



## SCOPE OF RELATIONSHIP COUNSELLING FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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### **Abstract**

*Teachers are the relationship managers, who influence the present society and build the next generation. The pre service teacher education is the best period to impart the relationship skills since the student teachers are at the brim to start their marital life, career and their life is at a new juncture. They are expected to make successful relationship with students, fellow teachers, with authorities, with family members and society. Hence awareness, training and guidance are necessary for pre- service teachers to equip them for life. The present study aims at the pre-service teachers' perceptions on relationship counselling and its scope in enhancing their relationship efficacy. The study was conducted among 195 pre -service teachers and identified ten facets of life where relationship counselling is essential. The investigator implemented a group counselling on relationship skills and explored the scope of relationship counselling for maintaining sustainable relationship. The study implies that relationship counselling is highly beneficial for pre-service teachers to improve their personal and professional life.*

**Keywords:** *Relationship Counselling, Sustainable Relationship, Interpersonal Skills, Transferable Skills, Conflict Resolution, Virtual Relationship.*

### **Introduction**

On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 the five Judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously held that Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code is Macaulay's legacy and it shackled the human instinct to love. The opinion of the Supreme Court that Section 377 was irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary; it is ultimately a matter of human relationship. The verdict would become the foundation for the members of the community for seeking relationship based on the fundamental right to privacy. The intervention of the Supreme Court indicates that making a relationship is a private matter, but its consequences are social issues. The strength of a society is embedded in the strength of the relationship of its members. Relationship failures hamper the forward progress of an individual. Cordial, stable and conducive interpersonal relationship motivates individuals to become active and connected to the society. However, people traits are unique and complex which lead to personal conflicts and stress which may cause break of relationship. This further increases stress and maladjustment that results in frustration. Hence skills essential for positive relationship are to be developed at an early stage of life itself.

Education is the process through which a person acquires the knowledge and skills for effective social life. The incompetence to maintain proper and positive relationships among students is a major threat for their future life. Academic achievement alone cannot regulate the success of life. Childhood relationship has long lasting impact for the individual in making relationships. The cognitive and affective processes are regulated based on the quality of relationship one possess. (Moore&Kinghorn 2011).

Teachers are the relationship managers, who influence the present society and build the next generation. If they can impart the values of sustainable relationship among the students, the next generation student community will develop innate capacities for strong interpersonal relationship. The



pre service teacher education is the best period to boost the relationship skills since the students are at the brim to start their marital life, career and their life is at a new juncture. They are expected to make successful relationship with students, fellow teachers, authorities, family members and society. Hence awareness, training and guidance are necessary for pre- service teachers to equip them for life. Positive teacher-student relationships are classified as having the presence of closeness, warmth, and positivity. Students who have positive relationships with their teachers use them as a secure base from which they can explore the classroom and school setting both academically and socially, to take on academic challenges and work on social-emotional development (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

A teacher who possesses proper relationship skills can make healthy relationship in the family and society which will help to enhance the teaching skills in the classrooms. The cordial atmosphere of the class room strengthens the cognitive and affective components of the learners for better achievement. The mental health of the teacher is a measure of the stability of the relationships one possess. The struggles in the relationship reflect in the professional life and it makes hindrances in the academic sphere of the teacher and learner. Hence relationships are essential for teachers for effective teaching and active personal life.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Being a teacher educator, the researcher felt that though the academic records are fine, the relationship skills are not satisfactory for the graduates of our Universities. When they face struggles they become helpless to overcome the troubles. The personal problems prevent them from leading a successful family life. Their stress cause conflicting relationships with students and peer teachers. They withdraw from social activities and their social life become invisible. Sometimes the process of teaching becomes an academic exercise without touching the minds of students. If proper guidance is provided for them during the pre-service period, that will enhance their personal skills to lead a jovial life. This study will describe purposeful affective strategies and interactions with students that a teacher uses to effectively engage students in the learning process. This study will contribute to the field of education by providing teachers and administrators with guidance on relationship-building strategies that a highly effective teacher utilizes in a real world, authentic classroom.

Social constructivism is a worldwide accepted approach in learning which necessitates close interactions between students and between student and a more knowledgeable adult. The classroom atmosphere with conducive relationship among all the members is a prerequisite for social constructivism. The role of the teacher is to guide the learner from the current level of development to the potential development. Teachers are workers in the zone of proximal development. If a teacher is unable to maintain a proper relationship with the students, this task become very difficult, the proximal development zone widens and the potentialities of the learner remains concealed.

Palincsar (1986) proposes reciprocal teaching as an effective strategy for group learning through dialogues. Collaborative learning takes place only when the teacher builds a close relationship with the students. The possibility of a negative trajectory in the academic process can be eliminated with the dynamic set of interactions between the student and the teacher.

Knowledge transferability is a necessary skill if one is to acquire complex knowledge and mastery beyond superficial understanding of preliminary learning. Knowledge cannot just be handed over to the learner, active involvement in knowledge acquisition is necessary along with “opportunistic guidance



by expert mentors”.(Spiro et al. 1987).Teachers who have built strong relationships with their students would be able to provide opportunistic guidance to their students because they have accurate knowledge of how their students learn. The quality of the relationship between a student and the teacher will result in a greater degree of learning in the classroom. Forming strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows students to feel safer and more secure in the school setting, feel more competent, make more positive connections with peers.

The relationship between parents and children are also very significant in development of children. Parents who maintain high quality relationship have better adjusted children with more positive attitudes and shows high quality relationship. Results indicate that the parents’ relationship quality is very consistently and positively associated with a range of child and family outcomes, including: child behaviour problems (externalizing), child social competence, and child school engagement, child internalizing (depression), parent-child communication, and parental feelings of aggravation. (Moore, 2011) The parental conflict and unhealthy family relationship affect the developmental process both cognitive and affective competencies. Hence the progress of a child becomes positive and if teachers and parents have good relationship skills.

Relationship counselling helps an individual to become aware of the significance of healthy relationship and motivate to acquire interpersonal skills for cordial relationship. The training for emotional and social literacy should be a part of the pre-service training course so that the trainees integrate this with their classroom teaching. Assuming multiple roles and performing manifold responsibilities through successful relationship with fellow beings enhances mental health. Hence it is essential that the pre service teachers are to be equipped with relationship skills through guidance and counselling .Appropriate platforms are to be utilised at teacher preparation level for familiarising the problems and prospects of various forms of social relationships. The present study explores certain possibilities of relationship counselling for pre service teachers to empower them to strengthen personal and professional competencies.

### **Objectives**

- To identify the perceptions of pre-service teachers on various facets of relationship counselling
- To implement group counselling for pre-service teachers for enhancing relationship skills.
- To explore the scope of relationship counselling at teacher preparation level.

### **Methodology**

The study was preceded in three phases.

**Phase 1.** A survey among 195 pre service teachers was conducted to identify the areas where they feel relationship struggles and need counselling.

This is done with the help of an inventory which covers statements on relationships of various life aspects. The participant has to respond on a three point scale, to a great extent. To some extent and not at all according to the intensity of the problem they feel and need of counselling they require.

### **Phase 2.**

#### **Implementation of Relationship Counselling**

After the analysis of the survey results, an intervention counselling was planned and prepared for two weeks (12 hours). Group Counselling was provided for 100 students on various fields of relationship.



**The investigator prepared the relevant aspects of relationship counselling which includes eight sessions.**

1. Better understanding of the self
2. Mature Personality
3. Interpersonal skills
4. Social competencies
5. Marriage & Family Cohesion
6. Social media & virtual relationship
7. Teacher as a relationship manager in Classrooms
8. Abuse, Neglect and Conflicts in Relationship

Each session is followed by reflections from the participants. Activities, videos and brainstorming sessions were included for effective understanding of the concepts shared.

**Phase**

3. Focus Group discussions were conducted to reflect upon the topics discussed. The final feedbacks were collected after the School internship of 40 days. They faced with real life conflicts and challenges during these days and they became sensitized to face the situations positively. The feedback clearly indicates the benefits of relationship counselling.

**Findings**

The facets of life where the pre service teachers need counselling are identified as follows

**Table1. Facets of relationships in life that requires counselling**

SI No.	Facets of relationships in life that requires counselling	Percentage of Response
1	Marriage Relationship	100
2	Family Relationship	100
3	Virtual relationship through e-media	97
4	Relationship with Students	95
5	Relationship with Own children	94
6	Relationship with Teachers	94
7	Relationship with Friends	92
8	Relationship with Self	91
9	Relationship with Strangers	90
10	Relationship with Neighbours	78

The table shows that all need counselling related to marriage life since they have apprehensions in conflicts with the life partners. All need counselling related to family relationship since family is a place where many people with different age and character are living together. It is strongly opined that (96%) counselling is essential for virtual relationship since the modern technological era engage one in numerous relationship through social networks. The sample opines (94%) that they need counselling on teacher student relationship since it is essential for class management and effective teaching. They have conflicts in their friendship and they need counselling on cordial friendship. They have apprehensions in relationships with teachers and fellow workers and hence a counselling on this regard is needed. Parenting is an important stressful aspect for youth and 92% need counselling on parenting and parent



child relationship. They believe that relationship with the self is the most important factor of personal growth hence they need counselling in better understanding of the self(91%).They also require counselling on relationship with strangers(90%) to become cautious and need help in maintaining good relationship with neighbours(79%) to have better social life..

### **Scope of relationship counselling**

The following benefits are reported in their feedback sheets which were submitted after school internship. They got opportunity to interact with school teachers, students, parents and peer teachers during their internship and they felt the need of relationship counselling.

The participants gave the feedback that they have got basic awareness on various sorts of relationship and their confidence has raised to meet the challenges of life. The feedbacks indicate that relationship counselling is highly useful with the following scopes:

- Strengthens the self through proper self-awareness, helps for identifying the self-efficacy.
- Helps to identify own shortcomings which may hamper relationships
- Motivates for accepting people as such with their merits and defects
- Improves the social competencies for healthy relationship with others
- Enhances long-term relationship by handling conflicts
- Promotes cordial and healthy relationship with students that caters the holistic development of the learner
- Motivates for responsible parenthood thereby shaping the next generation
- Assimilates a code of conduct for making virtual relationship thereby ensuring cyber safety
- Provide awareness on the abuses and neglect in relationships
- Inspires in maintaining collegial relationship with fellow workers.
- Encourages to interact with neighbours and stay connected with the surroundings
- Boosts the need of strong friendships and inspires to maintain lasting friendships.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher preparation curriculum deals with the theoretical inputs for effective teaching and learning. However, teachers have significant roles in the behaviour modification process of learners. Hence teachers with favourable attitudes and healthy relationships can enforce appropriate relationships skills among students through their interventions and modelling. As role models if teachers can demonstrate better relationship skills, the learners internalise that in their life. The most important resource of the nation, the human resource can be developed if the emotional space of the individuals are strong and stable. This is to be focused in all educational endeavours of the nation. Hence relationship counselling should be a part of the educational process especially for teacher preparation for the holistic development of all.

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