

**WELL BEING AT WORK - SUPPORTING WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH**

**\* Ms. Swaleha Mujawar**

\* TGT (Social Science), S.B. Patil Public School, Ravet, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

**Abstract:**

*My research paper primarily focuses on the need to sustain the mental health of our women at their work place (here we refer with due focus on the SCHOOL). We need to work on building a positive environment at the workplace that would be safe, supportive and inclusive.*

*For a definition, mental health pertains to emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is instrumental in how you think, feel, act, handle stress, and relate to others. It is important for Productivity, Confidence and Relationships – at the workplace. This presentation explores key aspects and strategies to foster such a conducive environment. The major reason for selecting this subject matter is an attempt to convey to the women folk around the globe that - THEIR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS.*

*According to a research paper published by Teaching and Teacher Education (December 2024) Teaching is a complex and demanding profession that requires teachers to navigate various pressures, such as heavy workloads, time constraints, student behaviour management, and external assessments (Collie & Mansfield, 2022; Day & Hong, 2016; Li et al., 2019). Women keep juggling multiple roles – at home & at workplace. She is a daughter, a sister, a spouse, a daughter, a daughter in law, sister in law; prime responsibility - she is a Mother. At the workplace (School) – she is an employee, a teacher, a mentor, a role model, a counsellor, a subject head, a team leader, School Head or a Managerial office bearer. Every role calls for varying priorities & commitments It is majorly observed that while trying to keep pace in fitting into every role – that priorities appear to be clashing, crossing paths and at times – all commitments come to be conceded to at one time. This ends up resulting in constant stress, anxiety and burnouts. Volatile working environments hamper the mental harmony of women, challenging them to the core. The prime focus here needs to be - HEALTHY WOMEN- HAPPY WORKPLACE.*

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**Commonly Found Mental Health Challenges:**

Persistent taxing nature of work place and inability to balance it put with the home front commitments; have become so vogue that women happen to now undergo some commonly observed mental health upheavals are:

**a) Diverging Work – Life balance.** It is mockingly said that all other occupations leave their work at their workplace before leaving for home & they never carry their domestic life to the professional

arena. But for teachers – ironically – till the time they retire from work – they happen to be

CARRYING THE HOME TO THE SCHOOL

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CARRYING THE SCHOOL TO THE HOME

**b) Persisting Stress & Burn outs** – This is like cough & common cold. The cyclical motion of trying to meet expectations, deadlines, satisfaction indexes, new commitments & responsibilities, vulnerable

work situations – puts teachers into a vicious circle of persisting Stress & burnouts situations. Any time you conduct a stress test or an aptitude & performance appraisal test – you will be flooded with the hallmark notifications of a draining mental stability, frequent burnouts & always – to –stay stress situations – evident in the test results.

- c) **Escalating Anxiety & Depression:** This often arise from heavy workloads, time pressure, classroom management challenges, and the need to balance professional duties with family and social responsibilities. Constant stress, emotional labour, and limited support can lead to persistent worry, exhaustion, low mood, and reduced motivation, affecting both their well-being and job performance.
- d) **Diminishing Self Confidence:** This can result from continuous work pressure, high expectations, limited recognition, and challenges in balancing professional and personal roles. On-going stress, comparison with others, and lack of support may lead to self-doubt, reduced assertiveness, and decreased belief in their abilities, impacting both their performance and emotional well-being.
- e) **Breath-taking Emotional Exhaustion:** It stems from prolonged stress, heavy workloads, constant emotional demands, and the pressure to meet professional and personal responsibilities. Over time, this overwhelming fatigue drains emotional energy, leading to burnout, reduced empathy, and a sense of being mentally and emotionally overwhelmed.

#### **Mental Health Challenges @ Workplace also Come in the Form of:**

- a) **Gender Bias & Discrimination** *Gender bias* often operates subtly through stereotypes—such as beliefs about what men or women “should” be like—while discrimination is the direct result of those biases in action. but it has historically and

adversely impacted the female work force in Schools.

- b) **Unequal Pay & Professional Growth Opportunities:** Gender bias leads to unequal opportunities, pay gaps, restricted access to leadership roles, or differential treatment in decision-making and legal systems.
- c) **Volatile Working Hours:** They refer to irregular, unpredictable, or frequently changing work schedules that disproportionately affect women educators. These may include sudden timetable changes, last-minute class re assignments, extended after-school duties, unexpected meetings without prior notice. For female teachers—such unstable schedules can challenge the balancing of professional and personal roles. Volatile working hours may lead to increased stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction.
- d) **Disparities in help & support during Pre & Post-natal Care:** female educators face unequal access to maternity leave, workplace accommodations, and health support. Limited leave, inflexible schedules, and lack of childcare resources make it difficult to balance work and maternal responsibilities. These gaps can lead to stress, health challenges, and career interruptions.

#### **Impact of Poor Mental Health on Work Profile:**

As every incidence comes with impacts – so do the challenges to mental health. It is often observed that a woman man may be immensely capable and enthused to give her 100 percent at work. She is enduring all obstacles & persevering hard to achieve personal and professional growth & satisfaction – at par with keeping her people at home and the workplace complacent and happy with her efforts. Call it her lesser fortune or the pessimism of the people she is surrounded with – a woman is always supposed to be on toes – running errands, multi-tasking, cementing shortcomings and gushing through the narrow lanes of

never – ever – happy family & not – so – impressed workplace – to emerge SUCCESSFUL. The entire detrimental impact falls on the output and performance & is highlighted loud and large as if a woman has divine super powers that can alter falling meteors to dazzling stars – at the drop of a pin.

The evident effects can be summarized as below: -

- a) **Reduced productivity:** This means decline in teaching efficiency, output, or engagement among female educators, often caused by excessive workload, lack of support, gender bias; or personal responsibilities. Challenges such as volatile working hours, limited pre- and post-natal support, or workplace discrimination can lead to stress, fatigue, and burnout, affecting lesson planning, classroom management, and student outcomes.
- b) **Lower job satisfaction:** It refers to a decline in the sense of fulfilment, motivation, or contentment that female educators feel in their professional roles. Factors such as heavy workloads, volatile working hours etc. can contribute to frustration and dissatisfaction. This can lead to decreased engagement, lower productivity, and higher turnover,
- c) **Resultant health issues:** ‘Health Issues in Female Teachers’ refer to physical, mental, and emotional challenges that female educators may experience due to professional demands and workplace conditions. Common issues include musculoskeletal problems from prolonged standing or writing on boards, and burnout from volatile schedules.

***Research shows that 09 / 10 women have reported that they have experienced poor mental health as a result of Work –Life Imbalance.***

### **What Can A Supportive Workplace (A School) Do?**

Now that we have diagnosed the ailment; let us now look for the treatment possible for its cure. Let us be

oblivious to the home environment for a while. We embark to work on the work front and try to rectify the surroundings in the best possible manner. This may hopefully help us to address the issue of failing mental health of our womanhood.

A study conducted on the theme of - Resilience and pro-sociality: pathways to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom by **Frontiers in Psychology** (2025) revealed that resilience significantly predicts teacher self-efficacy, both directly and indirectly through pro-sociality. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening socioemotional competencies—such as resilience and prosocial tendencies—in teacher training programs, as key mechanisms to improve classroom management, teaching effectiveness, and student motivation in the school contexts.

- Let us think on a few ways in which we can help redress the damage done to the will power, commitment, resilience and self-esteem that working women carry with them
- a) **Improved employee well-being:** This includes encouraging open communication, and providing access to wellness resources. When employee well-being is supported, it leads to higher job satisfaction, increased
- b) **engagement and reduced absenteeism.**
- c) **Optimistic outlook towards work:** An optimistic outlook towards work among female teachers reflects positive emotional well-being, characterized by reduced stress, emotional balance, and psychological satisfaction. It demonstrates emotional resilience, enabling them to adapt positively to challenges and sustain commitment.
- d) **Boosts confidence and performance:** An optimistic outlook towards work boosts confidence and performance among female teachers by strengthening self-belief, motivation, and professional effectiveness.

- e) It enhances professional confidence, contributing to improved classroom & inter personal engagement.
- f) Enhance social skills & team work
- g) Create a positive organizational culture by:
  - Fostering cooperation, mutual support, and a sense of community, enhancing personal growth and professional effectiveness in the school environment.
  - Participating in team projects, staff meetings, and collaborative lesson planning
  - Providing for supportive policies, equitable workloads, and resources that enable female teachers to maintain their professional performance without compromising their well-being.
  - The urge is highlighting the need for supportive work environments, and recognition of female teachers' contributions.

#### **Now Let Us Work on Certain Strategies :**

Let us say preventive measures or early safeguards to cure the mental health concern. Let us see if any / all of the following steps of diagnosis will work out for us:

- Flexible Working hours
- Equal opportunities & fair pay systems
- Safe & respectable workplace policies
- Accessible mental health services & support
- Organizing mental health programs
- Promoting community activities to reduce stress and foster social bonds.

#### **Is There Something Our Client – Our Women Need to Come Up with –**

As diagnosis experts, we are trying our best so that the process of recovery from mental health ailments becomes speedy and effective? Well, here is what women can do; like a prophylactic follow up.

- a) **Set boundaries at work place:** According to Bandura, setting boundaries at the workplace reflects female teachers' self-efficacy, enabling them to assert professional limits, manage demands

effectively, and maintain confidence in their teaching roles.

- b) **Practice Self-care & mindfulness:** According to Maslach, practicing self-care and mindfulness serves as a protective mechanism for female teachers, reducing emotional exhaustion and promoting sustained professional engagement.
- c) **Seek help without fear or stigma:** Here female educators feel safe and supported in asking for assistance—whether for personal, professional, or health-related challenges—without worrying about judgment, discrimination, or negative consequences. This includes accessing counselling, mentorship and workload support.
- d) **Building Supportive Peer Networks by Female Teachers:** This refers to the process by which female educators create professional and social connections with colleagues to share knowledge, resources, and emotional support. Such networks help teachers collaborate on lesson planning, classroom management etc., while also providing encouragement and mentoring during challenging situations.



- e) **Manage Work – life balance:** It involves the strategies and efforts female educators use to balance their professional duties with personal and family responsibilities. It may be organizing time efficiently, setting boundaries between school and home tasks and using available support systems.

### What is Going to Be the Outcome?

Let us assume that the diagnosis is working in the right direction; our preventive measures are showing their positive effect and our subject clients are also totally following the requisite actions. Well, if so much of endeavour and endurance is put in; surely the outcome is going to be equally awesome. It will be soon evident as: -

### Conclusion:

Concluding by inferring that *Women's mental health is not a luxury*; it is a fundamental need that directly impacts their well-being, productivity, and overall quality of life.

Ensuring it requires *a collective effort and commitment* from schools, colleagues, policymakers, and society

By *prioritizing mental health, fostering strong social bonds, and promoting inclusivity*, we create environments where female teachers feel valued and supported.

*Supportive workplace environments have the power to transform challenges*—such as stress, discrimination, and work-life pressures—into resilience, personal growth, and professional fulfilment, benefiting both educators and the students they guide.

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