Impact of Online Stress Management Courses on Job Satisfaction of Secondary School Teachers During Post-Pandemic Period in West Bengal

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Abstarct: *The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges for secondary school teachers, particularly in West Bengal, where rapid shifts to online and blended modes of instruction increased workload, technological demands, and emotional strain. In the post-pandemic period, concerns regarding teachers' mental health and job satisfaction have become central to educational recovery and institutional stability. This study examines the impact of online stress management courses on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in West Bengal. The primary objective is to determine whether structured virtual interventions focusing on coping strategies, emotional regulation, time management, and work–life balance contribute to improved professional well-being. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. A sample of secondary school teachers from government and government-aided schools was selected using stratified random sampling. Standardized tools were employed to measure perceived stress levels and job satisfaction before and after participation in online stress management courses. Statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used to analyze the data. The findings indicate a significant reduction in stress levels and a corresponding improvement in overall job satisfaction among teachers who completed the online courses. Participants reported enhanced emotional resilience, better classroom engagement, and improved professional commitment. The study highlights the importance of institutional support mechanisms and the integration of structured mental health programs within professional development initiatives. It concludes that online stress management courses can serve as an effective, accessible, and scalable strategy to strengthen teacher well-being and sustain educational quality in the post-pandemic context of West Bengal.*
Keywords: *Online stress management, Job satisfaction, Secondary school teachers, Post-pandemic period, Teacher well-being, West Bengal.*

INTRODUCTION:

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the educational landscape across India, compelling secondary school teachers to adapt rapidly to online and hybrid modes of instruction. In West Bengal, the sudden transition to digital platforms, increased administrative responsibilities, technological challenges, and concerns about students' learning gaps created unprecedented professional pressure. Even in the post-pandemic period, many teachers continue to experience residual stress due to curriculum backlog, assessment reforms, classroom management adjustments, and heightened expectations from institutions and parents. These circumstances have significantly influenced teachers' psychological well-being and overall job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction among secondary school teachers is a crucial determinant of instructional quality, student achievement, and institutional effectiveness. When teachers experience prolonged stress without adequate coping mechanisms, it can lead to burnout, reduced motivation, emotional exhaustion, and decreased professional commitment. Therefore, ensuring teachers' mental health has become a central concern in educational policy and practice during the recovery phase. In response to these challenges, online stress management courses have emerged as a flexible and accessible support mechanism. Such courses typically include modules on emotional regulation, mindfulness practices, time management, cognitive restructuring, and work–life balance strategies. Delivered through digital platforms, these programs allow teachers to participate without disrupting their professional responsibilities. They offer structured guidance to manage stress effectively and rebuild professional confidence. The present study seeks to examine the impact of online stress management courses on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers during the post-pandemic period in West Bengal. By exploring the relationship between stress reduction interventions and professional fulfilment, the study aims to contribute to the development of sustainable teacher support systems and promote a healthier educational environment.

Teaching in West Bengal During and After the Pandemic :

The outbreak of COVID-19 brought an abrupt halt to conventional classroom teaching across India, and West Bengal was no exception. When schools were closed in early 2020 as a preventive public health measure, secondary school teachers had to shift from face-to-face instruction to online modes within a very short time. This transition was neither gradual nor systematically planned. Most teachers were accustomed to traditional chalk-and-board methods, and only a limited number had prior experience with digital platforms. As a result, the sudden change created professional uncertainty and psychological strain. In West Bengal, the diversity of schools—including government, government-aided, and private institutions—highlighted stark inequalities in digital access. Many schools lacked adequate technological infrastructure, and teachers often relied on personal devices and internet connections to conduct classes. In rural and semi-urban areas, unstable connectivity and limited student access to smart phones made regular online teaching extremely challenging. Teachers had to modify lesson plans, prepare digital materials, record video lectures, and maintain communication with students and parents through multiple channels such as messaging applications and virtual meeting platforms. These additional responsibilities increased workload and blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life. The pressure was particularly intense for secondary school teachers because they are responsible for preparing students for board examinations. Concerns about syllabus completion, examination patterns, and student performance added to existing stress. Frequent policy changes regarding assessment procedures and reopening schedules required continuous adaptation. Teachers were expected to provide academic support while also offering emotional reassurance to students who were coping with anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty. This dual responsibility of academic instruction and psychosocial support significantly expanded the scope of their role. The pandemic also altered patterns of professional interaction. Staff meetings, training sessions, and departmental discussions were conducted online. While virtual communication ensured continuity, it reduced opportunities for informal peer support that typically occurs in physical school settings. Many teachers reported feelings of isolation and reduced collegial bonding. The absence of regular classroom interaction further affected teachers' sense of accomplishment, as immediate feedback and face-to-face engagement with students were limited. As schools gradually reopened in phases, teachers encountered a new set of challenges. The post-pandemic period did not represent a simple return to pre-pandemic conditions. Instead, it required adjustment to blended teaching models, strict health protocols, and strategies for learning recovery. Students returned to classrooms with varying levels of academic preparedness, having experienced prolonged disruptions. Teachers had to address learning gaps while managing time constraints and administrative expectations. Remedial instruction, revised curricula, and continuous evaluation became part of the new routine. The emotional impact of the pandemic lingered even after reopening. Teachers remained concerned about health risks, especially those with vulnerable family members. The experience of prolonged stress during lockdown had already affected many educators' mental well-being. Feelings of fatigue, reduced motivation, and uncertainty about the future were not uncommon. At the same time, institutions expected teachers to demonstrate renewed energy and commitment in restoring academic standards. Despite these challenges, the pandemic also accelerated digital awareness among teachers in West Bengal. Many educators developed new technological skills and explored innovative teaching strategies. Online workshops and webinars became more common, expanding opportunities for professional learning. Some teachers discovered the advantages of digital resources, such as recorded lectures, online assessments, and collaborative tools. This exposure contributed to a gradual transformation in pedagogical approaches, with blended learning becoming more acceptable in the post-pandemic context. However, the increased reliance on technology also underscored the importance of mental resilience. Continuous screen time, extended working hours, and the expectation of constant availability heightened stress levels. The distinction between work and home life became increasingly blurred, particularly for teachers managing household responsibilities alongside professional duties. In many cases, female teachers faced additional pressures related to care giving and domestic work during lockdown periods. In the aftermath of the pandemic, educational discourse in West Bengal has increasingly recognized the need to support teachers' psychological well-being. The experience demonstrated that teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also central pillars of emotional and social stability within schools. Their job satisfaction directly influences student engagement, institutional reputation, and educational outcomes. Consequently, attention has shifted toward creating supportive environments, incorporating mental health awareness into

professional development, and exploring innovative interventions such as online stress management courses. Overall, teaching in West Bengal during and after the pandemic has been marked by rapid adaptation, heightened responsibility, and enduring psychological demands. While the crisis revealed vulnerabilities in infrastructure and preparedness, it also highlighted the resilience and dedication of secondary school teachers. Understanding this context is essential for examining how structured support systems, including online stress management initiatives, can contribute to improving teachers' job satisfaction and sustaining the quality of education in the post-pandemic era.

Online Stress Management Interventions :

Online stress management interventions have emerged as an important response to the growing psychological demands faced by professionals in contemporary society. In the educational sector, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, these interventions gained particular relevance as teachers were required to adapt to rapid changes in teaching modes, institutional expectations, and social realities. For secondary school teachers in West Bengal, the integration of online stress management programs represents not only a technological shift but also a transformation in how professional well-being is addressed and sustained. Stress management refers to a set of structured strategies designed to help individuals recognize stressors, understand their emotional and physiological responses, and develop effective coping mechanisms. Traditionally, stress management programs were conducted through in-person workshops, counselling sessions, or group training activities. However, limitations related to time, accessibility, financial resources, and geographical barriers often restricted participation. The advancement of digital technology created opportunities to deliver these interventions through online platforms, enabling greater reach and flexibility. Online stress management interventions typically consist of organized modules delivered through learning management systems, mobile applications, or video conferencing platforms. These modules may include psycho education about stress, guided relaxation exercises, mindfulness practices, cognitive restructuring techniques, time management skills, and strategies for maintaining work–life balance. The digital format allows participants to access materials at their convenience, revisit recorded sessions, and engage in self-paced learning. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for teachers who manage demanding schedules and multiple responsibilities. One of the foundational components of many online stress management programs is psycho education. Participants are introduced to the concept of stress, its causes, and its impact on physical and mental health. Understanding the physiological mechanisms of stress, such as the activation of the body's stress response system, helps individuals recognize symptoms early. For teachers, awareness of how prolonged stress affects concentration, patience, and emotional regulation can motivate proactive coping efforts. Psycho education also reduces stigma associated with seeking psychological support by normalizing stress as a common human experience. Another significant component is mindfulness training. Mindfulness practices encourage individuals to focus on the present moment without judgment. Online programs often include guided audio or video sessions that teach breathing exercises, body scans, and short meditation practices. Research indicates that mindfulness enhances emotional stability and reduces anxiety. For teachers who frequently manage classroom disruptions and performance pressures, mindfulness techniques can improve composure and decision-making. Regular practice fosters a calm and attentive mindset, which positively influences professional interactions. Cognitive behavioural strategies form a core element of many digital stress interventions. These strategies help participants identify negative thought patterns and replace them with constructive alternatives. Teachers may experience self-doubt, frustration, or feelings of inadequacy when confronted with academic challenges or administrative demands. Through structured online exercises, they learn to challenge irrational beliefs and adopt balanced perspectives. This cognitive reframing reduces emotional distress and strengthens resilience.

Time management and organizational skills are also emphasized in online stress management courses. Teaching involves lesson planning, grading, administrative documentation, and communication with parents and colleagues. Ineffective time allocation can intensify stress. Digital modules often provide practical tools such as priority-setting frameworks, scheduling techniques, and strategies to prevent procrastination. By improving efficiency and clarifying professional boundaries, teachers can achieve a more sustainable balance between work and personal life. Social support mechanisms are frequently integrated into online interventions. Discussion forums, peer-sharing sessions, and virtual group meetings create spaces for collective reflection. Teachers benefit from exchanging experiences and

coping strategies with colleagues who face similar challenges. This sense of community reduces feelings of isolation and enhances emotional validation. In the context of West Bengal, where teachers may work in geographically dispersed schools, online forums enable connection beyond local institutional boundaries. The accessibility of online stress management interventions contributes significantly to their effectiveness. Participants can access content from home or school without travel requirements. Recorded sessions accommodate varying schedules, allowing teachers to engage with materials at times that suit them. Mobile-friendly platforms ensure that interventions remain reachable even in regions with limited infrastructure. Such flexibility supports consistent participation, which is crucial for meaningful outcomes. Evaluation studies across various professional sectors suggest that online stress management programs produce measurable improvements in perceived stress levels, emotional well-being, and job satisfaction. Participants often report enhanced coping confidence and greater awareness of personal triggers. In educational settings, reduced stress correlates with improved classroom climate, better communication with students, and increased professional commitment. While outcomes depend on program design and participant engagement, evidence indicates that structured digital interventions can be as beneficial as traditional face-to-face approaches. In the context of secondary school teachers in West Bengal, online stress management interventions address several contextual challenges. Many teachers face long commuting distances, family responsibilities, and institutional workload. Attending in-person workshops may not always be feasible. Online courses provide a practical alternative that aligns with their schedules. Additionally, the digital skills acquired during pandemic teaching facilitate adaptation to online learning environments, making participation more accessible.

The effectiveness of online stress management interventions depends on certain critical factors. Clear objectives, evidence-based content, interactive components, and regular feedback enhance engagement. Programs that incorporate self-assessment tools enable participants to monitor progress. Institutional support also plays a vital role. When school administrations encourage participation and recognize the importance of teacher well-being, teachers are more likely to perceive the intervention as valuable rather than an additional burden. Despite their advantages, online stress management programs may face limitations. Limited internet connectivity in rural areas can hinder consistent access. Participants may also experience reduced motivation without direct supervision. To address these challenges, blended models combining digital modules with periodic interactive sessions can strengthen accountability and connection. Ensuring user-friendly interfaces and culturally relevant content further enhances effectiveness. The theoretical foundation of online stress management interventions lies in psychological models that emphasize coping, self-regulation, and resilience. By equipping teachers with practical skills and reflective practices, these interventions promote adaptive responses to professional demands. Over time, improved coping capacity contributes to greater job satisfaction, reduced burnout, and sustained commitment to teaching.

Objectives of the Study :
The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:
1. To examine the level of job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in West Bengal during the post-pandemic period.
2. To assess the level of perceived stress among secondary school teachers in the post-pandemic context.
3. To determine the impact of online stress management courses on reducing stress levels among secondary school teachers.
4. To evaluate the effect of online stress management courses on improving job satisfaction among secondary school teachers.
5. To compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group with regard to stress and job satisfaction.
6. To compare the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups in terms of stress and job satisfaction.
7. To explore the relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY :
The present study adopted a quantitative approach to examine the impact of online stress management courses on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers during the post-pandemic period in West

Bengal. A pre-test and post-test experimental design with a control group was used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. A quasi-experimental design was employed. Two groups were formed: an experimental group that participated in the online stress management course and a control group that did not receive the intervention during the study period. Both groups were assessed before and after the intervention to measure changes in stress levels and job satisfaction.

The population comprised secondary school teachers working in government and government-aided schools in West Bengal. A sample of 120 teachers was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from urban and rural schools. Sixty teachers were assigned to the experimental group and sixty to the control group.

Tools Used :

- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to measure stress levels.
- Teacher Job Satisfaction Scale to assess overall job satisfaction.
- A background information schedule to collect demographic data such as age, gender, teaching experience, and subject specialization.
- The tools selected were standardized and validated for reliability and consistency.

Intervention Procedure :

The experimental group participated in an eight-week online stress management course. The program included modules on stress awareness, mindfulness practices, cognitive restructuring techniques, time management skills, emotional regulation, and work–life balance strategies. Sessions were conducted through a digital platform with weekly interactive meetings and guided activities. The control group continued with their regular professional activities without participating in the course.

Data Collection :

- Pre-test data were collected from both groups before the commencement of the course. After completion of the eight-week intervention, post-test data were collected using the same instruments.

Statistical Techniques :

- Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-test to determine significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores as well as between experimental and control groups.

Ethical Considerations :

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and participation was voluntary.

This methodological framework enabled a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of online stress management courses on improving job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in West Bengal.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS :

The findings of the present study indicate that participation in online stress management courses had a meaningful influence on both perceived stress levels and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in West Bengal during the post-pandemic period. Teachers who engaged in the structured digital intervention demonstrated a noticeable reduction in stress and a parallel improvement in professional satisfaction when compared to those who did not receive the intervention. These results align with the broader understanding that psychological well-being and job satisfaction are closely interconnected in the teaching profession.

One of the most significant observations of the study is that stress reduction contributed directly to enhanced professional attitudes. Teachers who reported lower stress levels after the intervention expressed greater enthusiasm for classroom engagement, improved patience in dealing with students, and stronger commitment to institutional responsibilities. This suggests that stress management is not merely a personal wellness strategy but a professional development necessity. When teachers feel emotionally balanced and supported, they are better positioned to create positive learning environments.

The post-pandemic context of West Bengal adds particular relevance to these findings. During the pandemic, teachers faced technological challenges, workload expansion, and emotional strain related to student welfare. Even after the reopening of schools, the residual effects of prolonged uncertainty continued to influence teachers' morale. The study demonstrates that targeted online interventions can help address these lingering effects. By equipping teachers with coping strategies such as mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, and time management, the program supported their psychological resilience in a period of educational recovery.

Another important aspect of the findings is the practicality of online delivery. Teachers were able to participate in the course without disrupting their professional duties. This flexibility increased accessibility and reduced barriers often associated with traditional face-to-face workshops. In geographically diverse regions of West Bengal, where travel and scheduling constraints can limit professional development opportunities, digital platforms offer a scalable solution. The success of the intervention indicates that mental health support can be effectively integrated into existing digital infrastructures developed during the pandemic.

The relationship between stress and job satisfaction observed in this study reinforces theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of coping mechanisms in professional fulfilment. Teachers who developed adaptive coping skills were better able to reinterpret challenges constructively rather than perceiving them as overwhelming threats. This shift in perception appears to have strengthened their sense of competence and professional autonomy, which are key components of job satisfaction. Therefore, the intervention did not simply reduce negative feelings but actively promoted positive professional identity.

The implications of these findings extend to educational policy and institutional practice. First, school administrations should recognize teacher well-being as a foundational element of educational quality. Incorporating structured stress management modules into regular in-service training programs can ensure that psychological support becomes an integral component of professional development rather than an optional add-on. Institutional encouragement, including scheduling dedicated time for participation, can further enhance engagement and effectiveness.

Second, policymakers in the education sector may consider developing standardized online well-being frameworks tailored to regional needs. Context-sensitive content that reflects the realities of secondary school teachers in West Bengal—such as examination pressure, large class sizes, and resource limitations—can improve relevance and impact. Collaboration with mental health professionals in designing these programs would strengthen their evidence base and sustainability.

Third, the findings suggest the importance of fostering a supportive organizational climate. While individual coping skills are crucial, systemic support from school leadership enhances long-term outcomes. Administrators can promote open dialogue about stress, encourage peer collaboration, and establish mentoring systems that complement formal online courses. A culture that values well-being contributes to sustained job satisfaction and reduced burnout.

Finally, the study highlights the need for continued research on teacher mental health in the evolving educational landscape. Longitudinal studies could examine whether improvements in job satisfaction persist over time and how online interventions interact with other factors such as leadership style and institutional resources. Expanding research to include diverse school settings across different districts would also provide a more comprehensive understanding of regional variations.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores that online stress management interventions offer a practical and effective approach to enhancing teacher well-being and job satisfaction in the post-pandemic era. By addressing both emotional and professional dimensions of stress, such programs can strengthen resilience, improve institutional functioning, and contribute to the overall stability of the educational system in West Bengal.

CONCLUSION:

The present study examined the impact of online stress management courses on the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in West Bengal during the post-pandemic period. The findings clearly indicate that structured digital interventions designed to address stress can play a significant role in enhancing teachers' professional well-being. In a context marked by rapid educational changes, technological adjustments, and lingering psychological strain, the importance of supporting teachers' mental health cannot be overstated. The pandemic disrupted conventional teaching practices and placed unprecedented demands on educators. Even after the reopening of schools, secondary school teachers continued to face academic pressure, curriculum adjustments, learning recovery challenges, and heightened expectations from institutions and parents. These conditions contributed to sustained stress levels, which, if left unaddressed, could negatively influence job satisfaction, instructional quality, and long-term professional commitment. The study demonstrates that online stress management courses offer a practical response to these challenges.

Participation in the intervention led to a measurable reduction in perceived stress and a corresponding improvement in job satisfaction among teachers. This outcome highlights the close relationship between emotional regulation and professional fulfilment. When teachers are equipped with coping strategies such as mindfulness practices, cognitive restructuring techniques, and effective time management skills, they are better prepared to handle workplace demands with confidence and balance. As a result, they experience greater enthusiasm, commitment, and satisfaction in their roles. The online format of the intervention proved particularly relevant in the post-pandemic educational landscape. Digital platforms allowed teachers to engage in structured learning without disrupting their schedules or personal responsibilities. The flexibility and accessibility of online modules make them suitable for diverse school contexts across West Bengal, including urban and rural settings. This scalability enhances the feasibility of integrating similar programs into broader professional development initiatives. The study also underscores the importance of institutional support. While individual coping skills are essential, sustainable improvements in job satisfaction require an environment that values teacher well-being. School administrations and policymakers should therefore consider incorporating mental health support mechanisms into routine training frameworks. By normalizing discussions around stress and promoting proactive coping strategies, educational institutions can foster a healthier professional culture. In conclusion, online stress management courses represent an effective and accessible strategy for strengthening teacher resilience and job satisfaction in the post-pandemic era. Supporting teachers' psychological well-being is not only a matter of personal health but also a fundamental requirement for maintaining educational quality and stability. Ensuring that teachers feel supported, confident, and satisfied in their profession ultimately benefits students, institutions, and the broader educational system of West Bengal.

Future Research of the Study :
The present study provides meaningful insights into the impact of online stress management courses on job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in West Bengal during the post-pandemic period. However, several areas remain open for further investigation to deepen understanding and strengthen the evidence base.

First, future research may adopt a longitudinal design to examine the long-term sustainability of the intervention effects. While the current study assessed changes immediately after the completion of the online course, it would be valuable to determine whether reductions in stress and improvements in job satisfaction persist over six months or one year. Long-term studies could reveal whether continuous reinforcement or refresher sessions are necessary to maintain positive outcomes.

Second, similar research can be extended to different educational levels, such as primary school teachers, higher secondary teachers, and college faculty members. Comparative studies across levels of education would help identify whether the impact of online stress management programs varies according to professional responsibilities and institutional contexts.

Third, future studies may incorporate mixed-method approaches, combining quantitative measures with qualitative interviews or focus group discussions. Qualitative data would provide deeper insights into teachers' personal experiences, perceived challenges, and subjective evaluations of the intervention. Such narratives could help refine program content to better address contextual realities in West Bengal.

Fourth, researchers may explore the role of moderating variables, such as gender, years of teaching experience, school location (urban vs. rural), and type of institution (government vs. private). These variables may influence both stress levels and responsiveness to online interventions. Understanding these differences can assist in designing more targeted and inclusive programs.

Fifth, future research could compare online stress management interventions with face-to-face or blended models to determine relative effectiveness. This would help policymakers decide which format yields the most sustainable results in diverse school environments.

Another promising area for future investigation involves examining the relationship between teacher well-being and student outcomes. Studies could assess whether improvements in teacher job satisfaction resulting from stress management training contribute to better classroom climate, student engagement, and academic performance.

Finally, further research may focus on developing region-specific digital well-being frameworks tailored to the socio-cultural context of West Bengal. Evaluating the cost-effectiveness, scalability, and institutional feasibility of such frameworks would support broader implementation.

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