

LIFE SKILLS OF STUDENT TEACHERS AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Research
Paper

ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to find out the life skills of student teachers at secondary level in Kerala state. The survey method of study was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 100 student teachers at secondary level. The investigator constructed a tool to measure the life skills of student teachers. The findings revealed that there is significant difference between rural and urban, arts and science major students in their life skills.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in an era, when science and technology have indeed exploded into massive endeavour and achievement at a rapid pace. The new millennium has marked a great transition for the whole mankind and witnessed greater discoveries and opened new vistas of development in the field of science and technology. On the one hand man has been trying to conquer nature and on the other he has not been able to understand the extent of the relationship between himself and others more intimately. The more he explores the outer world, the less he tries to learn about his own inner self. The great transition which has occurred in the external domain should also similarly reflect in the internal domain of a human being. Unfortunately, man has become more and more ambitious and wants to achieve much within a short duration of time by hook and crook. This causes tension and unrest not only in the particular individual but also it affects other people in the society, causing conflict. In the era of accelerating change we need to be more aware of the impact of change in our environment on our personal lives and on the relationship among individuals, organizations and families.

Life skills are essentially those abilities that promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. Most development professionals agree that life skills are generally applied in the context of health and social events. They can be utilized in many content areas: prevention of drug use, sexuality, violence, HIV/AIDS prevention and suicide prevention. In short, life skills empower people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote health and positive relationship.

World Health Organization lists the ten core life skill strategies and techniques as: problem solving, critical thinking, communication skills, decision making, creative

thinking, interpersonal relationship, self awareness, empathy and coping with stress and emotions. These factors help the young people to develop and grow into well balance adults. To equip our future generation to withstand the storm of unhealthy developments they should be strengthened with effective life skills. Life skill education in school is an important means to promote psycho-social competence among young individuals. For this our teachers and educational trainers should have the knowledge of life skill education and also possess life skills. Hence it is the demand of the day that our would-be teachers have to be sufficiently equipped with all the needed skills, attitude and knowledge to steer the destination of a generation and make it emotionally healthy, potential and creative.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Life skills offer self empowerment in relating oneself to others while providing coping strategies for understanding the past, managing the present and creating the future. It is essential for a person to acquire life skills and take charge of their own life. To equip our future generation with courage to withstand the storm of unhealthy developments, they should be strengthened with effective life skills. In fact, teacher educators must be highly responsible in developing life skills in students. As teacher educators it is important to provide the students with the knowledge they need to enhance not only their careers but also their quality of life across the social spectrum. Teachers are looked upon as destiny makers and model setters. Therefore it is a pre-requisite to analyze how far our teachers, especially aspirant student teachers, possess life skills and the level of their life skills, so that the endeavor

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can be more meaningful and visionary. So the investigator thought that the study to know the level of life skills of student teachers at secondary level in Kerala state would be worthwhile.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The following are the major objectives of the study
1. To examine the level of life skills of student teachers.
 2. To compare the life skills of student teachers with respect to gender, subject and locality.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of life skills of student teachers with respect to gender, subject and locality.

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The study was conducted using the Life Skill Scale, prepared and standardized by the investigator on a sample of 100 student teachers from two colleges of Teacher Education in Kottayam District. For the present study, student teachers refer to the teacher students doing the B.Ed course in Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. The technique used for the descriptive study was normative survey method. Life Skill Scale was used to measure the life skills of student teachers under the dimensions: problem solving, critical thinking, communication skills, decision making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship, self awareness, empathy and coping with stress. The scale consisted of 30 items. Each item has five alternatives: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The respondent had to choose any one of the five responses. The reliability of the scale was found using the test retest method after a gap of two weeks and showed a high correlation of 0.75.

The tool was administered on the sample and data were collected. The collected data were analyzed on the basis of the objectives of the study. The statistical techniques used for analysis and interpretation were mean, median, standard deviation, t- test and simple percentage analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

1. Life Skills of Student Teachers

To find out the level of life skills of student teachers the investigator analyzed the data collected through Life Skill Scale. The data collected were tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS 16. The details are given in the following Table.

Table 1
NUMBER (N), MEAN (M),
MEDIAN (MD), STANDARD
DEVIATION (SD) OF LIFE SKILL SCORES
STUDENT TEACHERS PRESENTED IN
HIGH, AVERAGE AND LOW CATEGORIES

N	M	MD	SD	High Above 85	Average 45-85
100	66.0	64.0	19.07	19%	63%

Table 1 shows that the mean value is 66.0, median value is 64.0. In the present study, students were above +1SD distance from the mean on the regression line were considered as those having high life skills. Students who were below -1SD distance from the mean were considered as those having low life skills. In the present study, the student teachers come under the average life skill category. It is found that 63% of the student teachers are positioned as average, 19% high and the rest are low on their life skills.

Table 2
RESULT OF TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE
OF DIFFERENCE IN MEAN LIFE SKILL
SCORES OF STUDENT TEACHERS WITH
RESPECT TO LOCALITY, GENDER
AND SUBJECT

No.	Group		Sample size	M	SD	t
1.	Locality	Urban	55	74.50	19.02	6.71
		Rural	45	53.82	11.57	
2.	Gender	Male	35	61.74	10.21	1.64
		Female	65	67.06	22.0	
3.	Subject	Arts	47	69.0	16.34	2.07
		Science	53	61.31	20.07	

From table 2, it is evident that the t value for locality and urban student teachers is 6.71, which is significant at 0.01 level with df= 98. It shows that the means of life skills of rural and urban students differ significantly. The mean scores of life skills of urban students is 74.50, which is significantly higher than that of rural students where the mean score for life skills is 53.82.

It can be seen that the mean score for life skills for male is 61.74, which is significantly lower than that for female whose mean score for life skills is 67.06. From the table it is evident that the t value for male and female is 1.64, which is not significant at 0.05 level. From table 1, it is observed that the t value for arts and science students is 2.07, which is significant at 0.01 level. It reflects that the mean scores for life skills of arts and science students differ significantly. Mean scores for life skills for arts students is 69.0 which is significantly higher than that for science students (61.31).

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Institution should incorporate components of Life Skill education to combat stress and anxiety and manage the emotions.
2. Life skills should become an important concept in curriculum planning. Life skill theme as a separate topic should form the foundation for the whole curriculum.
3. Methodologies in the form of discussion, debate, brain storming, case studies should find place in classroom.
4. The components of life skills may be provided through the project, text book and curriculum reform and through training by pre-service and in-service courses.
5. The student teachers should be enabled to understand about social justice and how to help children develop a healthy attitude towards the needs and requirements of others.

CONCLUSION

"The primary purpose of education is to humanize; that is, to become sensitive to the sufferings of others and to act to alleviate it." (Paulo Freire)

If education is the only defense against human catastrophe, Life Skill education is the soul of education that can create the shield for human survival on this planet. Through Life Skill education one can move towards more positive and holistic approaches in order to educate the new generation and through them the future generations. Life Skill education aims to provide students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. It facilitates a complete and integrated development of young people to function effectively as social beings and make them socially more sensitive.

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