



Rural Teachers' Quality of Life Through Physical, Psychological, Social, and Environmental Lenses

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Teachers aged over 50 reported significantly better environmental QoL ($p=0.001$).
- Psychological health varied significantly by caste, with OBC teachers scoring highest ($p=0.001$).
- Postgraduate teachers had significantly higher environmental QoL scores than those with only UG degrees ($p=0.004$).
- Married teachers showed significantly better psychological and environmental QoL than unmarried ones ($p=0.024$, $p=0.00$).
- Nuclear families were associated with significantly better QoL across all four domains ($p<0.05$).

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses rural senior secondary school teachers' QoL. Teachers play an important role in community development by driving economic growth, social stability. The objective of the study was to evaluate the QoL of rural SES teachers and compare it with socio-demographic factors. The study was conducted in 2022 among 185 teachers. The selection of the teachers was made through multistage sampling from Kashi Vidyapeeth and Chirgaon block of Varanasi. The results show that age, caste, marital status, years in service, SES, family type, and education significantly impact specific QoL domains. Teachers aged >50 years reported the highest Environmental QoL scores (57.40 ± 20.23 , $p=0.001$). The caste also played a role, with OBC teachers having the highest Psychological Health scores (55.78 ± 14.71 , $p=0.001$). Marital status was significant in Psychological Health ($p=0.024$) and environmental QoL ($p < 0.001$), with married teachers scoring higher. Teachers with >5 years in service had better Psychological Health ($p = 0.026$) and environmental QoL ($p < 0.001$). Family type also influenced QoL, with nuclear families scoring significantly higher across all domains ($p < 0.05$), whereas gender, religion, occupation, area of residence, and house status did not show significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

INTRODUCTION

Teachers, the most important human resources. The nature and qualities of any educational structure depend generally on their teacher's work. It has been vastly stated that educating is one of the most stressful occupations in the world. Today, in many associations, teachers are not happy with their job (Albertson & Kagan, 1987). They play an important role in developing that section of country education need first for development then

anything. They are the light source for students who are deprived of resources and lack of guidance. Teaching refers to the process of conveying knowledge and skills from a teacher to their students. It contains the activities of educating or instructing. It is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Quality of Life (QoL) is the Individuals satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the cultural or intellectual conditions under which they are living. It is one of the essential aspects of individual's life that impacts the person's

performance and progress. It affects both the personal and professional parts.

The concept of quality of life (QoL) has emerged as a critical domain of research, particularly in understanding the well-being of individuals across various socio-economic and cultural settings. QoL encompasses multiple dimensions, including physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental conditions, which collectively contribute to an individual's overall satisfaction and productivity. Among rural populations, where access to resources and infrastructure is often limited, the QoL holds profound significance, particularly for educators who play a pivotal role in shaping the community's future. In our previous study we have also observed that resource for online education was limited to rural students, many students lacked prior knowledge of online classes, most participated encountered various problems, especially with device and internet connectivity (Mishra & Kumari, 2024b). The QoL for teachers in rural areas is crucial for several reasons, as it directly impacts the education system and the overall development of rural communities. Rural teachers often face significant challenges that affect their QoL, including low pay, poor living conditions, heavy workloads, and limited professional development opportunities (Leech et al., 2022). These factors contribute to the shortage of high-quality teachers in rural areas, as many teachers seek employment in urban settings with better remuneration and living standards. The disparity between urban and rural areas in terms of QoL can lead to greater depression among the rural population, including teachers (Mitchell et al., 2022).

Interestingly, the QoL in rural areas is not only important for teachers but also for the entire community. Keeping the settings of rural school in mind, it's necessary to study the QoL of teachers at rural schools. The study aimed at assessing the QoL of rural secondary school teachers. The study provides an opportunity for further research across QoL of rural primary school teachers to uncover the possible differences or similarities that may be present.

METHODOLOGY

The research design and tools used in this study closely followed those outlined in our earlier work on QoL of students (of class 11th and 12th) in rural senior secondary schools (Mishra & Kumari, 2024a). The study focused on teachers working in senior secondary government schools in rural areas of Varanasi district. Teachers from convent and private schools were excluded. A descriptive method was used to conduct the present study, and

survey-type research was conducted through the questionnaire. The sample was selected using a multistage sampling technique. First, the blocks Kashi Vidyapeeth and Chiragoan were selected randomly from eight blocks of Varanasi district (Arajiline, Baragaon, Chiragoan, Chhapra, Harhua, Kashi vidyapeeth, Pindra and Sewapuri). Thereafter, by simple random sampling, ten co-educational secondary government schools were chosen from these two blocks. Teachers from these selected schools formed the sampling frame. This study was conducted in the year 2022, and the sample size for the study was calculated to be 185 teachers (both male and female teachers included) aged between 30 and 50 years ($M = 36.94$, $SD = 8.81$), selected using Yemen's formula. They were briefed about the purpose beforehand and requested to provide informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses were assured. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which included demographic and socio-economic status information and the World Health Organization's Quality of Life (WHOQOL-BREF, 2012) tool. The WHOQOL-BREF is a widely used standardized instrument comprising 26 items that assess QoL across four domains that are physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental health. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating better perceived quality of life. The two general items measuring an individual's overall perception of QoL and health were not included in the present domain-wise analysis to maintain focus on the specific, measurable domains of the instruments. These global indicators may be explored separately in supplementary reporting. The collected data was analyzed in the SPSS 25 software. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation was calculated, and chi square test was applied to assess the associations between demographic variables and QoL domains. The p-value was considered statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

RESULTS

The results regarding the QoL of rural teachers about various socio-economic factors are presented in this section in four parts. The first table shows the association between teachers' gender and age with Quality of Life. The second table presents the association of religion, caste with QoL. The third table shows the association of educational qualification, marital status, occupation, and years spent in service with QoL, and at last, the fourth table highlights the association of area of residence, socio-economic status, family type, and house status with QoL.

Table 1. Association of Gender and Age of the Teachers with Quality of Life (QoL)

Variable	Category	PQ	PsychQ	SRQ	EnvQ
Gender	Male	47.63±13.04	53.00±15.47	63.87±17.39	49.12±16.97
	Female	44.82±12.55	49.58±15.02	66.11±17.14	46.19±12.23
	t value	1.39	1.42	-0.83	1.19
	P value	0.167	0.158	0.410	0.234
Age	<=30 years	47.21±11.23	51.83±15.20	65.67±17.54	42.62±14.19
	31-50 years	45.90±13.23	50.97±15.27	64.08±17.14	49.05±14.56
	>50 years	50.37±15.00	57.67±15.97	64.91±18.33	57.40±20.23
	F value	1.03	1.56	0.149	7.097
	P value	0.360	0.212	0.862	0.001*

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

Table 1 shows that there was no significant difference observed between males and females teachers across various aspects of QoL. However there was a significant difference was found in the Environmental domain of QoL across different age groups (F value = 7.097, $p = 0.001^*$), with older individuals reporting higher scores, which indicates a more positive perception of their environmental QoL than younger individuals.

Table 2 shows no significant difference for the Physical domain, Psychological domain, Social Relationship domain, and Environmental domain for the religion. Similarly, no significant difference for the Physical domain, Social Relationship domain, and Environmental domain for the caste category. However, the psychological domain varied significantly between the caste categories. The mean psychological score in the general caste category was 46.13 ± 13.94 , for the OBC caste was 55.78 ± 14.71 , and for the SC/ST caste was 51.70 ± 16.30 .

Table 3 shows that there were no significant differences in the Physical, Psychological, and Social Relationship domains among the different education levels of the teachers. However, both the Psychological domain and Environmental domain differed significantly based on marital status. Psychological domain for married teachers was reported high (53.50 ± 15.63) compared to

unmarried teachers was (47.88 ± 14.04). Similarly, the Environmental domain for married teachers was high (52.04 ± 15.36) than for unmarried teachers (38.56 ± 11.69). there is no significance difference for the Physical domain, Psychological domain, Social Relationship domain and Environmental domain for the occupation of the teachers. There is no significance difference for the Physical domain, Social Relationship domain for the year of service of the teachers however Psychological domain and Environmental domain varied significantly, indicating an association between length of service and these aspects of Quality of Life

Table 4, the psychological domain of quality of life, shows the significant difference across socio-economic status of the teachers. Psychological domain for the Class I was low (48.53 ± 13.92), and progressively high in Class II (53.04 ± 15.11), Class III (60.18 ± 13.87), Class IV (55.00 ± 17.76), and Class V (59.09 ± 19.52), showing a positive trend with increasing socio-economic class. there is a significant difference for, Physical domain, Psychological domain, Social Relationship domain, and Environmental domain for the family type of the teachers, which suggest that family type plays a meaningful role in influencing these dimensions of teachers' Quality of Life.

Table 2. Association of Religion and caste of the teachers with Quality of Life (QoL)

Variable	Category	PQ	PsychQ	SRQ	EnvQ
Religion	Hindu	46.62 ± 13.00	52.04 ± 15.44	64.74 ± 17.39	48.33 ± 15.64
	Muslim	52.38 ± 2.06	43.06 ± 6.36	55.55 ± 4.81	38.54 ± 11.83
	t value	-0.76	1.00	0.91	1.08
	P value	0.446	0.317	0.363	0.281
Caste	General	44.71 ± 13.10	46.13 ± 13.94	60.41 ± 17.28	48.83 ± 15.15
	OBC	47.31 ± 13.73	55.78 ± 14.71	67.16 ± 17.88	47.13 ± 15.81
	SC	48.13 ± 10.87	51.70 ± 16.30	64.96 ± 15.41	49.36 ± 16.04
	F value	1.03	7.10	2.62	0.363
	P value	0.358	0.001*	0.075	0.696

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

Table 3. Association of Education, Marital Status, Occupation and Service Years with QoL

Variables	Category	PQ	Psych	SRQ	EnvQ
Education	UG	46.43 ± 10.59	48.61 ± 6.80	70.83 ± 8.74	29.68 ± 4.30
	PG	53.36 ± 9.98	55.63 ± 15.66	67.16 ± 18.03	43.38 ± 12.49
	Professional	46.03 ± 13.12	51.62 ± 15.56	64.09 ± 17.46	49.36 ± 15.68
	F value	2.52	0.66	0.64	5.75
	P value	0.083	0.516	0.527	0.004*
Marital status	Married	46.80 ± 13.36	53.50 ± 15.63	64.01 ± 17.39	52.04 ± 15.36
	Unmarried	46.50 ± 11.87	47.88 ± 14.04	66.04 ± 17.13	38.56 ± 11.69
	t value	0.15	2.28	-0.72	5.75
	P value	0.883	0.024*	0.474	0.00*
Occupation	Govt. Service	45.99 ± 14.09	49.68 ± 15.02	64.38 ± 17.83	48.87 ± 15.78
	Private Service	47.41 ± 11.70	54.03 ± 15.47	64.80 ± 16.85	47.51 ± 15.51
	t value	-0.746	-1.941	-0.168	0.591
	P value	0.456	0.054	0.867	0.553
Years Spent in Service	≤ 5 years	45.36 ± 12.17	48.57 ± 14.53	63.80 ± 18.78	41.14 ± 12.01
	> 5 years	47.49 ± 13.31	53.78 ± 15.57	65.04 ± 16.46	52.17 ± 16.06
	t value	-1.08	-2.24	-0.47	-4.90
	P value	0.283	0.026*	0.642	0.000*

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

Table 4. Association of area of residence, SES, family type and house status with QoL

Variables	Category	PQ	Psych	SRQ	EnvQ
Area of residence	Urban	47.14±13.29	51.83±15.16	64.55±17.57	49.21±15.66
	Rural	45.58±11.92	52.04±16.05	64.70±16.71	45.46±15.34
	t value	0.73	-0.08	-0.05	1.46
	P value	0.465	0.935	0.957	0.146
SES (socio-economic status)	Class I	44.77±12.79	48.53±13.92	62.63±17.79	47.41±14.67
	Class II	47.78±12.94	53.04±15.11	68.01±16.84	50.16±16.20
	Class III	48.41±15.11	60.18±13.87	69.44±17.61	48.43±14.93
	Class IV	48.75±11.94	55.00±17.76	63.75±15.82	46.87±17.61
	Class V	54.22±9.42	59.09±19.52	64.39±15.85	50.28±20.89
	F value	1.78	3.54	1.05	0.29
	P value	0.13	0.008*	0.383	0.883
Family type	Joint	43.27±11.54	44.67±13.44	58.33±17.48	43.13±11.94
	Nuclear	48.42±13.26	55.44±15.05	67.67±16.41	50.65±16.63
	t value	-2.59	-4.47	-3.56	-3.15
	P value	0.010*	0.000*	0.000*	0.001*
House status	Rent	48.39±12.64	55.31±16.20	64.87±17.58	51.47±17.68
	Own	46.08±13.01	50.59±14.90	64.49±17.24	46.92±14.64
	t value	1.09	1.88	0.13	1.78
	P value	0.279	0.062	0.894	0.077

PQ: Physical health; PsychQ: Psychological health; SRQ: Social relationship; EnvQ: Environment

DISCUSSION

Studies on QoL of rural teachers are scarce (Garcia et al., 2008; Oliveira et al., 2012; Oliveira Filho et al., 2012; Silvério et al., 2010) among primary and secondary education teachers, studies on QoL present conflicting evidence regarding gender differences. Some results show a lower perception of QoL among female professionals (Tabeleao et al., 2011) while other find no difference in QoL according to gender (Penteado & Pereira, 2007; Pereira et al., 2013). Despite extensive research on teachers' well-being, the QoL of rural teachers remains an underexplored area in the existing literature. The investigation on QoL is of interest globally due to more concerns being put on becoming healthy, physically and mentally.

The study shows that QoL scores varied widely. Gender did not exert a significant influence on these dimensions of QoL within this specific population. Male teachers scored significantly higher in the domains of Physical health (sig.=0.000) (Zivkovic et al., 2024). Age of teachers shows a significant difference in the Environmental QOL (EnvQ) domain ($p=0.001^*$), with teachers aged > 50 years reporting the highest scores, and other domains were non-significant. This could be because teachers in this age group have less family related responsibility. They get experienced in managing stress and adapting to challenging environment as they develop resilience and coping mechanisms, which helps them in dealing with their environment more positively, whereas religion did not have a substantial impact on rural teacher's perceived QoL. Rural teachers from the OBC category have a significant difference in psychological health.

The study shows that education and QoL among teachers in rural India significantly differ in the Environmental QoL (EnvQ) domain ($p=0.004$), with teachers holding professional qualifications reporting the highest scores, likely due to better job opportunities, income, and exposure to urban resources. However, no significant

differences were found in Physical Health (PQ), Psychological Health (PsychQ), and Social Relationships (SRQ) domains. This may be due to shared rural challenges, such as limited healthcare access, job-related stress, and strong community ties, which affect individuals similarly regardless of education level. These findings highlight that while higher education improves environmental conditions, it does not necessarily enhance health or social well-being in rural contexts. Whereas most of the teachers had a graduate degree and had low scores in the social relations domain (Santos et al., 2021; Guerreiro et al., 2016). This study shows that married teachers have significantly PsychQ and a highly significant EnvQ than unmarried teachers. Marriage brings emotional support, companionship, and stability, which contribute to better psychological and environmental benefits. Previous studies found marital status to be significantly associated with teachers' QoL, (Khan & Ahmad, 2018; Mojgan Kasaei et al., 2015; Santos et al., 2021).

Government teachers and private/contractual teachers have similar QoL, although some studies reported that workload and type of employment significantly affect the physical and social relationships domains (Santos et al., 2021). Similarly, another study found that teachers with higher workload had worse QoL scores and contracted teachers with fewer hours had higher scores. (Pereira et al., 2014a). Teachers with more than five years of experience had significantly better scores in PsychQ ($p=0.026$) and EnvQ ($p=0.000$), suggesting that experience contributes to psychological stability and improved living conditions. However, previous studies have reported conflicting findings that teachers with more years of service reported lower QoL indices (Pereira et al., 2014b; Santos et al., 2021). Significant difference was found in PsychQ ($p=0.008$) with higher SES classes III, IV, and V reporting better psychological well-being. Teachers with higher SES often experience better QoL which can enhance their teaching quality and effectiveness (Lutfiu & Hoxha, 2024), this finding is supported by other studies that

linked SES with teaching quality and job satisfaction (Tavares et al., 2015; Dalton Sangma & Subudhi, 2022; Jayasingh et al., 2022; Gupta & Sharma, 2020). Spending time with family strongly correlates with all aspects of teachers' QoL (Adhiya & Gawali, 2022). This study shows that teachers from nuclear family reported significantly better QoL across all domains ($p < 0.05$) which indicate that nuclear family structure provide better psychological and social well being possibly due to greater independence and financial stability. In contrast, other studies have found that teachers from joint families have higher well-being than teachers from nuclear families (Lata, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The study provides valuable insights into the QoL of Rural teachers and highlights the significant influence of demographic and socio-economic factors. Age, Caste, marital status, year in service, SES, family type, and education level were found to impact specific QoL domains. Teachers above 50 years reported the highest Environ QoL scores while OBC teachers had the highest Psycho health scores. the other way around, gender, religion, occupation, area of residence, and house status did not show significant differences. These findings show the crucial role of psychological and environmental factors in shaping teachers' wellbeing. The study emphasizes the need for interventions that consider socioeconomic realities, which ensure a more supportive work environment for teachers in rural areas. Improving living conditions and providing professional development opportunities are essential steps in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers in rural settings.

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