Original Research Paper

Management

A REPORT ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT
Work plays a dynamic role in sustaining life. Occupation is one of the major determinants of health, as each one of spends at least 8 to10 hours in the workplace daily. The working population not only represents half of the world's population but also is the key contributors to socioeconomic development. The health of the working population is determined not only by the health hazards at the workplace but also by social and individual factors as well as easy access to available health services.
The health is one such trait, which majorly contributes to the process of education. Health does not only mean physical health but it also means mental health. Mental health of a teacher is thus very important in the process of education because the teacher can do so only when he/she has a sound mental health which contributes not only to the maintenance of physical health but also to social effectiveness. The teachers face multiple occupational hazards. The main objective of the present review is to explore the impact of occupational health hazards on the health of teachers.

The role of a teacher in the process of education is unquestionable. Not only in the field of education but also in a specific teaching learning situation, he or she is the ultimate agent who dispenses knowledge, prepares the time schedule, selects relevant reading materials, plays the role of a specialist, and evaluates learning outcomes and help pupils not only to overcome their difficulties but also personal problems.

Teacher effectiveness is essential because the "effectiveness of each and every teacher is the life of every educational institution" (Rao and Kumar, 2004), as the teachers educate the most treasured assets of the country, i.e. students. Campbell et. al. (2004) described teacher effectiveness as the most impact factors in the class room that affects the student's performance. It includes teaching methods, expectations of the teachers, organization of class room and the use of class room resources. Thus a Teachers' effectiveness has more impact on student learning as compared to any other factor under the control of school systems, including class size and school size(Steven et al., 2005).

Teachers are the considered to be the most resourceful person to bring quality in school education. Thus, the level of satisfaction in job is very important for teachers to produce effective learning and bring quality in school education. The success of any system of education majorly depends upon the job satisfaction of teachers. In fact, job satisfaction plays a important role in maintaining good mental health of teachers' which in turn, is conditioned with her/his efficiency (Gupta, 1986). Thus a teacher, unless and derives satisfaction in job is not able to initiate desirable outcomes i.e. effectiveness in teaching and teaching profession that helps them to cater to the needs of society as well as live up to societal expectations.

Moreover, to be a good teacher, having the necessary knowledge of the subject is not enough. The teacher plays a major role in shaping the life of individuals. Thus, besides his/her educational qualifications, personal qualities of a teacher count a lot in making one's good teacher. The teaching profession not only requires hard work but also requires dedication, perseverance and patience. There are countless qualities which a teacher needs to have, for example, good and pleasing personality, right attitude towards education, knowledge of teaching skills, and knowledge of child psychology and in addition to it the most important is sound mental health.

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Mental health primarily denotes the ability to balance one's feelings; emotions, desires and ambitions, as well as the ability to face and accept the realities and challenges of life. It is unquestionable fact that social forces are continuously moving and changing. Similarly, our mental adjustment is also moving and changing by numerous factors. Thus, mental health is a process of adjustment, which involves compromise and adaptation, growth and continuity. Hence, some psychologists have defined the term "mental health" as the ability of the individual to make personal and social adjustments. Many of them have also defined mental health as such abilities as of making decisions, of assuming responsibilities in accord with one's capacities, of finding satisfaction, success and happiness in accomplishment of everyday tasks, of living effectively with others and of showing socially considerate behaviour. A mentally healthy person, usually mean a person who has biological efficiency or is has the ability to carry on nicely in society or is of good morals, etc.

However, in the recent years, probably no professional group has been criticized as frequently and intensely as the teachers. The list of criticisms is long and probably, more often than not, justified. Society compares and perceives the present generation of teachers as mercenary, unprofessional, irresponsible, and lacking in dedication and commitment which teachers of previous generation were reputed to possess. Moreover if it is really true, it must be a matter of great concern. Something must be truly wrong somewhere if a considerable portion of the community completely lacks any motivation and commitment to its profession. It is quite fearsome to think that so many persons are spending their life time in doing something which has no meaning for them and which gives them no satisfaction and personal worth.

It is thus progressively being realized that the effective and efficient functioning of any organization depends principally on the quality and commitment of its human resources. Thus the same applies for the school system. The core connections of formal education take place where the teachers and students meet; but rarely there are books and articles instructing teachers on how they should teach and behave in class, empirical studies of the outlook and ethos of teachers as a group. Psychologists have focused their investigations primarily on the child where the teacher has been virtually ignored. The teacher is as significant as the child in the entire educative process, and there is a serious need for systematic study of the problems and the concerns of teachers. Waller (1932) has also observed that most of the innovative programmes are for the rehabilitation of teachers' apathy and teachers' resistance; however

the right attitude and involvement, the mental health and job-satisfaction of the teachers are essential conditions for the success of any school program which are every time ignored.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of research in India in the areas related to teacher motivation, teacher's morale, role conflicts and the anxiety of teachers. Moreover, there have been very few studies on teacher stress and burnout and mental health. There is a desperate need for research into the social and psychological aspects of the teaching profession. In the face of growing public criticism, we should quintessentially try to understand why young, enthusiastic teachers turn into bored and aloof professionals in just a few years of time and why many of our teachers are apathetic and uninvolved and make no effort to improve their learning and skill while some others, when placed in the same working milieu, are enthusiastic, committed and show a constant desire to grow professionally. We should thus be concerned about the potential consequences the teaching community in particular, may have on their self-esteem and professional self-image.

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