

PSYCHO-SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF WOMEN TEACHERS WORKING IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF PUNJAB

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This paper is a study of the psycho-social problems of women teachers due to institution (school/college), area (rural/urban) and age (<35 years and >35 years) in the State of Punjab. Out of the sample of 1000 women teachers, 500 (250 rural and 250 urban) were from schools and 500 (250 rural and 250 urban) from colleges. The data were subjected to statistical analysis and the results revealed that no significant difference existed in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in schools and colleges, in rural and urban areas of Punjab. Significant difference existed in psycho-social problems of school teachers of age <35 years and >35 years.

INTRODUCTION

Since ages, women continue to feel to be a weaker section of society. In spite of the opportunities thrown open to her in various fields along with some labour-saving gadgets in the house, she still seeks a place as an independent and honourable human being. The concept of equality has exercised a powerful emotional appeal in the struggle of women to free them from age-old oppression. During the last few decades, industrialisation, urbanisation, increasing level of education, awareness of rights, wider influence of media and westernisation has changed the status and position of women. 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 constraints of her life. For this, she has to maintain an equilibrium and balance between home and career. This changing status of women influences not only their role in society but also affects their interaction with their children. Today, the status of Indian women has totally changed. The number of educated women including the number of working women is increasing. At present, women are in a position to compete with men in all walks of life. Teaching has always been one of the prior profession open to women. The employment of women outside home has added to their duties and functions. The problems of women who combine the different roles of a wife, a mother and a working woman are multiple; which can be categorised under different heads as physiological problems, adjustment problems, social problems and economic problems. Although more and more women are coming out in search of employment and their families also need their income but, the attitude towards women and their role in the family has not undergone much change. Even today, looking after the family and children is generally perceived to be primary responsibility of women. Carrying out all the duties and responsibilities of home almost single handedly over strains a working woman. In addition, this perception that they alone are responsible for the domestic work, leads to a feeling of guilt when they are not able to look after the children or the family due to their official work, often resulting in emotional disorders. Cinamon & Rich (2005) reported that teachers attributed high importance to both roles. Working women's problems at work are manifold. They are not taken to be as equally efficient worker as men and face discrimination at the workplace. This attitude tends to create feeling of inferiority, uselessness or inability and leads to mental fatigue, stress related illness and high degree of job dissatisfaction among working women. Hence, women face problems like job strain, role conflict, sexual harassment, inadequate household help, financial dependence and other occupational hazards. The feeling of guilt and neglect afflict their job productivity and efficiency and earn them poor reputation as workers. Education is a continuous process of learning and teacher being the key figure and important element of educative process, is the person who transfers the knowledge as well as the positive changes to the following generation and also promote healthy training of students and their active integration into society. Hence, due to challenges in education and heavy demands made by society on teachers, for different roles, stress is sure to overpower and affect the mental health of women teachers. In the light of the multifaceted roles that women play, the well being of women should not only be viewed as an issue in social development but should be seen as an essential component for awareness. She should not only be visualised as a 'child-bearer' • and a • 'home-

maker' • but as an enterprising personality. Therefore, dire need was felt to undertake a study for investigating and exploring psycho-social problems that adversely affect women teachers working in schools and colleges of Punjab so that there is an increased awareness about these problems and also for seeking promising solutions to wipe them off to make the 'struggling lady' • take a cool sigh and march ahead in her dual life.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The term psycho-social refers to one's psychological development in and interaction with a social environment. Psycho-social problems, which can greatly affect one's life, one's work, family and one's domestic life; can be mild to most severe in terms of how pervasive and to what extent a person exhibits the features of a personality disorder. Those with a psycho-social problem possess several distinct features including disturbances in self-image; inability to have successful interpersonal relationship; inappropriateness of range of emotions and ways of perceiving themselves, others and the world and differently possessing improper impulse control. Modern scientific and technological development has created a lot of exposure in man's life. Today, human life is full of numerous hardships, conflicts and problems related to satisfaction of basic needs and psychological needs. Traditionally, it had been perceived that men are more subject to psycho-social problems because of varied responsibilities being the provider of the family. But in recent times, this perception has changed. Women face more psycho-social problems now as a result of her changing roles and bearing dual responsibilities, one in family and other at job. Various psycho-social problems like anxiety, frustration, mental illness, distress, depression, stress, anger, phobias and other various social and emotional distresses are likely to beset her. A careful and sensitive peep into mind and psyche of women reveals beyond doubt how her fears, anxieties, stress and strains warp and dampen her morale, courage and retard her march to excellence, progress and glory. She has to trudge a weary and difficult terrain all her life because of her dual responsibilities at home and at the job. Despite all her resilience, patience, fortitude and tolerance, sometime her spirits give way under the dreary and cumbersome obligation of their home and official duties. All the psycho-social problems prey upon her mental, moral, social, official and familial sphere. We can have a glance at the withering and decaying impact of the psycho-social problems on her outer and inner potential. With the passage of time, the wounds may heal but the scars remain and these scars with her aging process become more marked and more pronounced and manifest themselves in her attitude and self-conduct. Study conducted by Mukhopadhyay (1997) found that working women play a dual role in family and work place. They experience a sustained stress to cope with both conditions and hence their mental well being gets affected.

The jobs taken by women create more conflicting situation due to dual role played by her. This gives birth to anxiety, worry and inability to tolerate the whole burden. Sinha (1997) found that working status of women had significant effect on anxiety. Sheikh & Bhushan (2002) found that in a patriarchal society where male dominates, a growing sense of anxiety is imperative. The social situations that make women uncertain and hesitant also make them socially anxious. The ways the women are perceived and evaluated by others also generate social anxiety in them. The psycho-social problem that disrupt and hamper the health and psychology of working women, especially the teacher, is frustration. If the situation is unmanageable, then to frustration various aspects of teachers performances such as creativity, classroom management and implementation of educational techniques may suffer. Now, if their professional obligations cannot be met, their self-image and consequently their ability to cope up with social settings may be endangered. Bamji (2005) found that gender disparity at all levels and its adverse impact on women has become a face of life. This is partly due to biological role and responsibilities of women as mothers but mostly due to traditional mindset, which visualize women as a child bearer and home maker and men as bread winners. In the 21st century, depression has become so widespread that it has been called "common-cold" of mental illness. It involves the feeling of extreme sadness and dejection. Person who suffers from depression has depressed mood or loss of interest in pleasurable activities, feeling of fatigue, loss of energy, insomnia, decreased appetite, psychomotor retardation, feeling of guilt and

thoughts of death. Harsh (1989) also examined depression in women in relation to lifestyle and sex role orientations. Leger (2004) found that most working women who experience depression and generalised anxiety disorder are between age group 35-55 years. Such symptoms of depression and anxiety retard their success in workplace and household lives. Now, one can easily visualise how such dreadful mental ailments lead to prolonged anxiety, frustration, stress, anger and social and emotional distresses and make the women feel rejected, isolated, tense and make the situation unmanageable that affect various aspects of teachers performance, classroom management and almost all educational activities. If the professional obligation cannot be met, their self image and consequently their ability to cope may be endangered. A peep into the mind and psyche of women concludes that psycho-social problems influence the quality of women's life adversely.

Therefore, it is visualised that for drawing the best of creative talent and intellectual potentialities of women in the workforce and as well as in domestic life, there is need to recognize such psycho-social problems and study them in depth in today's changed scenario of education for seeking promising solutions and to give women teachers the worthy attention, dignity and cooperation that they richly deserve and help them maintain a healthy mind in a healthy body.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To compare psycho-social problems of women teachers working in schools and colleges.
2. To compare psycho-social problems of women teachers working in i) rural and urban schools and ii) rural and urban colleges.
3. To compare psycho-social problems of women school teachers of age <35years with age >35 years.
4. To compare psycho-social problems of women college teachers of age <35years with age >35 years.

HYPOTHESES

1. There exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in schools and colleges.
2. There exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in rural and urban schools.
3. There exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in rural and urban colleges.
4. There exists significant difference in psycho-social problems of women school teachers of age <35years and age >35years.
5. There exists significant difference in psycho-social problems of women college teachers of age <35years and age >35years.

METHOD

Sample

The sample of 1000 women teachers i.e. 500 school teachers (250 rural and 250 urban) and 500 college teachers (250 rural and 250 urban) was taken from the 15 districts of Punjab selected randomly.

Tool

Psycho-social problems of educated working women (Hundal 2002) is divided into two parts i.e. psychological and social problems of women teachers. There are 54 test items pertaining to social problems and 51 test items pertaining to psychological problems. These test items are based on five point scale i.e. strongly agree, agree,

undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The test-retest reliability of the tool was 0.82 and 0.84 for social and psychological test items respectively and its content and construct validity has been established by the investigators.

Statistical Techniques

t-ratios were calculated to locate the significant differences if any, in the psycho-social problems of women teachers due to institution (school/college), area (rural/urban) and age (<35 years / >35 years).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the current study have failed to find significant difference in psycho-social problems between school and college women teachers ($t=1.74$; $p<.01$). Hence, the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in schools and colleges is accepted. The 't' ratio testing significance of difference in psycho-social problems between rural and urban women school teachers indicated that there is no significant difference between rural and urban women school teachers ($t=0.64$; $p<.01$). Thereby, the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in rural and urban schools is accepted. The 't' ratio testing significance of mean difference between rural and urban women college teachers on psycho-social problems indicated that there is no significant difference between rural and urban women college teachers ($t=0.38$; $p<.01$). Thus, the hypothesis that there exists no significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers working in rural and urban colleges is accepted. It was hypothesized that significant difference exists in psycho-social problems of women school teachers of age <35 years and >35 years. The result obtained through t-test analysis, in women school sample, the critical t-value of 1.96 is less than that of the calculated t-value of 2.32 at 0.05 level of significance indicating that there exists significant difference in psycho-social problems of women teachers of age <35 years and >35 years. Therefore, the hypothesis that significant difference exists in psycho-social problems of women school teachers of age <35 years and age >35 years is accepted. This finding implies that age plays a significant role in determining psycho-social problems of women teachers. The present finding supports the earlier findings of Almeida (2002) who reported that young and old women differ significantly in the level of stress experienced. Chaturvedi & Purushothaman (2009) also revealed that teachers in the age range of 40-60 years, with higher experience can cope better with the job stress than their counterparts. In case of college women teachers, no significant difference exists in psycho-social problems of women college teachers of age <35 years and >35 years ($t=1.31$; $p<.01$) leading to rejection of hypothesis that significant difference exists in psycho-social problems of women college teachers of age <35 years and age >35 years.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the analysis of data. Results obtained in the current study have failed to find any significant difference between psycho-social problems of school and college including rural (school/college) and urban (school/college) women teachers. Significant mean difference exists in psycho-social problems of women school teachers of age <35 years and > 35 years and the difference is in favour of <35 years age group, whereas for college women teachers of age <35 years and >35 years no significant difference exists. This is due to the fact that women teachers of age <35 years are in the most productive period of their life. They are forced to juggle the demands of career, spouse, children and aging parents. The years of experience could be directly proportional to chronological age of an individual. By the time the women are >35 years, they have better understanding of one's family life, career and aging parents. This is because the more one stays at a position, the more one grows older, the better one learns to cope with the psycho-social problems. It is evident that psycho-social problems have adverse physical and mental health consequences on women. These reduce her energy, lead to difficulty in dealing with others and in completing the required tasks and duties of job. She has a feeling of low control, helplessness and powerlessness. Administrators, policymakers should help to create a work environment that conveys caring and promotes fairness. If employees feel that the work place climate supports balancing work and family responsibilities, they may experience higher levels of work/family enrichment as well as work and family satisfaction. Family support organizational policies may be designed to provide assistance to employees coping with psycho-social problems.

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