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Research Paper

Empowering rural women teacher trainees through life skill orientation

Dr. M. PARIMALA FATHIMA

Assistant Professor Alagappa University College of Education Karaikudi – 630 003,
Tamil Nadu e-mail: parisyed11@gmail.com

K. JEEVITHA

Project Fellow Alagappa University College of Education Alagappa University, Karaikudi
– 630 003, Tamil Nadu e-mail: jeevithavijayakumar1@gmail.com

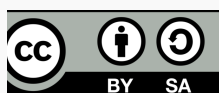
Dr. S. SUMITHRA

Teaching Assistant Alagappa University College of Education Alagappa University,
Karaikudi – 630 003, Tamil Nadu e-mail: sumithramurugu@gmail.com

Abstract

Empowerment of rural women teacher trainees is crucial for strengthening the educational system, fostering social change, and promoting gender equity. Life skill orientation, as advocated by WHO and UNESCO, provides a structured framework to equip teacher trainees with essential skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, self-management, and interpersonal relationships. This article highlights the significance of life skill orientation for rural women teacher trainees, explores its impact on personal and professional empowerment, and suggests strategies for effective integration into teacher education programmes.

Keywords: Empowerment, Life skill Orientation, Rural Women Teacher Trainees.



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1 INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, education is recognized as a tool for empowerment and social transformation. Rural women, especially those entering the teaching profession, often encounter multiple challenges such as socio-economic constraints, gender bias, lack of confidence, and limited access to modern resources. Life skills, defined as psychosocial and interpersonal abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with life's challenges, empower teacher trainees to adapt to the dynamic demands of the educational environment. Integrating life skill orientation into teacher education, therefore, becomes a strategic intervention for fostering empowerment and resilience among rural women. Empowering rural women teacher trainees through life skill orientation leads to substantial personal, social, and economic growth by equipping them with essential abilities needed to meet everyday challenges and seize opportunities for development. Life skills training foster self-confidence, encourages active participation in community life, and cultivates leadership, resilience, and adaptability, all of which are critical for women aspiring to become impactful educators. A growing body of empirical evidence proved that an intervention program on life skills education among young rural girls has significantly augmented their coping skills

and problem-solving ability (Acharya et al., 2009; Chaudhary Mehta, 2012; Pujar et al., 2014; Srikala, Kishore, 2010).

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To highlight the need for empowering rural women teacher trainees.
2. To identify the role of life skills in enhancing personal, social, and professional competencies.
3. To suggest methods for integrating life skill orientation into teacher education programmes.
4. To assess the long-term implications of life skill training for educational and community development.

3 IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SKILLS FOR RURAL WOMEN TEACHER TRAINEES

Life skills encompass a range of adaptive and positive behaviors, including communication, decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, and self-awareness. Training programs specifically aimed at rural women, such as self-help groups and structured educational interventions, have been proven to significantly raise confidence levels and empower participants to take initiative in personal, social, and professional spheres. These skills are vital for teacher trainees, who are not only shaping their futures but also influencing the next generation.

4 LIFE SKILL ORIENTATION INCLUDES TEN CORE SKILLS IDENTIFIED BY WHO:

- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Critical thinking
- Creative thinking
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationships
- Coping with stress
- Coping with emotions

For rural women teacher trainees, these skills bridge the gap between traditional roles and modern professional responsibilities. For instance, self-awareness and confidence-building help overcome gender-based stereotypes, while communication and interpersonal skills enhance classroom teaching and community engagement.

5 IMPACT ON EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Studies show that life skill orientation among rural women leads to:

1. Enhanced self-esteem and the ability to make informed decisions independently.
2. Greater engagement in community development activities and local governance, often resulting in trainees taking on leadership roles.
3. Improved economic stability through entrepreneurial ventures, better financial management, and income-generating activities.
4. Increased awareness and advocacy for women's rights and entitlements.

6 EFFECTIVE ORIENTATION STRATEGIES

Successful life skill interventions usually include modules covering the following:

1. Communication skills and conflict resolution.
2. Critical thinking and problem-solving.
3. Financial literacy and basic management.
4. Building networks and connecting with markets, officials, and financial institutions.
5. Resilience training and fostering a growth mindset.

7 THE MODULE OF LIFE SKILL EDUCATION

The Module of Life Skill Education With life skills education in India gaining momentum, numerous entrepreneurs innovate and develop their own approaches to life skills delivery (Singh Menon, 2015). However, we used a life skill education module with a clear definition and conceptual framework, which is evident from the way it is modeled by Rawal (2006), as it starts with understanding emotions, then communication and proceed to understanding self and empathy, thus, leading to creative thinking problem solving in addition to critical thinking decision-making skills. Some unique features of this module including non-threatening and interactive environment of the drama classes, the anxiety-free learning atmosphere and guaranteed maximum acceptance by children persuaded us to zeroed in on this module for educating life skills among children as they have the magic potential to attract and sustain children in the whole process.

8 DISCUSSION

The introduction of life skill orientation has multiple benefits:

1. Personal Empowerment: Enhances confidence, self-esteem, and decision-making abilities.
2. Professional Competence: Equips teacher trainees with better classroom management, conflict resolution, and innovative teaching strategies.
3. Social Transformation: Women teachers trained in life skills become role models for students, especially rural girls, thereby breaking cycles of gender discrimination and fostering equity.
4. Community Development: Empowered teachers contribute to rural development by promoting awareness on health, hygiene, gender equality, and sustainable practices.

9 Conclusion

Life skill orientation is a powerful tool for empowering rural women teacher trainees. It bridges the gap between academic training and real-life challenges, thereby preparing them as confident, competent, and socially responsible educators. By embedding life skills into teacher education, institutions can create a ripple effect of empowerment that extends beyond classrooms into families and communities.

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