



PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

Baby Prasanna Kumari Rebba ¹, Dr. J.R. Priyadarsini²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education, Acharya Nagarjuna University, A.P

² Associate Professor, St. Josephe's College of Education for Women, Guntur, A.P

Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to gender, marital status, and locality. A sample of 300 teachers was selected from various secondary schools of Guntur District using a stratified random sampling technique. Psychological Wellbeing scale developed and standardized by Devender Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary (2012) was selected. The study formulated three null hypotheses to determine whether significant differences existed in psychological well-being based on gender (male/female), marital status (married/unmarried), and locality (urban/rural). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and independent samples *t*-tests.

The findings revealed statistically significant differences in psychological well-being across all three demographic variables. Female teachers exhibited significantly higher psychological well-being than male teachers. Similarly, married teachers demonstrated greater psychological well-being than their unmarried counterparts. Urban teachers were found to have significantly better psychological well-being compared to rural teachers. These results indicate that personal and contextual factors significantly influence the emotional and mental health of secondary school teachers.

The study highlights the importance of supporting teacher well-being through targeted interventions, especially in rural and unmarried teacher populations. The findings have implications for educational policy, teacher training, and mental health support programs aimed at fostering a positive school environment and promoting teacher effectiveness.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, secondary school teachers, gender, marital status, urban-rural locality, teacher mental health

1.1. Introduction

The teaching profession, long regarded as one of the noblest, is also among the most demanding. Secondary school teachers, in particular, face a unique set of challenges as they balance academic instruction, student behavior management, curriculum delivery, administrative responsibilities, and often, extracurricular duties. These cumulative responsibilities, if not adequately supported, can significantly impact a teacher's psychological well-being. In recent years, concerns about teacher stress, burnout, and mental health have garnered increasing attention from researchers, educational planners, and policymakers across the globe.

Psychological well-being refers to an individual's overall emotional and mental state, encompassing their ability to manage emotions, build meaningful relationships, and lead a purposeful life. It is not merely the absence of mental illness, but rather the presence of positive mental health, including feelings of satisfaction, balance, and personal growth. One of the most widely accepted frameworks of psychological well-being was proposed by Carol Ryff (1989), who identified six core dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These dimensions reflect an individual's ability to accept themselves, maintain fulfilling relationships, make independent decisions, manage daily life challenges, find meaning and direction, and continuously strive toward personal development. In the context of teaching, psychological well-being is crucial as it influences not only the teacher's own mental health but also their professional effectiveness, classroom climate, and student outcomes. Teachers with high psychological well-being are more resilient, motivated, and capable of fostering a supportive learning environment. Thus, understanding and nurturing psychological well-being is vital for sustaining both personal and professional success in the teaching profession.

1.2. Psychological Well-being in the Teaching Profession

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing an individual's emotional, cognitive, and social functioning. In the teaching profession, psychological well-being refers to the mental and emotional resilience of teachers, their sense of job

satisfaction, and their ability to maintain positive relationships, personal growth, and purpose in life, despite the challenges inherent in educational environments.

According to Ryff (1989), psychological well-being comprises six key dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. These dimensions are particularly relevant in the teaching profession, where educators must navigate complex social interactions, maintain motivation, and adapt to ever-changing educational demands.

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual and emotional development of students. However, the growing workload, increased administrative tasks, large class sizes, behavioral challenges, and pressure to meet academic standards can significantly affect their well-being (Kyriacou, 2001). Chronic stress and lack of support may lead to burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and declining mental health (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Maintaining psychological well-being is essential for sustaining high levels of teaching effectiveness. Teachers with higher psychological well-being demonstrate greater job commitment, use more effective classroom strategies, and report better student-teacher relationships (Bricheno, Brown, & Lubansky, 2009). Furthermore, emotionally healthy teachers create more supportive learning environments, which directly benefit students' academic and emotional development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Demographic factors such as gender, marital status, and geographical location may also influence psychological well-being. For example, research suggests that female teachers often experience higher levels of stress due to role conflict between professional and domestic responsibilities (Antonioni, Polychroni, & Walters, 2000). Rural teachers may face isolation and lack of access to professional development or mental health support, whereas urban teachers might contend with overcrowded classrooms and higher workloads (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995).

Given the central role of teachers in educational success, it is imperative to assess and enhance their psychological well-being. Addressing this aspect not only improves teachers' quality of life but also positively influences student outcomes, school climate, and the broader educational system.

1.3. Importance of Psychological Well-being in School Teachers

Psychological well-being is crucial for school teachers as it directly affects their personal health, professional performance, and the overall learning environment. Teachers are not only knowledge providers but also role models and emotional support systems for students. When teachers experience good psychological well-being, they are more likely to be motivated, empathetic, patient, and effective in their instructional practices.

A mentally healthy teacher can handle classroom challenges more constructively, maintain positive relationships with students and colleagues, and demonstrate better classroom management and problem-solving skills. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), teachers with high psychological well-being foster more emotionally supportive classrooms, which in turn promote student engagement and academic achievement.

On the other hand, poor psychological well-being may lead to stress, burnout, absenteeism, and even attrition from the profession. This not only affects the individual teacher but also disrupts the continuity of teaching and lowers the quality of education. Kyriacou (2001) emphasizes that persistent stress and emotional exhaustion can impair a teacher's instructional quality and negatively impact student outcomes.

Furthermore, teachers with strong psychological well-being contribute to a positive school climate, support collaborative culture among staff, and adapt more easily to educational reforms and technological changes. Their sense of purpose and fulfillment enhances their commitment to professional development and lifelong learning.

Ensuring the psychological well-being of teachers is not just a matter of individual care but a systemic necessity that supports educational quality, student success, and sustainable teaching careers.

1.4. Need and significance of the Study

A number of studies have been conducted globally and in India to understand the psychological well-being of teachers and the factors influencing it. These studies consistently highlight the importance of a supportive work environment, manageable workload, personal resilience, and positive interpersonal relationships in sustaining mental health among educators. Ryff (1989) laid the foundational framework for studying psychological well-being by proposing a six-dimensional model—autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. This model has since been used in many empirical studies on teachers' mental health and professional fulfillment. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) studied 244 teachers in Norway and found a strong negative correlation between emotional exhaustion (a key component of burnout) and psychological well-being. Their study emphasized that lack of autonomy and poor support from school leadership significantly reduced teachers' sense of environmental mastery and job satisfaction.

Jennings and Greenberg (2009) introduced the concept of the *prosocial classroom*, highlighting that teachers with high psychological well-being and emotional competence create more effective and emotionally positive learning environments. Their research supports the notion that teacher well-being is intricately linked to student academic and behavioral outcomes. In the Indian context, Verma and Sharma (2003) conducted a study on secondary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh and found that psychological well-being was significantly influenced by job security, work-life balance, and administrative support. Female teachers reported lower well-being compared to male teachers, often due to work-family conflict. Suri and Sharma (2018) examined psychological well-being among school teachers in urban and rural schools in Punjab. The study revealed that urban teachers experienced higher

stress levels due to overcrowded classrooms and curriculum pressures, whereas rural teachers reported isolation and lack of professional growth opportunities as major challenges.

Antoniou, Polychroni, and Walters (2000) in a cross-national study found that special education teachers experienced more psychological strain than general education teachers due to emotional demands and behavioral issues in students. The study recommended emotional support training and peer mentoring for teachers. Collectively, these studies underline the fact that psychological well-being in teachers is not only determined by internal factors such as personal resilience and emotional intelligence but also by external factors including administrative support, peer relationships, student behavior, and socio-demographic variables such as gender and location. Teachers are the cornerstone of any educational system. Their psychological well-being plays a crucial role not only in shaping their professional competence and classroom behavior but also in influencing student learning, motivation, and emotional development. In recent years, increasing workload, curriculum reforms, administrative pressures, and changing societal expectations have posed significant challenges to the mental health of school teachers, particularly at the secondary level. Despite their critical role, the psychological needs of teachers often remain overlooked in educational policy and practice.

The **need for this study** arises from growing concerns about teacher stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. Several studies have indicated that compromised mental health among teachers can result in low morale, absenteeism, reduced instructional quality, and early retirement. In such a context, assessing the level of psychological well-being and identifying the factors influencing it is essential to ensure teacher retention and professional effectiveness.

This study is **significant** as it takes a comprehensive view of psychological well-being by examining how demographic variables such as gender, marital status, and geographical location (urban/rural) impact the mental health of secondary school teachers. Understanding these relationships can help in designing targeted interventions, such as counseling support, well-being workshops, and professional development programs, tailored to teachers' specific needs.

1.5. Review of Related Literature

A review of recent studies (2022–2024) reveals growing academic interest in the psychological well-being of school teachers across different regions of India. Several common patterns and significant findings emerge. Many studies highlight the positive influence of social support, resilience, spiritual intelligence, and coping strategies on psychological well-being. For instance, Chhabi Mohan and Rinkal Sharma (2024) found a strong positive correlation between social support and well-being, suggesting that teachers with higher levels of interpersonal and institutional support experience better mental health. Similarly, Rithvik S. Kashyap et al. (2024) emphasized the roles of resilience and personal growth in enhancing self-efficacy among teachers as mental health facilitators, pointing to the importance of adaptability and self-acceptance. Gayatri and Jain (2024) and Kaur et al. (2024) explored the negative relationship between occupational/job stress and psychological well-being, with findings indicating that increasing stress levels severely hinder emotional balance and personal functioning among teachers.

Further, regional comparisons reveal differences in psychological well-being based on type of school management and location. Studies by Sapna Tripathi and Subodh Kumar (2024) and Sushma and Aruna Anchal (2023) consistently found that government school teachers scored higher in psychological well-being compared to their private school counterparts. This could be attributed to better job security, structured working hours, or reduced administrative pressure in government settings. The impact of demographic variables such as gender, marital status, teaching experience, and academic stream was explored in depth by Nagendramma and Esther Suneela (2023), who observed that female and urban teachers generally had better well-being scores than male and rural teachers, although not all differences were statistically significant.

In addition, the role of internal factors such as spiritual intelligence was investigated by Swarupa Rani and Sreenivasu (2023), who found a moderate level of well-being across five psychological domains, indicating a balanced psychological state influenced by spiritual awareness and emotional control. Coping mechanisms were the focus of Ashok et al. (2022), who observed that teachers most frequently used positive reframing and planning as strategies to handle stress, while maladaptive mechanisms like substance use were minimal. Chaudhry and Chhajer (2023) emphasized energy management and thriving as predictors of psychological well-being, suggesting that wellness programs focusing on energy restoration could improve teachers' mental health.

Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted nature of psychological well-being among school teachers and highlight the need for holistic interventions that consider both institutional and personal variables. They also point to systematic differences based on work environment, gender, and support structures, and reinforce the importance of resilience-building, professional support systems, and emotional self-regulation in sustaining mental health among educators.

1.6. Objective of the Study

1. To find out the Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Teachers with respect to the following variables.
 - a) Gender : Male/ Female
 - b) Marital Status : Married/ Unmarried
 - c) Locality of Teacher : Rural/Urban

1.7. Hypotheses of the Study

1. There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Male and Female Teachers.

2. There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Married and Unmarried Teachers.
3. There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Rural and Urban Teachers.

1.8. Method of Investigation

Normative Survey Method was used.

Sample and Sampling

For the present study, a **stratified random sampling technique** was employed to ensure a representative distribution of participants across different categories of secondary schools within the **Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, India**. Initially, **simple random sampling** was used to select secondary schools using the **lottery method**. From these selected schools, a total of **300 secondary school teachers** were chosen as the sample for the study. The stratified sampling approach ensured balanced representation based on criteria such as school type, gender, and location, providing a reliable cross-section of the teacher population in the district.

Tool Used in the Study

For assessing psychological well-being of the subjects of the present investigation, Psychological Wellbeing scale developed and standardized by Devender Sisodia and Pooja Choudhary (2012) was selected. This scale was developed by using Likert technique. Suggestions were invited from experts from different fields such as Psychology, Sociology Human Development, Family Relations, and Psychiatry. The final form of scale was thus prepared comprising of 50 statements with a view to measure several aspects of well-being like Satisfaction, Efficiency, Sociability, Mental Health and Interpersonal Relations. This scale consists of 50 items each to rated five points alternatives. The scale consists of positive items only and, is verbal in nature. The **reliability** of the scale was confirmed through test-retest ($r = 0.72$ over 16 days) and split-half methods ($r = 0.71$), with the final reliability improved to **0.86** using the **Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula**, indicating high internal consistency and dependability.

Administration of the Tool and Collection of Data

The data collection process was carried out **personally by the investigator** across various secondary schools in the Guntur district. Prior permission was obtained from the heads of the institutions before the commencement of the study. During each visit, the researcher provided a **brief orientation** to the teachers, explaining the **purpose and significance** of the study to ensure their understanding and cooperation. After establishing rapport, the **Psychological Wellbeing** questionnaires were distributed directly to the teachers. The active cooperation of both headmasters and teaching staff facilitated smooth and efficient data collection.

Statistical Techniques Used

To analyze the collected data, the study employed basic descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, **Mean** and **Standard Deviation (SD)** were used to summarize the central tendency and dispersion of the Psychological Wellbeing scores. Further, **t-tests** were applied to examine **significant differences** in Psychological Wellbeing across various demographic and institutional variables. These statistical techniques provided insights into patterns and variations in Psychological Wellbeing among the sampled secondary school teachers.

1.9. Data analysis

Hypothesis-1: There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Male and Female Teachers.

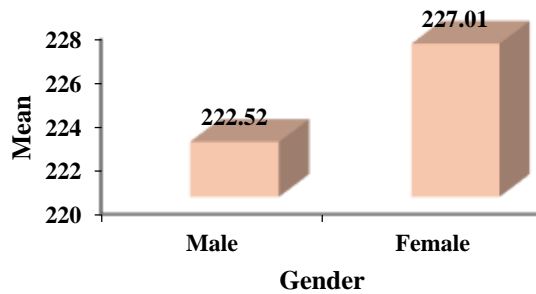
Table 1. Comparison of the mean scores of the level of Psychological Wellbeing of secondary school Male and Female teachers

Variable Gender	Sample N	Mean	SD	SED	t-value
Male	133	222.52	2.65	0.60194	7.462*
Female	167	227.01	6.52		

* Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

Interpretation

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine the difference in psychological well-being between male and female secondary school teachers. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in the psychological well-being scores, $t(298) = 7.462, p < .05$. Female teachers ($M = 227.01, SD = 6.52$) scored significantly higher on psychological well-being compared to their male counterparts ($M = 222.52, SD = 2.65$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that gender has a significant impact on the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers.



Graph 1. Comparison of the mean scores of the level of Psychological Wellbeing of secondary school Male and Female teachers

Hypothesis-2: There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of Psychological Wellbeing of Secondary School Married and Unmarried Teachers.

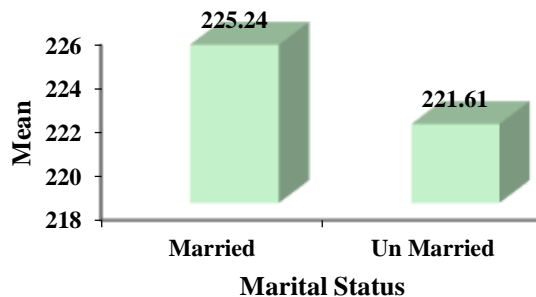
Table 2 Comparison of the mean scores of the level of Psychological Wellbeing of secondary school Married and Un Married teachers.

Variable Marital Status	Sample N	Mean	SD	SED	t-value
Married	282	225.24	5.716	1.3550	2.681*
Un Married	18	221.61	2.19		

* Significant at 0.05 level

Interpretation

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the psychological well-being of married and unmarried secondary school teachers. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(298) = 2.681, p < .05$. Married teachers ($M = 225.24, SD = 5.72$) had significantly higher psychological well-being scores than unmarried teachers ($M = 221.61, SD = 2.19$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that marital status plays a significant role in the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers.



Graph 2. Comparison of the mean scores of the level of Psychological Wellbeing of secondary school Married and Un Married teachers

Hypothesis-3: There would be no significant difference in the mean scores of psychological well-being of Secondary School Rural and Urban locality Teachers.

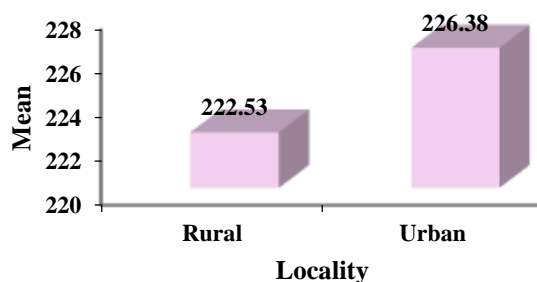
Table 3 Comparison of the mean scores of the level of psychological well-being of secondary school Rural and Urban locality teachers.

Variable Locality of Teachers	Sample N	Mean	SD	SED	t-value
Rural	106	222.53	2.66	0.6440	5.976*
Urban	194	226.38	6.32		

* Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

Interpretation

An independent samples *t*-test was performed to assess the difference in psychological well-being between rural and urban secondary school teachers. The results indicated a statistically significant difference, $t(298) = 5.976, p < .05$. Urban teachers ($M = 226.38, SD = 6.32$) reported significantly higher levels of psychological well-being compared to rural teachers ($M = 222.53, SD = 2.66$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that locality significantly influences the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers.



Graph 3. Comparison of the mean scores of the level of psychological well-being of secondary school Rural and Urban locality teachers

1.10. Findings

1. Female secondary school teachers exhibited significantly higher psychological well-being than their male counterparts.
2. Married secondary school teachers showed significantly higher psychological well-being than unmarried teachers.
3. Urban secondary school teachers reported significantly higher psychological well-being than their rural counterparts.

1.11. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to gender, marital status, and locality. The findings offer valuable insights and align well with previous empirical research conducted in the field of teacher mental health.

Firstly, the finding that **female secondary school teachers exhibited significantly higher psychological well-being than their male counterparts** is consistent with the results of Nagendramma and Esther Suneela (2023), who also reported higher mean scores of well-being among female teachers. This may be attributed to greater emotional expressiveness, stronger social support networks, or better adaptability to the nurturing demands of the teaching profession, which are often associated with female roles (Suri & Sharma, 2018). While some earlier studies (e.g., Sushma & Aruna Anchal, 2023) reported no significant gender differences, the current findings support a growing body of literature that suggests gender-based variation in emotional resilience and psychological adjustment among educators.

Secondly, the study revealed that **married teachers demonstrated significantly higher psychological well-being than unmarried teachers**. This finding is in line with earlier studies such as those by Verma and Sharma (2003), which found that married individuals often benefit from spousal support and family stability, contributing positively to their emotional and psychological states. The presence of a stable support system may enhance coping mechanisms and reduce the emotional burden associated with professional stress (Chhabi Mohan & Sharma, 2024).

Thirdly, it was found that **urban teachers had significantly higher psychological well-being than rural teachers**. This aligns with the findings of Nagendramma and Esther Suneela (2023), who reported that urban teachers often have better access to professional development resources, mental health services, peer networks, and a more structured work environment compared to their rural counterparts. Rural teachers, on the other hand, may face challenges such as professional isolation, inadequate infrastructure, and limited support systems, all of which can negatively affect psychological well-being (Tripathi & Kumar, 2024).

Overall, the results of the current study reinforce the significance of contextual and demographic variables in shaping the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers. They also underscore the need for targeted interventions and support programs that consider gender, marital status, and locality to promote teacher well-being. These findings contribute to the growing recognition that teacher mental health is a critical component of educational quality and sustainability.

1.2. Conclusion

The present study explored the psychological well-being of secondary school teachers in relation to gender, marital status, and locality. The findings revealed significant differences across all three demographic variables. Female teachers demonstrated higher

levels of psychological well-being than male teachers, married teachers reported better well-being than their unmarried counterparts, and urban teachers exhibited greater psychological well-being compared to rural teachers. These results highlight the influence of both personal and environmental factors on teachers' mental and emotional health.

The study underscores the urgent need to prioritize psychological well-being in the teaching profession, as it directly impacts teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall school climate. Addressing psychological well-being through structured interventions, counseling services, and teacher-friendly policies—especially in rural and private school settings—can foster healthier and more effective educational environments. Moreover, strengthening social support systems and recognizing individual differences based on gender and marital status can further enhance teacher well-being.

Promoting the mental health of teachers is not just a matter of personal well-being—it is a foundational requirement for sustainable educational excellence.

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