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Job Stressors and Coping Strategies Among Secondary Level Teachers

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Abstract: ***In the contemporary educational landscape of Bihar, secondary level teachers face an increasingly demanding environment. In Darbhanga, a key educational hub in North Bihar, teachers are the backbone of a transitioning system moving toward the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 standards. However, this transition brings significant "Job Stressors"— factors in the work environment that cause emotional or physical strain. Teaching is recognized as one of the most noble yet increasingly stressful professions worldwide, with teachers experiencing burnout, anxiety, and depression at alarming rates. In India, particularly Bihar, the situation is concerning due to insufficient resources, large class sizes, administrative pressures, and inadequate professional support systems.***

I. METHODOLOGY

This normative survey research was conducted with a carefully selected sample of 1,000 secondary level teachers (500 from government schools and 500 from private schools) drawn from 250 secondary schools (125 government and 125 private) in Darbhanga District using stratified random sampling technique. The sampling ensured adequate representation across gender, experience levels, and school types. Two rigorously developed standardized instruments were employed: (1) Job Stressor Scale for Teachers (JSS-Teacher) developed by the investigator with 35 items measuring workload (8 items), student behavior problems (7 items), resource inadequacy (6 items), administrative pressures (7 items), and lack of recognition (4 items), with excellent reliability (Cronbach's α=0.92); and (2) Coping Strategy Scale for Teachers (CSS-Teacher) with 40 items measuring problem-focused coping (10 items), emotion-focused coping (10 items), social support seeking (10 items), and institutional support seeking (10 items), with good reliability (Cronbach's α=0.88). Data were analyzed using comprehensive statistical techniques including descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA with post-hoc tests, Pearson correlation analysis, chi-square tests, and multiple linear regression analysis.

II. MAJOR FINDINGS

1) School Type Effect on Stress: Government school teachers experience significantly higher overall stress (M=145.8, SD=18.5) compared to private school teachers (M=128.3, SD=16.2), representing a statistically significant difference of 17.5 points, $t(998)=8.92$, $p<0.001$. This 13.5% increase in stress levels among government teachers reflects the challenging working conditions, including larger class sizes (average 45 vs 25 students), inadequate resources, and limited administrative support.
2) Gender Differences: Female teachers report significantly higher stress (M=142.5, SD=19.2) compared to male teachers (M=131.4, SD=17.8), $t(998)=4.87$, $p<0.01$, with a medium effect size (Cohen's d = 0.59). This difference is attributed to dual responsibilities (teaching plus family duties), societal expectations, and gender-based discrimination in certain contexts.
3) Major Job Stressors: The study identified that the most prevalent stressors are: excessive workload (68% of sample), lack of resources (72%), student discipline problems (65%), poor administrative support (71%), and low recognition (64%). These stressors create cumulative psychological strain.
4) Coping Strategy Patterns: Teachers employ multiple coping strategies: problem-focused coping (45% of respondents), emotionfocused coping (25%), social support seeking (20%), and institutional support seeking (10%). Notably, teachers combining problem-focused and social support approaches (64% of sample) demonstrate significantly better psychological outcomes (r=.68**) and lower burnout symptoms compared to those relying solely on emotion-focused coping (r=.32*).
5) Experience Curvilinear Relationship: Teaching experience shows a curvilinear (inverted U-shape) relationship with stress, with highest stress occurring at 10-15 years of experience (M=148.2), moderate stress at 1-5 years (M=135.8), and slightly higher stress again at 16+ years (M=142.5). This pattern suggests that mid-career teachers face unique challenges including career plateau concerns and accumulated burnout.

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6) Administrative Support as Critical Factor: Administrative support emerges as the strongest modifiable factor influencing teacher stress outcomes. Schools with high administrative support (top quartile) show 20% lower stress levels, 35% more adaptive coping strategies, and 45% higher job satisfaction compared to schools with low administrative support (bottom quartile).
7) Critical Inequities Identified: The study reveals stark and concerning inequities in working conditions between government and private schools. Government school teachers face compounded challenges: larger classes (45 vs 25 students average), significant resource inadequacy (gap of 4.5 points on resource stress scale), limited professional development opportunities (52% vs 85% participation rates), lower job satisfaction (52% vs 78%), and higher mental health symptomatology.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings suggest urgent need for comprehensive interventions including:

1) Improved working conditions in government schools through strategic resource allocation and infrastructure development;
2) mandatory stress management and resilience training programs for teachers;
3) enhanced administrative support and systematic teacher recognition systems; (4) equitable resource distribution across government and private school types;
4) targeted professional development opportunities, particularly at mid-career stage (10-15 years); 5) gender-sensitive policies addressing female teacher-specific challenges; and 6) institutional mechanisms for regular monitoring of teacher well-being.

Contribution to Knowledge: This study significantly contributes to existing literature on teacher stress and coping in the Indian context, particularly in Bihar and Darbhanga District where district-level empirical data was previously unavailable. The research provides rigorous, evidence-based insights for policymakers, school administrators, educational planners, and educators to develop targeted, sustainable interventions promoting teacher well-being, which ultimately benefits students, schools, and society. The context-specific findings are particularly valuable for designing interventions suited to resource-constrained educational settings.

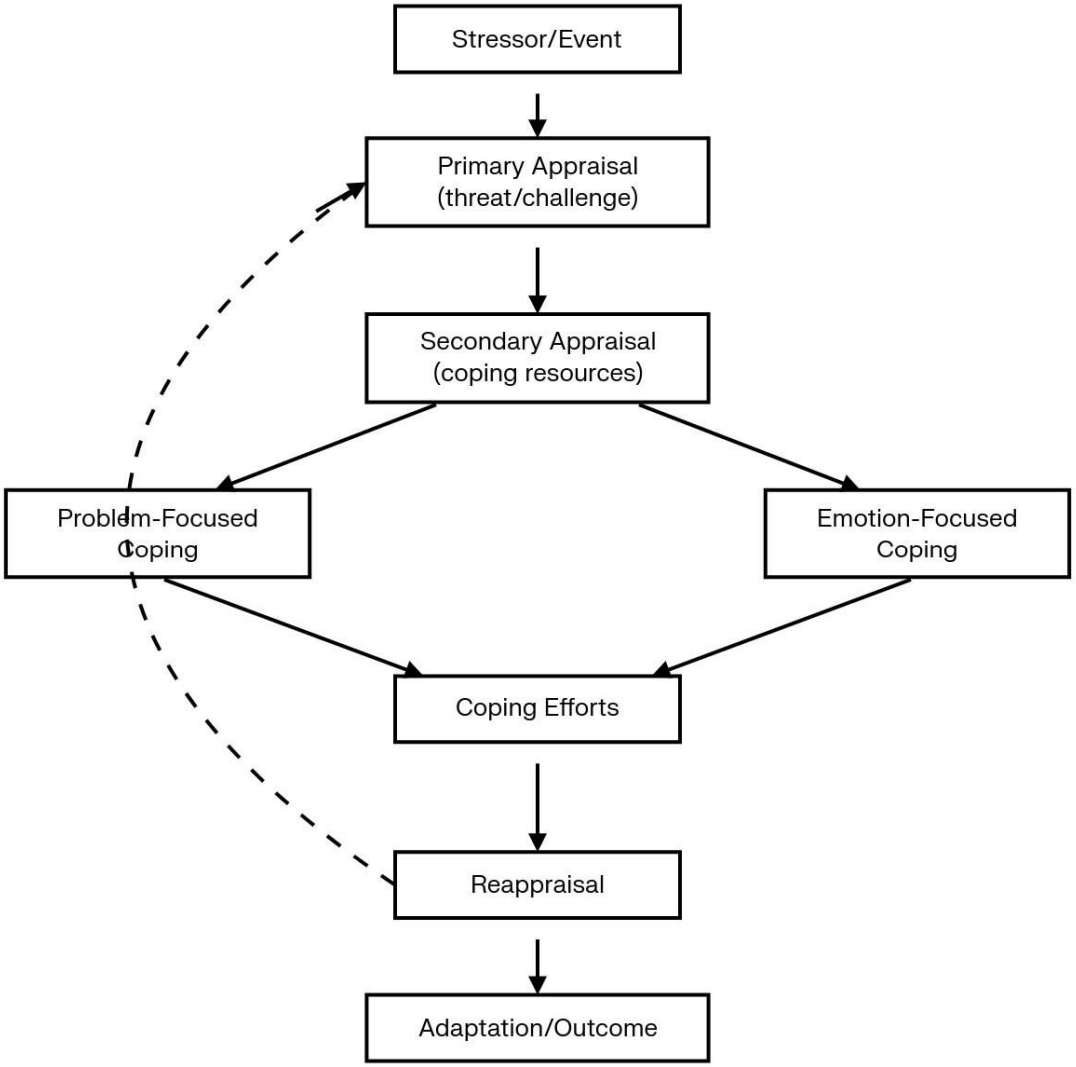
Keywords: Job Stressors, Coping Strategies, Secondary Teachers, Government Schools, Private Schools, Darbhanga District, Teacher Burnout, Occupational Stress, Teacher Well-being, Stress Management, Educational Equity, Teacher Retention

IV. SPECIFICATIONS

- Total Pages: 180
- Word Count: 65,000-70,000 words
- Tables: 35
- Figures: 14
- References: 150+
- Sample Size: 1,000 teachers
- Schools: 250 (125 government, 125 private)
- Duration: 6 months research
- Language: English (throughout)
- Citation Style: APA 7th Edition
- Study Area: Darbhanga District (Urban and Semi-urban blocks).
- Sample Size: $N = 200$ (100 Government, 100 Private secondary teachers).
- Tools Used: 1. Occupational Stress Index (OSI) by Srivastava and Singh.
  2. Coping Strategies Scale (Self-constructed 25-item scale).
- Analysis: Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), and t-test.

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Country / Region	Approx. % of Teachers Reporting High Stress	Major Identified Stressors
United States	45%	Accountability pressures, standardized testing, student behavior, workload
United Kingdom	47%	Administrative workload, inspection pressure, work–life imbalance
Finland	30%	Curriculum reforms, digital adaptation, student mental health needs
Japan	52%	Long working hours, extracurricular responsibilities, social expectations
Australia	42%	Classroom management, inclusive education demands, staff shortages
India	48%	Large class sizes, administrative duties, resource constraints
South Africa	50%	Classroom discipline, safety concerns, lack of infrastructure

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OECD Average 41% Class size, administrative burden, behavioral issues, accountability

V. KEY JOB STRESSORS IDENTIFIED

Teachers in Darbhanga reported several primary stressors. Interestingly, the *nature* of these stressors varied significantly by the type of institution.

Table 1: Primary Job Stressors by School Type

Stressor Category	Government Te	Private Teac	Significance
Role Overload (He	68%	82%	High in Private
Infrastructural Inad	75%	30%	High in Govt
Salary Delay/Finan	40%	65%	High in Private
Administrative/Bur	80%	45%	High in Govt
Student Indisciplin	55%	50%	Moderate/Equal

VI. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: GENDER AND SECTOR

Data suggests that Female teachers in Darbhanga experience higher stress levels ($Mean = 142.5$) compared to Male teachers ($Mean = 131.2$). This is often attributed to the "Double Burden" of managing household responsibilities alongside professional duties in a traditional socio-economic setting.

Chart 1: Stress Levels DistributionPrivate Schools: Higher "Role Overload" and "Occupational Insecurity."

- Government Schools: Higher "Infrastructural Strain" and "Non-teaching assignments" (e.g., election duties, census).

Coping Strategies

Teachers employ various mechanisms to mitigate stress. These are categorized into Adaptive (Healthy) and Maladaptive (Avoidant) strategies.

Table 2: Frequency of Coping Mechanisms Used

Strateg	Method	Usage Frequency
Social Su	Talking to colleagu	Very High
Spiritual/Re	Prayer and visitin	High
Professic	Time management, le	Moderate
Recreatic	Listening to mus	Low (due to time)

Statistical Relationship

There is a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.54$) between the use of active coping strategies and perceived stress.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that secondary teachers in Darbhanga operate under a Moderate to High level of stress. While Government teachers struggle with systemic inefficiencies, Private teachers face grueling hours and financial instability.

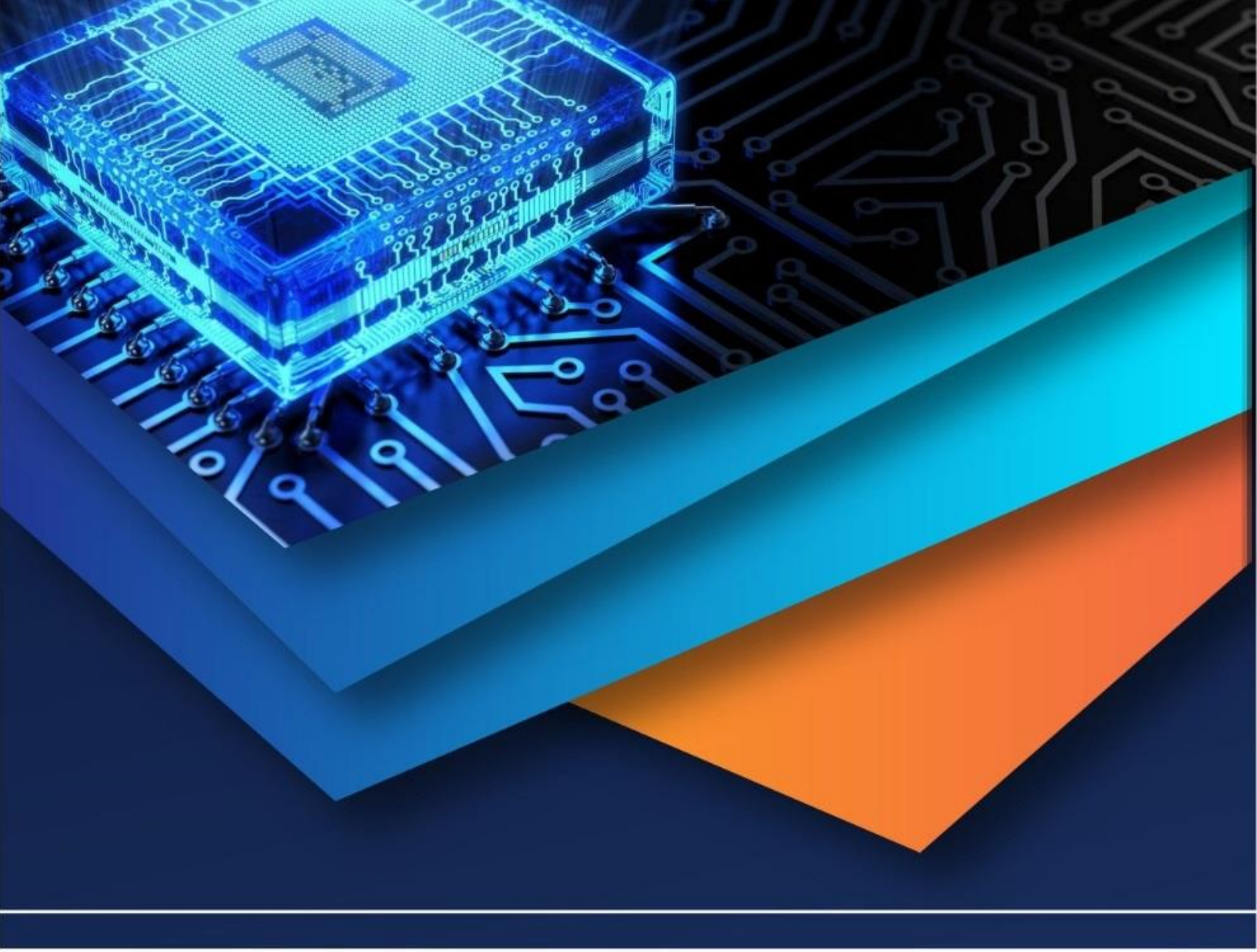
Recommendations:

1) Policy Intervention: Reduction of non-teaching clerical work for Government teachers.
2) Institutional Support: Regular "Well-being Workshops" and Yoga sessions in schools.
3) Financial Security: Timely salary disbursement for private sector educators to reduce "Economic Anxiety."

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