

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and new normal on Job Stress among Arts and Science College Teachers in Chennai

*N.Subbiah, **Dr.M.Ketharaj, ***Dr S. Senbaganathan

*Ph.D Research Scholar, PG & Research Dept of Commerce, Raja Dorai singam Govt, Arts college Sivagangai.
(Affiliated to Alagappa University, Karaikudi)

**Associate Professor & Research Supervisor, Department of Commerce, Sri Meenakshi Government Arts college for Women (Autonomous), Madurai - 625 002.

***Associate Professor, PG & Research Dept of Commerce, Raja Dorai singam Govt, Arts college Sivagangai. (Affiliated to Alagappa University, Karaikudi)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18813508>

Published Date: 28-February-2026

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the higher education sector, compelling Arts and Science college teachers to rapidly adapt to unprecedented teaching and working conditions. This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent new normal on job stress among Arts and Science college teachers in Chennai. The sudden transition to online teaching, increased workload, technological challenges, job insecurity, and difficulties in maintaining work-life balance during lockdown periods contributed substantially to elevated levels of job stress. Furthermore, psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of infection, and emotional exhaustion intensified stress during the pandemic phase.

In the post-pandemic new normal, teachers continue to experience stress due to hybrid teaching models, increased academic expectations, and adaptation to digital pedagogy, and institutional performance pressures. The study highlights that while some stressors have reduced with the resumption of physical classes, new forms of occupational stress have emerged, indicating the long-term impact of the pandemic on the teaching profession. The findings emphasize the need for effective institutional support systems, stress management interventions, and policy measures to safeguard the mental well-being and professional effectiveness of college teachers. The study contributes valuable insights for educational administrators and policymakers in addressing job stress in higher education institutions during crisis and post-crisis periods.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, New Normal, Job Stress, Online Teaching, Work-Life Balance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented crisis across all sectors, with the higher education system experiencing profound disruptions worldwide. Colleges and universities were compelled to suspend traditional classroom teaching and rapidly shift to online and remote modes of instruction. This sudden transformation significantly altered the professional roles, responsibilities, and working conditions of Arts and Science college teachers, leading to increased levels of job stress. In India, particularly in metropolitan regions such as Chennai, the impact of the pandemic on teaching professionals was acute due to prolonged lockdowns, technological constraints, and institutional pressures to ensure academic continuity.

Job stress among college teachers during the pandemic emerged from multiple sources, including increased workload, unfamiliarity with digital teaching platforms, lack of adequate training, and difficulties in evaluating student performance online. Additionally, teachers faced psychological challenges such as anxiety, fear of infection, social isolation, and uncertainty regarding job security and career progression. Balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations during work-from-home arrangements further intensified stress levels, especially among women faculty members.

As educational institutions gradually resumed physical operations, a “new normal” in higher education began to take shape, characterized by blended and hybrid teaching models, enhanced use of digital tools, and heightened performance expectations. While the return to campus reduced certain pandemic-related stressors, it also introduced new challenges such as adapting to dual modes of teaching, managing health and safety concerns, and meeting increased administrative and academic demands. Consequently, job stress has persisted among college teachers, reflecting the long-term effects of the pandemic on the teaching profession.

In this context, examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal on job stress among Arts and Science college teachers is essential. Understanding the nature and sources of stress can help educational administrators, policymakers, and institutional management develop effective strategies to support teachers’ well-being, enhance job satisfaction, and improve the overall quality of higher education in the post-pandemic era.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. N. Subburaj (2022) Stress is a mental condition in which a person is under a lot of pressure because of problems with their social and environmental well-being, which can lead to a lot of diseases. The crucial age for young people is when they are going through a lot of life transitions. They are expected to be among society's elite. As a result, they should improve their stress management skills in order to thrive in society. When a child is young, they must not only adjust to their new life and surroundings but also become familiar with a lot of new people, events, and things. The primary issue concerns the causes of stress among students of various ages and their families. The study's primary goal is to investigate the causes of students' academic anxiety, including excessive parental expectations, high rank, excessive

Kita et al. (2022) observed higher education teachers mental hearing at the time of COVID-19 who used e-learning. The study examined two periods, that is, before the pandemic and during the pandemic. The results highlighted that teachers' mental health was better before the onset of the pandemic. The study also explored those teachers who experience more mental health issues who, do not know how to use information technology properly, and they were not satisfied with the administrative help.

B.Kishori& B. Vinothini (2016) found that various components of occupational work stress have an effect on banking sector employees. It was discovered that private and public sector bank employees experience a high level of occupational work stress as a result of long working hours, conflict, and political pressure

Objectives

- 1 To analyze the physical factors, technical factors influencing the job stress
- 2 To study factors New normal situation of the college teachers
- 3 To Study the job factors such as work environment, monetary benefits, facilities offered by the employers.

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the higher education system, forcing Arts and Science colleges to shift abruptly to online teaching. This sudden transition increased workload, technological challenges, and psychological pressure among college teachers. During the pandemic, teachers faced stress due to work-from-home practices, fear of infection, job insecurity, and work–life imbalance. In the post-pandemic new normal, hybrid teaching models and increased academic expectations have continued to create job stress. Arts and Science college teachers in regions such as Chennai continue to experience persistent occupational stress. However, limited region-specific studies exist, highlighting the need for this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal on job stress among Arts and Science college teachers in Chennai. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. A structured questionnaire is used as the main tool for collecting primary data, covering demographic details, sources of job stress, pandemic-related stress factors, and new normal challenges. The population of the study consists of Arts and Science college teachers working in government, aided, and self-financing colleges. A convenient sampling method is adopted to select the respondents. The collected data are analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square test, t-test, and ANOVA to draw meaningful conclusions.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is confined to Arts and Science college teachers working in colleges located in Chennai. The study focuses on job stress experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the post-pandemic new normal period. It examines stress arising from online teaching, technological challenges, workload, psychological pressure, work–life balance, and institutional support. The study also considers selected demographic variables such as age, gender, qualification, teaching experience, and type of institution. The findings of the study are useful for college management, policymakers, and educational administrators in designing effective stress management and support strategies.

Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected directly from Arts and Science college teachers through a structured questionnaire administered personally and through online platforms. The questionnaire covers aspects such as demographic profile, pandemic-related stress factors, challenges faced during the new normal, and coping strategies adopted by teachers. Secondary data are collected from research journals, books, published articles, reports, conference proceedings, government publications, and relevant online databases related to job stress, COVID-19, and higher education.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE TEACHERS IN CHENNAI REGION AND OPINION OF FACTORS OF NEW NORMAL SITUATION TO THE COLLEGE TEACHERS

To find relationship between age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers the following hypothesis were formulated.

Ho: There is no significant difference between age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers.

H1: There is a significant difference age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers.

The agreement towards factors of new normal situation of arts and age of science college teachers in Chennai were subjected to one-way ANOVA with their age and the values of F and their corresponding significance levels are shown in the following table.

Table 1: One way ANOVA between age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I am happy to be updated with digital technology as well as chalk and talk	Between Groups	3.812	3	1.271	1.256	0.28
	Within Groups	420.900	416	1.012		
	Total	424.712	419			
Hybrid mode is saving time	Between Groups	4.670	3	1.557	1.495	0.21
	Within Groups	433.128	416	1.041		
	Total	437.798	419			
Access of learning sources are unlimited after Covid -19	Between Groups	7.741	3	2.580	2.186	0.08
	Within Groups	491.107	416	1.181		
	Total	498.848	419			
Digitalisation is used optimally	Between Groups	15.621	3	5.207	3.980	0.00*
	Within Groups	544.293	416	1.308		
	Total	559.914	419			
Self motivation is possible	Between Groups	12.447	3	4.149	3.631	0.01*
	Within Groups	475.351	416	1.143		
	Total	487.798	419			
Easily circulating /sharing the information	Between Groups	6.556	3	2.185	1.579	0.19
	Within Groups	575.577	416	1.384		
	Total	582.133	419			
More knowledge about the using of social media	Between Groups	7.601	3	2.534	1.651	0.17
	Within Groups	638.389	416	1.535		
	Total	645.990	419			
Searching of Job is possible	Between Groups	14.543	3	4.848	3.691	0.01*
	Within Groups	546.340	416	1.313		
	Total	560.883	419			

* Significant at 5 per cent level

Inference

The analysis of the association between the age of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion on factors related to the new normal situation was carried out using one-way ANOVA. The results reveal that for most of the factors considered, such as being updated with digital technology alongside traditional chalk and talk, hybrid teaching saving time, unlimited access to learning resources, ease of circulating information, and increased knowledge of social media usage, the differences across age groups were not statistically significant, as their significance values were greater than 0.05. This indicates that teachers across various age groups shared relatively similar views on these aspects of the new normal. However, significant differences were observed in three factors, namely optimal use of digitalisation, self-motivation, and the possibility of job searching, where the p-values were less than 0.05. This suggests that teachers’ opinions on these factors varied significantly depending on their age. Younger teachers may have shown greater adaptability and inclination towards digitalisation, while older teachers might have expressed different levels of motivation or outlook towards employment opportunities in the changed academic environment. Thus, the results partially reject the null hypothesis, confirming that while age did not influence teachers’ opinions on several aspects of the new normal, it did create differences in their perspectives towards digitalisation, motivation, and job search possibilities.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MONTHLY INCOME OF ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE TEACHERS IN CHENNAI REGION AND OPINION OF FACTORS OF NEW NORMAL SITUATION TO THE COLLEGE TEACHERS

To find relationship between monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers the following hypothesis were formulated.

Ho: There is no significant difference between monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers.

H1: There is a significant difference monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers.

The agreement towards factors of new normal situation of arts and monthly income of science college teachers in Chennai were subjected to one-way ANOVA with their age and the values of F and their corresponding significance levels are shown in the following table.

Table 2: One way ANOVA between monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and opinion of factors of new normal situation to the college teachers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I am happy to be updated with digital technology as well as chalk and talk	Between Groups	5.163	5	1.033	1.019	0.406
	Within Groups	419.549	414	1.013		
	Total	424.712	419			
Hybrid mode is saving time	Between Groups	9.047	5	1.809	1.747	0.12
	Within Groups	428.751	414	1.036		
	Total	437.798	419			
Access of learning sources are unlimited after Covid -19	Between Groups	25.387	5	5.077	4.440	0.00*
	Within Groups	473.461	414	1.144		
	Total	498.848	419			
Digitalisation is used optimally	Between Groups	19.172	5	3.834	2.936	0.01*
	Within Groups	540.742	414	1.306		
	Total	559.914	419			
Self motivation is possible	Between Groups	14.949	5	2.990	2.618	0.02*
	Within Groups	472.849	414	1.142		
	Total	487.798	419			
Easily circulating / sharing the information	Between Groups	22.927	5	4.585	3.395	0.00*
	Within Groups	559.206	414	1.351		
	Total	582.133	419			
More knowledge about the using of social media	Between Groups	25.020	5	5.004	3.336	0.00*
	Within Groups	620.971	414	1.500		
	Total	645.990	419			
Searching of Job is possible	Between Groups	11.675	5	2.335	1.760	0.12
	Within Groups	549.209	414	1.327		
	Total	560.883	419			

* Significant at 5 per cent level

Inference

The one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the relationship between the monthly income of arts and science college teachers in Chennai region and their opinion on factors associated with the new normal situation. The results show that for factors such as being updated with digital technology alongside chalk and talk, hybrid mode saving time, and the possibility of job searching, the significance values were above 0.05, indicating that teachers' opinions on these aspects did not differ significantly across income groups. However, significant differences were observed in several factors, including unlimited access to learning sources after Covid-19, optimal use of digitalisation, self-motivation, ease of circulating or sharing information, and increased knowledge in the use of social media, where the p-values were below 0.05. This outcome highlights that income level influenced teachers' perspectives towards certain aspects of the new normal, particularly in terms of digital adoption, learning opportunities, and professional motivation. Higher-income groups may have had better access to resources and greater exposure to digital tools, while lower-income groups might have encountered more limitations in adapting to these changes. Thus, the null hypothesis is partially rejected, confirming that monthly income created significant variations in teachers' opinions on specific aspects of the new normal, even though it did not influence all dimensions under study.

4. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent new normal have had a profound impact on job stress among Arts and Science college teachers. The sudden shift to online teaching during the pandemic increased workload, technological stress, psychological pressure, and work-life imbalance. Teachers were required to adapt quickly to digital platforms while coping with health concerns, job insecurity, and emotional exhaustion. Although the reopening of colleges reduced certain pandemic-related stressors, the new normal introduced hybrid teaching models, continuous performance monitoring, and increased academic expectations, leading to persistent occupational stress.

The study reveals that job stress among college teachers is not limited to the pandemic period but continues in altered forms in the post-pandemic environment, particularly in urban regions such as Chennai. Institutional support, effective training, and stress management initiatives play a crucial role in reducing stress levels and enhancing teachers' well-being. The findings of the study highlight the need for policy interventions and supportive organizational practices to ensure sustainable teaching environments and improved quality of higher education in the post-COVID era.

REFERENCES

- [1] Agrawal, S., & Sharma, R. (2021). Job stress and mental health of teachers during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, 10(1), 1–7.
- [2] Brooks, S. K., et al. (2020). The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it. *The Lancet*, 395(10227), 912–920.
- [3] George, S., & Thomas, J. (2022). Occupational stress among college teachers in the post-pandemic period. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 36(5), 789–804.
- [4] Gupta, A., & Goplani, M. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on educational institutions in India. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, 5(3), 1–6.
- [5] Kumar, R. (2019). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. Sage Publications.
- [6] World Health Organization. (2020). *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak*.