



## Teachers' Resilience during Covid-19

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### ABSTRACT

This unprecedented event has changed the world into a new era of online learning for all people. Only a handful of private schools have started with their online digital virtual classes due to which many teachers had to depart the roles. The educational system and teachers are one of the very important components who is dealing with stress issues and problems to cope up with this pandemic everyday. Teachers faced many types of academic challenges. In order to succeed and maintain their well-being, they must be resilient and have the ability to fight back or recover from stress. One may find a situation very difficult but in handling the situation if a person has a capacity or factor of resilience than life issues can be sorted easily. The objective of the present study is to study the psychological health and resilience among school teachers and to study the relationship between resilience and psychological health among school teachers. For this purpose, 50 government and 50 private school teachers was the sample of the study having age group 30 to 60 years. The result of the study indicate that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers with respect to resilience and psychological health.

*Keywords: Resilience, teachers' online teaching, virtual classrooms, Covid -19*

### Introduction

The month of March 2020, when India declared a lockdown to fight the covid-19 is un-forgettable. Not only India covid-19 has severely affected the whole world - loss of lives, economic crisis, uncertainty and concerns of mental well-being of individuals (Chhikara, 2020). Teachers were also affected in variety of manner ranging from loss of jobs either because of closure of private schools or reduced strength of teachers in schools (as schools faced financial crisis), to change in pedagogies. The virtual classroom and online teaching have become a new normal. Schools were closed for elementary school children for more than 18 months in continuation. During all this time teaching continued – teachers learnt and train themselves in new ways of conducting online classes in order to sustain in the new normal.

In online classes, students are participating through platforms like Zoom, Google, Teams, WebEx and many others. The virtual presence of students, only sometimes with camera on, made it difficult for teachers. It is hard to understand whether students have understood a concept or not. Teaching methods and assessment practices changed with the changed

reality. It is tough for teachers to survive and in the reality of competition and job insecurity, teachers are highly impacted and this is where the factor of resilience comes into play. Resilient teachers can only handle the tough situations faced by them. They can deal with the stressful times using their defence mechanism, without affecting their mental health.

#### Psychological health and its measurement

The **psychological health** is a multi-dimensional concept, which not only symbolizes an absence of disease and disability, but also the existence of the sense of happiness and welfare, a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (WHO, 2011). It is a state, an ability to conduct everyday activities, establish proper relationship, and exhibit proper social and cultural behaviour. To elaborate, let us try to answer the following three question:

- Do you suffer anxiety?
- Are you depressed?
- Do you feel like you have lost control over everything and cannot do anything about your feelings?

If answer to above questions is in affirmative then it indicates a situation of psychological distress, which in turn is related to mental health. Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope up with all the normal stresses of life, and is able to make a good contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2011).

Psychological distress is viewed as an emotional condition that involves negative views about self, others and the environment and is characterized by unpleasant subjective states. These subjective states can reduce the emotional

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resilience of individuals and impact on their ability to enjoy life and to cope with pain, which ultimately results in disappointment, and sadness. Psychological distress can be viewed as a state in which people can move from experiencing well-being to distress and back at various times throughout their lives. It can also have direct and indirect effects on the individual's psychological, emotional, social and occupational functioning, which affects many major areas of their life, including relationships, work and health. Psychological distress is a non-specific syndrome, which may include anxiety, depression, anger, irritability, and some other concepts previously classified under neuroses. Depression and anxiety are the core components of the distress syndrome.

The variety of measurable psychological health aspects is wide, ranging from very severe disorders to psychological well-being, adjustment, and quality of life concerns. Often mental ill-health and disorders are the main concern in health surveys. One of the most common instruments used for measuring psychological distress is the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ).

### Resilience and its Levels

Resilience is the ability to adapt well to hardships, problems of various kinds, trauma, tragedy, threats or even various sources of stress due to any reason or challenge in life. It helps the individuals to be positive even in the times of stress and keep them optimistic. It helps them to prepare and adapt to the situation. As per Cooke (2015) resilience is defined as "the capacity of individuals and systems to mitigate, adapt to, recover, and learn from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability and increases well-being".

Humans face challenging situation in their lives. Some people are positive in negative situations and others may get into depression and stress. It is very important for teachers to be resilient. One, if teachers themselves are not resilient then how will they role model the resilient qualities to children? (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Two, teachers face challenge every day while teaching diverse group of children in the twenty-first century. This is an emerging "age of diversity and sustainability" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Thirdly, resilient teachers have capacity to face challenges, recover quickly in adversities, which is linked positively to motivation to teach and it helps in promoting achievement in all aspects of students' lives. Resilience has potential effects on well-being, welfare, and quality of life of individuals (Windle, 2011). In this research, resilience is comprehended as capacity and ability to cope stressful situations.

#### Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the research:

- To study the perceptions of teaching-learning situation by teachers during the transition from physical teaching to online teaching.
- To study the psychological health and level of resilience of teachers during the transition from physical teaching to online teaching.

#### Review of Related Research

Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) studied about the impact of COVID-19 in education in schools, skills and learning and found that global lockdown of educational institutional had caused a major interruption in students learning and also chaos in their assessment. They had also highlighted about the

continuous debate between policy makers and leaders across the world whether to open school and maintain the economy and jobs for workers or close the educational institutions and save lives.

Sahu (2020) studied about the impacts of dreadful COVID-19 outbreak on the education and its results in the mental health of the students and academic staff. Some of the major changes and challenges include shifting from face to face to online classes, impacts on the assessment and evaluation process, loss of studies of international students, travel restrictions for everyone and also the impacts on the mental health due to the disrupted lives of many people.

Talidong and Toquero (2020) studied about the practices to deal with the anxiety due to the COVID-19 by Philippine teachers. The closing and lockdown of schools and educational institutes, social distancing and home quarantine practices caused a sudden state of anxiety in the teachers when the mode of their work is completely changed to online teaching. Some of the practices to cope up with the anxiety in teachers include information seeking, and taking preventive measures to deal with COVID-19 (Chhikara 2021), also practicing virtual learning and communication on the professional grounds.

Castro, Kelly, and Shih (2017) investigated the strategies of resilience exhibited by fifteen noble teachers employed in high-needs areas, such as in urban and rural contexts and in special education field. Findings indicated that teachers utilised a variety of strategies, including help seeking, problem-solving and seeking rejuvenation/renewal. These strategies assisted beginning teachers in building additional resources and support; however, the burden for success and securing resources fell on teachers themselves. Furthermore, the researchers recognised that resilient teachers demonstrated agency in the process of overcoming adversity and challenges of life.

Crow and Crow (2015) emphasized the importance of mentally healthy teachers in schools. They said that more important than industry is the need in schools for well-adjusted, satisfied and efficient teachers. Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. Happiness, peace of mind, satisfaction in achievement and enjoyment of life and work are all aspects of mental health. They found that a person who has good mental health adjusts in a good way with himself and his environment.

Ganapa and Sreedevi (2015) planned to find out difference in the stress levels of government and private school teachers and different symptoms experienced due to stress. The study was conducted in 180 school teachers (n1=86 government school teachers, n2=94 private school teachers). Pretested semi structured questionnaire was administered. From results, there is significant difference between private and government teachers in relation to personality and system factors, but no significant difference was seen in interpersonal factors. In addition, private school teachers showed more symptoms of stress.

Gonsalves, A. (2014) studied public school teachers' perceptions about psychological health. Teachers understanding of the terms 'health and psychological health', was studied. The result shows from the teachers' perspective of general health is defined as the proper physiological functioning of the body and mental health is related to the balance between mind and body, as it is a basic requirement for happiness. Most of the teachers (80.6%) showed great interest in acquiring knowledge about mental health and receiving educational materials on the subject.

Nandoliya, H. (2013) conducted a study on psychological health of higher secondary school teacher with relation to sex, habitat, types of school and faculty. The result showed that a significant difference existed between male and female teachers on mental health. A significant difference existed between the urban and rural teachers on mental health. Significant differences existed among arts, commerce and science faculty's teachers on the mental health.

**Sample**

The sample of research was taken from teachers teaching in 2 government and 2 private schools in Delhi. There were 50 male and 50 female teachers in the age group of 20 to 35 years and with experience of 2-5 years. Only those teachers who gave consent and showed willingness to participate were included in the research.

**Tool used for data collection**

**Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale**

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), defined resilience, as the capacity to overcome adverse situations. The CD-RISC is a 25 items scale that has been studied in a variety of populations such as, members of different ethnic groups and cultures, adolescents, teachers, elders, military medical personnel, medical students, college students, survivors of various traumas, social workers, and even select professional or athletic groups. It has 25 statements to be marked on 5-point scale (from none of time to all of the time). It has statements like:

- I am feeling optimistic about the future;
- I have been feeling useful; I have been feeling relaxed;
- I have been feeling interested in other people;
- I had energy to spare;
- I have been feeling confident;
- I have been feeling loved;
- I have been thinking clearly;
- I have been feeling good about myself;
- I have been dealing with problems well;
- I have been feeling close to other people;
- I have been able to make up my own mind about things;
- I have been feeling cheerful;
- I have been interested in new things.

Conor – Davidson Resilience Scale is an effective tool, which helps to measure the resilience of a person. This is the most reliable and recommended tool to be used for resilience as it helps to find out various components of resilience like the ability to adapt to changes and deal with challenges, cope up with stress.

Psychological Health Questionnaire development by Goldberg and Williams (1988) has been extensively used in different settings and different cultures with reliability varying from 0.78 to 0.95 in various studies. The GHQ focuses on the two major areas: 1) the inability to carry out normal functions and 2) the appearance of new and distressing phenomena. Each item is to be marked on a 4-point scale and thus, can be scored from 0 to 3 with a total possible score ranging from 0 to 84. Using this method, the total score of 23/24 is the threshold for

the presence of distress. The content validity of the questionnaire was also established in India with the help of experts and no modifications were suggested. The reliability of the scale was established with Cronbach Alpha Coefficient method, seems to be satisfactory, that is 0.89

A questionnaire to assess the knowledge and awareness of the teachers about Covid-19 was designed with 13 questions to be marked on a 3-point scale. The questionnaire has items about symptoms, spread, treatment and precautions to be taken about / during Covid – 19.

Statistical tools - mean, percentage, standard deviation, 't' test and coefficient correlation were calculated. The data was collected through questionnaires using google forms and a few teachers were interviewed through online mode.

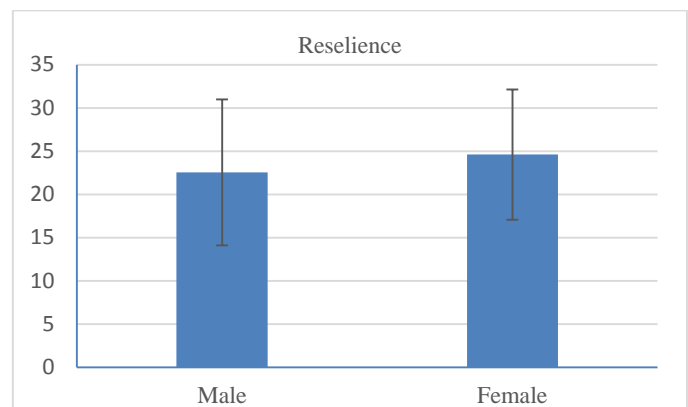
**Results**

**Resilience of Male and female teachers:**

**Table 1.** Mean scores of male and female teachers on resilience and results of independent samples 't' test

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	P Value
Resilience	Male	50	23.56	4.85	1.99	.0612
	Female	50	22.90	3.04		

df=98; Significant at 0.05 level



**Graph 1:** Showing the Mean and SD of male and female teachers with respect to resilience

Independent samples 't' test revealed there is a significant difference between mean resilience of male and female teachers with respect to the level of resilience. Similar results were reported by Ganapa and Sreedevi (2015). They found that there is significant difference between male and female teachers in relation to personality and system factors.

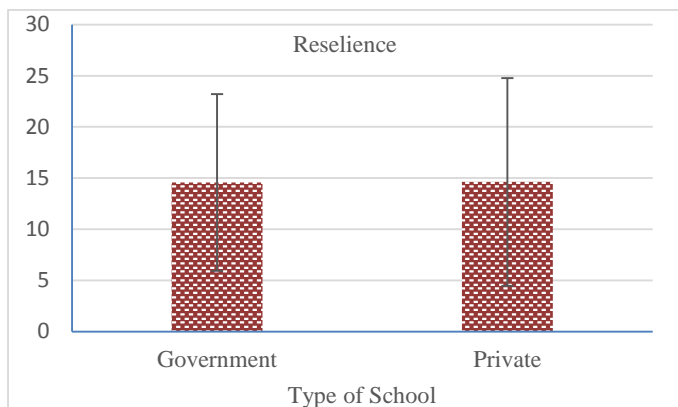
**Resilience among government and private schools teachers**

**Table 2:** Government and private school teachers with respect to resilience and results of independent samples 't' test

Variable	Type of Schools	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	p Value
Resilience	Government	50	14.10	6.05	.216	.829
	Private	50	14.38	7.20		

df=98; Significant at 0.05 level

As shown in the table above, there is no significant difference in teachers teaching in government and private schools with respect to the level of resilience.



**Graph 2:** Showing the Mean and SD of teachers teaching in government and private schools with respect to resilience.

Contrary to our findings, Ganapa and Sreedevi (2015) found that private teachers show more symptoms of stress as compared to their counterparts from the government schools.

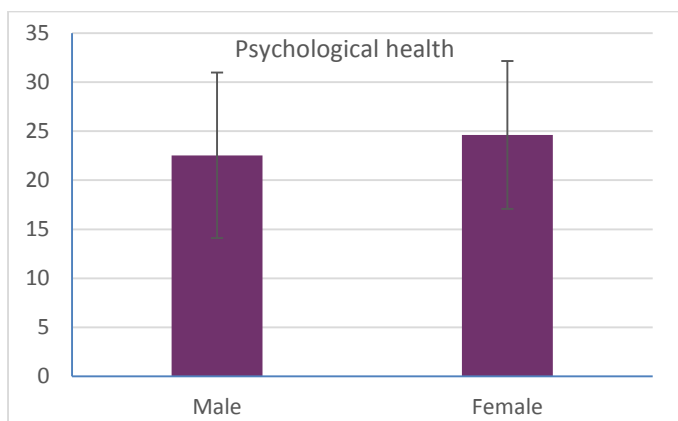
### Psychological health of male and female teachers

**Table 3:** Mean scores of male and female teachers on psychological health and results of independent samples 't' test

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	P value
Psychological Health	Male	50	22.54	8.44	2.144	.033
	Female	50	24.61	7.54		

df = 98; Significant at 0.05 level

In the table above, there is significant difference in the psychological health of male and female teachers. Mental and behavioural disorders affect all people (with all ages, genders, all income groups, and both urban and rural environments from all countries and societies). In the current study, the total scores of female teachers had higher mean score than male teachers. The findings of the current study support the view of Miller et al., (2010) findings. They mentioned that males scored significantly higher on both physical and psychological health than women, indicating better psychological health among men.



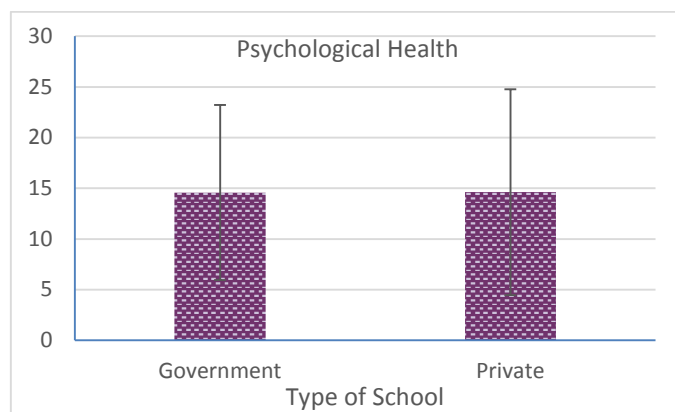
**Graph 3:** Showing the Mean and SD of male and female teachers with respect to psychological health

### Psychological health teachers teaching in government and private schools

**Table 4:** Mean scores of teachers teaching in government and private schools on psychological health and results of independent samples 't' test

Variable	Type of Schools	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	P value
Psychological Health	Government	50	14.58	8.63	.034	.973
	Private	50	14.62	10.14		

df=98; Significant at 0.05 level



**Graph 4:** Showing the Mean and SD of teachers teaching in government and private schools with respect to psychological health.

There is a significant difference in teachers teaching in government and private schools with respect to psychological health. In psychological health, there was significant difference teachers, teaching in government and private schools. Galgotra (2013) also found that government school teachers possess good psychological health in comparison to private college teachers. These findings point the role of policy makers and authorities in education. Shakuntala (2011) studied the adjustment of college teachers in relation to their psychological health and found that government and private college were significantly different in psychological health of teachers. Psychological health of college male and female teachers was significantly different, and it was found that significant difference exist in government and private college psychological health.

### Understanding of Covid-19

A total of thirteen questions were used to measure the knowledge of teachers on the COVID-19 virus. The average knowledge score for participants was 10.5 (SD = 1.4, range 0–13) for male teacher and 12.5 (SD-2.0) for female teacher. The overall correct answer rate of the knowledge questionnaire was 80.5% (10.5/13\*100) while the range of correct answer rates for all participants were between 46.2 to 100%. About 77.2% of participants were able to obtain scores above 10, representing an acceptable level of knowledge of Covid 19.

The table below gives the understanding of Covid 19 situation by male and female teachers.



**Table 5:** Teacher's' knowledge of COVID-19 (N=100)

Question	True	False	I'm not sure
1. The main clinical symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, fatigue, dry cough, and body aches .	86.7%	10.1%	3.2%
2. Unlike the common cold, stuffy nose, runny nose, and sneezing are less common in persons infected with the COVID-19 virus.	65.0%	17.8%	17.2%
3. There currently is no effective cure for COVID-19, but early symptomatic and supportive treatment can help most patients recover from the infection.	94.1%	1.4%	4.6%
4. Not all persons with COVID-2019 wil develop to severe cases. Only those who are elderly and have chronic illnesses are more likely to be severe cases.	89.6%	5.7%	4.7%
5. Eating or touching wild animals would result in the infection by COVID-19 virus.	35.2%	35.7%	29.2%
6. Persons with COVID-19 cannot infect the virus to others if they do not have a fever.	5.8%	83.2%	11.0%
7. The COVID-19 virus spreads via respiratory droplets of infected individuals.	81.9%	7.4%	10.7%
8. The COVID-19 virus is airborne.	42.1%	43.3%	14.6%
9. Ordinary residents can wear face masks to prevent the infection by the COVID-19 virus.	76.7%	16.8%	6.6%
10. It is not necessary for children and young adults to take measures to prevent the infection by the COVID-19 virus.	3.7%	95.5%	0.8%
11. To prevent the infection by COVID-19, individuals should avoid going to crowded places and avoid taking public transportation.	96.7%	2.3%	1.0%
12. Isolation and treatment of people who are infected with the COVID-19 virus are effective ways to reduce the spread of the virus.	98.9%	0.4%	0.7%
13. People who have contact with someone infected with the COVID-19 virus should be immediately isolated in a proper place. In general, the isolation period is 14 days.	99.1%	0.4%	0.5%

**Table 6:** Mean scores of male and female teachers with respect to COVID-19 and results of independent samples 't' test

	N	Mean	SD	t	Level of Significance	Result
Male	50	10.50	1.40	2.52	1.96	Significant
Female	50	12.50	2.0			

In the table above, the perception regarding COVID-19 ( $t=2.52$ ;  $p=.033$ ) is significantly different between male and female teachers. Most participants knew that people who had contact with an infected person should be immediately isolated for a period of 14 days (99.1%) and that this is an effective way to reduce the spread of the virus (98.9%). Even so, there was noticeable confusion among participants regarding transmission of the virus. Only 43.3% of participants answered correctly when asked if the virus was airborne and just 35.7% answered correctly when asked if eating and touching wild animals could result in infection.

### Conclusions

Education is a comprehensive and continuous process, which helps in the development of the body, the mind and emotions (Affective domain). Teachers know their subject thoroughly well and continue to remain up-to-date. A good teacher is required to have an attitude of love and empathy for students to help them grow happily and develop their self; they leave an ever-lasting impression on the minds of students. The unprecedented situation of covid 19 has affected everyone including teachers; Teachers in this context fought the battel at two fronts. One, as individual level and other at societal (school level). At the individual level, teachers teaching in private schools were constantly under the stress of loss of jobs or deduction in salaries. Moreover, everyone faced stress of loss of loved ones in their families and neighbourhood. Resilience can help take out a person from any trauma or any stressful situation. Good psychological health can only be accompanied with a person who is resilient because problems are faced by everyone but how one tackles them is what matters the most. Resilience is more than an individual trait. It is a capacity which arises through interactions between people. It was found that teachers with good psychological health perform better. Studies have also shown that a good mental health means a high job satisfaction, this would mean that the teachers in this study also enjoy high job satisfaction. The teachers who enjoy good psychological health and high job satisfaction are most likely to be more productive than those who do not possess high job satisfaction or good psychological health.

In the present research it was found that there are gender difference in the level of psychological health and resilience. Hence, greater the resilience, greater will be the good psychological health. More the amount of resilience will be there in a person the higher will be the psychological health and risk of mental and emotional loss will be less if a person is in any difficult situation or challenges of life. It has been observed through previous research that, the levels of work related stress, anxiety and depression are higher within education than any other occupational groups. Attention should be given upon fostering and sustaining resilience rather than focusing upon managing stress. It is suggested that the resilience needs to be actively nurtured through initial training and managed through the different phases of their professional lives in general among the teachers. It is very important that efforts should be made to

ensure that our teachers possess good health. Activities like yoga, exercise and meditation should be conducted in the school premises for teachers which would help in the overall psychological health. There is a need to constantly update our teachers with the latest technologies used for online/ blended teaching. Moreover, the right attitude needs to be nurtured in the teacher towards teaching-learning and students.

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