

A Study on The Factors Influencing the Happiness of College Educators in Ernakulam District, Kerala

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Abstract: Happiness and well-being are increasingly recognized as critical components of human development and professional satisfaction. Despite their pivotal role in shaping future generations, college educators in Ernakulam district face challenges that adversely affect their happiness, with limited research exploring these specific issues. This study addresses this gap by examining the factors influencing the happiness of college educators, using both descriptive and analytical research methods. The research also examines the impact of stress and workload on educators' happiness levels. Findings reveal that educator happiness is shaped by a combination of financial and non-financial factors. Moderate salaries are associated with higher well-being, while excessive workloads and limited awareness of government support schemes reduce job satisfaction. The study highlights the need for supportive institutional environments and improved policy communication. By identifying the key influencers, this research provides actionable insights for policymakers and academic institutions to implement targeted strategies that enhance job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and ultimately foster a more motivated and effective teaching workforce. Promoting educator happiness not only benefits individual well-being but also improves instructional quality and student outcomes, contributing to a stronger educational ecosystem.

Keywords: College Educators, Government Support, Happiness, Human Development, Job Satisfaction, Stress, Well-being.

I. Introduction

Happiness and well-being are becoming more widely acknowledged as essential components of human growth. By putting "happiness" on the international agenda and highlighting the need for a more comprehensive approach to development, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution in 2011. In partnership with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the Earth Institute at Columbia University first introduced the World Happiness Report (WHR) in 2012. The report uses a variety of metrics, including the following, to gauge happiness and well-being worldwide: economic prosperity, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption. According to the World Happiness Report (WHR), the happiness of nations is measured on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 indicating the highest level of happiness. By ranking nations according to their happiness scores, the report offers insights into the elements that affect happiness and overall well-being.

The concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) was developed by the Kingdom of Bhutan. In 2015, the government issued its third GNH report, finding that aspects of well-being that had improved included mental well-being, physical health, youth literacy, participation in community events countered by increases in working hours, satisfaction with government performance, and sense of belonging.

Finland has been ranked as the world's happiest nation for eight consecutive years, according to the World Happiness Report. Finland has the highest happiness score on the list (7.74), closely followed by Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, and Israel and India ranked 118th out of 147 countries.

The happiness index has a big impact on college teachers' relationships with students, job satisfaction, and quality of instruction. Contented teachers are more likely to be involved, driven, and successful in their work, which improves student learning results. They are also more dedicated to their school and coworkers, and they develop closer relationships with students. However, their level of satisfaction may be impacted by elements such as workload, pay, autonomy, and institutional policies. By comprehending these elements, organizations can establish a more encouraging workplace, which will boost employee satisfaction, lower attrition, and improve their reputation. In the end, putting college teachers' happiness first can benefit both their health and the standard of instruction as a whole.

The Ernakulam district's college educators' job satisfaction, the quality of their instruction, and their interactions with students are all greatly impacted by the happiness index. Numerous college educators go above and beyond to help their students' academic and personal development, and they are renowned for their commitment to and enthusiasm for teaching. Teachers have the opportunity to interact with the community and create creative, place-based learning programs because of the district's distinct cultural and social setting. Many teachers are giving their pupils experiential learning opportunities that encourage civic involvement, creativity, and critical thinking.

Significance of the Study

The happiness and well-being of college educators are vital to the overall quality of higher education, as they directly influence teaching effectiveness, student engagement, and institutional performance. In Ernakulam district, where educators face challenges related to workload, work-life balance, and limited institutional support, it becomes crucial to understand the factors that influence their happiness. Despite their vital role in shaping the future generation, many educators in the district face challenges that adversely impact their job satisfaction, relationships with students, and overall teaching effectiveness. A lack of targeted research in this area has made it difficult for institutions to implement focused strategies that support faculty well-being. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining key factors such as workload, work-life balance, and government support initiatives. It aims to provide insights into how these elements influence educator happiness and to offer strategies that can enhance their professional and personal well-being. Moreover, the study explores the broader impact of teacher happiness on student learning and institutional outcomes. By identifying the core issues affecting college educators' satisfaction, this research can help institutions and policymakers develop informed, targeted interventions that reduce burnout, increase job satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to a more effective and thriving educational environment.

II. Review of Literature

Happiness is increasingly recognized as a fundamental factor in education, influencing not only academic success but also mental and emotional well-being. While traditional educational systems often emphasize cognitive performance and measurable achievements, recent research suggests that happiness is not merely an outcome but a prerequisite for effective learning (**Matas-Terron, 2025**). With the rapid advancement of modern technology, the traditional notion of education is rapidly evolving. Only those who are happy and fulfilled at work can give their best effort. Depending on the demands of the situation, management may decide to address the relevant employee needs. They have issues with a number of things, such as transportation facilities, leave policies, compensation, an overwhelming workload, spending time with loved ones, etc. To improve college educators' quality of work life, the relevant authorities must take note of these issues and take particular action. College educators will be more satisfied and productive as a result of this (**Xavier, 2023**).

It has been discovered that there are direct correlations between cultural factors and job satisfaction. Three important levels of contributors were found in the analysis of the antecedents of job satisfaction: personal attributes, circumstantial factors, and the fit between personal traits and job roles. In order to promote improved job happiness and well-being, it is crucial to match employees' abilities, values, and goals with their job duties (**Elkoutour and El Abboubi, 2024**). Workplace satisfaction has been found to have a significant impact on faculty members' work commitment. Faculty members' job satisfaction has a big impact on their performance. Therefore, it can be said that by granting their employees the freedom to choose where, when, what, and how they work, higher education institutions enhance the dedication, engagement, contentment, and happiness of their faculty (**Karthik and Udayasuriyan, 2023**).

The factor that most significantly affects workers' job satisfaction and performance is workplace happiness. Employees who receive praise for their efforts from their employer are more likely to be motivated and satisfied. In addition to increased effort from employees to work harder and produce an increasing number of employable graduates, employers who express gratitude to their employees will observe improvements in morale, satisfaction, and productivity. Workplaces with happy employees are more productive, more creative, healthier, and have many other advantages (**Sarwar et al., 2023**). Another important factor that influences the happiness of college educators is stress. Stress is the body's response to a demand or challenge. It is emotionally and physically exhausting. Because workplace stress levels are typically high, they must be managed. People of all genders are impacted by workplace stress (**Aysha, 2022**).

An improved work environment is critical to the success of any organization because employees' dedication is defined by the presence of a welcoming environment. It greatly increases the staff's efficiency (**Al Suwaidi et al., 2020**). Workplace happiness plays an indispensable role to improve employees' well-being as well as the productivity of the organization. Thus, most organizations today are very concerned about issues related to the happiness of their employees and focus on the factors that affect the happiness of employees on the job (**Anjum and Islam, 2021**).

Objectives of the Study

To measure the happiness index among the college educators across different colleges within Ernakulam district.

To identify the key factors influencing the happiness among educators.

To examine the effects of stress and workload on the happiness level of college educators in Ernakulam district.

To identify the effectiveness of government initiatives in supporting educators work life balance.

III. Research Methodology

This study adopts both descriptive and analytical research methodologies to explore the factors influencing the happiness of college educators in Ernakulam district, Kerala. Primary data were collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire administered to selected college educators across various institutions in the district. A total of 55 college educators were selected

as respondents for this study using a convenience sampling method, comprising 17 males and 38 females. This sample size was determined based on the accessibility and willingness of participants during the data collection period. Secondary data were sourced from relevant literature, including journals, websites, and official publications. Data analysis was conducted using statistical tools such as percentages, along with tabular and graphical presentations to interpret the findings clearly. Additionally, Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) was performed using Python programming to examine the relationship between various independent variables and the happiness levels of educators. This mixed-method approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of educator well-being in the region.

IV. Result and Discussions

Data were collected from 55 college educators in Ernakulam district to understand the factors influencing their happiness and well-being. The main aim of the study is to uncover meaningful patterns and relationships among variables such as salary, workload, work-life balance, institutional support, and awareness of government initiatives. By interpreting these findings, this section seeks to provide a clear understanding of how various financial and non-financial factors affect the overall job satisfaction and happiness of educators, thereby offering valuable insights for institutional improvement and policy formulation.

Gender of College Educators

Understanding the gender composition of college educators is essential, as it provides insights into workforce diversity and the representation of men and women in higher education. This section presents the gender-wise distribution of respondents in the study.

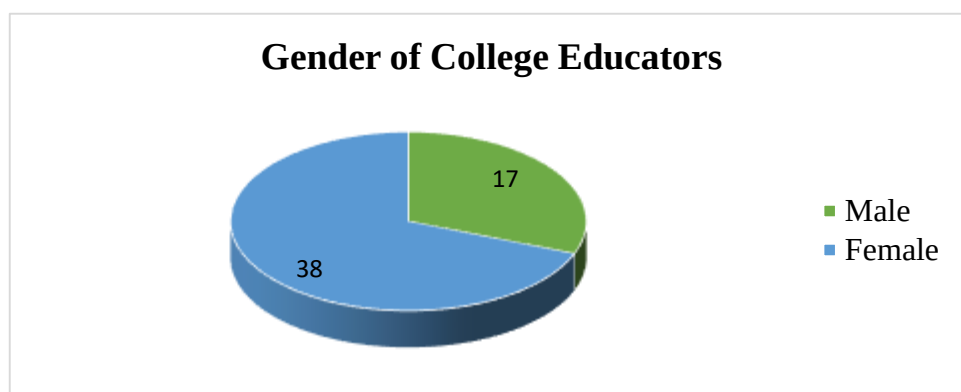


Figure 1: Gender of College Educators

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred that the majority of the college educators under study were female. The study was conducted with 55 respondents, 38 female and 17 male educators from various colleges in Ernakulam district. The gender distribution of college educators varies across institutions. However, based on the available data, it appears that female educators outnumber male educators.

Educational Qualification of the College Educators

The academic qualifications of college educators play a significant role in shaping the quality of teaching and their professional development. This section analyzes the educational background of the respondents to understand the level of academic attainment among educators in Ernakulam district.

Table 2: Educational Qualification of College Educators

Educational Qualification	Percentages
PG	38.4
NET	27.3
MPhil	7.1
PhD	27.3
Others	0
Total	100

Source: Primary Data

The data reveals that college educators in Ernakulam district are highly qualified, with 38.4% holding a PG degree, 27.3% cleared NET, 7.1% holding an MPhil degree, and 27.3% possessing a PhD degree, indicating a strong academic environment with expertise and research orientation.

Nature of the College

The type of institution where educators are employed can significantly influence their job security, workload, benefits, and overall work experience. This section examines the distribution of college educators across different types of institutions in Ernakulam district. Understanding this aspect provides insights into how institutional frameworks may impact educator happiness, job satisfaction, and access to support systems.

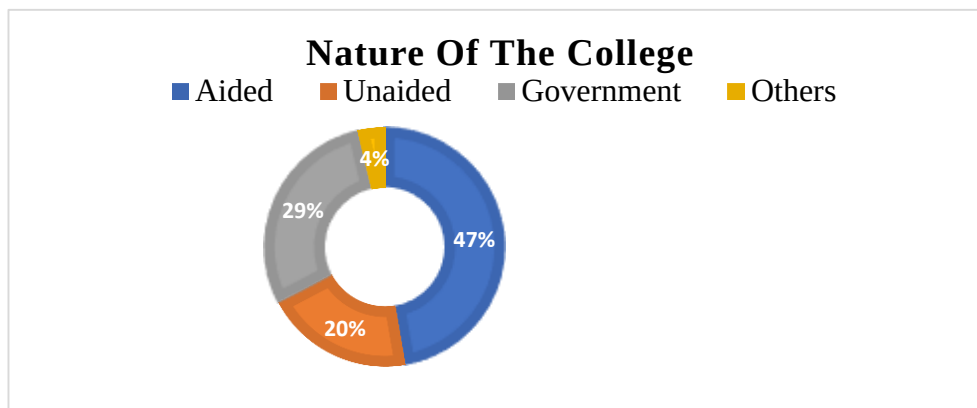


Figure 3: Nature of the College

Source: Primary Data

The data shows that educators in Ernakulam district predominantly work in publicly-funded institutions, with 47.3% employed in aided colleges and 29.1% in government colleges. Unaided colleges account for 20% of professors, while a minor 3.6% work in private, autonomous, or specialized institutions. This suggests a strong presence of government-supported education in the district.

Annual Spendings of the Educators for Teaching Resources and Materials

Investments made by college educators in teaching resources and materials reflect their commitment to maintaining academic quality and enhancing the learning experience. This section analyzes the annual expenditure by professors in Ernakulam district on resources such as books, software, subscriptions, and other educational tools. Understanding these spending patterns provides valuable insights into the financial responsibilities borne by educators and how such costs may influence their overall job satisfaction and well-being.

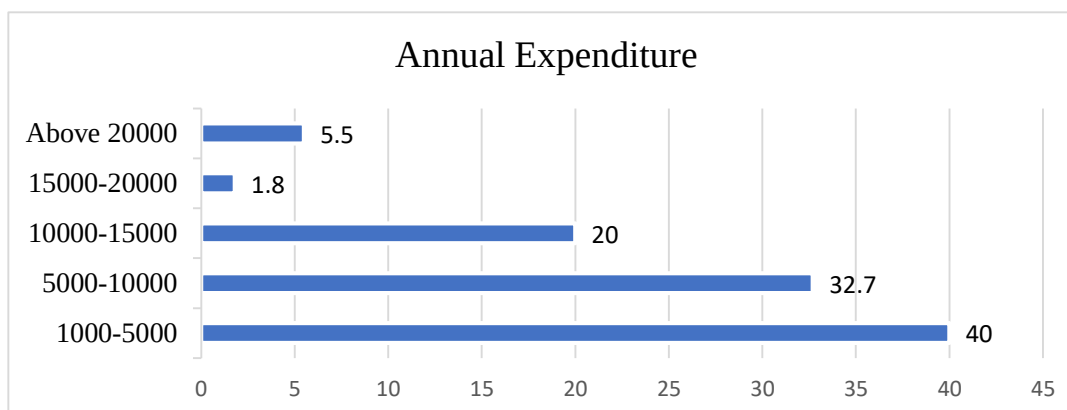


Figure 4: Annual Spendings of the Educators

Source: Primary Data

Educators in Ernakulam district exhibit a significant investment in educational resources, with 72.7% allocating ₹1,000-₹10,000 annually, indicating a moderate to significant expenditure. Furthermore, 20% invest ₹10,000-₹15,000, and 5.5% spend above ₹20,000, highlighting a substantial allocation of funds for study materials and teaching resources.

Effectiveness of the Government Initiatives in Supporting Educators Work Life Balance

Work-life balance is a critical factor influencing the happiness and productivity of college educators. This section presents the responses of college educators regarding the effectiveness of government initiatives in supporting their work-life balance. It captures their perceptions, levels of awareness, and satisfaction with these support measures. By analyzing these responses, the study aims to understand whether existing government programs are meeting the practical needs of educators and where improvements may be necessary to enhance their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Table 5: Effectiveness of the Government Initiatives

Effectiveness of Government Initiatives	Percentage
Extremely effective	1.8
Very effective	21.8
Somewhat effective	41.8
Not so effective	27.3
Not at all effective	7.3
Total	100

Source: Primary Data

The data reveals that government initiatives in supporting educators' work-life balance have a limited strong impact, with only 1.8% finding them "extremely effective" and 21.8% "very effective". While 41.8% perceive the initiatives as "somewhat effective", a significant 34.6% (27.3% + 7.3%) find them ineffective, highlighting a substantial need for improvement to better support educators' work-life balance.

Coping Mechanisms for Stress and Workload Among College Educators

Teaching is a demanding profession that often involves high levels of stress and workload. In this section, the study explores how college educators in Ernakulam district cope with these challenges in their professional roles. The responses reveal a variety of coping strategies adopted by educators to manage stress, maintain work-life balance, and sustain their overall well-being. Understanding these methods provides valuable insights into the support systems and personal practices that enable educators to remain motivated and effective despite occupational pressures.

Table 6: Methods to cope with Stress and Workload

Methods to Cope with Stress and Workload	Percentage
Exercise or physical activity	20.9
Meditation or mindfulness practices	12.8
Social support from colleagues, friends or family	44.2
Hobbies or creative pursuits	18.6
Others	3.5
Total	100

Source: Primary Data

The most prevalent approach is seeking social support from colleagues, friends, and family, with 44.2% of educators relying on interpersonal connections to cope with stress. This underscores the significance of emotional support, advice, and help from others in managing stress. Additionally, educators engage in self-care activities, such as exercise or physical activity (20.9%), hobbies or creative pursuits (18.6%), and meditation or mindfulness practices (12.8%). A smaller proportion of respondents (3.5%) reported other coping strategies, including professional counseling or therapy, taking short breaks or naps, and engaging in entertainment-based relaxation activities such as listening to music or travelling, all of which contribute to reduce stress and improve their overall well-being.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on the Factors Influencing the Happiness of College Educators

Happiness level of the college educators of various colleges within Ernakulam district is shown in Table 7. This table contains various factors that affect the happiness of various college professors within Ernakulam district. Factors such as the nature of college, annual income, workload, family responsibilities, work life balance, annual spending, support from the department, additional rewards, relationship with administrative staffs and head of the department, government initiatives, teaching environment, availability of resources, relationship with the students, hours of work are considered.

Table 7: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on the Factors Influencing the Happiness

Variable	Coefficient	P-Value
Constant	1.536053e+00	0.247007
PG Qualification only	-1.294983e-03	0.999002
PG+NET	6.352625e-01	0.512289
PG+M.PHIL	-1.990295e-01	0.906350
PG+NET+M.PHIL	5.157061e-01	0.686706
PG+PHD	-4.031986e-02	0.962606
PG+NET+PHD	7.889256e-02	0.937624
PG+M.PHIL+PHD	-7.846846e-16	0.511599
PG+NET+M.PHIL+PHD	-2.655310e-01	0.840095
Government College	-1.227523e-02	0.978501
Aided College	3.695526e-01	0.317050
Unaided College	2.256375e-01	0.656945
Others	9.531379e-01	0.251391
Salary Below 100000	-6.400150e-02	0.891868
Salary between 1-3 L	-1.788752e-01	0.628788
Salary between_3-6 L	7.887660e-01	0.094344
Salary between 6-12 L	6.129318e-01	0.343155
Salary Above 12 L	3.772316e-01	0.588519
Work Satisfaction	1.675244e-01	0.304954
Salary Fairness	1.129644e-01	0.513093
Work Life Balance	-4.510036e-02	0.823230
Departmental Support	1.291739e-01	0.525121
Teaching Role - Interacting	4.366891e-01	0.359943
Teaching Role - Mentoring and Guiding	2.886810e-01	0.581642
Teaching Role - Teaching and Sharing Knowledge	3.401387e-01	0.436671
Teaching Role - Collaborating with Colleagues	2.783183e-02	0.968456
Reward - Monetary Incentives	4.324762e-01	0.426449
Reward - Additional Benefits	-8.964026e-03	0.988935
Reward - Professional Development	-1.145836e-01	0.806626

Reward - Reduced Workload	2.948311e-02	0.964709
Reward - Others	-2.024182e-01	0.789995
Relationship - HOD	2.433442e-02	0.888423
Stress - Heavy Workload	-4.083179e-01	0.325889
Stress - Lack of Resources	5.751857e-02	0.894830
Stress - Poor Management	-1.785080e-01	0.770333
Stress - Conflicts with Colleagues or Students	-2.293558e-01	0.683844
Stress - Others	-5.678074e-01	0.322170

Source: Primary Data

The given analysis presents the report showing positive correlation and negative correlation of various factors influencing the performance of the educators from various colleges within Ernakulam district. The analysis highlights the importance of considering institutional context when exploring factors that influence educator well-being. The differing relationships between college type and educator happiness suggest that tailored approaches may be necessary to support educator happiness in various institutional settings.

Correlation Analysis of the Nature of College and Educator Happiness

The correlation analysis reveals a significant relationship between the type of college and educator happiness. A negative correlation for government colleges (-1.2275) indicates that happiness increases when factors like bureaucratic hurdles or administrative workload decrease. Conversely, a positive correlation for other institutions (9.5313) suggests that greater autonomy, resources, and support are associated with higher educator happiness.

Analysis of Years of Work Experience and Educator Happiness.

The analysis reveals a positive correlation (1.85309) between the number of years of work experience and educator happiness, indicating that, as educators gain more years of work experience, their happiness tends to increase. The positive correlation coefficient suggests a direct relationship between work experience and happiness.

Correlation Analysis between Salary and Educator Happiness

The analysis shows an intriguing relationship between salary levels and educator happiness. Various salary scales such as below ₹1 lakh, ₹1–3 lakhs, ₹3–6 lakhs, ₹6–12 lakhs and above ₹12 lakh were used as part of the regression analysis to better understand the income-related differences. It was found that educators earning less than ₹1 lakh show a negative correlation (-6.40015), possibly due to lower tax burdens, simpler lifestyles, fewer financial obligations, and greater appreciation for non-monetary job aspects. Meanwhile, those earning ₹3 - 6 lakh salary have a positive correlation (7.88766), indicating that increased financial security, ability to meet basic needs and enjoy some comforts and sense of accomplishment and recognition significantly enhance happiness at this level. Overall, moderate salaries may offer the best balance between financial comfort and happiness, while non-financial factors appear more influential at lower income levels.

Correlation Analysis with Factors such as Work Satisfaction, Salary Fairness, Work Life Balance, Departmental Support with the Happiness of College Educators

The correlation analysis shows that work-life balance has a negative correlation (-4.5100), suggesting that educators prioritizing work over personal life may still feel happy, possibly due to high job demands. Alternatively, poor work-life balance may lead to increased stress, which could be mitigated by factors such as job satisfaction, autonomy, or social support. Work satisfaction (1.6752), salary fairness (1.1296), and departmental support (1.2917) all show positive correlations with happiness, indicating that feeling valued, fairly compensated, and supported contributes significantly to educator well-being. Factors like autonomy, job security, opportunities for growth and development, fair salary, sense of belonging, collaboration, or resources for professional growth within the department contribute to increased happiness.

Interaction with Students shows a Positive Correlation

Interaction with students, with a coefficient value of 4.36689, shows a strong positive correlation with educator happiness. This indicates that teachers who prioritize meaningful engagement with students tend to experience higher levels of happiness in their roles. Building relationships, fostering classroom interaction, and creating a sense of community not only enhance the teaching experience but also serve as key contributors to overall job satisfaction and well-being.

Monetary Incentives and Reduced Workload are the most Significant Predictors of Educator Happiness

The analysis reveals that monetary incentives (coefficient: 4.3247) and reduced workload (coefficient: 2.9483) are the strongest predictors of college educator happiness. Financial rewards significantly boost job satisfaction, while a manageable workload supports better work-life balance. Conversely, additional benefits (-8.9640) and professional development opportunities (-1.1458) show negative correlations, suggesting that while these factors support growth, they may not directly enhance happiness. These findings provide valuable insights for college administrators, highlighting the importance of prioritizing monetary incentives and workload reduction to improve faculty well-being.

Primary Sources of Stress are Heavy Workload

The analysis identifies key stressors impacting educator happiness. A heavy workload (-4.0832) (driven by excessive teaching hours, grading, lesson planning, and administrative tasks), poor management (-1.7851), conflicts with colleagues or students (-2.2936) (often stemming from inadequate leadership, miscommunication or interpersonal issues), and other stressors such as bureaucratic pressure, parental expectations and personal issues (-5.6781) all show negative correlations, indicating they significantly reduce teacher happiness. Interestingly, "lack of resources" shows a strong positive correlation (5.7519) (due to inadequate textbooks, outdated technology, insufficient classroom materials, and limited support staff), which appears contradictory. This may be because of the adaptive coping among educators, those working with limited resources may develop resilience, rely more on peer collaboration, or find fulfilment in overcoming challenges, which paradoxically enhances their sense of purpose and happiness. This contrast highlights how the subjective perception of a stressor, rather than the stressor itself, can influence well-being. The unusually high positive coefficient suggests a complex relationship worth exploring further in future qualitative research.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Additional adequate opportunities for relaxation and refreshment should be provided to help teachers maintain a healthy balance between their profession and family responsibilities.

Teachers recommend for active recreation clubs for staffs in all colleges.

Flexible timing would also help to improve the happiness of the educators.

Many teachers recommend a daycare facility for the infant so that it can help the teachers to balance their work and family responsibilities.

The existing policy that should be revised or updated is counselling facilities for the faculties.

Balancing between academic and non-academic activities for the educators has become a primary source of stress and it decreases the happiness of the teachers so other administrative staff should be appointed to do such non-academic activities.

Implement effective management practices, such as clear communication and supportive leadership, while also establishing mentorship programs that pair experienced educators with new recruits to provide continuous guidance, support and reduced stress.

Conflict resolution strategies and professional development opportunities can help teachers manage conflicts and difficult student behaviors.

Implement a recognition and reward system to appreciate educators' hard work and contributions.

Implement wellness initiatives, such as yoga classes, meditation sessions, and health check-ups, to promote educators' physical and mental well-being.

Encourage the introduction of new schemes to enhance research activities and foster a collaborative environment where educators can share ideas, resources, and expertise.

Ensure that educators receive fair compensation and benefits, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave.

V. Conclusion

The study underscores that the happiness of college educators in Ernakulam district is shaped by a complex interplay of financial stability, institutional support, manageable workloads, and personal well-being. While most educators are highly qualified and work in government-supported institutions, challenges such as excessive workload and limited awareness of government initiatives negatively affect their satisfaction. Enhancing communication about support schemes and fostering a balanced work-life environment can significantly improve educator happiness. Promoting such well-being is essential not only for individual fulfillment but also for strengthening the overall quality of education in the district.

In conclusion, promoting teacher happiness and well-being in Ernakulam district necessitates a comprehensive strategy that tackles the intricacies of their professional and personal spheres. By adopting a multifaceted approach that incorporates measures such as workload reduction, fair compensation, supportive culture, and opportunities for growth, institutions can cultivate a

conducive environment that prioritizes teachers' welfare, fosters job satisfaction, and ultimately enhances the quality of education, leading to a positive impact on the overall educational ecosystem.

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