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Mental Health of Women Teachers Working in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Mental health is now recognized universally as a shared problem with thought significances for the fitness and welfare of the people. But there is a small kindness paid to the delinquent for the distinct group of people, female teachers working in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Objective: This paper is highlighting the status of mental health, work-family conflict and level of anxiety, depression, somatic symptoms and social dysfunction of the women teachers working in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Methods: The research has followed the mixed-mode method with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Simple Random sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Five secondary schools of (3 urban and two rural) each district i.e. (5x8=40) 40 schools were selected for the study. Five female teachers who were available on the day of visit from each school i.e. 40x5=200 teachers were selected as the sample of the study. Out of 200 teachers, 100 are above 10 years of teaching experience and 100 are below 10 years of teaching experience. The Mental Health scale by S.P.Anada (2002) was used to collect the data for the above purpose.

Results: The study reveals that the women teachers working in private secondary schools and teachers having less experience of Mizoram are mentally unhealthy. Government of Mizoram will take necessary steps for improving the mental health of private secondary school teachers and teachers having less experience.

Conclusion: School Guidance and Counselling cell may help to solve mental, psychological and health-related problems of teachers and students. Mental health promotion related workshops, seminar, group discussions and conferences should be organized at the interschool level for promotion of mental health teachers. The government should ask the management of private schools to provide a salary to the teachers at par with government teachers.

Key Words: Mental health, Secondary, Gender, Management, Qualification

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a human service profession; to teach effectively the teacher must possess sound mental health. The type of school management may also affect the mental health of the teachers in such a way that in a Public (Government) School the salary of teachers is much higher when compared to the salary of Private School teachers and the workload is also heavier. Adequate salary will keep the teachers free from financial worries, which will greatly promote their mental health. Inefficient school management is also responsible for the mental illness of the teachers. Emotionally and mentally healthy people have strategies to cope with difficult situations.¹ Teaching is measured to be an appropriate profession

for the female because it is considered of not possessing too much workload and at the same time it helps women to combine roles in workplace and family with such low level of conflicts.² Furthermore, it is revealed that the teaching profession possesses certain characteristics, such as a low level of career commitment and more time available to devote to family, making it an ideal profession for women. Ironically, several studies show that most of the female teachers are not able to separate their professional role and role in family effectively.³ They feel that their role as a teacher and as a mother at the same time is not relaxed and pleasant. Even some female teachers mention that they must do four jobs at the same time. In some recent study, it was established that teachers are motivated more by intrinsic rewards like self-

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respect, accountability and intelligence of achievement, than by extrinsic rewards like monthly salary and other financial assistance.⁴⁻⁶ Mental health denotes the occupied and pleasant-sounding functioning of our total personality as well as spiritual well-being.⁷ Teachers' mental health and wellbeing are important for the social and emotional wellbeing of their pupils. High levels of work-related stress are linked with a range of physical and mental health problems.⁸ Yet, the teaching profession is commonly reported as one of the most stressful occupations.⁹

A little attention is paid to the problem of female teachers in working in secondary schools of Mizoram. Statistics showed that no of female teachers in secondary schools of Mizoram is 1541. Female teachers were playing a more and more important role in secondary schools of Mizoram. It was well accepted in Mizoram that teacher was one of the most glorious occupations. It was necessary to analyse rationally and thought highly about their mental health of women teachers working in secondary schools of Mizoram. So, keeping in mind the importance of mental health of women teachers working in secondary schools of Mizoram the researcher is interested to take the project.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research has followed the mixed-mode method and has incorporated quantitative and qualitative methodologies to study the mental health and work-family conflicts in women secondary school teachers of Mizoram. Simple Random sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Five secondary schools of (3 urban and two rural) each district i.e. (5x8=40) 40 schools were selected for the study. Five female teachers who were available on the day of visit from each school i.e. 40x5=200 teachers were selected as the sample of the study. Out of 200 teachers, 100 are above 10 years of teaching experience and 100 are below 10 years of teaching experience.

Ethical clearance has been taken by the researcher from the Departmental Research Committee. The researcher has used both the Primary and Secondary data for this piece of research. The researcher has collected both the Primary and Secondary data. As regards the secondary data, the investigator went through different research reports, journals and magazines on the mental health of secondary school teachers written by different authors for the development of the tools. The researcher visited the library of national importance.

To find out the mental health of women teachers, the RCE, Mental Health Scale (MHS) was used which has highly reliable and validity.¹⁰ The tool is consisting of 60 items in Likert scale which measures six dimensions namely self-concept, the concept of life, perception of self-amongst others, perception of others, personal adjustment and record of achieve-

ment. The scoring was done as per the descriptions given in the manual of the standardized scale. The interview schedule was used to collect the data about work-family conflict of women teachers working in secondary schools of Mizoram. Five Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was also conducted for the study. The data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The descriptive as well as inferential statistics was employed for analysis of data. This study was approved by the Institutional Human Ethics Committee of Mizoram University. The data was collected with the help of the research assistants from the different secondary schools of Mizoram. The women teachers are very much cordial to the research assistants for answering the questions.

Data were compiled and analysed using the statistical software Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 21.0, IBM Corp, Armonk, NY, USA), and numerical variables are presented as mean, standard deviation, median, and interquartile range. Difference between mean scores was tested using the analysis of variance with t-test analysis. $P \leq 0.01$ was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

From the analysis regarding Mental Health of Women Teachers of Secondary School of Mizoram the following observations have been made. Most of the respondents i.e. 42% were in the age group 31-45 years, 40% are in the age group of 36-40 years. Most of i.e. 92% of teachers of secondary schools are married whereas only 6% are unmarried and a negligible percentage are widows. Sixty-two percentage of secondary school women teachers having B.A/B.Sc. B.Ed. qualification whereas 26% are untrained and 12% are having trained postgraduates. Secondary school women teachers of Mizoram were mentally healthy. However, 31% of the teachers were mentally unhealthy and needed guidance and counselling for mental health. A few Women teachers have excellent mental health, 11% have very good mental health, 18 %have good mental health, 23 % are above average in mental health, 29.5% are average, 7.0% are poor, 5.5 % have very poor mental health and 1.0% have weak mental health. The Women teachers from Urban Secondary Schools of Mizoram have good mental health than the Women teachers from Rural Secondary Schools. Training does not affect the mental health of women teachers of Mizoram. The Women teachers of Government Secondary Schools have good mental health than Women Teachers of Government aided and Private Secondary Schools. Government secondary school women teacher shows mentally healthy on the concept of life. Private School women teacher has a better understanding of the concept of life. The government secondary school teachers have good mental health in the perception of other components. private school women teachers are showing more record of achievement. Women teachers having below

ten years of teaching experience have more mental health on self-concept component. Women secondary school teachers having below 10 years of teaching experience are more mentally healthier than those women secondary school teachers having above 10 years of teaching experience with regards to their perception of others. Women teachers of above 10 years of teaching experience are more mentally healthier than those teachers of below 10 years of teaching experience with regards to their feelings of adjustment. Women teachers having above 10 years of teaching experience are more mentally healthier than the women teachers having below 10 years of teaching experience with regards to their perception of achievement. Most of the respondents said that the family issue creates a problem in teaching work in the school. Sometimes they show anger among the students and other teachers. Sixty-two per cent teacher said that the in-laws are not supporting overtime work in the school. Some time they teased to them so that they are feeling mentally unhealthy in the family. Eighty per cent of the teachers expressed that the conflicts in family are due to the interference of husband in the salary of the working women. Teachers working in the Government institutions are staffed public servants and they do not fear from dismissal. On the other hand, teachers working in private institutions work on contract and their

contracts are renewed every year upon their performances. Thus, these teachers should work hard, be successful and improve themselves to be able to continue working in the same school. This situation caused more work-family conflicts for teachers working in private schools. The mothers of school-going children talked about the increase of the pressure from schools for parents to get involved in school activities and increase real-time engagement with their children in the class and outdoor activities. The autocratic behaviour of some of the Headmasters in private schools who behave only in an official manner and impose their orders on teachers without demonstrating an appreciation of services rendered is the cause of mentally unhealthy

To accomplish the objectives of the study the t-test was applied to study significant differences of secondary school women teachers' mental health concerning their experience and management type of schools. The results are given in the following tables. From Table 1 it was observed that there is the difference in mean scores of mental health of women teachers of private and government schools. To find out the significance of the difference component-wise analysis of scores of teachers of both the private and government was made.

Table 1: Component wise Comparison of Mental Health between private and Government school women teachers

Sex	Components											
	Self-concept		Concept of Life		Perception of self amongst others		Perception of others		Personal adjustment		Record of Achievement	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	6.28	3.01	9.68	4.87	20.51	5.35	8.54	4.01	10.79	3.46	13.34	5.22
Female	7.68	2.66	10.86	3.96	21.72	4.96	10.99	3.49	11.71	3.28	16.98	4.77

Table 2 indicates that there is a significant difference in respect of self-concept, perception of others and record of achievement. It was also observed that in each component government teachers show superiority as compared to their private

school teachers. On perusal of the above table, it was evident that obtained value of 't' ratio in case of management variation which was 3.23 was greater than the tabulated value (2.60) at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the 't' ratio was significant.

Table 2: Component wise analysis of scores of teacher components

	t'	Remarks
Self-concept	3.50	Significant (p< .01)
Concept of Life	1.90	NS
Perception of self-amongst others	1.68	NS
Perception of others	4.62	Significant (p< .01)
Personal adjustment	1.91	NS
Record of achievement	5.12	Significant (p< .01)

The study conformed with earlier studies done by^{11,12} who have shown gender as an intervening variable for the mental health of teachers. The 't' ratio in case of qualification varia-

tion (1.94) was lesser than the tabulated value (1.97) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the 't' ratio in case of the concept of life was also not significant.

Table 3: Summary of the test of significance of differences between the means of contrasts of the sample on Mental Health

Variation	Sub Samples	N	Mean	SD	SE _D	Df	't'	Remarks
Management	Vs.	100	74.24	17.21	2.67	198	3.23	(p< .01)
	Government	100	76.68	13.31				Significant
	Vs.				2.08	198	3.96	(p< .01)
	Private	100	68.43	16.02				

Hence the 't' ratio in case of school type variation was significant. The above table also revealed that Government school teachers have higher mental health as compared to teachers of privately managed schools. The study conformed with earlier studies done by¹³⁻¹⁶.

DISCUSSION

As there are still many untrained women teachers in schools, teachers should be encouraged to undergo in-service training. The school management should arrange in-service training for teachers to refresh their knowledge of content and teaching methods. The school must have a School Guidance and Counselling cell which is functioning to cater to the needs of the teachers and students. The School Guidance and Counselling cell will help to solve mental, psychological and health-related problems of teachers and students. Mental health promotion related workshops, seminar, group discussions and conferences should be organized at the interschool level then only teachers can benefit. According to¹⁷ emphasized the framework for school mental health services must be promotional, preventive, conservative and curative and should include goals, objective, concrete activities and services which prevent problems from arising and through this approach promote teacher's well-being. As per results revelations, government schoolteachers show better mental health inventory scoring in comparison to private school teachers.¹⁸

The importance of mental health promotion should be to focus throughout the lifespan to ensure a healthy start in life for children and to prevent mental disorders in adulthood. There is an urgent need in the reduction of workload in the secondary schools of Mizoram. Not more than 33-36 periods per week should be given to a teacher to teach. Besides other duties should be equitably distributed among all the members of the staff. Secondary Schools whether run by a government or by private bodies of Mizoram should work on democratic principles. There should be no place for favouritism or flattery in schools. women teacher should keep busy themselves in teaching work and should try to see they're on limitations and adjust themselves to the environment. School authority should not assign overtime work to the women teachers. The government should try to avoid to assign general duties like

census and election to women teachers. To alleviate the conflicts of teachers, individual and organisational strategies are needed. Teachers should learn how to cope with stress, pay attention to protecting physical and mental health and strike a balance between family and work life. As the head of the school, school headmaster should provide a positive working environment for women teachers, support teachers in solving the problems experienced in the working environment and also motivate them. The salary of the private school teachers must be paid by the private management as per the government rule and structure. Schools should provide the physical environment and social conditions required to encourage and help women teachers select and participate in different activities.¹⁹

There should be equitable sharing of resources in the school organisation to avoid dissatisfaction among the women teachers. Local Church, YMA should participate for counselling and giving an inspirational and motivational talk to the secondary school women teachers of Mizoram. Thus, the mental health of women teacher is essential to know their abilities, coping with normal stresses of life, can work productively and to make a contribution to the learning community. Therefore, the mental health of the women teachers should be enriched to make the students face the difficulties persisting within the society.

CONCLUSION

The present study exposes the mental health condition of our secondary school women teachers and this study has implications for school management members, policymakers, school authorities and administrators. The teachers of private schools differ significantly in mental health in comparison to government school teachers and therefore the school management and higher education authorities should look into the matter seriously and should provide necessary motivation and emphasis should be given on the development of self-confidence of teachers to stabilize their mental health. Attempts should be taken to address the difficulties of teachers working in private schools. Emphasis should be given for creating a better organizational climate which is mainly hampered due to groups, internal rivalry and narrow politics among staff in schools. School administrators and higher

authorities should arrange faculty improvement programmes for teachers. Ample opportunity should be given for research work for the professional growth of teachers.

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