

PROBLEMS OF FEMALE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KERALA

Research study conducted by

Dr. BAIJU . K.NATH
Lecturer in Education
Dept. of Education, University of Calicut
Kerala, India 673635

drbaijukn@rediffmail.com

July 2008

PROBLEMS OF FEMALE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KERALA

Abstract

The problems of employed women will vary with the nature of job , sector in which she is working , and family setup . Fairly large proportion of teaching community is comprised of female teachers , which is one of the major service sectors chosen by women in the state. The study aimed to study the Personal , Familial and Professional problems faced by the female school teachers in Kerala . Methodology of the study followed the procedure of descriptive research , in which existing status of female teachers in Kerala was thoroughly analysed. . The problems of female school teachers were identified using the tools such as a questionnaire , and an interview schedule .

Health related problems are more prevalent. Majority of the respondents skipped breakfast daily , and do not get time for simple exercises , relaxation ,and unable to engage in any recreation activities . Very high pupil – teacher ratio, unnecessary emphasis on clerical works related to documentation of evaluation , Evaluation of fairly large number of students , loss of working days , the tension caused by the existing system of education. ,lack of enough reference materials, are important professional problems

Extensive support from members of family is essential to reduce the pressure of double work of school and home at a time . Teachers should be properly trained in time management also . The educationists, planners and administrators ,must develop urgent plan to eliminate those problems facing by teachers , which is essential for quality enhancement of school education

PROBLEMS OF FEMALE SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KERALA

Introduction

We are in an era of gender sensitization and women empowerment . The status of women in different societies, countries , and religion will be different . What are the real problems of women ? Do their problems understood correctly ? Problems of women are less addressed or overlooked many times . What special provisions and rights are set apart for the welfare of women both nationally and internationally ? And how far those contributed to welfare of women ? ; etc., are some important questions need to be answered before analyzing the present status . Though the number of women engaged in different occupation is increasing , the proportion is far lower than men . Majority of women are employed in informal sectors and less paid or sometimes unpaid . There are only few sectors in which women are equally paid . Kerala is considered as a paradise of women. Even here the sex ratio of children below six years shows an alarming decline in female population , which may be a direct impact of societal outlook on women .

Need & Significance

The first step towards establishing equal rights to men and women was established in the UN proclamation. On 10th December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The list of Human Rights elaborated in the Declaration provides a common standard of 'achievement for all peoples and all nations'. The declaration proclaimed that "... equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". *Durgabai Deshmukh Committee on Education of Women* (1959) stressed the need for undifferentiated curricula for both boys and girls and also to treat education of girls as a special problem. *Committee on Status of Women Towards Equality*, 1974, revealed a declining proportion of women in the population, low female literacy and education, higher female mortality, waning economic participation and poor representation of women in political processes The *UN Development Decade* (1975-85) viewed growth of institutional mechanisms such as the Department of Women and Child Development, and aimed , movement from "welfare" to "development" and finally to "empowerment" in

the Eighth Plan The *National Perspective Plan for Women* (1988_2000) chalked out the national gender agenda till the turn of the century with a strong focus on rural and disadvantaged women. *Ramamurthy Review Committee: Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society*, highlighted the need for redistribution of educational opportunities in favour of girls belonging to rural and disadvantaged sections with adequate support services , and also asked for 50% share for girls in educational resources. The *National Policy on Women's Empowerment* (2001) meant to bring about the advancement of women. emphasised on equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of nation; equal access to women for health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office, strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; etc.

There are various constitutional and judicial provisions in favour of women in India . The constitution of India have several provisions to safeguard the status of women .The main provisions are given in the articles 14, 15 , and 16 . Article 15 (3) says that “Nothing in this article prevent the state from making any special provision for women and children” . There are significant constitutional amendments also to ensure status of women. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992) give 33% representation to women in Panchayats and Nagar Palikas and 30% headships to women in these bodies at the village, block and district levels in rural areas and in towns and cities.

The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work. An amendment brought in 1984 to *The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961* made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence. Also, **a new criminal offence of "Dowry Death"** has been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code. Enactment of *Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986* and the *Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987* have also been passed to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation. The protection of women from domestic violence Act 2005 and the PNDT act are the latest in this direction .

Though there are so many special provisions the position of women even in a cent percent literate society is not so promising . Even in service sector ,women are facing variety of problems . The

changes in family structure from joint family system to nuclear family system fired up problems of women to a great extent . The problems of employed women will vary with the nature of job , sector in which she is working , and family setup . Fairly large proportion of teaching community is comprised of female teachers , which is one of the major service sectors chosen by women in the state . Hence a study of this type is attempted to realise the problems of female school teachers .

Objectives

Objectives of the study is given as follows

- 1 To study the Personal , Familial and Professional problems faced by the female school teachers in Kerala
- 2 To provide necessary suggestions to overcome those problems

Methodology

Methodology of the study followed the procedure of descriptive research , in which existing status of female teachers in Kerala was thoroughly analysed. . The problems of female school teachers were identified using the tools such as a questionnaire , and an interview schedule . Document analysis was done for identifying provisions for women in the Constitution of India, Judicial safeguards , and recommendations of various committees and commissions for the welfare of women . The investigator also conducted discussion with experts to gather relevant information about the status of women in India and Kerala

Tools & Sample :

The tools used for the study were questionnaire and an interview schedule. A questionnaire was developed by the investigator on various aspects related to the personal , familial and professional problems of lady teachers working at school level . An interview schedule was also prepared to gather relevant information which should supplement the data obtained through the questionnaire .

The sample of the study comprised of 400 school teachers teaching at primary , secondary , and higher secondary level in Kozhikode , Wayanad , Kannur and Kasaragod districts of the state of Kerala . Since the population size is very large the study was limited to the representative sample . Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample . Due representation was given to locale , type of

institution , teaching experience , and nature of institution . Interview with forty eight teachers belong to primary, secondary , and higher secondary levels was conducted to gather relevant information to supplement the data obtained through the questionnaire .

Findings & conclusions

The main findings of the study are as follows

- 1 Majority of female teachers working in different levels are facing Personal problems , Familial problems ,and Professional problems ; and the problems faced by them are more or less similar in nature regardless of the level in which they are teaching .
- 2 Among the personal problems health related problems are more prevalent. Majority of the respondents skipped breakfast daily , and do not get time for simple exercises , relaxation ,and unable to engage in any recreation activities . Most of them do not get time to read news papers daily . Majority of teachers at Higher secondary section , opined that wearing saree is inconvenient for teaching
- 3 Among the familial problems , cooperation of family members was identified as the major problem area . Majority of respondents do not get cooperation from spouse and children in family and house hold matters . So that they them selves should complete all those works after return from school . Majority expect support from their spouse in house hold works ,and in supervising studies of children , but the support available is only marginal .
- 4 Huge syllabus , very high pupil – teacher ratio, unnecessary emphasis on clerical works related to documentation of evaluation , Evaluation of fairly large number of students , loss of working days , the tension caused by the existing system of education. ,lack of enough reference materials, inadequate support from colleagues and head of the institution , inadequate in-service training ,etc . are the major professional problems of majority of teachers .
- 5 A teacher of science subjects in some school have to instruct , evaluate ,and grade up to 500 or more pupils at secondary level . The number of pupils may have increases up to 1500 in the case of teachers teaching Music, Needle work & Physical education . This is really impractical to evaluate and grade such a large number of students by a single teacher

- 6 Reference facilities in school and time available for reference is very limited as opined by most of the respondents . Most of the teachers have an average of 24 periods of work load per week for direct teaching along with innumerable other duties .
- 7 Though not remarked as a problem almost all teachers disagree with the practice of assigning only letter grades in SSLC certificate . Most of them advocate that either marks or grade points should be given along with letter grades.

Suggestions

The female teachers regardless of the level of teaching ,facing personnel , Familial , and Professional problems , which heavily influence their physical as well as mental health . A person suffering from physical and mental stress may not be able to engage in creative activities . Since , woman is the pivot of every family , and thereby society , it is necessary to alleviate their problems in a time bound manner .

Since the problems faced by lady teachers at different levels such as primary , secondary , and higher secondary are mostly alike a comprehensive approach should be necessary to solve those problems .

The health problems of majority of teachers is due to improper food habits and lack of exercise and relaxation . These unhealthy habits would lead to increased stress , both physical and mental , and may cause irreparable damages to any of the important body systems even by early forties. Since a working person must have to strive for the family as well as for the institution , adequate support is essential . So extensive support from members of family is essential to reduce the pressure of double work of school and home at a time . The sharing of responsibility should be begin from family itself . there are some works , that children alone could do beautifully . Train them in doing so , and encourage them to engage in all household responsibilities as they are growing . Cooperation from spouse is all the most crucial for providing wholistic support to a woman . So, opportunities to made them aware about personal problems and development of consensus is essential. Teachers should be properly trained in time management also, which will help them to find time for breakfast , relaxation , exercises as well as for official works.

The educationists, planners and administrators ,must develop urgent plan to eliminate those problems facing by teachers , which is essential for quality enhancement of school education . A very high teacher pupil ratio is suggested as a problematic situation . Team teaching is an effective alternative to

eliminate this problem . But it needs necessary preconditions such as transformation of curriculum in an integrated manner and change form period system to hour system . The former enable , for example presence of a language teacher and science teacher in the same class at a time and the latter will help to reduce the workload of teachers per week . Unnecessary documentation is another important area , which should be renovated , because it taken away the time for preparation and instruction . Qualified persons may be appointed to school at the time of entry of data in the evaluation profile of pupils . another alternative is complete computer based system of evaluation .

References :

- 1 Allahabad Law Agency (1993). *Constitution of India* .Allahabad : Allahabad Law Agency
- 2 Government. of India (1958).*Report of the National Committee on Women's Education* . New Delhi :Ministry of Education .
- 3 Government of India (1990).*Committee for review of NPE 1986 , Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society* . New Delhi : Ministry of Human Resource Development .
- 4 www.ncert.nic.in
- 5 www.ncw.nic.in
- 6 www.wcd.nic.in