



## School teachers' wellbeing in India education agenda: A social work perspective on bridging the gap in SDG 4-C and NEP 2020

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### Abstract

Teachers' mental health needs to become a serious focus in India's public education system. Teachers struggle to give students good education because of their workplace problems plus money worries and mental health issues though SDG 4-C and NEP 2020 work toward improving education. This study examines all aspects of teacher wellness in India through personal, work and leadership perspectives. The research shows that teachers need more mental health support plus organizational backing plus better policy execution. Study results demonstrate the need to merge mental health services with inclusive policies and professional development plans to realize the educational ambitions defined by SDG 4-C and NEP 2020. This analysis offers practical guidance for decision-makers, schools and social work professionals to develop better ways to serve and support teachers in their workplace.

**Keywords:** Indian school teachers well-being, NEP 2020, SDG 4-C, School Mental Health, Social work interventions

### Introduction

**India's Present Teacher Well-Being Situation:** Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and moral fabric of society. Yet, in India, these systemic barriers including compulsory work, low wages, limited career progression, and poor access to mental health care have dire consequences in their lives (i. e. Inaccuracies in the diagnostic process, poor patients' understanding of what a diagnosis entails, the stigma surrounding mental illness, undervaluing of teachers, and workplace harassment all contribute to the increased stress and burnout.

**The Welfare of Teachers:** Education should depend on the quality of human resources, which means teachers, their efficacy determines general socioemotional conditions in learning institutions and quality of training. Mentors and educators of the new generation of the members of society contribute to the formation of moral and intellectual character by giving appropriate advice and examples. When teachers feel much better psychologically, they are encouraged to foster student involvement, improve the students' performance, and help create a positive school atmosphere. On the other hand, low teacher well-being may lead to poor performance hence poor students' results, high turnover, poor job performance. Teacher professional development has been highlighted worldwide in many policy documents including the sustainable development goal 4-C focused on quantity and quality and competency rather than health and welfare of teachers. NEP 2020 of India focuses a lot on the teachers professional development and policies suggesting for better mental health facilities for the teachers, load shedding for administrative works and professional development. Still, such assurances remain more of a formality because policy implementation often neglects comprehensive teacher's needs addressing, to which extent the existing gap poses a significant problem that demands further attention.

### The study's objectives

- To analyze the situational and psychological factors affecting Indian educators.
- To analyze how SDG 4-C and NEP 2020 address the well-being of teachers.
- To identify any gaps in the laws and body of knowledge relating to teachers' welfare.
- To Analyze how social work interventions can enhance teachers' lives and bridge these gaps.

**Study Scope:** This study looks at teachers' well-being from both an institutional and personal perspective. It considers factors including professional advancement, work-life balance, and job satisfaction while addressing structural barriers, corporate policies, and cultural attitudes.

### The following are the main points emphasizing how crucial social work practices are to Indian teachers' well-being:

1. **Lesson stress and burnout:** Crisis help, help with mental health, stress management is also provided by social workers.
2. **Increases workplace satisfaction:** Major steps include motivation, Acknowledgement and a positive work environment which are embraced by social workers.
3. **Enhances relationships between teachers and students:** They embrace the basic value of empathy, conflict solving, and providing information on students' requirements.
4. **Encourages professional growth:** They consider continuing education, conducting different workshops in order to enhance their competence level, and aligning goals with NEP 2020.
5. **Deals with work-life balance:** Professional and paraprofessional social workers give guidance on how

best to balance instructional responsibilities and individual commitments.

6. **Promotes peer support and teamwork:** Preschool teachers plan social workers' support groups and participate in group decision making.
7. **Promotes psychosocial well-being:** Social workers help to prepare mankind for the formation of emotional security and supply a feeling of accomplishment.
8. **Facilitates communication with school administration:** The social workers aid the educators, ensure that communication is effective and establish policy.
9. **Assists educators with inclusive education:** Social workers educate teachers as to how to deal with students from culturally diverse backgrounds and to how they could handle different classes.
10. **Supports NEP 2020 objectives:** Social work methods start with considering the teachers' needs thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 and quality learning.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the current state of school teachers' wellbeing in India?
2. How do SDG 4-C and NEP 2020 address school teachers' wellbeing in India?
3. What gaps exist in the current literature on school teachers' wellbeing in India?
4. How can social work perspectives and interventions contribute to bridging the gaps in school teachers' wellbeing in India?

#### Research Gap

Despite employing teachers to deliver educational content their complete wellness does not receive proper attention in Indian teaching practice. The educational plans SDG 4-C and NEP 2020 support teacher training but ignore essential mental health issues that pressure teachers such as emotional strain and exhaustion. Few schools apply comprehensive social work methods for systematic and emotional teacher support in Indian education. Research today ignores how the workplace environment and leadership impact teacher mental health. Despite their relevance to job satisfaction and work outcomes organizations typically neglect to assess personal factors when evaluating teachers. Studies lack evidence connecting specific teacher suicides to problems found throughout the entire educational system. Our understanding of these gaps must expand so that specific teacher help programs can be created and policies better enforced while building a teacher-friendly work environment.

#### Literature review search methodology

**Objective:** The research process examines published research documents and teaching experiences to explain what helps or hurts teachers' wellness in Indian educational setups.

**Approach:** This study uses a technique that combines thematic analysis with case studies to give complete insights

into teacher mental health. Research looks at teacher health on three levels - personal, professional, and workplace dimensions to fully examine the causes of job happiness.

#### This research study selects certain materials to include and exclude based on specific criteria

##### Inclusion Criteria:

1. Researchers examined published work between 2010 and 2024.
2. This study analyzes school teacher information presented in peer-reviewed publications and official policy documents alongside direct case study results from India.
3. Our research analyzes SDG 4-C Doctoral Qualification, NEP 2020 and psychological health in published English educational studies.
4. Our analysis used reports about teacher suicides from reputable news outlets across India.

##### Exclusion Criteria

1. We do not research studies from before 2010 or those that focus on teachers outside India.
2. Our research rejects items such as doctoral dissertations and unreleased research documents.
3. Our research uses material written in languages besides English.

**Data Sources:** The review uses Google Scholar and ResearchGate for academic literature plus UN SDG data and official archives from the Indian Government. The search tools used keywords that included "teacher well-being" plus "India" combined with "mental health" and "social work interventions" to seek matching results using Boolean operators.

**Screening:** Author checked title and abstract information to determine study suitability.

**Full-text Review:** The research team scanned all qualifying papers to collect important facts.

**Data Extraction:** Our team found important subject content plus noted regular elements and empty spaces across chosen studies plus case records.

#### Analysis Framework: A thematic framework was used to organize findings into the following key themes:

1. A person's psychological well-being and their confidence in work alongside their commitment to life outside work matters here.
2. Professorial Qualities (including work fatigue and job happiness plus teacher-student connections).
3. Leadership style workplace norms and policy actions shape how teachers perform their duties.
4. Data analysis of 10 Indian teacher suicide cases revealed obstacles to teacher health and helped us find effective solutions for their situation.

#### A thematic framework was applied to organize the findings into nine major themes:

1. Personal Factors
2. Professional Factors
3. Organizational Factors
4. Well-being Dimensions

5. Theoretical Perspectives
6. NEP 2020 and SDG 4-C Policy Analysis
7. Global Teacher Challenges (SDG 4-C Context)
8. Social Work Interventions

## Thematic literature review

### Theme 1: Personal factors that influence teacher well-being.

#### 1.1. Physical Health and Mental Health.

The study of the mental and physical well-being of school teachers in India demonstrates worrying tendencies. Research shows that up to half of teachers have serious indicators of anxiety and depression, which means that they do not need any further diagnostic intervention (Kashyap, 2024) <sup>[2, 22]</sup>. Teachers of government schools are known to show a relatively better mental health when compared to those of private schools (Maheswara, 2017; Pachaiyappan Raj, 2012) <sup>[1, 56]</sup>. One of the crucial observations is that anxious and depressed teachers are less resilient in various areas of profession. This highlights why mental health specific curricula that should assist educators and subsequently enhance student well-being are in urgent demand (Kashyap *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[2, 22]</sup>. The literature on gender-based differences is consistent, although the results are sometimes contradictory. In the majority of studies, women teachers are characterized by higher mental health status than their male colleagues, and urban educators are more likely to be higher on mental health indicators than their counterparts in a rural environment (Maheswara, 2017; Gorsy *et al.*, 2015) <sup>[1, 3]</sup>. Occupational stress that is inherent in teaching is also manifested in a physical form - it leads to cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and high blood pressure (Abirami M Kala, 2018) <sup>[4]</sup>. All these observations point to the fact that the profession has an excessive amount of physical and psychological load.

#### 1.2. Self-Efficacy

The situation of self-efficacy of Indian teachers is quite complex and multidimensional. Resource teachers, who undertake the work with students with disabilities, possess much greater self-efficacy than their colleagues in general education (Lamtore and Gathoo, 2017) <sup>[64]</sup>. The perceived leadership quality is positively associated with job satisfaction and self-efficacy, and in a number of studies, women have higher self-efficacy than men (Ayesha Humaira & Sara Mahmood, 2023) <sup>[5]</sup>. The result revealed that self-efficacy and the capacity to teach reading comprehension had a statistically significant relationship among teachers in the state of Telangana, which is a secondary school (Begum and Hamzah, 2018) <sup>[6]</sup>. Moreover, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy have a positive relationship with each other among Indian school teachers (J. Parameswari, 2013) <sup>[57]</sup>. Studies also posit that ICT infrastructure in schools has a significant but minor correlation with the self-efficacy in technological, pedagogical, and integration (Kundu *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[7]</sup>. These results highlight the fact that the key to increasing the quality of education in India is to facilitate teacher self-efficacy on several levels, including instructional, technological and emotional.

#### 1.3. Personality Traits

Personality traits have a great impact on teacher well-being and professional conduct. Innovative working behaviour and

enhancement in adapting to professional demands are associated with extraversion and openness to experience (Kundu and Roy, 2018). Extroverted instructors have better performance in organizations and administration than introverted instructors, and introverted instructors have higher occupational stress (Shiv Prakash *et al.*, 2016). The differences related to these personalities influence work-life balance (WLB) and eudaimonic well-being among Indian school teachers (Soni and Bakhr, 2019) <sup>[9]</sup>. The comparative analysis of cross-cultural trends in teachers in Croatia and India proves the existence of strong relationships between personality characteristics and psychological well-being. Resilience, grit, and emotional intelligence are some of the traits that have a positive correlation with the overall health of a teacher (Kamboj and Garg, 2021). The pro-social work behaviours of the Big Five personality dimensions, especially which of agreeableness and conscientiousness, are associated with wider eudaimonic well-being in the academic sphere through WLB. These results recommend the use of systemic strategies that identify and encourage psychological resilience in teachers.

#### 1.4. Work-Life Balance

In India, work-life balance (WLB) is a significant factor that defines teacher efficacy, productivity and job satisfaction. Such variables as designation, deployment type, academic stream, and institutional type have been identified as factors of WLB outcomes (Punia and Kamboj, 2013; Kaur and Pooja, 2020) <sup>[65]</sup>. The positive links between WLB and productivity in schools have been determined, which proposes that institutional outputs become better when teachers experience balanced lives of both personal and professional (Thakor & Balasubramanian, 2021) <sup>[58]</sup>. The aspects affecting the WLB are the levels of workload, work pressure, environmental factors, and turnover intentions (Pavani and Prasad, 2023). According to the literature, job satisfaction levels can be affected by economic conditions and the opportunities available, some of which can be better than others — which implies that the WLB-satisfaction relationship is not universal. One of them is social support: teachers who are well-connected have shown reduced stress management, and those who experienced a lack of social support report much higher occupational stress (Rajakala and Kumar, 2021) <sup>[12]</sup>. It is recommended that policymakers should institutionalize the WLB-supportive systems in order to improve the teaching performance of the Indian education system that is diverse.

#### 1.5. Family Support and Financial Stability

The socioeconomic conditions of the Indian school teachers are still influenced by gender, geography and caste. In the cities, male teachers tend to have better conditions than female teachers in rural ones (Sangma, 2022) <sup>[16]</sup>. Educator women are burdened two times over: family duties, farm work, and their jobs, giving them less time to grow personally or professionally. Their age, marital status, and education levels have an impact on their socioeconomic status (Turaskar, 2024) <sup>[15]</sup>. It has been discovered that socioeconomic status (SES) of teachers directly affects educational results. A Meghalaya study found that there were strong status disparities between urban and rural teachers of both sexes (Sangma, 2022) <sup>[16]</sup>. It has been found that an increase in teacher salaries is associated with student

performance because better-qualified teachers are more likely to be hired with high salaries (Phil, 2021) <sup>[17]</sup>. These results indicate that a structural intervention of specific salary changes especially in under-served areas is required to improve teacher well being and learner success.

## **Theme 2: India Professional factors influencing teacher well-being.**

### **2.1. Burnout**

The idea of burnout is growing among Indian school teachers which is influenced by demands on large volumes of work, role overload, and non academic administrative requests. Burnout has a high level of correlation with high job demands and is complemented by work-family conflict and low work engagement (Chakravorty and Singh, 2020). In this respect, clinical manifestation of burnout includes high levels of somatic symptoms and low levels of prosocial behaviour even without an increased absenteeism (Chakravorty and Singh, 2021) <sup>[27]</sup>. Among the affected teachers, the presence of occupational stress leads to such forms as anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and loss of appetite (Christian *et al.*, 2022). Male teachers report anxiety and depression more frequently and female teachers report disproportionately high workload burdens. Emotional intelligence is also a protective factor that may mediate the adverse effect of high occupational demands on burnout outcomes (Chakravorty and Singh, 2021) <sup>[27]</sup>. These results demand policy-relevant evidence-based responses that can solve the workload challenges in the system and offer psychological support to educators.

### **2.2. Role Clarity and Autonomy**

There is a positive correlation between well-being and professional effectiveness dimensions and teacher autonomy. The teachers of secondary schools in Delhi complain about the lack of autonomy in the field of curriculum development and decision-making, which is the symptom of a larger systemic limitation (Kundu and Bej, 2024). Nevertheless, in situations where autonomy exists, it is positively associated with the perceived ease of using ICT, job satisfaction and self-efficacy. The correlation between mental health and teaching efficacy is also moderated by teacher autonomy whose mediating variable is emotional intelligence (A. Kundu & Bej, 2024).

In Chennai, job autonomy in primary school teachers has been related to more task setting, greater depth of curriculum to task, and greater student creativity. Implications of evidence include the importance of legislation and institutional intervention in order to increase teacher autonomy in curriculum development, ICT integration and in general professional practice.

Teacher-student relationships involve students engaging in classroom activities and dialogue in which instructors must thoughtfully and effectively convey their content to enhance student learning results (Reed, 2005).

### **2.3. Teacher Student Relationships:**

Teacher-student relationships entail students taking part in a classroom setting and engaging in a dialogue with the teachers where the instructors need to share their content thoughtfully and effectively in order to promote student learning outcomes (Reed, 2005). The teacher satisfaction in India is a fundamental factor that determines the quality of education and teacher student relationship. According to

research, the structural features that determine this relationship are freedom, authority, and hierarchy. Good relationships help in the self-esteem and adaption of students in academic settings and conflict shows negative relationships with both (Khullar and Tyagi, 2015). The triad with teachers, students and parents can be increased by the school-wide caring approach, but it might become compromised by the hustle and bustle of high-stakes testing setting (Zakrzewski, 2012). The scale of student-teacher relationships developed in India through culturally validated identified four distinguishable aspects, including devotion, trust, respect, and compliance (Yadav *et al.*, 2022). This is significant to contrast the models based on the theme of attachment theory in the West, and it is arguably important to have culturally contextualised models when examining or developing teacher student relationships in the Indian schooling context.

### **2.4. Growth and Development of the Professionals.**

Continuous professional growth is key to teacher performance, professional growth and long-term wellness. Learning on the job is also linked to such physical advantages as improved job opportunities, pay raises, and promotions (Bhaskar and Dayalan, 2021). The changes that have occurred over the last twenty years in the context of higher education in India are causing refresher courses and workshops on faculty development to become a necessity (Antil, 2017). Professional development is also known as Continued Professional Development (CPD) in South Asian settings, where knowledge gaps are not only filled but also supported with a complex institutional structural system (Singh *et al.*, 2020). The COVID-19 enabled the introduction of technology-based teaching earlier than planned and revealed the bankrupt nature of rural teacher support systems. CDP and mentoring as the career development resources are carefully supported by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that suggests the inclusion of mentor-teachers with the state systems (Charania *et al.*, 2022). These provisions form a structural recognition of a permanent developmental requirement of the teachers.

### **2.5. Job Satisfaction**

Study on the job satisfaction of teachers in India indicates an average, steady/ constant status in most groups of demographics. The nature of teaching work, professional challenges as well as progress have been quoted as sources of satisfaction by teachers. The working conditions, remuneration, and the absence of institutional recognition are the issues of dissatisfaction that are more frequently associated (Tahir and Sajid, 2019) <sup>[18]</sup>. Notably, a Trichy and West Bengal study gave no evidence of a meaningful gender, educational level, or residential differentiation in job satisfaction (Pandiyani, 2021; Mondal, 2014) <sup>[20]</sup>. It has been discovered that recognition and reward systems enhance teacher performance mediating empowerment, communication, and WLB (Kwong *et al.*, 2022). The requested physical working conditions, student relations, and insufficient recognition of additional responsibility are ranked as the key areas of concern in Chennai (Kumar and Balasubramanian, 2019). It is always advised in the literature that administrators and policymakers should design more empowering recognition-based organizational climates to boost teacher motivation and performance in education.

### **Theme 3: Factors in the organization that will influence teacher well-being in India.**

#### **3.1. Leadership and Management Style in a School**

Leader style is an influential factor that satisfies teacher jobs, commitment, and self-efficacy. Transformational leadership is also described to have a positive impact on the organization commitment and job satisfaction among teachers (Abraham and Oosterhoff, 2015). The existence of positive links between the elements of transformational leadership and teacher self-efficacy has been reproduced in various researches (Rajnee Sharma and Dr. Shalini Singh, 2017) [24]. Although teachers feel relaxed under democratic leadership as compared to laissez-faire ones, hierarchical models of leadership are still common in most Indian schools (M. Shrestha, 2019) [25].

The research findings show that empowering leadership by principals can result in the elevated psychological empowerment, intensified job crafting behaviours, solid affective commitment, and decreased rates of work alienation among teachers (Dash and Vohra, 2019) [59]. These results show that the leadership orientation of the school principal has a trickle down effect on the attitude, behaviour and performance of the teachers. Schools with investments in transformational and empowering models of leadership are in a better position to promote the teacher well-being and productivity of an institution.

#### **3.2. Organizational Climate**

The school climate is either conducive or challenging to the teachers and directly influences teacher welfare. The positive attitude of teachers can be supported by the supportive climate of relationships between them with the help of mutual communication and recognition, and the burnout and disengagement are preconditioned by the stressful environment. Transformational, empowering, and democratic leadership styles that contribute to job satisfaction also establish the quality of climate (Abraham and Oosterhoff, 2015; Dash and Vohra, 2019) [59]. A positive organizational climate supports the sense of belonging of teachers along with lessening turnover intentions and increase in collective efficacy. The review indicates that such institutional investments like climate evaluation, leadership training, and participatory models of decision-making are among the most effective pegs of maintaining teacher wellness at the systems level.

#### **3.3. Training, Salary and Compensation**

With augmented resources provided towards education in India, the dwindling education results signify structural weaknesses in the management of teachers (Kaur, 2017) [31]. The quality of teachers, including recruitment, deployment, training conditions, and payment is the key issue in meeting the objectives of the academic vision. These inequities are also worsened by infrastructure differences between states, and certain areas do not have basic amenities (Sharma, 2018) [32]. The burden of motivational decline among the contract teachers in situations where they are not provided with equal wages and possess lower professional ranks than the permanent employees is a grave risk to the education process (Madhur Chandra, 2015) [30]. The structural obstacles still exist in the form of resource maldistribution, pay gaps between regular and contractual teachers, and disincentives of rural posting (Ramachandran, 2017; Kaur, 2017) [31, 33]. To build a motivated, well-supplied, and

financially fairly compensated teaching staff in India, the solution lies in dealing with these failures in the system.

#### **3.6. Teacher Relationships with Parents**

The teacher-parent relationships are complicated relational spaces that may either promote or put pressure on professional well-being. The relationship pan-ethnic tensions and frictions are often replicated and mirrored in the larger socioeconomic inequalities and parents with African American, Latino, and low education backgrounds tend to be less engaged than white and higher educated parents (Deslandes *et al.*, 2023). Student-teacher-parent relationship in the context of low-cost Indian schools is highly interdependent with the behaviour and attitude of students being tightly conditioned by the common expectations of the teacher and their parents (Saxena *et al.*, 2021). These relationships can be enhanced by use of structured communication, involvement to the community and culturally responsive model of partnership, which will enhance student outcomes and decrease the educational disparities.

#### **3.7. Access to Mental Health Support Services**

The levels of anxiety, depression, and high stress rates are apparent in Indian school teachers who encounter many of them and frequently interact (Kashyap *et al.*, 2024) [2, 22]. The mean mental health of urban male teachers is better than in their female rural counterparts, which indicates the existence of socioeconomic and geographic differences (Chanderkant Gorsy *et al.*, 2015) [3]. The well-being of teachers is directly correlated with the welfare of students: when a teacher is in a mentally depressed state, they will be less capable of delivering effective and emotionally sensitive instructions (Kashyap *et al.*, 2024) [2, 22]. In spite of these issues, the majority of teachers say that they feel uncomfortable dealing with mental health issues and are ignorant of the available options (Manjubairavi *et al.*, 2024). Programs to prepare teachers as effective mental health gatekeepers to students, as well as an extensive restructuring of school health and social support services are the urgently required ones (Kashyap *et al.*, 2024; Manjubairavi *et al.*, 2024) [2, 22].

#### **3.8. Stress management and wellness programmes**

Among Indian teachers, psychological well-being showed a positive relationship with energy management, whose implementation via successful and less stressful states is mediated (Chaudhry and Chhajer, 2023) [38]. In contrast to the ones working in government and government-supported schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya teachers exhibit superior overall wellness (Devaki *et al.*, 2019). The stress management programs were found to minimize feelings of negativity and more institutions support (Kipps-Vaughan, 2012).

The rates of anxiety and depression are higher among male teachers, and the female teachers are disproportionately burdened with workload, which is a gendered phenomenon and has to be explicitly approached by the wellness programs (Christian *et al.*, 2022). Specific well-being interventions involving educators are not only necessary in relation to the health of educators but also as preliminary investments in the establishment of optimal learning conditions and the enhancement of educational results.

### 3.9. School Infrastructure

The physical learning climate, such as classroom size, availability of resources, school provisions etc., have a direct influence on teacher well-being and professional effectiveness. Lack of equal access to infrastructure both in government and in the private sector exacerbates any given socioeconomic differences. Some states are already on the level of basic infrastructure, but there are still many who are at a disadvantage (Sharma, 2018) [32]. Reorganization of the education systems without sufficient investment in the infrastructure provides an added burden on teachers, who have to change the pedagogy to new conditions in which resources are scarce.

Such settings also include accelerating stimuli of curriculum evolution and shifting student learning patterns that are facing teachers in such settings. Infrastructure investment should be an absolute part of every well-being improvement program of teachers (Sen, 2019) [37].

#### Theme 4: Dimensions of well-being and their effects on the well-being of teachers.

##### 4.1. Physical Well-Being

Studies present a positive correlation between psychological well-being and energy management among teachers which are controlled by stress and professional enrichment (Chaudhry and Chhajer, 2023) [38]. Variations in the levels of physical well-being are observed between the school types; the teachers of middle school have a higher overall level of well-being than secondary school coworkers. In a scoping study in Northern India, 65 percent of the schools teachers in secondary level had low well-being status of the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, and there is a concern that is widespread and systematic. It has been demonstrated that yoga and physical exercise impact both mental and physical wellbeing of teachers positively, also creating effective channels of institutional wellness programming (Kor & Singh, 2019). These results support the fact that the whole-school strategies towards physical health require teachers, administrators, and community partners.

##### 4.2. Emotional Well-Being

The most important predictors of psychological well-being in teachers are emotional intelligence (EI) and resilience. Sustained well-being, in turn, is closely related to the perseverance aspect of resilience (Kamboj & Garg, 2021). Energy management also has a direct influence on the psychological well-being via the mediating roles of thriving and lowering stress (Chaudhry and Chhajer, 2023) [38]. A study of teachers in training indicates a difference in emotional stability related to specialization of subject but not gender or type of institution (Mandhyan, 2024) [41]. One of the most frequent results of the studies is an existing inverse relationship between emotional competence and work stress: the greater the level of EI is, the lower the level of work stress is (Holeyannavar & Itagi, 2012) [61]. Emotional literacy, adaptive coping, and professional vitality are crucial, thus, in improving teacher efficacy and general psychological wellbeing.

##### 4.3. Professional Well-Being

The problem of professional well-being is closely interconnected with job satisfaction and psychological health in Indian teachers. Research indicates that a significant proportion of teachers face a poor professional

well-being not only because of factors such as individual, relational, and contextual (Kaur and Singh, 2019) [40, 43]. There is a big disparity in the well-being dimensions between the government school teachers and the teachers in the private schools (Zahoor). A moderate positive relationship between psychological well-being and job fulfillment has been reported between school and college teachers (Gifty Jacob and Kiranbabu, 2021) [67]. Job satisfaction has a positive connection with professional commitment, and there are gender variations in satisfaction and no gender variations in the level of commitment (Liyakath Bashir, 2017). These results support the argument that schools, communities, and policymakers should unite their efforts in formal professional development and specific well-being plans set in place to enhance educator well-being and educational results.

##### 4.4. Social Well-Being

Teacher job satisfaction and instructional effectiveness are strong predictors on the existence of social support. It will provide protection against professional burnout, and educators that have sufficient social networks have much higher well-being outcomes (Chi *et al.*, 2014). To support the need of hybrid education, low-income Indian school teachers created ad hoc support systems during the COVID-19 pandemic, which are usually mediated by smartphones and through the support of NGOs (Gavade *et al.*, 2023). Nevertheless, emotional support in such networks has not been developed. Research carried out in Tamil Nadu revealed that there were positive correlations between marital status, income and the social support levels among the teachers (Rajakala & Kumar, 2021) [12]. In Australia, there is evidence that suggests conscious peer-to-peer social support improves well-being, collaboration and pedagogical practice (Turner *et al.*, 2022). Teacher autonomy and social engagement can also be established using collaborative and bottom-up models of resource development, such as localized Open Educational Resources (Kasinathan, 2019).

#### Theme 5: Theoretical concepts and models of teacher Well-Being

##### 5.1. Ecological Perspective

A comprehensive ecological approach can be used to define teacher well-being. Based on the ecological systems theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner, the researchers focus on how the personal attributes of a teacher, his or her beliefs, school surroundings, the school culture, neighborhood values, and national policies interplay to determine subjective well-being (Hofstadler *et al.*, 2020; Price and McCallum, 2015) [46, 47]. The contextual background in which teachers get through professional challenges throughout their careers is constituted by social-psychological capital such as resources of confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism (Jin *et al.*, 2021) [48]. Notably, scholars suggest that the concept of sustainable teacher well-being needs long-term structural measures as opposed to temporary personal-based assistive interventions (Hartcher *et al.*, 2022) [45]. Ecologically, the well-being of the student and the teacher has a similar formative experience in a lean school environment, which underscores the simultaneous dependence of these products on each other (Roffey, 2012). One of the institutional mechanisms found in support of teachers to thrive is leadership facilitated by inclusive well-being policies (Holzner & Gaunt).

## 5.2. Eco-Educational Biopsychosocial Model

A new synthesis is emerging in the literature that provides an Eco-Educational Biopsychosocial Model of teacher well-being. This model consists of a combination of biological, psychological, and social aspects - the point of view that none of these aspects alone is enough to understand the complexity of teacher health (Murphey and Edlin, 2020). Job satisfaction acts as an intermediate factor in the relationship between psychosocial and organizational factors to teacher mental health (Capone *et al.*, 2022). Wong *et al.* (2021) also observed that biological dimensions have been traditionally underrepresented in the school mental health models, which is why it is important to employ thorough biopsychosocial approaches. Structural stressors that should be considered by this model are adverse occupational conditions (low pay associated with anxiety and stress, heavy workloads, poor environments, and others) (Cezar-Vaz *et al.*, 2015). The proposed mechanisms that can be identified as practical to comply with the prescriptions of this model to maintain teacher health in the educational environment are co-located peer support practices, positive interdisciplinary collaboration, and reflective instruction.

### Theme 6: SDG 4-C and NEP 2020 -Teacher policies

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India is an integrated effort to reorganize teacher education in accordance with the requirements of 21st century learning (Dr. Vijay Laxmi, 2023). The policy also requires three major changes, including four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, which will be implemented in full by 2030 to be the one combining specialization of the subjects alongside training in pedagogy and the foundations in the Indian value systems (Manoj Sharma, 2024) <sup>[53]</sup>. It fosters multidisciplinary, local knowledge participation, and integration of the right technology throughout education programmes of teacher education (P. Kakodkar *et al.*, 2024). In NEP 2020, the role of the teacher is by no means only that of an instructor; rather, professional growth, proper compensation, and lifelong learning are viewed as the attributes of the teacher that are essential to his or her identity (D. T, 2023). Student mental health is another issue covered in the policy, which points to problems with memorization, strict tests, and the absence of counselling services - and suggests extracurricular activities as a component of a holistic education experience (Swarup Das & Sk Amiruddin, 2023). Nevertheless, there are still enormous implementation issues. The multi-stakeholder is necessary to commit themselves to infrastructure development, quality control, and social density of reforms (Manoj Sharma, 2024) <sup>[53]</sup>. According to the critics, although NEP 2020 progresses teachers education, it lacks adequate consideration of mental health complications of teachers and students in higher learning institutions. Political desire, proper resource distribution, and systemic collaboration between the government, civil society, and academic organizations will determine the success of the policy in the long run.

### Theme 7: Global Perspective SDG 4-C, teacher shortages

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4-C worldwide aims at increasing the size of qualified teaching workforces as a precondition to quality and equitable education by 2030. Significant efforts have been achieved in

Southern Asia: the percentage of trained teachers rose 80 to 89 in 2015-22 similar to the North African region: 81 to 95. Nonetheless, shortages are projected in the region with the country requiring around 7.8 million more teachers in 2030 (Arora, 2021; Bora *et al.*, 2023). Areas that are economically disadvantaged are the highest in shortage of teachers. The cross-national study between India, Mexico, and Tanzania revealed that teachers who had practiced with disadvantaged students constantly expressed greater discontent and wished to transfer their status (Luschei and Chudgar, 2017). Such a tendency indicates a systematic disparity in the distribution of teachers that has vulnerable groups of learners. The reduction in the spending of education as a percentage of the GDP (14.2 to 10.6) in Southern Asia during the period of 2017-2021 continues to limit the ability of the region to recruit, train and retain high-quality teachers. To alleviate the problem of teacher shortages, it is necessary to invest money in this sphere and achieve general changes in working conditions, remuneration, and professional assistance.

## Theme 8: Teacher well-being: social work perspectives

### 8.1. Social Work Interventions

Interventions focused on social work have become more and more popular as one of the mechanisms to enhance the well-being and retention of teachers. Systematic implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) has provided positive results such as a decrease in burnout and teacher efficacy in low-income schools (Ross *et al.*, 2012). Mixed monetary remunerations including performance bonuses and career promotions coupled with mentorship have been associated with slightly positive teacher retention rates (Naghieh *et al.*, 2015). Nevertheless, the general evidence base of teacher well-being interventions still lacks sufficient rigor of methodology. Associates of research recommend cluster-randomised designs, bigger samples, and complicated frameworks of interventions to create more reliable evidence on efficient organizational interventions (Naghieh *et al.*, 2015; Dreer and Gouasé, 2021). It is important to establish a more robust evidence base that would inform policy and practice in this field. The role of the social worker in schools is also related to advocating the school constitution (Schatz, 2012). School social work has become an important occupation in terms of fostering student achievement, social equity and health of school communities. To achieve the complex needs of school community members, social workers, school psychologists and teachers should work together to establish and enact well-being policies and programmes that tackle the diverse needs of every school community member (Testa, 2023). School social work is based on evidence-informed and strength-based practices, which provide ample coverage and readiness of learners to engage in the academic field (Singh and Verma, 2020).

### 8.2. Social Work in the School Environment.

School social work has become a critical occupation in facilitating school student achievement, social equity and school well-being. To address the intricate needs of the members of all school communities, social workers, school psychologists, and teachers need to devise and enforce well-being policies and programmes to address the diverse needs (Testa, 2023). School social work has evidence-based and

strength-based practices that prioritize sufficient support and readiness of the learners to engage in academic activity (Singh and Verma, 2020). School social work is a new profession in India relative to its developed status in the Western setting (Singh and Verma, 2020). Some of the challenges encompass role ambiguity, institutional hierarchy and less recognition. District, and school based social work role are supported by the international evidence as they provide evidence based framework on school-family-community integration (Finigan-Carr & Shaia). The potential of enhancing the agency staff, the home-school support workers with social work qualifications, as well as the collective counseling infrastructure are the prospects of educational life in India.

### 8.3. Need for School Social Work

School social work responds to the multidimensional needs of students that only affect educational attainment directly. Social workers are important in regards to providing mental health support, social capacity building and the consistency in performance (Singh and Verma, 2020). New information on childhood trauma, toxic stress, and poverty, where social workers are receiving an increasing amount of training, is transforming the model of how schools are conceptualized and providing support (Branson, 2019). Integration of social work curriculum in schools has been demonstrated to promise improvements in the context of safety in schools, standardization of intervention methods, and equal access to opportunities among students in developing settings, including the Western Balkans (Škorić and Kuprešanin, 2018). In India, where socioeconomic volatility and poor institutional frameworks are the other factors of concern, the institutionalization of school social work in progressive ways is a top reform must- necessity, albeit with a number of complexities.

### Recommendations

Based on the evidence discussed in this paper, the following specific recommendations are based on the evidence of how Indian school teachers can be adequately served with respect to mental health and professional well-being:

#### 1. Institute Broad Academic-Based Mental Health Systems.

The mental health programmes should be incorporated in schools through counseling services, crisis intervention, and the provision of long term psychological services. The introduction of permanent consultation with qualified mental health professionals is crucial to the overall access reduction and lack of stigma towards helping them and involve fewer ad hoc deals. The mental health infrastructure needs to be a priority of the schools the same way that academic infrastructure is.

#### 2. Make Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Practices an institution.

MBSR training should be included in the teacher professional development calendars. Regular practices of yoga, meditation and guided relaxation programs must be planned as an institutional practice and not as a voluntary wellness procedure. There exists evidence that these interventions produce quantifiable results in physical and mental health.

#### 3. Develop Conducive School Cultures.

Leaders of schools are to be trained in transformational and empowering leadership styles, which would promote the existence of cooperative relations and psychological security within the school. Climate checks carried out after every few months that are based on validated instruments should occur and teacher feedback should inform programme design and policy change.

#### 4. Enhance Work-Life Balance

The work policies ought to be designed in such a way to allow teachers to balance their work and individual requirements better. Induction and continuous professional development programmes should also involve work load management training, such as time management, prioritizing tasks and boundaries, etc.

#### 5. Develop Mentorship and Support Programs.

Peer direction support groups need to be set up to enable teachers to have safe reflection space, collective problem solving and accountability to each other. Mentorship programmes ought to be formal whereby experienced teachers are assigned novice teachers so that they may socialize professionally and attrition of new teachers minimized. Effectiveness in such frameworks should be institutionally assisted and checked.

### Future Research Directions

This study on the well being of teachers working in Indian schools not only throws light on the current issues but also provides the future research focus. A number of directions can be discussed and held:

**Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration:** Interdisciplinary teams of education, psychology, public health as well as social work scholars must be encouraged to create holistic solutions centered on teacher well-being that are multidimensional as appropriate to the issue.

**Longitudinal Studies:** To check the long-lasting effect of mental health and well-being interventions on teacher performance and student achievement, research on teachers and students should last several years.

**Technology Updating:** The study ought to research the feasibility of using digital platforms and telehealth technologies to enhance the mental health provision of teachers across more geographically remote and underserved areas, minimizing geographic disparities to well-being resources.

**Comprehending School Cultures:** Comparative study of various types of schools, governance arrangements and location will contribute to defining how particular cultural and institutional attributes affect teacher well-being so as to develop less generalized interventions.

**Policy Advocacy:** The scholars and practitioners can participate in the state and national policymaking to promote the establishment of structural reforms that can institute teacher well-being as part of educational governance systems.

**Social Work Methods in Education:** Extensions on ways that social work tools and frameworks may be customized to

Indian school settings provides a bright potential of creating a durable support platform between teachers and students alike.

### Contributions to Society

**Improving Educational Quality:** Strong and mentally healthy teachers who possess a high level of professional well-being are in a better place to be able to interact with students, which enhances the educational results at large scale. A healthy teaching workforce means better and more resilient society, which is educated and skilled.

**Less Mental Health Stigma:** This study will decrease the problem of Mental Health stigmatization by making mental health a more common and normalized topic of conversation in schools and colleges, which will help the wider culture to move towards mentally sound institutional priorities instead of implying a personal deficiency.

**Increasing Bondage to Community:** Spurring families and communities to be supportive of teachers will result in more integrated education eco-systems. Viable research has indicated that the parent engagement plays a significant role in improving the learning outcome of children- supporting the effectiveness of school-community relationships.

**Empowering Teachers:** This research will enable educators with research-supported knowledge that can promote themselves to gain professional and mental health; it will create a culture of self-care and professional pride among the teaching fraternity.

**Maintaining Education Practices:** The research findings would help in the creation of health-sustaining practices on an institutional level, which in turn would enable a thriving and healthy teaching body in present and future generations.

### Conclusion

This has been an extensive review of the state of the school teacher well being in India at the personal, professional, organizational and theoretical levels of practice and policy making that has revealed a grossly under-serviced and multidimensional educational policy and practice sector. Although SDG 4-C has developed the international demand to enhance supply and quality of professionally qualified teachers, the Indian scenario has shown that the numbers are not enough to gauge the improvement. Their life, both physical, mental, emotional, and social, is the core determinant of the quality of services they provide.

**The facts are clear:** Indian school teachers are greatly challenged in mental health concerns. Freedom of anxiety and depression are rampant, employment pressure is systematically framed and the help networks are inadequate to the extent of the requirement. It is not only individual educators who are impacted by these conditions, but these conditions have a trickle-down effect on the classrooms, student engagement, achievement, and well-being. As shown in the current review, teacher well-being is not an extraneous issue and a central factor that determines the quality of education.

There are also such critical gaps in the actual practice and policy that are identified by the review. Available models lack a sufficient consideration of the intersectional approach

to teacher well-being, gendered aspects of occupational stress, the differences between state and privatized school environments, and holistic social work contribution in schools. NeP 2020 is a breakthrough in the reimagining of teacher education, but it cannot become as effective as possible without support in terms of infrastructure and the provision of mental health as well as professional support structures.

The suggestions developed in this review, as comprehensive school-based mental health systems, mindfulness and stress reduction programmes, supportive leadership cultures, WLB-enhancing policies and structured peer mentorship, offer an implementation roadmap. These are not the ideals; they are evidenced based interventions that are shown to be effective in similar educational settings.

The way ahead needs immediate concerted effort. To establish a genuine ecosystem of care about the well-being of educators, policymakers, school administration, teacher educators, mental health professionals, social workers, and community stakeholders should collaborate to create a system of education. As teachers flourish, students flourish - and any society trying to pay attention to the psychological wellbeing of its teachers, ends up investing in itself. The happiness of school teachers in India is a national issue but not merely a workplace issue.

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