

THE LEVEL OF LIFE SKILLS: A STUDY ON MARRIED WOMEN SCHOOL TEACHERS

Abstract:-

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: local, state and central. India in the field of Education falls under the control of both the Union Government and the State Governments. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide Education as a fundamental right. Nature transforms every little bud into a beautiful flower through various steps involving natural process. Similarly, all children are little flower buds when they enter a school for the first time. It is the role and responsibility of the school teachers who are involved in blooming them into colorful flowers with sweet fragrance which is especially knowledge. School teachers are considered as a superior power of nature who takes the children from ignorance to intelligence. As every child comes out of the confined environment of home for the first time and is away from the parents, these school teachers become a parent substitute. What a child learns and experiences in its early school years can shape the child's views about himself or herself and the world around him or her, which would later play an important role in his or her success at school, work and also the personal life. Therefore, the school teachers are responsible for the emotional, social and intellectual growth of the children. Since ages, women continue to feel to be a weaker section of society. The present sky rocketing prices resulting in economic tension have aroused in her a desire to pool in her might in easing the financial and economic issues of her life. For this, she has to maintain an equilibrium and balance between home and career.



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INTRODUCTION

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. (WHO, 1995) Described in this way, skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. These are listed below: Decision Making, Problem Solving, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationship skills, Self-Awareness, Empathy, Coping with Emotions and Coping with Stress

The school is an appropriate place for the introduction of life skills education because of:

- The role of schools in the socialization of young people;
- Access to children and adolescents on a large scale
- Economic efficiencies (uses existing infrastructure);
- Experienced teachers already in place;
- High credibility with parents and community members;
- Possibilities for short and long term evaluation.
- **Why there is a Need for Life Skills Education?**

The host of factors that promote high risk behaviour such as alcoholism, drug abuse and casual relationships are boredom, rebellion, disorientation, peer pressure and curiosity. The psychological push factors such as the inability to tackle emotional pain, conflicts, frustrations and anxieties about the future are often the driving force for high risk behaviour. Life skills training is an efficacious tool for empowering the teachers to act responsibly, take initiative and take control. It is based on the assumption that when women are able to rise above emotional impasses arising from daily conflicts, entangled relationships and peer pressure, they are less likely to resort to anti social or high risk behaviours.

Implementing a life skills programme will require the introduction of teaching methods that may be new to teachers, and the success of the programme will depend very much on the availability of in-service training, as well as efforts to include training in participatory learning methods in teacher training colleges.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gupta and Asthana (2008) examined the adjustment problem of married and unmarried working women. The study was conducted to find out the impact of social support and adjustment of married and unmarried working women. It was observed that married working women were more adjusted in comparison to unmarried women. In our society married women have to make several adjustments with their family, society and their jobs. So if they are supported well they made better adjustment.

Effective Life Skills interventions were shown to have positive effects on knowledge, attitudes, and skills and sometimes on behaviors (Ross et al., 2007).

In countries such as the United States life skills-based programs have been said to reduce alcohol and tobacco use, reduce substance use, and contribute to reductions in gang crime and reoffending (Botvin, Griffin, & Nichols, 2006).

Phuphaibul and et al., (2005) in a research as generalizing Life skills for individuals with severe mental illness showed that giving coping skills cause the improvement of performance and growth of quality of life in people with severe mental illness.

(Sukhodolsky, Golub, Stone and Orban, 2004) showed in a research that giving life skills with stressed situation caused the prevention and reduction of mental disorders and psychosomatic diseases among many people.

An important point is, life skills training (LST) help individual in controlling problems such as depression, anxiety, lone lines, rejection, diffidence, anger, confliction in interpersonal relationship lack and failure (Smith, 2004).

(Nelson Jones R 1998, Megel M, et al 1994) in an ideal world, the objective of education in life skills would be to educate everyone in those skills required in order to face every mission in each stage of their life. This education emphasizes more developmentally than correctional or penitentiary.

Forman (1993) also included life skills as one of the important areas in the broader context of coping strategies for students and teachers in schools. She also mentioned relaxation, using self-instruction techniques, and decreasing irrational beliefs in her review of important coping skills for them.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Life skills are the bridge helping people to turn knowledge into attitude, behavior and active,

healthy habits. Stimulating personal development will help stimulate social development, prevent social problems and protect human rights. Nowadays, teachers are suffering lots of pressure from the curriculum, family and society. Therefore, teachers and pupils spend more time at school. Once educating life skills becomes the objective of comprehensive education of pupils' personality, and teachers' stress free situations schools become an advantageous environment for them to understand the core value of morality, to have interest, pleasure and to turn it into actions. Educating life skills needs the involvement of various forces in the society such as school, family, society, community, government. Due to the above reasons, the researcher has decided that the Life Skills for School Teachers are more significant. Life skills are vital for holistic development of the individual, whether it can be called as intelligence, personality, capacity building and researches refer a mixture of names for life skills like social competence, practical intelligence, emotional intelligence or psychosocial wellbeing. Whether may the term be, the whole meaning is to enhance Life Skills and to improve "the abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life (Hendricks, 1996). The teacher can be rightly called a nation builder. Teachers through their perseverance, love and sacrifices has shown us the right path in which great men have built our nation. Knowledge received without a teacher's guidance can be compared to a blind man walking without his stick. Life skills education is very important especially for teachers who prepare the young minds. Hence the study is more significant.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The main aim of the study is to study the level of Life Skills among Married Women School Teachers. The objectives are: To measure the level of life skills of the respondents, to find out the association, differences and correlation between selected socio demographic characteristics and the life skills of the married women school teachers and to suggest suitable means to improve the level of life skills of married women school teachers. The research hypotheses are: There is a significant association between the age and level of life skills among Married Women School Teachers, there is a significant difference among the teaching experience and the level of life skills among Married Women School Teachers, there is a significant correlation between the family support and the level of life skills among Married Women School Teachers. The present study aims at describing the dimensions of Life Skills among Married Women School Teachers working in Higher Secondary Schools at Tiruvarur town like Decision Making, Problem Solving Skills, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Self-Awareness, Empathy, Coping with Emotions and Coping with Stress as well as their Socio-Demographic characteristics. Hence Descriptive Research Design has adopted. There are four Government-Aided Higher Secondary Schools in Tiruvarur town. The universe of the study comprised of Married Women Higher Secondary School Teachers who are currently working in Tiruvarur town. The researcher found the reliable source for collecting a complete list of schools, further she had gone through the collected official records of recruitments and dropouts obtained from District Educational Officer to arrive at a comprehensive and gaining clear picture of the present study. Further the universe is 90. The researcher has adopted the census method for selecting the respondents and hence the data has been collected from all the 90 respondents. The first part of the structured questionnaire consists of the socio – demographic profile of the respondents. The second part of the structured questionnaire consists of the Life Skills Assessment Scale constructed by RGNIYD (2010). The multi-dimensional life skills scale consists of 100 items in the form of statements in-built with 5-point Likert Scale for the respondent to check the appropriate response which is most descriptive of her viz., Always true of me, Very True of me, Sometimes true of me, Occasionally true of me and Not at all true of me. The reliability value of the scale is (0.8138).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Socio-demographic findings:

Majority (63.3 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the age group of 31-40 years. One third (35.6 per cent) of the respondents have below 5 years of teaching experience. Majority (65.6 per cent) of the respondents were qualified up to post graduation degree with B.Ed. or M.Ed. A very meager (5.6 per cent) of the respondents were holding Diploma in Teacher Education. More than half (53.3 per cent) of the respondents belonged to urban community. Majority (67.8 percent) of the students of the respondents' socio-economic status at medium level. More than half (53.3 per cent) of the respondents are handling classes for IX and X-standard. Nearly one third (35.6 per cent) of the respondents are getting salary of Rs. 5,000 to 10,000. Majority (73.3 per cent) of the respondents belonged to nuclear family. More than half (51.1 per cent) of the respondents have only one child. Vast majority (94.4 percent) of the respondents are satisfied with regard to their profession. Vast majority (92.2 per cent) of the respondents have the family support with regard to the profession.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY VARIOUS DIMENSIONS OF LIFE SKILLS

S. No	Dimensions of life skills	No. of respondents (n=90)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Self-Awareness		
	a) Very low	65	72.2
	b) Low	15	16.7
	c) Average	10	11.1
	d) High	0	0
	e) Very high	0	0
2.	Empathy		
	a) Very low	63	70.0
	b) Low	26	28.9
	c) Average	1	1.1
	d) High	0	0
	e) Very high	0	0
3	Effective Communication		
	a) Very low	14	15.6
	b) Low	35	38.9
	c) Average	40	44.4
	d) High	1	1.1
	e) Very high	0	0
4	Interpersonal Relationships		
	a) Very low	74	82.2
	b) Low	16	17.8
	c) Average	0	0
	d) High	0	0
	e) Very high	0	0
5	Creative Thinking		
	a) Very low	52	57.8
	b) Low	33	36.7
	c) Average	5	5.6
	d) High	0	0
	e) Very high	0	0
6	Critical Thinking		
	a) Very low	73	81.1
	b) Low	16	17.8
	c) Average	1	1.1
	d) High	0	0
	e) Very high	0	0
7	Decision Making		
	a) Very low	49	54.4
	b) Low	37	41.1
	c) Average	3	3.3
	d) High	1	1.1
	e) Very high	0	0

The table indicates that majority (72.2 per cent) of the respondents' level of Self Awareness was found to be very low, majority (70 per cent) of the respondents' level of empathy was found to be very low, less than half (44.4 per cent) of the respondents have only an average level of effective communication and remaining a very meager (1.1 per cent) of the respondents have high level of effective communication, vast majority (82.2 per cent) of the respondents' level of Interpersonal Relationship was found to be very low, more than half (57.8 per cent) of the respondents' level of Creative Thinking was found to be very low, majority (81.1 per cent) of the respondents' level of Critical Thinking was found to be very low, more than half (54.4 per cent) of the respondents' level of Decision Making Skill was found to be very low, majority (86.7 per cent) of the respondents' level of Problem Solving Skill was found to be very low, more than half (63.3 per cent) of the respondents have an average level of Coping with Emotions and less than one fifth (12.2 per cent) of the respondents have high level and only (3.3 per cent) of the respondents have very high level of Coping with Emotions, a less than half (43.3 per cent) of the respondents have an average level of Coping with Stress, more than one fourth (27.8 per cent) of the respondents have high level and only (3.3 per cent) of the respondents have very high level of Coping with Stress. The table finally reveals that a vast majority (93.3 per cent) of the respondents have very low level of overall Life Skills and remaining very meager (6.7 per cent) of the respondents have low level of overall Life Skills.

SUGGESTIONS

Life skills training are the act of increasing the knowledge and skill of an employee for doing a particular job. It is required in every school so as to cope the teachers with the emerging trends. Life skills can substantially improve the quality of life and productivity among the women teachers. Schools imparting life skills training are more effective than other, which reduces teacher turnover. Therefore life skills training and education are the only way to resolve today's crisis of a woman teacher facing in the day to day life situations.

- The schools should make the teachers aware of the significance of Life Skills and how it can be used by them.
- The management can put in more efforts to promote a positive learning environment.
- The teachers should be guided by their team leaders and Head Master to enhance the sharing of constructive knowledge in the school.
- The women teachers should be made aware of the benefits of using Life Skills in everyday work.
- The new teachers should be made to understand the Life Skills efforts of the school in the induction itself.
- The Chief Educational Officer should periodically review the Life Skill training process and check whether it is efficient and effective and suitable measures should be introduced.
- More incentives and other rewards can be given to teachers who contribute to the wealth of Life Skills in the school.
- The school management should allot some funds to promote Life Skills efforts.
- The school management can enhance the ways in which Life Skills efforts throughout the school are undertaken.
- Training should be given for women teachers on a regular basis to step up Life Skills.
- The Chief Educational Officers should identify the areas in which Life skills practices are being well utilized and reward the teachers involved.
- Life Skills practices should be monitored carefully and latest practices in the school should be implemented.
- Improved technology can be used in Life Skills training.
- Life skills programmes can either be allocated special time on the teaching timetable or be integrated in the teaching/learning process and be examined, or better still a core life skills education subject be introduced in the school curriculum.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports should step up its Supervisory role on the progress of life skills education by for instance forming life skills committees/clubs in schools and also fund the life skill programmes.
- The government should consider increasing capitation grants to schools to enable them run some activities such as refresher courses for teachers, purchase exercise books for pupils and or provide food for all pupils.
- In a bid to cultivate the culture of reading and writing, writing and debating competitions could be introduced and supported among teachers in the schools.

METHODS FOR IMPROVING LIFE SKILLS

Life Skills are enhanced by using interactive methods that make learning meaningful, relevant, and interesting. These methods help the married women school teachers to equip their knowledge, abilities and skills. Some common methods are group discussions, brainstorming, skits and role-playing, question

box, case studies, games and stimulations, debates, quiz, competitions, poster/painting competitions and VIPP (Visualization in Participatory Processes).

SOCIAL WORK AND LIFE SKILLS

Professional Social Workers play an important role in imparting life skills education to the married women teachers by using social case work and group work method.

Social case work is one of the important methods of social work. In case work, the social worker can help the teachers to solve some of the problems where it helps the teacher to develop her life skills.

Social group work can be done with any group with maximization of twelve members. Women feel accepted in the group and change is also more likely to happen in the group compared to individual work. Inhibitions are seen to be less in groups. Teachers can be taught through group work using life skills approach to improve their skills.

CONCLUSION

The researcher conducted the study level of life skills among Married Women School Teachers in Government Aided Higher Secondary School at Tiruvarur town. By using Descriptive research design, the researcher collected the data from 90 respondents. The researcher used questionnaire which covered socio-demographic characteristics and Life Skill Assessment Scale which was developed by Rajiv Gandhi National Institute for Youth Development. The data were subject to statistical analysis by using Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, Students' t-test, Chi-square test and Correlation. The main findings of the study were that the vast majority of the married women school teachers had very low level of life skills. Life Skills can consequently improve the quality of life and performance among the married women school teachers. Life skills are found through living, school, work, family, environment and the world around us. Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help the married women teachers make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner in both school and family.

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