

Historical Presentation of Professional burnout among Rural and Urban Elementary Teachers

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Abstract

This paper focused on the comparison and previous responsible factors of professional burnout among Rural as well as Urban teachers' in Nayagarh district of Odisha. Elementary teachers are overburdened, engaged in non-teaching activities as well as less paid and posted on contractual basis in no convene areas of Nayagarh district. Government is silently promoting them as 'Money Saving Approach' in current education system. Elementary teacher's agitation throughout the Odisha indicated towards the serious psycho-social problems among teachers community. Hence, the attempt is made to highlight the historical responsible factors for burnout of Rural and Urban teacher in elementary school of Nayagarh district. Therefore, the present study conducted on the sample of 400 elementary teachers (200 from Rural Schools and 200 from Urban schools) of Nayagarh District. To measure the Burnout level among teachers as well as three levels of professional burnout among Rural and Urban, Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) Educational Survey was used as a tool. To find out the level of professional burnout between them four objectives and equal number of research questions are framed and data analyzed by using Mean, SD and 't' test. Results indicated that majority of elementary schools teachers are experiencing medium level of Burnout in the district. It was also found that Rural elementary school teachers are experiencing more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization than Urban elementary teachers but place of posting of an individual is not affected Personal Accomplishment of elementary school teachers on that district.

Key Words: comparative study; professional burnout; rural & urban elementary teachers; burnout syndrome; depressive symptoms; MBI; SSA.

Introduction

There is an absence of a responsive education system in India. School curricula are inapt to meet diverse learning needs of learners living in different contexts. Teachers are engaged in non-professional work such as election duty, preparation of voters list, survey for people below poverty line and out of schoolchildren, campaign against literacy and diseases. This reduces their teaching hours as well as increasing their professional detachment from schools. Through this above discussion it can be concluded that job burnout is directly correlated to underlying factors such as pressures caused by job status, working conditions, students' behavior problems, professional level, number of students in the classrooms, lack of resources, relationship with coworkers, and social support received by teachers.

Professional burnout is a set of unfavorable feelings and emotions, which employees view within their works. It refers to a collection of attitudes that workers have about their job. This evaluation may rest largely upon one's success or failure in the achievement of personal objectives and upon the perceived contributions of the job and employing organization to these ends. Thus, a worker may like certain aspects of his work yet thoroughly dislike others. Professional teacher burnout can lead to students' negative reactions and attitudes toward the teacher in particular and the learning situation in general. Elementary teachers negative feelings are connected with reduced quality in teaching, less flexibility to accept various student needs, and poor teacher-student interactions. Lack of interest in teaching, communicating, and conveying the lesson of the day might be warning symptoms of the burned out teachers. In the same time low achievements of the students high teacher absenteeism, turnover, career

change, mental health, deteriorating performance and early retirement low self esteem and depressive symptoms resentment, anger and helplessness, headache, frequent colds, flu, and cardiovascular symptoms , and the like are among the negative consequences of the chronically burned out teachers.

Meeting these challenges and avoiding burnout means providing teachers with the technological tools and professional learning opportunities to make their jobs easier. Step one in that process is developing a comprehensive plan that addresses a district's specific challenges and learning goals for all students. That's why the govt introduced different innovative programmes and new initiatives to help school districts plan for and effectively use technology and digital learning to boost student outcomes.

Apparent teacher shortages are particularly severe in some fields not only in Nayagarh district but also all over Odisha/India. The data suggest, for example, that there are too few candidates to meet the demand for teachers in fields like mathematics, science, and special education. Subject specific shortages are likely to be worse in district as well as state that have not enacted targeted programs and incentives to recruit and prepare teachers in these fields. These factors are related to the professional burnout among the teacher now, therefore, it is the work of policy maker to concentrate upon this syndrome.

What is burnout?

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress within the workplace. It occurs when the teacher feels overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, the teacher begins to lose the interest or motivation towards the job that led the teacher to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces teachers' productivity and saps their energy, leaving their feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, they may feel like they have nothing more to give. Most of us have days when we feel bored, overloaded, or unappreciated; when the dozen balls we keep in the air aren't noticed, let alone rewarded; when dragging ourselves out of bed requires the determination of Hercules. If you feel like this most of the time, however, you may be flirting with burnout. Therefore, that is the time for you that you are going to lose your energy and capability for giving the best to the profession.

Rationale of the Study

This syndrome is not only harmful for teachers themselves but it has a wide influence on students' achievement as well as on society. It is now a growing syndrome within the teaching profession. Therefore, it should be reduced for a better learning as well as school environment. It adversely affected the emotional condition of the teacher; hence, they are no longer capable to adjust themselves in the school environment. So the total workplace healthy environment is destroyed and which have a direct adverse effect on our society. It reduces their work output of the teacher, which lead to poor students' performance. The importance of burnout syndrome in the educational setting is even more emphasized, because apart from affecting the mental, psychosomatic and social health of educators it also decrease the quality of teaching and work performance, which in turn may negatively influences teachers family environment. The deleterious effects of burned – out teachers on themselves, their students and finally on the learning process. So there is an importance of studying burnout phenomenon in the educational environment in the district in particular and system as a whole.

Studies are also conducted to assess the burnout level and its impact on education. So there is a need to investigate how professional stress is related to burnout among elementary teachers in particular reference to Nayagarh district of Odisha. Most of the educated people in the districts of Nayagarh, who opt to be teachers; they couldn't meet the challenges and demands of the professional obligations, because it is one of the rural and remote districts in the state at the same time elementary schools are not well equipped

with proper needed physical infrastructure. So they are suffering from the Burnout Syndrome sooner rather than later. The Burnout stress Syndrome affects the work output of teachers both quantitatively and qualitatively. It causes deterioration in the quality of work of teachers and they can no longer function normally. Research evidence has shown that there is high stress and burnout among elementary teachers in elementary schools. Given that there are a few studies that investigated the relationship between job stress and burnout among elementary schools teachers and the moderating roles of personality and social support in the relationship, there is need to investigate how job stress is related to burnout among the elementary teachers placed in rural as well as urban areas of Nayagarh district. As they account for the vast majority of expenditure in school education and have the greatest impact on student learning, far outweighing the impact of any other education program or policy so here government should take initiatives to reduce the level of burnout among elementary teachers for its better and proper use. With regard to the above statement as a good citizen/research scholar/teacher, it's our primary duty to study the causes of burnout and find out they require measures for them. A substantial number of studies on teacher burnout indicate the employment of teachers in rural and urban areas have the burnout syndrome. Therefore here samples (rural and urban teachers) taken to investigate the effect of place of posting on the level of burnout as one of their demographic variables. These kinds of studies may not thoroughly demonstrate the demographic specific variables effects of burnout factors. Scarcity of studies on samples of rural and urban teachers was motivation for the present study. This is an attempt to survey the burnout level of teachers in the teaching profession in Nayagarh rural as well as urban areas and to possibly find answers to the research questions.

Objectives

The following objectives are set forth in the present study.

1. To assess the level of professional burnout presented among elementary teachers of Nayagarh district.
2. To examine dimension wise professional burnout presented among teachers of elementary school of Nayagarh district.
3. To find out the significant difference of professional burnout level between Rural and Urban elementary school Teachers.
4. To summarize, tabulate and suggest different strategies to minimize the level of professional burnout among elementary teachers.

Method of the study

Descriptive survey method was used to describe the current status of professional burnout among the elementary teachers especially placed in rural as well as urban areas. Also in the study as the investigators tried to get information about more than one variable and assigned numerical value to those variables also with better understanding of perceptions of stakeholders (Hittleman and Simon, 1997). Through this method information about conditions, situations and events that occur in the present can be obtained (UNESCO, 2005). Therefore, in the present study the investigator used this method to explore all possibilities to measure the level of professional burnout among rural and urban elementary teachers of Nayagarh district.

Sample and sampling strategy

Keeping in view the nature of the population and variety of cliental group, the study was conducted total Eight Blocks of Nayagarh district (Bhapur, Daspalla, Gania, Khandapara, Nayagarh, Nuagaon, Odagaon, Ranpur) with taking 400 elementary school teachers of government schools (200 rural and 200 urban teachers) of Nayagarh district as sample. The sample was selected from each Block that from elementary school randomly. While selecting the sample care was taken that equal number of rural elementary as well as urban elementary teachers were selected. Multistage stratified random sampling technique was employed for selection of various subjects of the study namely; blocks, clusters, schools. Holton & Burnett (1997) states that: “ultimate function of stratification is to organise the population into homogeneous subsets and then select appropriate number of elements from each. It permits the use of different sample designs for different portions of the population”

Instruments

Two questionnaires were distributed among the subjects. One was aimed to get the demographic information, including the teachers’ place of posting and teaching experience. The other questionnaire was the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI- ES) (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). It is a 7- point Likert scale ranging from 0-6 (where 0 = never and 6 = every day). It includes 22 items that asked the respondents how often they experience feelings that relate to burnout. These items are related to the three dimensions of burnout (i.e., Emotional Exhaustion (EE) = 9 items; Depersonalization (DP) = 5 items; and Personal Accomplishment (PA) = 8 items). The Emotional Exhaustion subscale assesses the feelings of being emotionally exhausted or overextended (e.g., “I feel used up at the end of the workday”). The Depersonalization subscale evaluates the feelings of impersonal response toward people (e.g., “I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects”). The Personal Accomplishment subscale measures the feelings of successful achievement (e.g., “I feel very energetic”). This indicates that all the items of the scoring scale are measuring the same construct.

Statistical Technique

Keeping in view of objectives of the study the data so collected was statistically analyzed by using simple statistics like percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ – test were used for analysis and interpretation of data in the present study.

Analysis and Interpretation

Dimension wise level of professional burnout among elementary teachers

The burnout level of elementary teachers as a whole (N = 400) was estimated in terms of the high, moderate, and low response categories. Table 1 indicates the frequency and percentage of the elementary teachers, for the three dimensions of the Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and reduced Personal Accomplishment (PA).

Table 1: Dimensions wise frequency and percentage of elementary teachers in terms of high, moderate, and low levels of burnout and their mean and SD.

	EE F(%)	DP F(%)	PA F(%)
High	133 (33.25)	115 (28.75)	170 (42.50)
Moderate	149 (37.25)	121 (30.25)	135 (33.75)
Low	118 (29.50)	164 (41.00)	95 (23.75)
Total	400(100)	400(100)	400(100)
Mean SD	23.05 (M) 10.63	9.02 (M) 7.03	33.61 (M) 7.96

Note. EE= Emotional Exhaustion (high ≥ 27 , moderate= 17-26, low ≤ 16); DP= Depersonalization (high ≥ 13 , moderate= 7-12, low ≤ 6); PA= reduced Personal Accomplishment (high ≤ 31 , moderate= 32-38, low ≥ 39)

Figure 1 Representing Level of Burnout dimension wise as a whole among elementary teachers

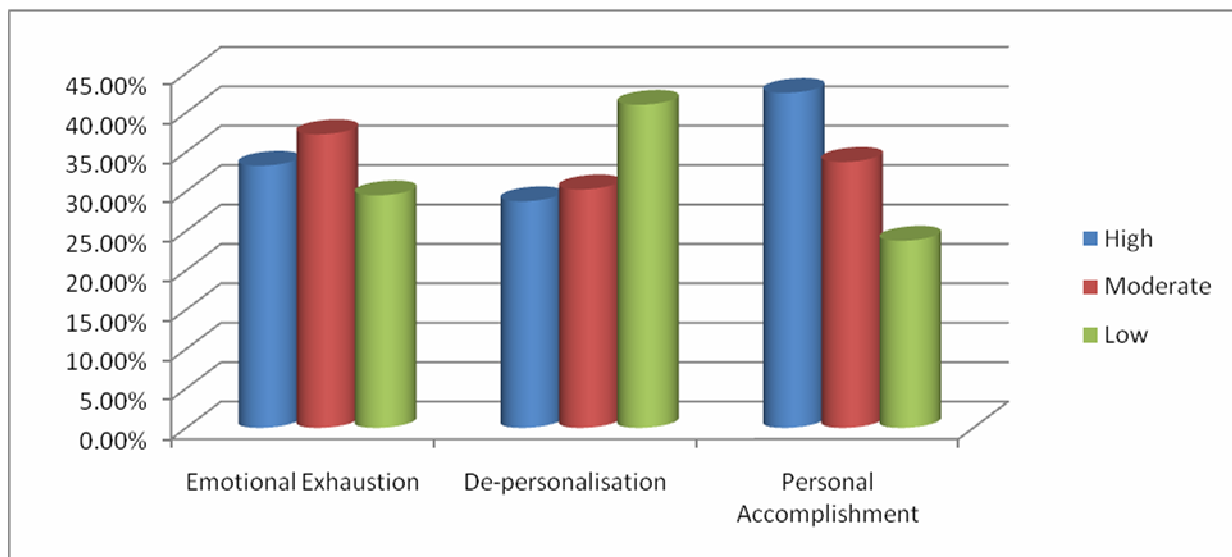
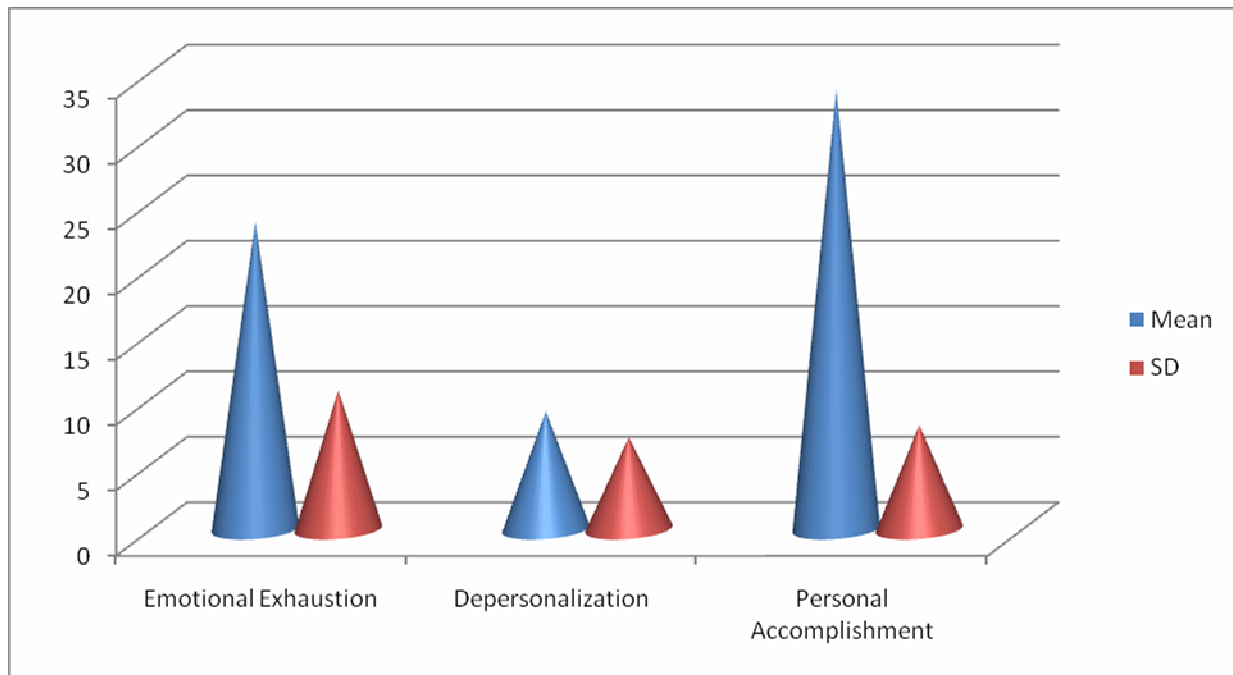


Figure 2 Representing Mean and SD on level of Burnout as a whole

Through this above table at the same time from the graphical representation attempt has been taken to assess the level of professional burnout that exist among rural elementary as well as urban teachers of Nayagarh district. So as criteria fixed by the Maslach in his Inventory it is observed that 33.25 % of teachers as a whole of Nayagarh district are emotionally exhausted that means they have depletion of emotional resources, as well as 37.25% are moderately exhausted means they are on the path of emotional exhaustion one syndrome of professional burnout. Whereas, 29.50% teachers are experiencing low level of exhaustion whatever may be burnout syndrome presented with everyone. At the same time 28.75% teachers are experiencing high levels of depersonalisation means they have developed a negative, callous and cynical attitude towards the recipients of their services. At the same time 30.25% teachers are going to detached from their job and also no doubt next stage is serious for them in particular society as a whole, in the same way near about half of the sample teachers (41.00%) on the path of depersonalisation. It is also revealed that 42.50% of teachers are experiencing lack of personal accomplishment means they evaluate their work negatively and developed feelings of insufficiency and poor professional self esteem and 33.75% experiencing medium as well as 23.75% have low but they all facing one of the burnout syndrome, so this not a good sign for that profession. Therefore, it can be concluded here that rural as well as urban schoolteachers are having professional Burnout of that district that is due to the occupational stress in schools like overloaded work, low salary structure and lack of recognition of them as a teacher in the society as well as the poor educational policy by govt. Although it does not matter whether they have high, medium or low level Burnout. Hence, they only concentrated with typical mechanical routine activities with a purpose to just complete their professional related work. They hardly enjoy the work they did. This is a serious issues must be dealt on priority to save the future of our children. The initiatives of the GOI under SSA and different international organisations those are working there for education must consider this issue as a major block in the way of providing quality elementary education to all under RTE act in our country in general particular the district in particular.

Burnout Levels of Rural and Urban elementary Teachers

To identify the level of professional burnout among elementary urban as well as rural teachers percentage wise calculation was made of all responses given by participants. Accordingly, low, moderate, and high levels of professional burnout have been identified. High, moderate, and low frequency of Urban (n = 200) and Rural (n = 200) teachers, as well as the Percentage for the three dimensions of EE, DP, and PA, are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of the three Burnout levels for Rural and Urban elementary teachers

	EE		DP		PA	
	Urban F(%)	Rural F(%)	Urban F(%)	Rural F(%)	Urban F(%)	Rural F(%)
High	69	79	59	58	83	109
	(34.50)	(39.50)	(29.50)	(29.00)	(41.50)	(54.50)
Moderate	73	75	66	47	76	54
	(36.50)	(37.50)	(33.00)	(23.50)	(38.00)	(27.00)
Low	58	46	75	95	41	37
	(29.00)	(23.00)	(37.50)	(47.50)	(20.50)	(18.50)
Total	200	200	200	200	200	200
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note. EE= Emotional Exhaustion; DP= Depersonalization; PA= Personal Accomplishment; F= Frequency;

Figure 3 Representing % value of Urban, Rural on Emotional Exhaustion **Figure 4** Representing % value of Urban , Rural on Depersonalization

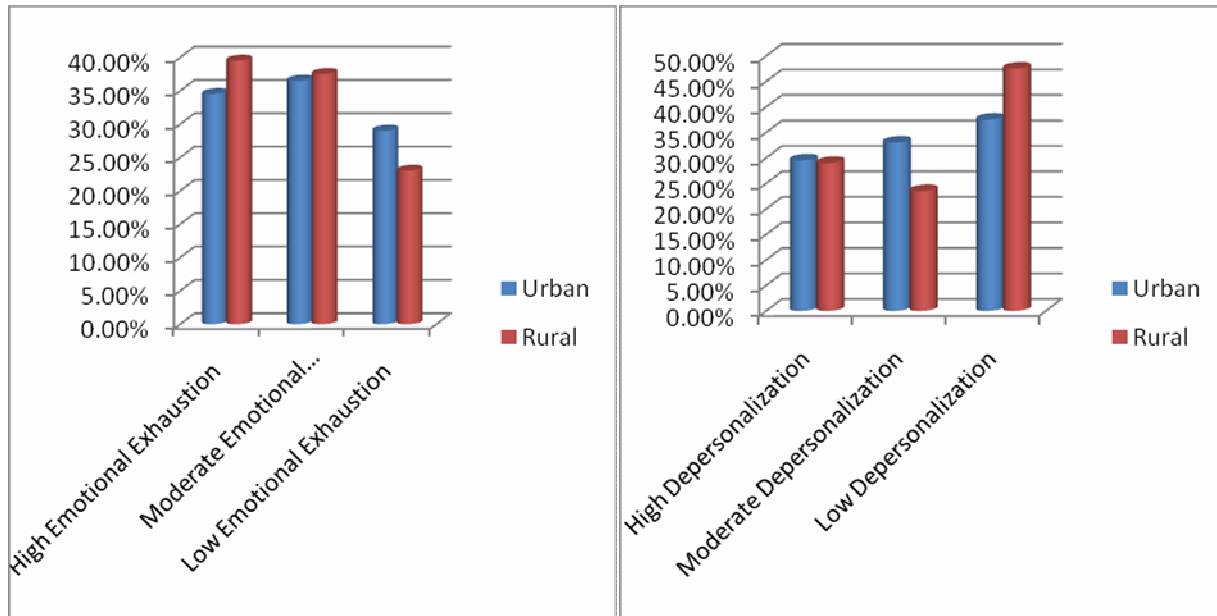
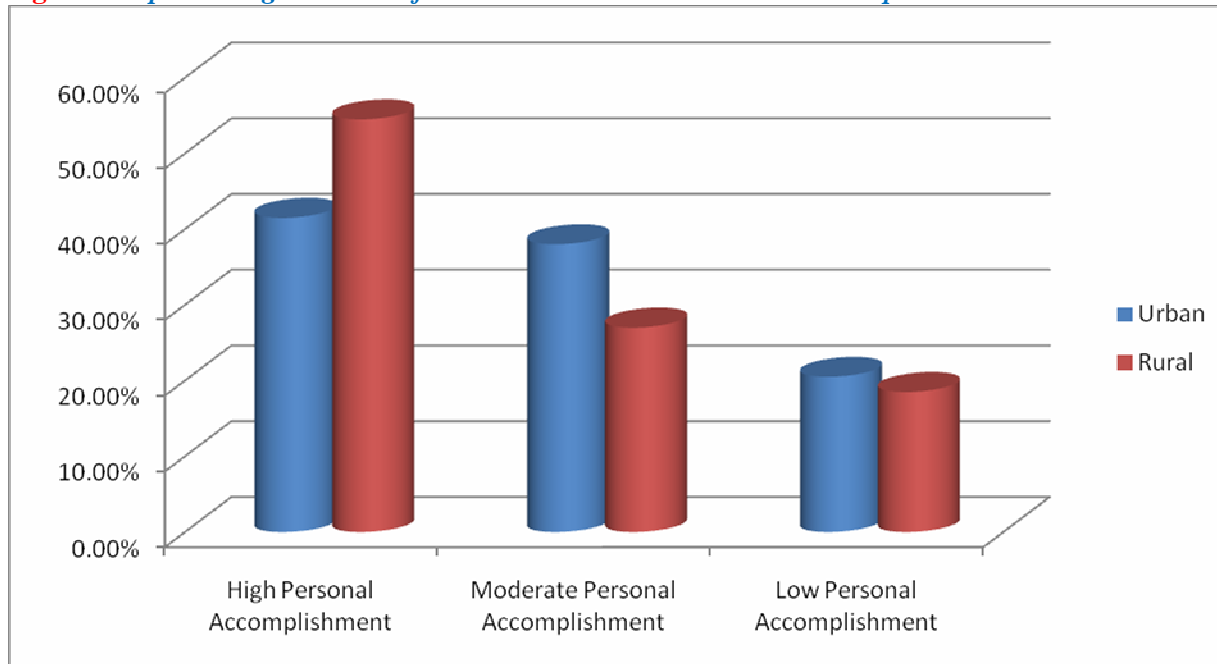


Figure 5 Representing % values of Urban and Rural on Personal Accomplishment



As it is seen clearly in these graphical representations the majority (39.50%) of rural teachers have expressed a high level of emotional exhaustion while a high number (36.50%) of urban teachers showed a moderate level of emotional exhaustion. Means they are also in the same path as rural elementary teachers and in near future they may be highly emotionally exhausted if the concerned stakeholder does not take proper measure. With regard to the dimension of depersonalization, a substantial number of the urban (37.50%) and rural (47.50%) teachers indicated low levels of burnout. Means they have not still

developed a negative, callous and cynical attitude towards the recipients of their services Likewise, a considerable number of the urban (41.50%) and rural (54.50%) teachers expressed feelings of high-reduced personal accomplishment. The pattern of burnout for the experienced EE, DP, and PA for the high frequency of urban female teachers is M-L-H, while it is H-L-H for rural female teachers, respectively. This implies that rural teachers suffer more from the burnout syndrome compared to the urban teachers. Therefore, here we may conclude that the rural teachers belonging to remote areas are experiencing high level of burnout than their counterpart means urban teachers. This is because Rural school teachers experienced significantly more stress from poor working conditions and poor staff relations than did urban school teachers. In addition, they expressed dissatisfaction with many aspects of their work lives insufficient opportunity for self-improvement, inadequate support services, and lack of involvement in school district decision-making. Along with insufficient teacher and overburdened workload is one of the major problems in that area and cause of the burnout. This trend indicates that the school administration as well as government is not cooperative according to the rural teachers, so they should give social support in terms of giving D-training and other relevant orientation about the real situation and mission as well as goals of the school. In the same time, adequate physical as well as financial and academic support should provide to carryout research activities not only to the rural teachers but also whole teachers those our backbone of our society.

Effect of the school location/place of posting (rural & urban) on Burnout of elementary teachers

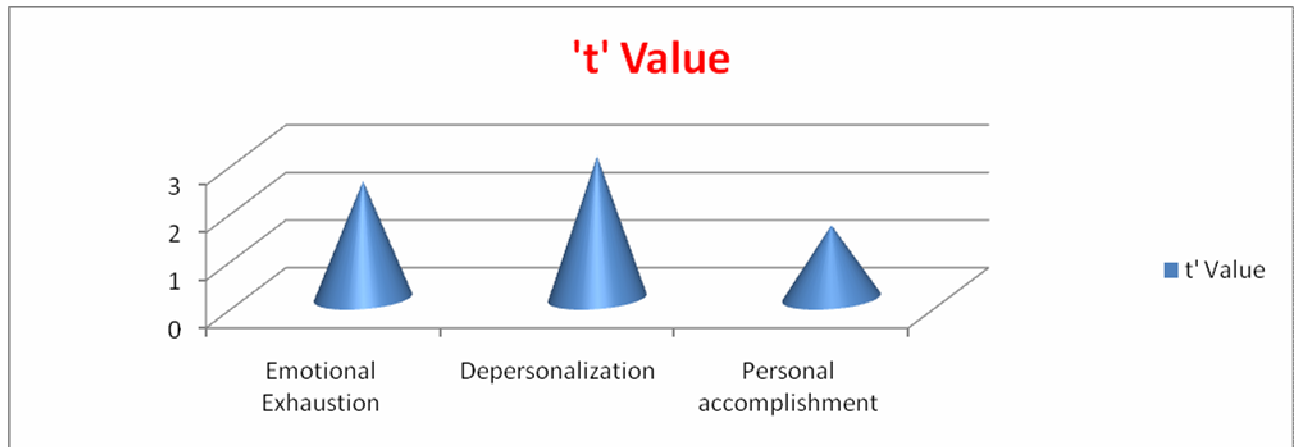
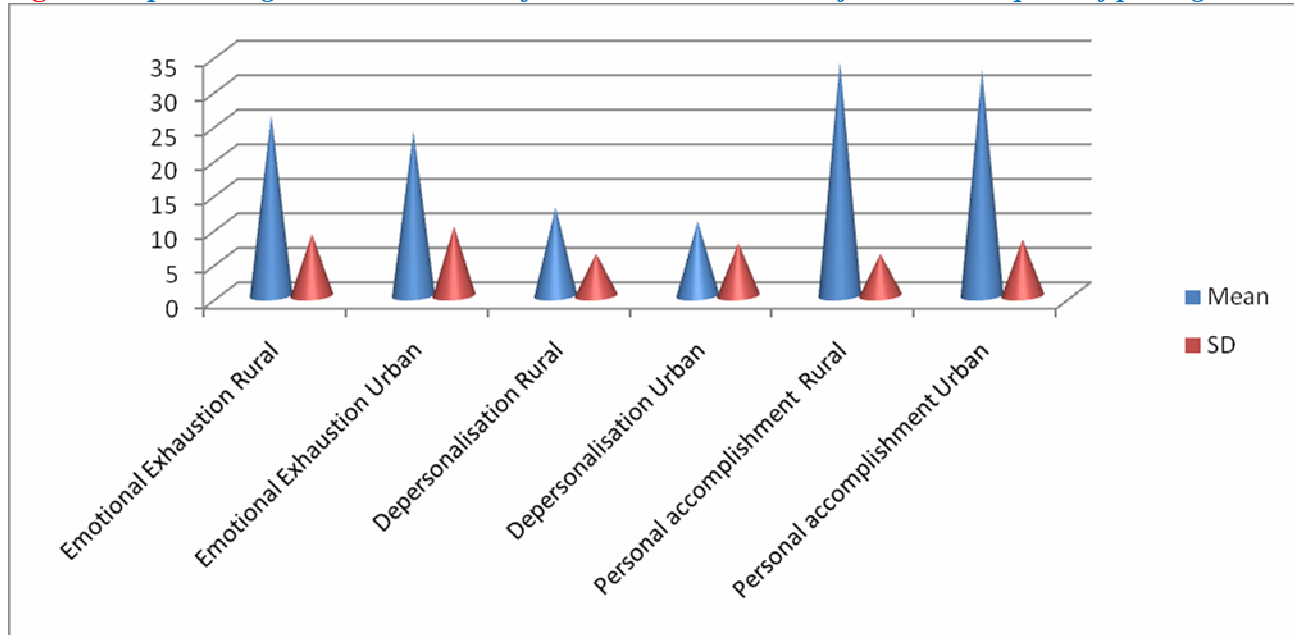
To know the significant differences, if any within the rural as well as urban teachers and their professional burnout due to variation in their place of posting or location, Mean, SD and 't' value have been calculated for each category and analyzed to know the significant difference in the professional burnout among rural and urban elementary teachers. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations and 't' for the three dimensions of burnout of the teachers in two levels(rural and urban). And the same is presented bellow on Table-3.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and 't' for the three dimensions of burnout and place of posting

Variable	N	M	SD	t
Emotional Exhaustion				
Rural	200	26.17	8.92	2.46*
Urban	200	23.83	10.03	
Depersonalization				
Rural	200	12.81	6.08	2.98**
Urban	200	10.75	7.65	
Personal accomplishment				
Rural	200	33.78	6.04	1.53
Urban	200	32.68	8.15	

Note-level of professional Burnout, Low-values 1.57 and below; Moderate- values from 1.58 to 2.43; High- values 2.44 and above

Figure 6 Representing Mean and SD & 't' for the three dimensions of burnout and place of posting



By examining the above table, it is observed that there is a significant difference in elementary rural and urban teachers on Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization but there is no significant difference in secondary and female elementary school teachers on Personal Accomplishment. Therefore, it can be concluded that rural elementary school teachers are experiencing more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization than their counterpart's means urban teachers. This may be due to that, overloaded work profile, much difference between lack of adequate infrastructure. It is also found that while some urban school are equipped with proper facilities starting from teacher ratio to physical infrastructure and best location in the city. In the same way most rural teachers live without local supermarkets, variety stores, professional medical and student teacher ratio even if proper infrastructure in the school as well as school facilities and services, teacher status as well as inconvenience areas etc. So it may be concluded here that place of posting of an individual is not affected Personal Accomplishment of elementary school teachers. This table mainly helps us to initiate different individualised plan of action and corrective means, which will help to reduce the level of professional burnout among them.

Suggestions for different strategies to minimize the level of professional burnout

In order to reduce the level of professional burnout teacher may adopt some mechanism which will help him/her to create a suitable atmosphere within the campus as well as in the home. There are many mechanisms some are explained here:

- Start the day with a relaxing ritual. In early morning when you wake up don't bother about previous day tension and as soon as you wake up, spend at least fifteen minutes meditation, think about God, do some gentle stretches, or read something that inspires you.
- Adopt healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits. A sound mind and sound health two are very much necessary for working with full energy. When you eat proper, engage in regular physical activity, and get plenty of rest, you have the energy and resilience to deal with life's hassles and demands.
- Set boundaries. Every where not only in the campus but also within home also. It will help you to get the proper respect in front of others. Never cross your boundary has this principle helped you to live in the society with proper respect.
- Take a daily break from technology. No doubt now without technology the life will be charmless we all are addicted with that one but still set a time each day when you completely disconnect. Put away your laptop, turn off your phone, and stop checking email. Try to spent time with your family and relatives.
- Nourish your creative side. Creativity is a powerful antidote to burnout. Try something new, start a fun project, or resume a favorite hobby. Choose activities that have nothing to do with work. Try to engage yourself with students in any creative activity.
- Learn how to manage stress. Every teacher should aware about stress management mechanism because for everyone in any means stress may come to our life so when you're on the road to burnout, you may feel helpless. But you have a lot more control over stress than you may think.

Findings

Major findings of this study revealed that more than fifty percent of the respondents are experiencing medium level of burnout. As well as it is also found that rural elementary teachers presented higher levels of job burnout that rural teachers are more burned out in EE and DP than urban teachers and this is due to their poor working condition and ill-equipped school. Means they have so much of enthusiasm, new values and ethics, further they may not easily adjust with the immediate new changes prevailing in the grassroots level system. It is also found that elementary rural teachers are experiencing high level of burnout and they are the position of maladjustment from their counterpart's means from urban teachers due to miss-behavior of parents and poor environmental condition of the schools. Rural elementary school teachers are experiencing more Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization than urban elementary school teachers due to more expectations of society with lack of proper infrastructural facilities, and high level of workload. It is also revealed that individual characteristics and place of posting of the rural teachers are not affected Personal Accomplishment. This shows that every teacher are facing professional burnout in the district it may be low, medium or high and this is the matter of concern now and this is not a good sign for the teaching profession.

Implications of the study

After the critical analysis of the situation, here researcher may imply that if elementary school teachers given adequate training and exposed to enabling environment to develop high level of emotional intelligence, burnout would be reduced if not eliminated among them. In order to ameliorate the problem

of job burnout among teachers and to alleviate their psychological pressures the Board, govt. or Ministries of Education in collaboration with each elementary school in particular district in general should have a well-planned training programme for helping teachers understand their emotions and the emotions of others.

In our country, primary schools are ill equipped with teaching work force. All primary schools managed by the Government have an average of 2.63 teachers per school against 5 classes. 'Schools with less than 3 teachers are 60.3 per cent. Further 11.7 per cent schools are still single teacher schools (NUEPA, 2008). Hence govt. should maintain a uniform structure with in the country not only the salary but also all facilities should be provided by the govt. in proper time and equally. Social and emotional learning should introduce for teacher in schools.

Due to this competitive society, parents want their children to attend schools with greater academic success; but in the same time, the number of students or student teacher ratio in classrooms is large in the district. However, number of students are far more, means overcrowded class size. Therefore, teachers should employ by government more as well as needed infrastructure to meet the present status of education and reduce the overburden of the teacher. The fact that schools with larger class sizes have greater problems/responsibilities, as well as the fact that the classrooms are crowded, may have caused a difference in the burnout levels of the teachers and their classroom management approaches.

In order to reduce the level of professional burnout Policy makers should draw such a plan so that a conducive environment created in the school so that in the occupation level there will no place for stress and burnout in the learning temples. Govt. should organise timely various types of teacher Orientation programme in the schools it may reduce the percentage level and through these programs a teacher can know about the school in all aspects.

All the required facilities, which need for creating a better environment in between the school should be provide by authorities. Therefore, those teachers can give their best productive time and energy to the progress and development of the students in particular for the society in general. School should focus on different techniques like play way method, learning by doing and activity based teaching for students. Hence, it will directly not only help the students but also in other hand helps teacher to burn their emotions in activity-based teachings. Value inductive sessions and meditation program can be started in school. There should be discussion among the teachers and the principal about the job satisfaction effectively. An atmosphere of trust, confidence and cooperation should be fostered, where teachers can interact with each other than disengage behaviour.

Conclusion

Professional burnout is now a days a serious syndrome for elementary teachers in general and Nayagarh district in particular. Therefore, government as well as concerned authorities should focus upon it to reduce the level otherwise it will destroy the work environment of schools. The present study is restricted to 400 sample teachers from the Nayagarh district of Odisha only, So the scope of the study is limited but the findings of the study are informative also applicable for the teacher society and used for making plan and procedure for the teacher. It is recommended that regular assessment of stress level should be conducted for preventive measures. Besides that, the institution or management should check that, supervision, support and relationship with the teachers is properly taken care of and enhanced most strongly. Most importantly, it is recommended that Ph.D scholar; principals and supervisors should investigate the causes for stress and evaluate the organizational climate of the school. They should also suggest ways, like workshops and seminars to alleviate and cope with stress.

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