

REVIEW, MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1.0 REVIEW

The effective and efficient functioning of a school depends primarily on the quality and commitment of its human resources, the teachers. Very recently, teachers and their problems have been attracting a great deal of attention in the West. Teacher stress and burnout have become topics of increasing public and professional concern. The negative impact of stressed and burned out teachers on the quality of education is easily imagined. More and more teachers are complaining of being under severe stress and stress is leading to teacher burnout. At the same time there are also many teachers who are motivated and committed, who find meaning and satisfaction in their work.

A positive relationship between attitude toward life and attitude toward work has been noticed. Viktor Frankl's (1959, 1960) philosophy that an individual always tries to find a meaning or purpose in life and one who cannot find fulfilment in the occupation has a chance to find meaning and fulfilment outside the occupation from other areas of life was likely to offer a clue to

the relationship between meaning in life and stress and burnout.

Desai and Govind (1979) mentions that in various Achievement motivation development studies the subjects found a greater meaning (through Achievement motive development) and hence they performed better. In other words there is a culmination point in motivation treatment which leads the subjects to find and seek greater meaning and satisfy it by more efforts.

The relatively new problem of meaning or purpose in life has been studied in the West, mainly in the area of Clinical Psychology. A few studies have been made in India too, though not with teachers as sample. Research on teacher burnout is of recent origin in the West, empirical studies have appeared only since 1977. No Indian study is available on meaning in life or stress or burnout in teachers. The present study was undertaken in this frame of reference to explore the levels of meaning in life, stress and burnout in teachers of secondary schools in the city of Calcutta.

The concept of meaning in life is based on Frankl's philosophy that there is a fundamental need for meaning in a person's life - this will to meaning is the most powerful motivational force in man and which makes him truly human. Life is made meaningful through

creations and achievements, through experiences and encounters and through attitude toward life. The failure to find meaning in life leads to a void and despair, an existential vacuum which, if prolonged, can develop into a neurotic condition. Frankl calls this the mass neurosis of the present age, an age of meaninglessness, depersonalisation and dehumanisation.

Frankl has influenced Klinger (1977) who tried to study the significant incentives which make life meaningful. According to him the most meaningful life is one that combines many and varied enduring sources of meaning.

The subject of occupational stress has been receiving increasing attention. Teaching is being regarded as one of the most stressful occupations. Teacher stress is a response syndrome of negative affects such as anger, anxiety or depression arising from aspects of the teacher's job which are perceived as threatening to his or her self-esteem or well-being.

The concept of burnout became popular in USA since mid-1970s. Freudenberger used a clinical approach and Maslach and Pines used a social-psychological research-oriented approach to the study of burnout, which together have generated a wealth of data and insights. However, despite a rapidly growing literature, there is still

a notable lack of critical perspective on the field. The syndrome of burnout has especially been associated with individuals who do 'people-work', who are in the 'caring' professions. Three central factors within the burnout syndrome have been revealed - emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. However, the determination of whether a person is or is not burned out is not easily made as burnout is a process and not an event, nor is the process identical for each one. It can be conceptualised as a function of stresses engendered by individual, work-related and societal factors. Popular and professional literature have often equated burnout with stress but aversive working conditions may produce a variety of stressful reactions of which burnout is one, though severe form. Burnout can be regarded as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions. Systematic research on burnout is less than ten years old and the results of the studies are not comprehensive or conclusive.

The main aim of the present investigation was to identify the levels and the sources of meaning in life, stress and burnout in teachers and to find out the relationship, if any, between meaning in life and stress and burnout.

Following the new methodology that is emerging

in educational psychology which is shifting its focus from distal research to time-specific and situation-specific proximal research and also keeping in view the aim of the present study which was to gain in-depth understanding of meaning in life, stress and burnout in Calcutta teachers through both quantitative and qualitative methods, there was no attempt for probability sampling. A typical and representative sample from different types of school was selected so that a cross section of teachers could provide the requisite information and insight. With the same in view non-parametric techniques and case-studies were used to analyse the data.

The study was in the form of a questionnaire survey and case study and utilised well-established standardised scales as well as items, inventories and interview schedule prepared by the investigator. The Purpose in Life Test (PIL) by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1969) which was specifically designed and has been widely used for measuring Frankl's concept of existential vacuum has been used to measure meaning in life. The PIL consists of 20 Likert-type items with 7 response alternatives ranging from 1 (Low Purpose) to 7 (High Purpose). It is a non-timed attitude scale and the total score is the sum of the numerical values checked for the 20 items. In addition, a single self-reporting item on meaningfulness of present life, a 14-item 4-point inventory for identifying the

important sources of meaning in life and a 20-item 4-point inventory for identifying important sources of meaning in teaching were used to assess meaning in life. Stress was studied by a 55-item 4-point inventory for identifying the predominant stressors in teaching and a single-item measure of self-reported stress in teaching. Burnout was measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) constructed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) - the most popular and widely used scale in burnout research. The MBI consists of 3 subscales to assess the three aspects of the burnout syndrome - Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalisation and Personal Accomplishment. Each sub-scale has two dimensions - frequency and intensity. The MBI is a 22-item Likert-type rating scale to be rated on a 6-point scale for frequency and a 7-point scale for intensity. The scores for each sub-scale are considered separately - there is no total score. A high degree of burnout is reflected in high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalisation sub-scales and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment sub-scale. For the case studies, a 4-part interview schedule was used.

The sample comprised 345 teachers (180 Male; 165 Female) from 15 secondary schools and the in-service teacher population of 3 teacher training institutions in Calcutta.

For data collection, the investigator decided

against mailing the questionnaires. She met the teachers of each school/institution personally and explained the purpose of the study and the procedure for filling the questionnaire. She personally collected them after a stipulated interval of time. After the data was scored and analysed, on the basis of PIL and MBI scores, the extreme cases were located and case studies of twelve selected teachers were made.

The data was analysed by using frequency, percentage and non-parametric statistics like Chi Square and Contingency Coefficient. As the instruments utilised in the study were Likert-type attitude scales and inventories which are basically and strictly speaking, ordinal scales, non-parametric statistics were indicated. Non-parametric measures were also the most appropriate techniques to find out the relationship between the variables like sex, age which were in the form of categories and the psychological variables like meaning in life, stress and burnout in which level or category wise (Low, Moderate, High) distributions were in terms of frequencies and not in terms of scores.

The scores were grouped into the three categories on the basis of quartiles - scores lying below the first quartile (Q_1), i.e. 25th percentile were included in the Low Category; scores between Q_1 and Q_3 , i.e. between 25th percentile and 75th percentile were included in

the Moderate Category; and scores above Q_3 or 75th percentile formed the High Category.

7.2.0 MAJOR FINDINGS

Major findings of the study with regard to meaning in life, stress and burnout of Calcutta teachers is given below according to the objectives of the study.

Objective 1. Level of Meaning in Life

The level of meaning in life of the sample in the present study as measured by the PIL is low - the mean : 100.86 is lower than the mean PIL scores of normal populations of other available studies which range from 110.03 (Yarnell, 1971) to 119.00 (Crumbaugh and Maholick, 1964).

Sex differences and age differences in PIL were not significant.

However, meaningfulness of life of the teachers is quite high according to their own perception. In the self-reporting measure nearly 47% regard their present life to be **very** or **extremely** meaningful while only about 12% regard it as **meaningless** or **slightly** meaningful.

Objective 2. Sources of Meaning in Life

Meaning in personal life (MIL) is derived primarily from human relationships with family and friends (items

ranked 2 to 6). Job success has been rated as very important but not professional growth. Religious faith comes in the middle; leisure activities and money and material positions come last.

No sex differences was found in the scores from total count of responses. But age differences was significant at .001 level. All the three older age groups tend to have higher scores than the youngest age group.

Meaning in professional life (MIT) is derived primarily from psychic rewards obtained from task-related outcomes and relationships with students. Intellectual rewards come next. Ancillary rewards have been rated low position.

Age differences in total count of response scores is not significant. However, sex differences is significant at .05 level. More female teachers than male teachers are in the High MIT Category.

Objective 3. Relationship among the measures of Meaning in Life

All the four measures of meaning in life (PIL, SRM, MIL and MIT) are positively and significantly related.

PIL and SRM : $\chi^2 = 137.727$ with 4 df $P < .001$

PIL and MIL : $\chi^2 = 15.120$ with 4 df $P < .005$

PIL and MIT : $\chi^2 = 26.441$ with 4 df $P < .001$

SRM and MIL : $\chi^2 = 28.949$ with 4 df $P < .001$

SRM and MIT : $\chi^2 = 36.381$ with 4 df $P < .001$

MIL and MIT : $\chi^2 = 72.734$ with 4 df $P < .001$

**Objective 4. Level of Stress and Sources of Stress
in Teaching**

Possible range of total score in the 55-item TSS
: 55 - 220.

Sample Mean 135.64

Sample Median 137.00

51 out of 55 sources of stress have mean value of more than 2 (2 indicating Moderate Stress).

Sex differences in TSS score is not significant. Age differences is significant at .05 level. Older teachers tend to experience greater stress.

In the self-reporting item of general stressfulness, 46.38% rated being a teacher as **considerably** stressful and 9.28% as **extremely** stressful while 9.28% rated it as **not at all stressful**.

The relationship between Scored Stress from TSS and self-reported stress is highly significant : $\chi^2 = 145.305$ with 6 df $P < .001$

Objective 5. Level of Burnout

Emotional Exhaustion Subscale :

Frequency (EEF) - Mean 17.83

Intensity (EEI) - Mean 23.47

The Mean emotional exhaustion of the sample is lower than the original MBI norm Mean (EEF - 24.08; EEI - 31.36). Calcutta teachers have a lower degree of burnout in the Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale.

Sex and age differences in Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale are not significant.

Depersonalisation Subscale :

Frequency (DF) - Mean 5.68

Intensity (DI) - Mean 7.76

The mean Depersonalisation of the sample is lower than the Norm mean of original MBI sample (DF : 9.40; DI : 11.71). The Calcutta teachers have a lower degree of burnout in the Depersonalisation sub-scale.

Age differences in Depersonalisation sub-scale is not significant. Sex differences is significant in both dimensions of the sub-scale at .05 level. Male teachers have a higher level of depersonalisation and are more burned out than female teachers.

Personal Accomplishment Subscale :

Frequency (EEF) - Mean 33.52

Intensity (EEI) - Mean 38.24

The mean Personal accomplishment of the present sample is lower than the norm mean of original MBI sample (PAF : 36.01; PAI : 39.70). The Calcutta teachers thus have a high level of burnout in the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

Age differences in Personal Accomplishment subscale is not significant. Sex differences is significant in both dimensions of the sub-scale at .01 level. Female teachers have a lower level of Personal accomplishment and are more burned out than male teachers.

Objective 6. Relationship between Stress and Burnout

Both Scored Stress (TSS) and Self-reported Stress (SRS) are positively and significantly related to the Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale and Depersonalisation sub-scale of burnout.

TSS and EEF : $\chi^2 = 21.285$ with 4 df $P < .001$

TSS and EEI : $\chi^2 = 15.440$ with 4 df $P < .005$

TSS and DF : $\chi^2 = 18.151$ with 4 df $P < .005$

TSS and DI : $\chi^2 = 15.651$ with 4 df $P < .005$

SRS and EEF : $\chi^2 = 37.690$ with 6 df $P < .001$

SRS and EEI : $\chi^2 = 29.347$ with 6 df $P < .001$

SRS and DF : $\chi^2 = 27.996$ with 6 df $P < .001$

SRS and DI : $\chi^2 = 26.197$ with 6 df $P < .001$

Stress is not significantly related with the Personal Accomplishment sub-scale.

Objective 7. Relationship between Meaning in Life and Stress

There is a significant negative relationship between meaning in life as measured by the PIL and both Scored Stress and Self-reported Stress.

PIL and TSS : $\chi^2 = 14.393$ with 4 df $P < .01$

PIL and SRS : $\chi^2 = 23.170$ with 6 df $P < .001$

The relationship between Self-reported Meaning in life and Scored Stress is not significant. But there is a significant negative relationship between Self-reported Meaning in life and Self-reported Stress in teaching.

SRM and SRS : $\chi^2 = 22.745$ with 6 df $P < .001$

Objective 8. Relationship between Meaning in Life and Burnout

There is a significant negative relationship between meaning in life as measured by both the PIL and the self-reporting item (SRM) and all the six burnout subscales.

PIL and EEF : $\chi^2 = 27.781$ with 4 df $P < .001$

PIL and EEI : $\chi^2 = 34.026$ with 4 df $P < .001$

PIL and DF : $\chi^2 = 18.929$ with 4 df $P < .001$

PIL and DI : $\chi^2 = 17.317$ with 4 df $P < .005$

PIL and PAF : $\chi^2 = 23.444$ with 4 df $P < .001$

PIL and PAI : $\chi^2 = 38.301$ with 4 df $P < .001$

SRM and EEF : $\chi^2 = 15.997$ with 4 df $P < .005$

SRM and EEI : $\chi^2 = 19.501$ with 4 df $P < .001$

SRM and DF : $\chi^2 = 17.116$ with 4 df $P < .005$

SRM and DI : $\chi^2 = 13.819$ with 4 df $P < .01$

SRM and PAF : $\chi^2 = 13.496$ with 4 df $P < .01$

SRM and PAI : $\chi^2 = 24.563$ with 4 df $P < .001$

7.3.0 DISCUSSION

The present study shows a comparatively low level of meaning in the life of the Calcutta teachers as indicated by a low Mean PIL score. School teachers in India, as a community, appear to be a frustrated group - frustrated with their lack of money, power and social status. This naturally affects their life and, therefore, it is likely that they do not regard their life to be very meaningful.

Relatively low rankings of items like **professional growth, inner searching and major life goals** as sources of meaning in life indicate lack of importance of higher order needs of self-actualisation and self-transcendence

in their life.

From the case studies it is observed that many teachers experience a feeling of boredom, a lack of involvement and identification with their work and fail to derive any meaning from it. But life does not present one with meanings; life merely is. The meaning comes from full involvement with life, from self-awareness and awareness of others. The significant interrelationship among the different measures of meaning confirms Frankl's and Klinger's concepts that meaning is derived from involvement with many and varied incentives and absence of meaning in one area can be compensated by meaning from another area. It also reaffirms that work is an integral part of one's life and job satisfaction enriches life and invests it with meaning.

In the study, 55.66% of teachers rated being a teacher as **considerably** or **extremely** stressful. Sources of stress affecting teachers may be societal, organisational and role-related which are interrelated and cumulative. A societal source of stress which influences how school programmes are organised has, in turn, an impact on the level of role-related stress. It is important for teachers to identify the sources of stress affecting them and to achieve some cognitive clarity for determining the extent to which each can realistically be alleviated or reduced. Societal sources, e.g., tend to be the most

difficult since they are a product of a complex, political process over which teachers have very little influence. Role-related sources of stress are the easiest to alleviate. Here teachers can have a better understanding of the factors causing stress and have more control over modifying them.

The study shows that the burnout of Calcutta teachers is lower than the American norm in two sub-scales of the MBI, the Emotional Exhaustion sub-scale and the Depersonalisation sub-scale. Emotional exhaustion arises from too much of emotional involvement and frustration. It is possible that the teachers studied did not have a high level of involvement and intense inter-personal relationship with their students. Also, conditions in schools in India, especially those pertaining to the students and their behaviour with teachers are not yet as unwholesome as in many state schools in America. Secondly, it is likely that because of strong familial and societal support in India, there is less alienation and depersonalisation. The present sample also derive the greatest amount of meaning from human relationships and affectional bonds. However, low emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation may be partly due to denial as such feelings are contrary to professional ideals and self-image of teachers and liable to be distorted by conscious or unconscious self-denial.

The present sample, however, have a lower mean score in the Personal Accomplishment sub-scale compared to the MBI norm. Social stressors like inadequate salary and material benefits, lack of social status, respect or power undermines the sense of personal worth. Feeling of personal accomplishment will also depend upon opportunities. In our existing school structure there is hardly any opportunity or incentive for professional growth and accomplishment. Hierarchical designations do not exist in the organisational structure - there is no promotion or advancement for merit. Chapman and Hutcheson (1982) observed that people who persisted as teachers tended to value the recognition and approval of other people while those leaving teaching appeared to value extrinsic rewards more. As extrinsic rewards are comparatively less and largely fixed in teaching, recognition and approval from students, parents, colleagues, authorities and community may take even a greater significance as correlates to personal accomplishment and job satisfaction. While continuous absence of such positive strokes or feedback may lead to burnout. Such positive feedback not only validates one's work but also provides a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Boredom and routinisation of the job (teaching the same thing year after year) may also lead to a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. Therefore, it is necessary to

encourage professional renewal through various in-service courses and sabbaticals. However, the case-studies show that only a few had attended any refresher course at all and the majority were not member of any professional association or journal.

The present study indicated a positive and significant relationship between stress and two subscales of burnout and also a negative and significant relationship of meaning in life with both stress and burnout, thus confirming the assumption of the study derived from Frankl and Klinger that meaning helps to tolerate occupational stress and prevent burnout and those who experience less stress and burnout in their occupation find life more satisfying and meaningful.

These correlational results derived from paper and pencil tests show a broad, general trend but not a complete picture of the factors which contribute to meaning or loss of it or the factors which lead to stress and burnout. The need to go deeper into the area focused by the statistical results to derive a conceptual relationship led to the case studies.

The following trends were noticeable from the case studies.

Loss of a meaning in life is the result of a loss of idealism and disillusionment with the socio-political

system including the sub-system of education; of frustration from unfulfilled ambitions and goals and being forced by poverty or circumstances to take up an occupation for which there is no genuine liking; of frustration in personal life arising from failure in finding a life partner and having children and a family life or from an indifferent or unhappy marriage. Loss of meaning also comes from loneliness and lack of friends and an inability to open up or relate to people. And finally, absence of a strong faith in religion or higher values, absence of selfawareness, absence of any strong, creative or humanitarian interest also contribute to meaninglessness.

The main factor which contributes to meaning in teaching is a positive association with own school experiences such as a liking for own school and happy memories of school life, having a role model in an admired teacher, a liking for young people and activities like games, dramatics, all of which make teaching an attractive pursuit and a chosen career. Another factor which makes teaching meaningful is a sense of accomplishment and recognition from students, colleagues and authorities, acting as reinforcement and generating a sense of identification with the institution and the profession.

Absence of a genuine liking for teaching; lack of identification with the institution; certain personality factors like a feeling of inferiority, inability to relate

to or communicate with people, lack of warmth; and a general low-level functioning personality lacking in self-analysis, ambition or goals, on the other hand, lead to professional burnout. Certain situational stressors like role overload - large classes, too many teaching periods, too heavy correction and paper work and lack of adequate financial benefits and social status after sometime lead to frustration and burnout. And frequently, dissatisfaction with life is reflected in dissatisfaction with work. It is often difficult to determine if stress leading to burnout is arising from school situation or from personal life and problems. Not so obvious a factor in burnout is the quality and tone of an individual's daily relationship with family and friends. Constant marital difficulties, e.g. makes it more difficult for an individual to relax or feel comfortable at work, to fulfil responsibilities and ultimately to garner satisfaction from the job. Conversely, satisfying relationships with family and friends produce a support network that mitigates the impact of work-related stress.

However, even when job satisfaction and pride in the profession are not present, compensatory factors from other areas of life help a person to cope with his frustrations and stresses and find a meaning in life which ultimately help him to come to terms with his work and to function effectively.

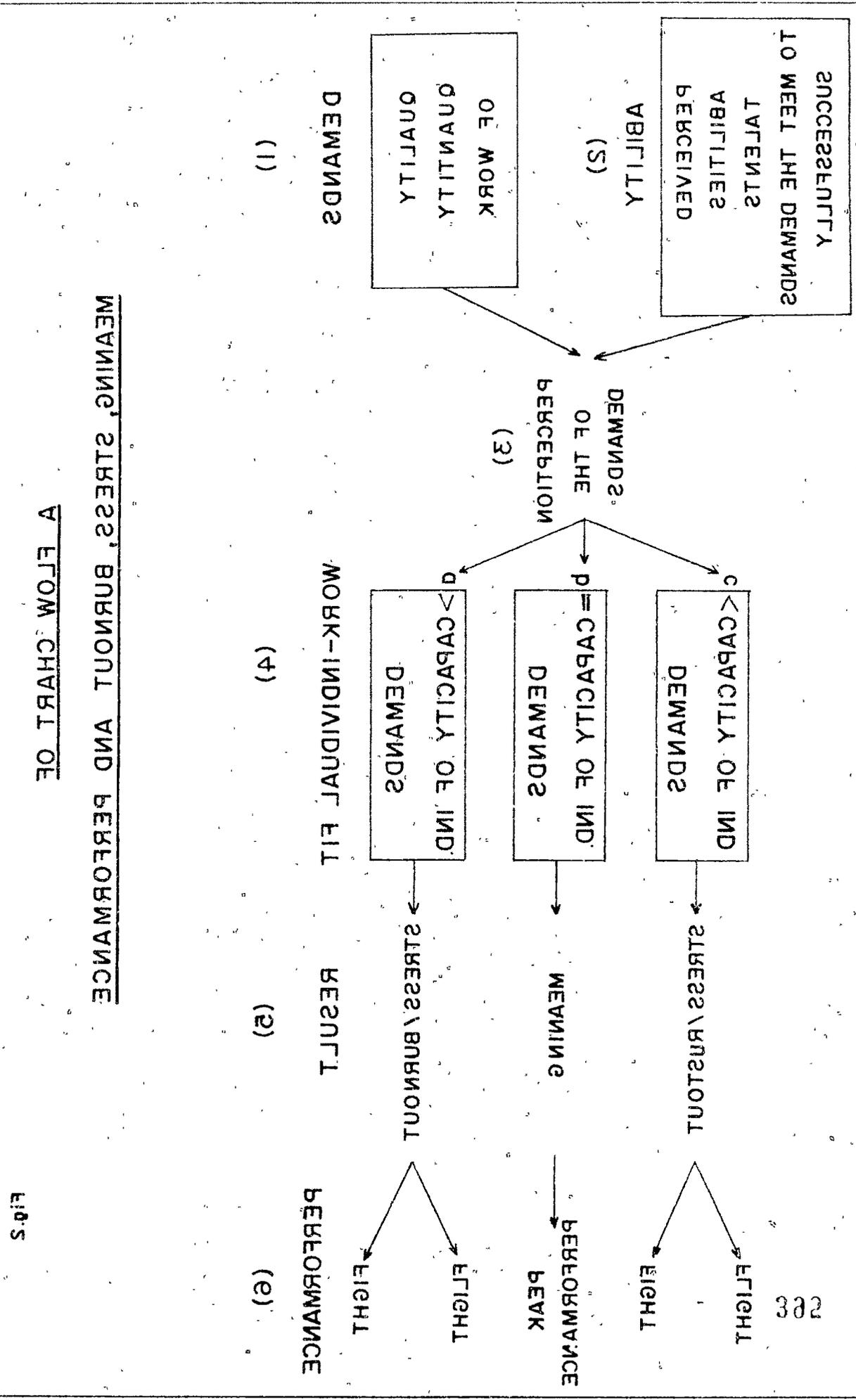
The relationships between meaning in life, stress and burnout focus attention on the fact that to remain healthy man must have some goal, some purpose in life that he can respect and be proud to work for.

Most of us would work for nearly forty years or more during our lives. How does an individual continue with zest during this long period? The fuel of human renewal is a balance between work, loving relationships and recreation - the themes of affiliation and achievement and their interplay. Certain attitudes towards life - an openness to change, a feeling of involvement in whatever one is doing and a sense of control over events help to cope with stress.

The present study may help us to understand the syndrome of burnout in teachers and how to prevent burnout by developing a more meaningful life.

Information on stress and burnout is expected to sensitise teachers to the problem of stress and how to cope effectively with it. However, one must remember that there are many times when all teachers feel physically and emotionally exhausted and less than satisfied in the classroom but they are all not necessarily burned out.

It is also important to realise that there are



MEANING, STRESS, BURNOUT AND PERFORMANCE

A FLOW CHART OF

FIG. 5

degrees of burnout

(i) First-degree burn (mild) : Short-lived bouts of irritability, fatigue, worry and frustration.

(ii) Second-degree burn (moderate) : Same as mild but lasts longer, two weeks or more.

(iii) Third-degree burn (severe) : Chronic physical and emotional illness.

It is not unusual for conscientious teachers to experience occasional mild to moderate feelings of burnout. It is only when the feelings persist and manifest themselves in unhealthy ways that burnout becomes a serious problem.

One must also realise that boredom and too little pressure or stress can be just as lethal as the popularised burnout syndrome. Performance problems can arise from either too much or too little stress. Figure 2 represents a flow chart on the nature of stress, reaction and performance. Box 1 represents the demands of the work which would pertain to both the quality and quantity of work. Quality refers to the difficulty or complexity of the tasks whereas quantity represents the number of assignments, tasks, corrections etc. that must be completed. Box 2 represents the individual's perception of his own ability and skills. Box 3 represents his perception of the demands, i.e. does he feel he has the skills and

talents to meet the challenges ahead of him? Box 4 assesses the work-individual fit - he may perceive that the work is (a) beyond or (b) equal to or (c) below his present capabilities. Box 5 represents the resulting feeling and experience and 6 represents the state of performance. If he feels the work-load is beyond his capabilities he may experience stress and burnout. If the job does not present him with enough challenges (being relatively simple, routine, unstimulating) then he may experience stress and rustout. When the job equates capacity, it becomes meaningful, and optimal, peak performance results. The effects of both burnout and rust out may be superficially the same - fight or flight responses.

Another impression gathered by the investigator from her discussions with teachers and case studies is that many teachers are not truly burned out but are rather rusted out. Freudenberger's (1974, 1975) original conception was that highly motivated and committed workers would react to stress by over-involvement and over-working until they collapsed. This is not the typical picture of many teachers rated as burned out from their scores. Instead of burning out from over-commitment and over-work, they never attempted to do much or stopped attempting after some initial efforts. They resent their choice of career, work half-heartedly with students and leave behind a legacy of resentment, neglect and frustration.

It is important to distinguish between the two types. Loss of initial enthusiasm and meaning leads to burnout; their absence leads to rustout. Both may ultimately react in the same manner but different types of treatment will be needed for their renewal.

On the whole, the percentage of burned out teachers in the present sample is quite low if we consider the responses to item No.8 of the MBI - 'I feel burned out from my work', the item which is a direct question on burnout. Only 9.86% answered 'frequently' (points 5 & 6) and 19.71% answered 'occasionally' (points 3 & 4). In a similar study by Farber (1982) 10.3% of suburban teachers and 21.6% of urban teachers in America answered 'frequently' to this item.

However, this should not make us complacent. A much greater proportion of rusted out teachers would have similar undesirable effects on the education system and efforts should be made to generate meaning and enthusiasm for teaching in this group.

Research on the problem of burnout will further understanding of the pressures of classroom teaching.

Data on the personality variables of burnout should be incorporated in the selection of future teachers and draw attention to the need for personality development and mental health in the teacher training programmes

which is very much neglected at present.

As a result of massive educated unemployment in the country, teachers who want to leave the profession often find that they cannot. They feel stuck in teaching - a position which intensifies feelings of irritability, anger and loss of commitment. More information and insight into stress and burnout in teachers will make the teachers themselves as well as the administrators and the public more aware of the problem.

Various stress reduction techniques and group-support techniques may be given to teachers in workshops to help them to cope with stress more effectively, to lessen isolation and produce solidarity through the sharing of problems and solutions.

However, these measures will not be fully effective unless sources of stress that emanate from a school environment which pays little attention to the needs of teachers are altered. A truly comprehensive and enduring approach to burnout would entail the coordinated efforts of community, parents, administrators, teachers and unions. If teacher burnout is to be prevented and if schools are to be made places that encourage the growth of teachers as well as students, then teachers must be made to feel respected and supported in their efforts to educate children.

The present study, being the first one on the problem, was exploratory. Various other studies on the problem may be undertaken to throw further light on it.

The questionnaire and interview methods of investigation used to identify the extent and sources of stress and burnout have numerous shortcomings. There is need for careful empirical research, using experimental designs to investigate the specific factors implicated in teacher stress and the interrelations between such factors.

The individual differences among teachers in stress and the personality correlates to stress-proneness among teachers remain unexplored.

More research should be made on stress-related physical and mental illnesses among teachers.

Studies on teacher stress to date attempt to identify stressful situations rather than actual behaviour of teachers in these real situations. Future investigators should expand their study into the realm of specific teacher and student behaviour observed in the classroom.

All available studies on stress are of external factors which mediate an individual's stress. There is need to investigate the relationship of perceived stress to 'internal factors' such as biological and physical threshold sensitivities, interest, intelligence, verbal

skills, morale, personality type, psychological defenses, past experiences and a sense of mastery over one's fate.

It would be interesting to study how Principals' perceptions would differ from those of teachers and the relationships between administrator stress, teacher stress and student stress.

There is reason to believe that the concept of burnout has not yet been fully understood. There is need to understand the psycho-social context in which burnout occurs, to think in terms of process, values and social systems. Important questions remain to be investigated. Does the process of burnout recur intermittently throughout individuals' lives? Does it affect only specific individuals, and if so, what types? Is the process specific or contiguous to a particular period of life? Similar questions need to be directed to organisations as well. For example, what variables within an organisation tend to induce burnout? Is burnout best treated by changing the individual or by changing the system? Also important is to study how behaviour at work relates to behaviour at home. In general, there is a need for specificity in regard to identifying the etiology, symptoms and effective treatment of burnout in any given individual or system.

The area of meaning in life also open up many possibilities for further research.

Does meaning vary with level of teaching? Many teachers in the present study said they would like to be teachers but at the university level and not school teachers.

The level of meaning in life and the sources of meaning in life among students in high school, college, and university levels could be studied. This will also give an idea about the interests, preferences and values of our youth.

Our education system need to give more emphasis to preparing the youth as well as adults for worthwhile leisure and development of interests and hobbies so that meaning could be derived from many areas of life.

Psychological burnout is prevented when there is space 'at work' and 'from work'. If individuals are to develop their creative potential they may enter into the many realms of human existence. Any person, movement, activity, and/or working situation that demands an investment of one's total psychological energy slowly diminishes one's ability to creatively relate to other aspects of life that bring meaning and fulfilment.

'Space at work' means associating with change, experimentation, creativity, involvement with issues and one's colleagues, which can help to foster a renewed

sense of vigour in one's professional life.

'Space from work' implies creating a meaningful existence outside the working environment. Many persons define themselves - who they are and what interests they have - by their vocation. While one's work is an important definition of oneself, other definitions can come to have intrinsic meaning. When individuals define themselves in a number of ways (relationships, community commitments, avocations), it is possible to get rewards from each area. Also, when they define themselves in multiple ways, rewards in one area may compensate for the frustrations in other areas. Therefore, the simplest, yet perhaps the most promising way to prevent burnout is to pursue new goals, new directions and new arenas of human endeavour.

Therefore, measures should be developed to identify true cases of burnout as distinct from ~~rustout~~ and then suitable programmes may be developed to generate meaning in their professional and personal life. Possibility of revival of meaning is present for both the cases. Packages of psychological courses for management of stress and burnout may be developed which would also aim at generating a greater meaning in work and life by enabling the teachers to develop space at work and from work, to progress towards professional and personal growth.

The study undertaken by the investigator is just the beginning which, hopefully, will open up many exciting research possibilities and lead to many more research work in the area, all of which may succeed to some extent to make our schools a better and happier place for both teachers and their students.
