

A Study of Cultural Competence of Rural and Urban Secondary School Teachers

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Introduction

In India there are lots of differences in the living standards, dress, food habits, music, dance forms, customs, religions, castes and languages among people living in different parts of the country. People very naturally tend to over value their own qualities and those of their group and to harbor prejudices against others. Teachers cannot hope to begin to understand who sits before them unless they can connect with the families and communities from which their children come. Teachers who share their student's culture can minimize some of the differences between home and school. Beginning the journey toward increased cultural competence requires teachers to rethink their assumptions and consider life's issue through the lenses of people who come from cultural backgrounds different from their own. For improving quality in education the most significant factor is the cultural competence of teacher. These days, role of teachers in secondary schools is crucial for child development at secondary level. Various demographic and psychological variables affect the cultural competence of secondary school teachers such as self esteem, gender, age, teaching experience, mother tongue and habitat. Here we focused how habitat affects the cultural competence of teacher. *Cultural competence* is the ability to effectively respond to students from different cultures and classes, while valuing and preserving the dignity of cultural differences and similarities between individuals, families and communities. According to the National Association of School Psychologists "*Culturally competent educators* are aware and respectful of the importance of the values, beliefs, traditions, customs, and parenting styles of the children and families they serve. They are also aware of the impact of their own culture on their interactions with others and take all of these factors into account when planning and delivering services to children and their families. Teel and Obidah (2008) provided a more comprehensive definition of cultural competence as it relates to teachers. They used the term racial and cultural competence and defined it as ability to see differences among students as assets. They create learning communities where individual and cultural heritages, including languages are expressed and valued. They use cultural and individual knowledge about their

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students to design instructional strategies that build upon and link home experiences.

Basic Skills of Cultural Competence

i. Valuing Diversity.

Accepting and respecting difference, different cultural backgrounds and customs, different ways of communicating, and different traditions and values.

ii. Being Culturally Self-Aware.

Culture—the sum total of an individual's experiences, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, and interests—shapes educators' sense of who they are and where they fit in their family, school, community, and society.

iii. Dynamics of Difference.

Knowing what can go wrong in cross-cultural communication and how to respond to these situations.

iv. Knowledge of Students' Culture.

Educators must have some base knowledge of their students' culture so that students' behaviors can be understood in their proper cultural context.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge and Adapting to Diversity—Culturally competent educators, and the institutions they work in, can take a step further by institutionalizing cultural knowledge so that they can adapt to diversity and better serve diverse populations.

Rationale of the study

According to National Council for Teacher Education (1998) to sustain commitment, every teacher requires acquisition of certain competencies and the willingness to perform with a sense of devotion and dedication for the benefit of the learner. Bibi (2005) conducted evaluation study of competence of secondary school teachers in Punjab and found demographic variables had no significant influence on teaching competence. Tyagi (2013) conducted study on teaching effectiveness of secondary school teachers in relation to their demographic characteristics and found that qualification, stream, teaching experience and locality of the school had a significant impact on the teaching effectiveness of secondary school teachers. Sharadha & Paremeshwaram (2008) in their study on teacher characteristics and learning in the classroom made an attempt to examine the role of some behavioral variations among teachers and their possible implications for effective classroom teaching and learning and found that the

gender and locality of the institution had significant impact on the behavior variations in the level of their teaching effectiveness. Prakasham (1986) studied teacher effectiveness as a function of school organizational climate and found that secondary school teachers and teachers working in industrial areas were better in terms of teaching competence than those teachers working in semi-urban and rural areas. Babu & Selvaraj (1997), from their research on teacher effectiveness and involvement in teaching reported that the sex and locality of higher secondary school teachers had no effect upon teacher effectiveness. Also they found that teachers with research degrees possessed greater effectiveness and competence. Few studies have been conducted on multicultural education and teaching competency but no studies have been conducted on cultural competence possessed by teachers. Also, cultural competence is not treated as an essential skill where the teacher-trainees have to be trained in. As a student at school, the investigator can very vividly remember facing several problems associated with cultural differences because of her habitat. Also as a teacher at school, the investigator observed many students suffering psychologically and academically because of migration from one place to another and cultural differences. Also, what happens to the self-esteem of students if they are teased by their peer because they look different from others, if they cannot speak English as fluently as their peer from some other location or background, if their teachers' are biased and prejudiced towards them? Mostly we see that teachers from rural and urban background have different cultural competence. So difference between them totally affects the students also.

Objective :

Objective of the study is as follows :

1. To compare the Cultural Competence of rural and urban secondary school teachers of Varanasi district.

Hypothesis:

There exists no significant difference between Cultural Competence of rural and urban secondary school teachers

Operational Definitions

Cultural Competence

In this study Cultural Competence of Secondary School teachers will refer to the ability of teachers to respond effectively to students from different cultures and classes, while valuing and preserving the dignity of cultural differences and similarities between students.

Secondary School Teachers

In this study secondary school teachers refer to those teachers who are teaching in class 9th and 10th of schools situated in Varanasi district during academic session 2017-2018.

Rural:- The secondary school teachers belonging to rural area of Varanasi district.

Urban:- The secondary school teachers belonging to urban area of Varanasi district.

Methodology

Method: Descriptive survey method is used for this study.

Population: The population constitutes all the secondary school teachers of Varanasi District.

Sample: The sample for the present study consisted of 100 secondary school teachers (50 rural secondary school teachers and 50 urban secondary school teachers) selected randomly from the different schools of Varanasi district.

Tools: The data for present study was collected with the help of Cultural Competence Scale of secondary school teachers (CCSSST) developed by investigator.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1 : Showing Comparison between Cultural Competence of rural and urban secondary school teachers

Habitat	N	Mean	S.D.	Mean Difference	Df	t- value
Urban	50	74.60	7.087	3.473	98	3.790*
Rural	50	71.13	10.921			

* Significant at .01 level

Fig 1: Cultural Competence mean scores of Rural & Urban Secondary School teachers

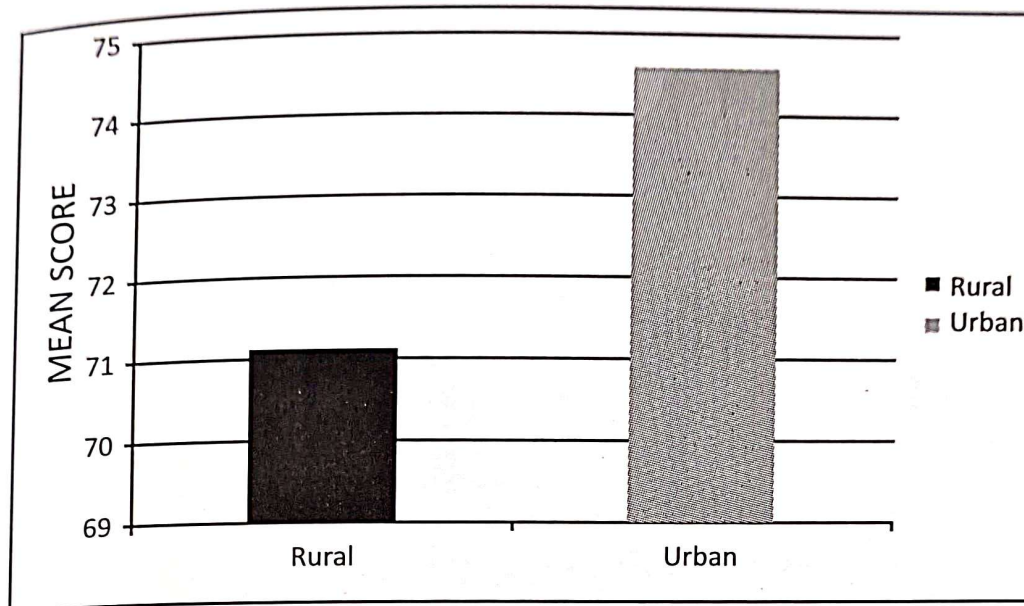


Table 1 shows that the t-value ($t = 3.790$) is significant at .01 level. Thus the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between cultural competence of urban and teachers is rejected. Therefore it is inferred that there was significant difference between cultural competence of secondary school teachers of rural and urban secondary school teachers. Further, Table shows that mean score of secondary school teachers of urban habitat ($M = 74.60$) was greater than the mean score of secondary school teachers of rural habitat ($M = 71.13$). Hence, it is concluded that secondary school teachers of urban habitat had significantly higher cultural competence than secondary school teachers of rural habitat. Prakasham (1986) found similar result that secondary school teachers and teachers working in industrial areas were better in terms of teaching competence than those teachers working in semi-urban and rural areas. Tyagi (2013), Babu & Shelvaraj (1997) also stated that teaching effectiveness is also affected by the locality of the individual.

Conclusion

On the basis of analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results certain meaningful conclusion have been drawn that cultural competence of urban secondary school teachers were found more than rural secondary school teachers of Varanasi district. Various stereotypes in rural area may affect the cultural competence of secondary school teachers. Urban teachers are not easily affected by myths and stereotype which may be reason for their higher cultural

competence. The existence of large number of unqualified teachers in rural areas, affecting the cultural competence of teachers. Limited access of rural teachers is seen in training programs because of the high costs involved. Teachers therefore need to be culturally competent to deal with diverse group of students effectively. Teachers must be capable of including and embracing families and communities to create an environment that is supportive of multiple perspectives and experiences. Cultural competence runs a set of skills that professionals need in order to mend the practice to serve all students and communicate efficiently with their families. These skills enable the educator to form on the cultural and language qualities that young people get to the classroom rather than seeing those qualities as shortfalls.

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