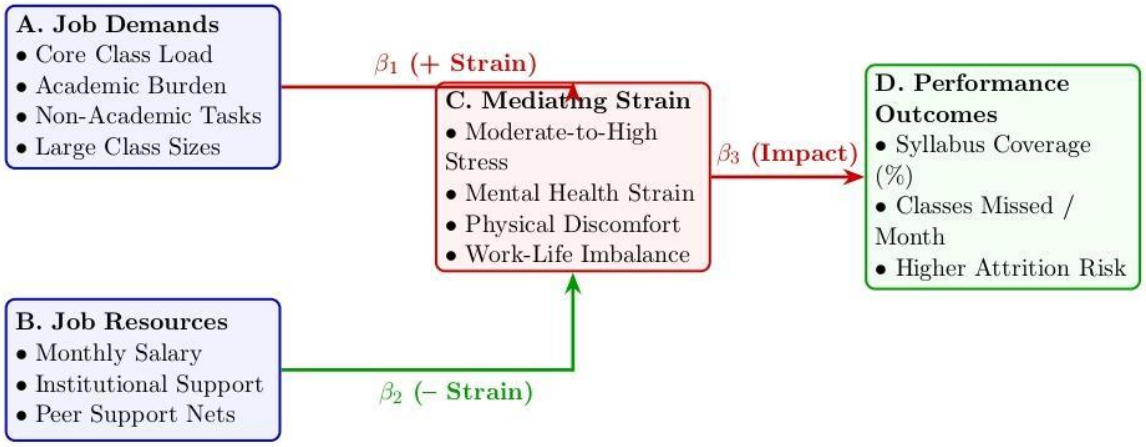


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Institutional Demands, Mediating Strain, and Teacher Performance Outcomes.

As illustrated in figure 1 above, the structural dynamics in teacher performance are captured through the exogenous path structure divided into four distinct categories. First, there is the "Primary Stress Vector" (Job Demands). Here, the fundamental stressors operating in the context of West Bengal's schooling institutions are included. Although instructional time remains constant, adding the extra job of undertaking administrative activities like conducting elections or participating in the census as representatives of the government increases the workload, which in turn leads to operational friction. Second, the "Buffer Matrix" (Job Resources) represents the economic and institutional cushions available to the worker. Financial reward constitutes an important resource. Given the low salaries for these workers (< Rs. 30,000 per month), this buffer resource runs thin, thereby exposing teachers to excessive occupational stress. Third is the "Mediating Strain Nexus." This is the effect on the individual teacher. The combination of high demand and low resources creates a serious health and well-being challenge. Our empirical data supports the occurrence of this crisis through the prevalence of reported mental stress experienced by 80.8% of our respondents and spill-over effects that negatively affected their private lives in 57.7%. Finally, it includes "Downstream Performance Disruptions." This terminal block denotes the disruption of institutional efficacy. The strain has direct implications that result in operational challenges. These include a significantly negative relationship with the number of courses completed ($r=-0.29, p<0.05$) and positively correlated with absenteeism ($r=0.31, p<0.05$). This system failure ultimately increases the likelihood of attrition, with 40.4% wanting to leave. In order to build on this theoretical framework, we shall define the research objectives in the next section.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the above discussion, we have developed three specific objectives for our study:

1. Workload Optimization Analysis: To assess the effect of academic loads and other non-academic responsibilities imposed exogenously on the performance of instructional outcomes in terms of syllabus coverage, class preparation and teacher absenteeism.
2. Temporal Allocation Matrix: To conduct a full-scale time-use analysis of the allocation of the finite 24-hour cycle of school teachers in professional mandates, domestic labour and recuperative leisure.
3. Socio-Economic Strain Mapping: To study the mathematical relationship of income compensation structures and the observed occupational stress indexes and to assess the impact of income precarity on professional satisfaction.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the impact of different levels of non-academic administrative duties on quantitative measures of classroom performance and teacher well-being?
2. What are the structural characteristics of a teacher's 24-hour time allocation model when subjected to competing professional and personal demands?
3. Does income precarity display a significant correlation with heightened psychological and physical burnout metrics among school educators?

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

### a. Design of the Study

The present study used a convergent mixed-method design to understand the problem of workplace stress among school teachers in West Bengal and its relationship with teacher performance. The design collected quantitative data on workload, stress indicators and demographic characteristics and qualitative data from open-ended questions on challenges, coping mechanisms and perceived solutions. This approach allows for the triangulation of findings, using qualitative insights to explain and contextualise statistical patterns (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

### b. Sample and Sampling Technique

We use a purposive sampling technique for choosing teachers from different districts of West Bengal. The sample districts included Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Hooghly and Howrah. From the selected districts, we choose the sample. Although 128

teachers were surveyed, the final sample after cleaning consisted of 104 school teachers. The teacher's participation was voluntary in the survey. Though the sample size is small, limiting the statistical generalizability to the entire population of teachers in West Bengal (estimated to be more than 400,000), but adequate for an exploratory mixed-methods study. Further, it allows for in-depth thematic analysis (Guest et al. (2006) who suggest saturation is often achieved within 12-30 interviews for qualitative themes. The sample comprised teachers from Government schools (n=28, 26.92%), Private schools (n=56, 53.85%), Aided and Missionary schools (n=20, 19.2%).

**c. Data Collection Instrument**

Teachers were given a structured questionnaire to collect the data. The instrument captured data in a number of domains:

Firstly demographic characteristics of the teachers like their age, gender, religion, teaching experience, district of residence, nature of employment, monthly salary, school type, medium of instruction and teaching level were asked. The second part of the questionnaire focused on the indicators of workload. These involved information regarding the school duty hours per day, time to class teaching, administrative work (academic and non-academic), number of classes taught per week, and subjects taught.

The third section focused on measures of stress and well-being of the teachers. For this,a set of Likert and dichotomous questions was asked. These questions related to physical discomfort, mental health problems, burnout, job insecurity, feelings of exploitation, resignation intention, and perceived discrimination. The next section focused on indicators of performance by the teacher (self-reported). This involved questions related to the coverage of the syllabus (in percentage terms), the number of classes missed per month and the perceived effectiveness of syllabus coverage. The fifth section captured the coping and support mechanisms. Questions about stress management strategies, private tutoring engagement, and preferences for institutional support were asked. Finally, there were open-ended questions. For this part, the teachers were invited to describe their most significant challenges, suggest workload reduction strategies, and identify desired support systems.

**d. Instrument Validity, Reliability, and Psychometric Evaluation**

Before deploying the questionnaire to the respondent, a rigorous two-phase psychometric evaluation was done. This helps us to ensure the empirical integrity of the structured questionnaire.The first was to ensure the validity of the content and face. The first draft of the survey was sent to an expert panel of three senior academic researchers with expertise in educational economics and psychometric design to establish structural alignment. The expert

panel judged the relevance, along with clarity and thematic coverage of the items in relation to the main objectives of the study. We systematically excluded items with low factor relevance or ambiguous wording and reworded them. Secondly, we ensure construct validity by locating the latent dimensions of "Workplace Burden" and "Occupational Strain" within existing theoretical frameworks, namely the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and the Transactional Theory of Stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

### e. Pilot Testing and Internal Consistency

A localized pilot study was performed with an independent baseline cohort of school teachers (n=15). These observations were discarded from the final analysis. For the core items underlying the multi-dimensional Composite Stress Index, specifically evaluating the latent matrices of physical discomfort, mental health disruptions, and systemic burnout—the scale yielded a high internal consistency profile, demonstrated by a calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha$) of 0.81. The value of well $\alpha$ is well above the standard academic threshold of 0.70. The final sample consists of 104 active school teachers of West Bengal. A sample of this magnitude limits the statistical generalizability across the broader educational sector of the state (estimated at over 400,000 active teachers). Still it provides strong statistical validity for an exploratory mixed-methods framework due to several critical econometric considerations:

Firstly, it optimises the degrees of freedom for the statistical analysis**.** For the primary bivariate correlation analyses utilised to isolate workplace stress mechanisms, a sample of N=104 provides an optimal 102 degrees of freedom (df=N−2). This provides sufficient statistical power to detect medium-to-large effect sizes at the standard 5% significance level ($\alpha$=0.05). Secondly we have non parametric cell adequacy**.** In cross-tabulation and chi-square ($\chi 2$) analyses, the sample size ensures that the minimum expected cell frequencies consistently satisfy Cochrane's criteria. This helps in avoiding the statistical distortions common in hyper-sparse data matrices. Finally for the convergent qualitative component, a sample of 104 open-ended narratives significantly exceeds the standard thematic saturation thresholds established in mixed-methods literature, where core organizational themes routinely stabilise between 12 and 30 deep institutional interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Thus, a qualitative saturation threshold is ensured.

### f. Variable Construction

In order to capture the multi-dimensional nature of occupational strain, a composite, normalised Stress Index ($Y_i$) was constructed for each individual educator (i) based on three self-reported latent strain indicators: Physical Discomfort ($X_1$), Mental Health Issues ($X_2$), and Professional Burnout ($X_3$).

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Each constituent variable was transformed into an ordinal numeric scale based on response severity:

$$X_{j,i} = \begin{cases} 1 & if\ response = Yes/\ Strongly\ Agree \\ 0.5 & if\ response = May\ be/\ Neutral \\ 0 & if\ response = No\ /Disagree \end{cases}$$

Where $j \in \{1,2,3\}$. The composite individual Stress Index ($Y_i$) is mathematically defined as the unweighted arithmetic mean of these components. It is bounding the index strictly within a unit interval:

$$Y_i = \frac{1}{3}\sum_{j=1}^{3} X_{j,i}$$

Where $Y_i \in [0,1]$. Mathematically, this specification assigns equal structural weights to the three indicators, i.e., physical, mental and burnout channels. This is under the classical parallel-indicator assumption. The middle weight of 0.5 serves as an agnostic representation of a latent state of uncertainty or partial strain confirmation.

Following index construction, the continuous metric $Y_i$ was segmented into three mutually exclusive operational tiers to facilitate bivariate cross-tabulation profiling:

$$\text{Stress Category} = \begin{cases} Low\ Stress & 0.00 \le Y_i \le 0.33 \\ Moderate\ Stress & 0.34 \le Y_i \le 0.66 \\ High\ Stress & 0.67 \le Y_i \le 1.00 \end{cases}$$

### g. Analytical Strategy

We proceed with the analysis in the three stages. In the first stage, we explore the descriptive statistics. Here, information of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations was calculated to analyse the basic characteristics of the sample and document the prevalence of workload and stress indicators. Next, we consider a bivariate analysis. Here details on cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were used to examine relationships between stress levels and key outcomes such as syllabus coverage. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to assess associations among continuous variables. Finally, we have done a thematic Analysis.

Here the open-ended responses were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. Responses were coded inductively, and themes were identified, reviewed, and named. Representative quotes were selected to illustrate each theme.

### h. Ethical Considerations

Participation in the survey was on a voluntary basis. The respondents were informed about the research objectives and methodology and were assured about the anonymity and confidentiality. The survey clearly stated that the information was for research use only. The survey did not include any personal identifiers that could link responses to individual teachers.

## RESULTS

### a. Sample Characteristics

Table 1 below presents the demographic and professional profiles of the sampled 104 teacher respondents.

**Table 1: Demographic and Professional Characteristics of Teachers (N=104)**

| Characteristic | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age Group** | 20-29 years | 32 | 30.8 |
| | 30-39 years | 34 | 32.7 |
| | 40-49 years | 24 | 23.1 |
| | 50 years and above | 14 | 13.5 |
| **Gender** | Female | 58 | 55.77 |
| | Male | 46 | 44.23 |
| **Teaching Experience** | Less than 5 years | 42 | 40.4 |
| | 5-15 years | 20 | 19.2 |
| | More than 15 years | 42 | 40.4 |
| | Kolkata | 32 | 34.6 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **District** | North 24 Parganas | 18 | 17.3 |
| | Hooghly / Howrah | 16 | 15.4 |
| | Other Districts | 34 | 32.7 |
| **School Type** | Private | 56 | 53.85 |
| | Government | 28 | 26.92 |
| | Aided/Missionary | 20 | 19.2 |
| **Employment Nature** | Full-time | 92 | 88.5 |
| | Contractual / Substantive | 12 | 11.5 |
| **Monthly Salary** | ≤ Rs.30,000 | 50 | 48.1 |
| | Rs.30,001 – Rs.50,000 | 28 | 26.9 |
| | > Rs.50,000 | 26 | 25.0 |

Source: Calculated from field survey data by the author.

We observe from Table 1 that the sample is predominantly female (55.77%). Most teachers are early-to-mid career (63.5% under 40 years). A significant portion of teachers are employed in private schools (53.85%). A substantial proportion (48.1%) earns Rs.30,000 or less per month. This indicates a financial precarity among many respondents.

### b. Workload and Stress Indicators

Table 2 below shows the descriptive statistics on workload and stress-related variables.

**Table 2: Workload and Stress Indicators: Descriptive Statistics (N=104)**

| **Indicator** | **Category** | **n** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| School Duties (per day) | More than 8 hours | 8 | 7.7 |
| | 6-8 hours | 66 | 63.5 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 4-6 hours | 30 | 28.8 |
| Administrative Duties (last week) | More than 8 hours per day | 2 | 1.9 |
| | 6-8 hours per day | 4 | 3.8 |
| | 4-6 hours per day | 8 | 7.7 |
| | 2-4 hours per day | 30 | 28.8 |
| | Less than 2 hours per day | 60 | 57.7 |
| Involvement in Non-academic Duties | Very Often | 16 | 15.4 |
| | Often | 14 | 13.5 |
| | Sometimes | 28 | 26.9 |
| | Rarely | 16 | 15.4 |
| | Never | 30 | 28.8 |
| Feel Exploited at Work | Strongly Agree | 22 | 21.2 |
| | Agree | 22 | 21.2 |
| | Neutral | 26 | 25.0 |
| | Disagree | 22 | 21.2 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 12 | 11.5 |
| Desire to Resign Due to Burden | Very Often | 18 | 17.3 |
| | Sometimes | 24 | 23.1 |
| | Rarely | 28 | 26.9 |
| | Never | 34 | 32.7 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Impact of Workload on Personal Life | Very High Impact | 28 | 26.9 |
| | Significant Impact | 32 | 30.8 |
| | Moderate Impact | 24 | 23.1 |
| | Slight Impact | 16 | 15.4 |
| | No Impact | 4 | 3.8 |
| Experienced Physical Discomfort | Yes | 72 | 69.2 |
| | No | 24 | 23.1 |
| | Maybe/Not Sure | 8 | 7.7 |
| Experienced Mental Health Issues | Yes | 84 | 80.8 |
| | No | 14 | 13.5 |
| | Not Sure | 6 | 5.8 |
| Experience Stress or Burnout | Yes | 64 | 61.5 |
| | No | 28 | 26.9 |
| | Not Sure | 12 | 11.5 |
| Non-academic Workload Impacts Class Responsibilities | Strongly Agree | 30 | 28.8 |
| | Agree | 48 | 46.2 |
| | Neutral | 14 | 13.5 |
| | Disagree | 10 | 9.6 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 2 | 1.9 |

Source: Authors' calculations from field survey

The main findings from table 2 above show a burden of workload. 2 hours or more/day on admin work (42.3%) and most work 6-8 hours/day in school. Almost three in ten (28.8%) are "often" or "very often" involved in non-academic duties like election work or government

surveys. The second important findings are Health and Well-being Crisis. The prevalence of self-reported health problems is disturbingly high. More than two-thirds (69.2%) report experiencing physical discomfort (e.g., back pain, hypertension), while 80.8% report mental health issues such as anxiety, insomnia, and anger. Almost two-thirds (61.5%) admit to feeling stressed or burnt out. Also we see that teachers mention an impact on their personal life.

A majority (57.7%) state that workload has a "significant" or "very high" impact on their personal and family life. Notably, an impact on their teaching. Crucially, 75% of teachers agree or strongly agree that non-academic duties negatively impact their class responsibilities, validating a central hypothesis of this study. Attrition Risk 40.4% reporting a desire to resign due to workload is a concerning indicator of potential teacher turnover. Figure 2 below captures graphically the workload strain as shared by the educators.

Figure 2: Pathological Profile of Educator Workload Strain ($N = 104$)

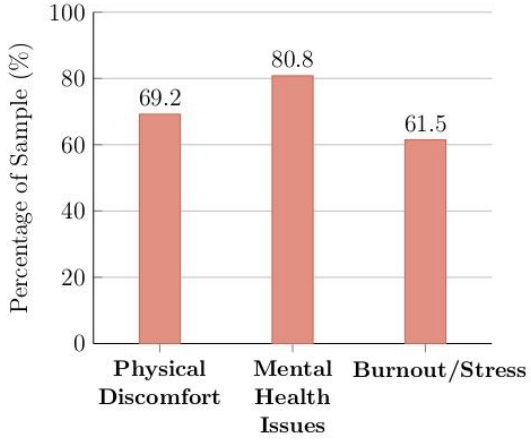


**Table 3: Stress Index Distribution Across Teacher Subgroups**

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| Subgroup | N | Mean Stress Index | SD | Low Stress (%) | Moderate Stress (%) | High Stress (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full Sample | 104 | 0.62 | 0.24 | 13.5 | 46.2 | 40.4 |
| Gender | | | | | | |
| Female | 58 | 0.68 | 0.21 | 8.3 | 41.7 | 50.0 |
| Male | 46 | 0.48 | 0.25 | 25.0 | 56.3 | 18.8 |
| School Type | | | | | | |
| Private | 56 | 0.65 | 0.23 | 12.5 | 43.8 | 43.8 |
| Government | 28 | 0.55 | 0.26 | 20.0 | 50.0 | 30.0 |
| Aided/Missionary | 20 | 0.58 | 0.24 | 10.0 | 50.0 | 40.0 |
| Non-academic Duties | | | | | | |
| Often/Very Often | 30 | 0.74 | 0.18 | 6.7 | 26.7 | 66.7 |
| Sometimes | 28 | 0.63 | 0.22 | 7.1 | 50.0 | 42.9 |
| Rarely/Never | 46 | 0.51 | 0.25 | 21.7 | 56.5 | 21.7 |
| Work-Life Impact | | | | | | |
| Significant/Very High | 60 | 0.78 | 0.14 | 0.0 | 30.0 | 70.0 |
| Moderate | 24 | 0.58 | 0.15 | 0.0 | 75.0 | 25.0 |
| Slight/None | 20 | 0.35 | 0.17 | 70.0 | 30.0 | 0.0 |
| Private Tutor | | | | | | |
| Yes | 34 | 0.70 | 0.20 | 5.9 | 35.3 | 58.8 |

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | 70 | 0.58 | 0.25 | 17.1 | 51.4 | 31.4 |

Source: Authors' calculations from field survey

The composite Stress Index (0-1 scale) had a mean of 0.62 (SD = 0.24) for the full sample, indicating a moderate-to-high level of overall stress. Categorizing this index: we observe that Low Stress (0.00 – 0.33): n = 14 (13.5%), Moderate Stress (0.34 – 0.66): n = 48 (46.2%) and High Stress (0.67 – 1.00): n = 42 (40.4%). We thus observe that over 86% of teachers fall into the moderate or high stress categories, with a concerning 40% in the high stress bracket.

Figure 3: Stress Index Stratification by Non-Academic Task Frequency

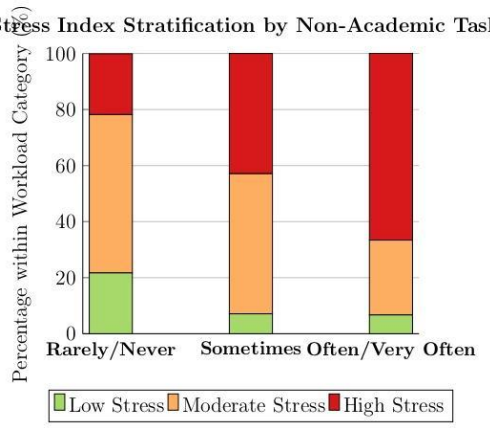


Figure 3 above shows the stress perception of the teachers arising from the non academic workloads. With almost 66% of teachers claiming to be under high stress most of the time. Figure 4 below shows the mean stress by teachers across different organisation. With teachers belonging to private schools claimed to be on average more under stress as compared to teachers of missionary schools or Govt schools.

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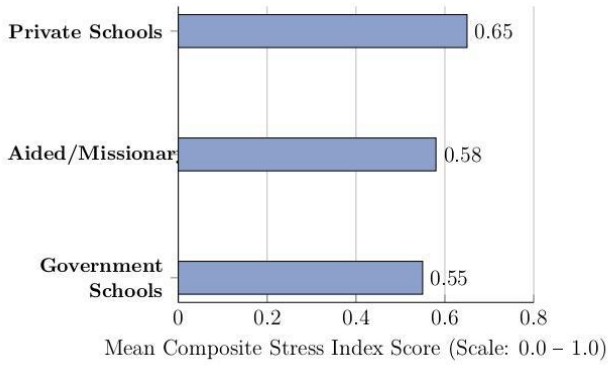
Figure 4: Institutional Variations in Mean Stress Index




### c. Stress- Syllabus Coverage analysis

**Table 4: Stress Level by Syllabus Coverage (Cross-tabulation)**

| Stress Level | Syllabus <70% | Syllabus 70-84% | Syllabus 85-100% | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Low Stress** | 2 (14.3%) | 6 (42.9%) | 6 (42.9%) | 14 (100%) |
| **Moderate Stress** | 14 (29.2%) | 10 (20.8%) | 24 (50.0%) | 48 (100%) |
| **High Stress** | 10 (23.8%) | 14 (33.3%) | 18 (42.9%) | 42 (100%) |
| **Total** | 26 (25.0%) | 30 (28.8%) | 48 (46.2%) | 104(100%) |

*Note: $\chi^2 = 2.94$, $p = 0.57$. Percentages are row percentages.

While the chi-square test does not reach statistical significance, likely due to small cell sizes. No statistically significant association is observed; however, the descriptive pattern is consistent with qualitative findings. The proportion of teachers failing to cover at least 70% of the syllabus more than doubles from the low stress group (14.3%) to the moderate stress group (29.2%). This pattern, while not definitive, aligns with qualitative reports of stress impairing teaching effectiveness.

### d. Correlation Analysis

Table 5 presents Pearson correlations among key continuous variables.

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix**

| Variable | Stress Index | Teaching Hours/ Week | Admin Hours/ Week | Classes Missed/Month | Syllabus Coverage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **(1) Stress Index** | 1.00 | | | | |
| **(2) Teaching Hours/Week** | 0.18 | 1.00 | | | |
| **(3) Admin Hours/Week** | 0.42** | 0.21 | 1.00 | | |
| **(4) Classes Missed/Month** | 0.31* | -0.08 | 0.19 | 1.00 | |
| **(5) Syllabus Coverage (%)** | -0.29* | 0.15 | -0.24 | -0.33* | 1.00 |

*Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

From the table above we find that "stress" is positively and significantly correlated with weekly administrative hours ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and classes missed per month ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$). Further "stress" is negatively correlated with syllabus coverage ($r = -0.29$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that higher stress is associated with lower perceived effectiveness. Finally, "Teaching hours" alone are not significantly correlated with stress, reinforcing the qualitative finding that it is the *non-teaching* burden that drives distress.

Figure 5 shows graphically points two important aspects. The first is that the women teacher points out that they are more stresses as compared to their male counterparts. And secondly that administrative duty is strongly related to the "stress" component.

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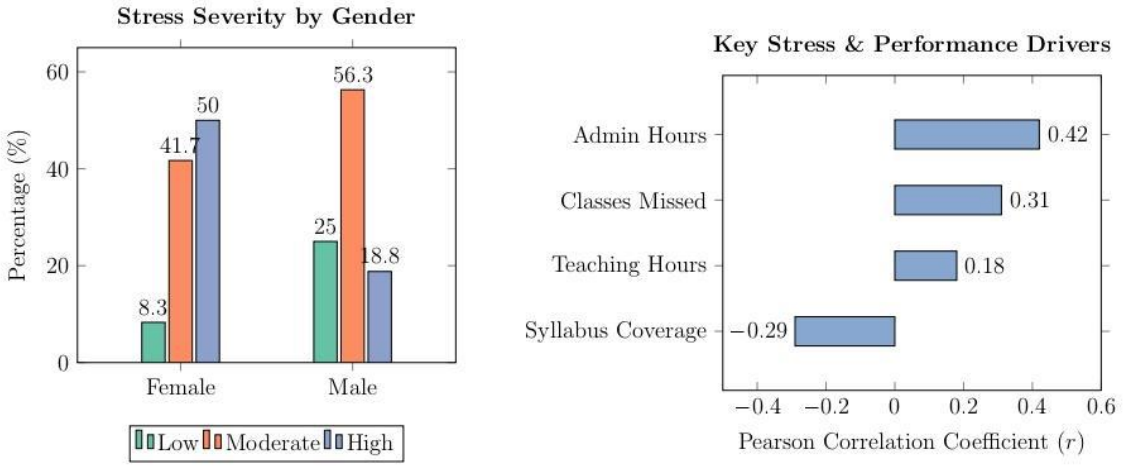
**Figure 5: Empirical Visualisation of Teacher Strain Profile and Institution Outcomes**




(a) Gendered Stress Polarization (b) Empirical Correlates of Strain

**e. Thematic Analysis of Open-Ended Responses**

Analysis of responses to "What are the most significant challenges you face as a teacher?" revealed five dominant themes. The first theme revolved around low finances (n=24 mentions). Low salary was cited by many as a key cause of stress, driving them to work elsewhere. "Low salary or financial constraints." (More than one respondent). "Financial reward is way lower than the stress or the work" (Recurring). The second theme revolved around student behaviour and management of the classroom (n=18). The teachers pointed out that dealing with student discipline and engagement issues was often a stressful event. (Numerous respondents). The third theme was"crowded Classrooms" (n=16). Constraints of large class sizes are felt as physical barriers to effective teaching. "Dealing with large classes" (Numerous respondents). The fourth theme focused on double burden of teaching and non-academic work (n=14). This theme codes the stress of non-voluntary work. (Numerous respondents) "Teaching plus other work duties" and election duties, and duties to the government and survey work" (one respondent). The fifth theme emphasized on work related stress and imbalance in personal life (n=8). Respondents cited the problems work created for their personal time and for their personal well-being. "Work-Life Balance or personal stress" (numerous respondents). There were some unique and pungent responses as well. Two responses were noteworthy because of the particularly moving and emotionally descriptive account. "*The biggest challenges for me are mental illness skimming and having a mentally ill colleague*." (Teacher 26) and "*I have a very long commute of four hours for work and often miss trains due to having caused an anxiety traffic jam*." (Teacher 40)

## DISCUSSION

In this study a mixed-methods approach has been taken to analyse the conditions of stress related to work stress in the work among school teachers present in the West Bengal area. The results show that a large proportion of teachers are under stress (86.4%) at moderate and high levels. This indicates that stress at the workplace is not a concern for just one person, but rather a systems or workplace problem. A finding of importance is the high level of correlation between non-academic duties and stress levels. The amount of administrative and external work done was found to be the source of a greater level of stress and in the way the responsibility for external tasks was ordered, as well as on the level of administrative and external work done, there was a greater feeling of disruption and loss of involvement from teachers in administrative and external activities. The quality of workload (non-teaching tasks) is important at determining the nature of stress, as described before. The findings also point to serious issues related to teachers' wellbeing. Many described physical pain and/or mental health problems, thus posing stress not just in professional doing but also as a factor for health problems. Moreover, work-life imbalance seems to be a significant variable as well, with a higher stress level being found related to high flow of work into personal life among the teachers.

Gender gaps are evident in that female teachers view themselves as more stressed. While the exact reasons are unknown, it may be due to the additional social and domestic service responsibilities and the excess of such responsibilities. Stress levels negatively impact syllabus coverage and are positively associated with the number of classes missed. While this association is not strong with the performance indicators separately, it can be inferred that the overall association has the potential to impact the level of effectiveness in teaching. Amongst the most important features of the empirical stratification of the Composite Stress Index is the very polarised trend across gender and institutional typologies. There is now something called Gendered Stress Paradox. The average stress indicator for female teachers (0.68,SD=0.21) was significantly higher than that of male teachers (0.48,SD=0.25) and a

Half of females (50.0%) are in the high stress category. This dramatic discrepancy is strongly reflected from the double-burden hypothesis often mentioned in the literature of south Asian labours (Chowdhury et al., 2025; Paramanik & Barman, 2025).

In the context of West Bengal, there is an additional dimension of strict professional performance indicators for the teachers at the school which compounded with uneven and longstanding domestic labour and caregiving duties pose challenges for female teachers. This is a localised finding that correlates well with the findings internationally. Findings from Hanif

et al. (2011) and Sarabia and Collantes (2020) show that teachers of both genders often give higher scores on their physiological and emotional exhaustion scales because of the feel of holding their pedagogical duties and domestic responsibilities. At the same time, the average stress Index (0.65, SD=0.23) of the private school teachers was significantly higher, the high stress level represents 43.8% of them compared to the low stress level encountered in government school organisations (0.55, SD=0.26). These findings show that there exist structural inequities in terms of employment in the state's education system. Government school teachers have guaranteed job security, special status, and a uniform pay structure. At the other end of the spectrum, the private education sector suffers from a shortage of institutional safeguards, large bureaucratic requirements and an extreme level of contractual insecurity. In field data, such a structural reality is reflected as a significant 48.1% (declared as the sample size) of the population having an insecure monthly income of Rs. 30,000, a strong activity in a private school. Meanwhile, this reflects the structural demand models recognised internationally proposed by Wang (2024) and Njuguna (2024) that private educators in an environment in which high corporate performance metrics are placed on them and they cannot rely on financial security or professional support, tend to suffer from serious professional burnout with the yearning to want to resign. Last but not least, many teachers voiced their intention to quit the teaching profession because of workload pressure. A high workload pressure score is seen as a potential teacher retention risk due to workload pressures. The findings as a whole highlight that non-academic workload and work-life imbalance plays a pivotal role in comprehending teachers' stress. Sustaining teachers' well-being and quality of teaching is crucial in solving these problems.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The results generated by this study suggest several implications for policymakers and administrators in West Bengal.

Firstly, there needs to be an attempt at minimizing the workload of teachers that does not involve academic responsibilities. Administration of elections and surveys and other types of work outside of teaching ought to be reduced as much as possible. Secondly, the psychological well-being of teachers requires further attention from policy-makers and schools' management. It seems appropriate to introduce additional supports to help teachers cope with stress and create a work environment conducive to well-being improvement. Thirdly, it may be worth revising the remuneration policy and workload structure among teachers to align payments with the true number of working hours and explore the possibility of introducing compensatory mechanisms. Such measures could help to minimize stress as well as the number of teachers

who rely on secondary sources of income. Fourthly, policies aimed at promoting a better work-life balance should be considered. For example, it may be beneficial to limit non-teaching tasks during after-class periods, making sure that they do not extend beyond the regular working period. Fifthly, special programs may be introduced for women teachers in light of their high stress rates. These programs may help to solve the problem. Finally, it is recommended to consider investing in improvements in school facilities and increase in teacher staffing to improve work conditions of teachers and thus promote teacher well-being. In summary, these implications reflect the importance of dealing both with the composition of workload and availability of institutional supports to improve teacher well-being and minimize teacher stress.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study carried out faces some limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results. Firstly, the sample size (n = 104) used was relatively small. This resulted in limited ability of statistics to capture meaningful relationships. Furthermore, the results of this research could be applicable only to a certain geographical area of West Bengal. There were no data collected about other areas of the country. Secondly, since all measures were based on self-reporting, potential biases may affect results obtained. For example, people who experience stress might overestimate its effect while individuals who managed to adapt to stressful situations might underreport their effects on well-being. Thirdly, the cross-sectional nature of the research does not allow us to make conclusive remarks about causality of the observed relationships. There might exists another unobserved variable causing both non-academic workload and stress rates.

## CONCLUSION

Through this study, it is clearly indicated that school teachers experience widespread levels of stress in their workplaces, and a significant percentage of teachers have been found to face moderate to high stress levels. From the study, it can be seen that workload issues and work-life imbalances play a critical role in increasing stress levels in teachers.It is noted that stress may lead to decreased performance levels as far as teaching is concerned, as it may limit syllabus completion and cause frequent absences. It is important to note that the high percentage of teachers intending to quit teaching is a clear indication of the gravity of the situation.In conclusion, it is clear that the problem faced by school teachers is not only an individual one; rather, it is structural. This problem is driven by various characteristics of workload structure.Future studies can adopt similar strategies using bigger and diverse samples and longitudinal studies.

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