

CHAPTER 5

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The present study entitled "An investigation into the problems of the primary teachers" was conducted in the Satara district which comprises of eleven talukas. The sample chosen covers all the talukas of the district so as to get a true picture of all the strata of society such as urban, semi-urban, rural and the distant hilly and remote areas. A total sample of 300 primary teachers was chosen out of which 265 teachers responded to the administered questionnaire, the details of which are discussed in the methodology in Chapter 3.

The Government of India has passed an act making the primary education compulsory in the country. Accordingly the Government has taken various steps to implement this act. The teacher is one of the main component of the education system. It therefore follows that if proper implementation of the act is to be made then the needs and problems of the teachers should be looked into. The teaching profession requires aptitude and liking for the job as teaching is not a mechanical sort of job and involves the total involvement of the teacher with the students. Thus teachers will be expected to perform to the best of their capacities only when all their financial, social and

intellectual needs are fulfilled. Keeping this perspective in mind the present topic for the dissertation was chosen. The findings of the study are concluded below :

- [1] In sketching out a profile of the teachers it was observed that of the 265 respondents 155 were male and 110 were female. Majority of the teachers were in age group 31 to 50. The education profile revealed that about 132 teachers were D.Ed., 17 teachers were B.Ed. and 9 post graduate; while the others had completed Jr. or Sr. PTC or S.S.C. Most of them (248) were married and had to shoulder family responsibility in addition to their jobs.
- [2] The teachers have to help in the clerical and other extra work such as preparation of results, assessing papers, preparing pay-sheets, writing synopsis, etc. in addition to their regular teaching workload. When asked about the difficulties they face in the school work, 247 said that their teaching was hindered due to lack of teaching aids, 243 due to additional clerical work and 61 said that they had difficulty in controlling the classes. 42 respondents reported that they suffered from physical strain. All these

factors are bound to affect their teaching.

- [3] Regarding the curriculum, nearly 55 percent felt that the curriculum in primary schools, especially for the rural pupil is very heavy and difficult. They have opined that the rural student is not as well exposed as his urban counterpart, nor are the rural folks very serious about the education of their wards as is the case with the parents in the cities and towns. As a result the absenteeism is also very high in the village schools.
- [4] Most of the primary schools do not have the necessary scientific equipment and apparatus needed to carry out the experiments recommended in the syllabus. Further any breakage in the available apparatus has to be compensated by the teacher himself.
- [5] The attendance in about 60 percent schools is above 90 percent while 29 percent had 80 percent attendance and others below that. The absenteeism was more in the rural students than in the urban schools and the reasons given by the teachers for this are poverty, help to the parents in farming and at home, sickness, lack of learning material, lack of motivation from the parents, etc.

- [6] The appointment in the Zilla Parishad schools is made on the basis of a written test and interviews while those in the other primary schools are only on the basis of oral interviews. Though many teachers complained of nepotism, political influence and bribery in getting the job, the study reveals that 225 teachers said that they got their job based on their performance while 39 got it through the influence of some acquaintance and 6 due to nepotism. The researcher experienced certain hesitation on the part of the teachers to give the true picture in the fear of losing their jobs.
- [7] There are no hard and fast rules for transfer of a teacher in the primary schools, except the Zilla Parishad schools, where it is stated that a teacher may be transferred once in 5 years. This leaves the transfers of the teachers in the hands of the superiors and management. The data collected on the transfers of the primary teachers shows great discrepancies in a number of ways. It was observed that while there were 30 teachers who were never transferred, there^{are} about 17 teachers who have been transferred for more than 7 times.

It was noticed that within a span of 5 years of service the primary teachers were transferred for as many as 363 times, while some individuals have been transferred after a period of 25 to 27 years. In short it is clear that the same treatment is not given to all the teachers. When the teachers were asked about the reasons for such discrepancies 22 teachers opined that political interference plays a major role in effecting transfers, 87 said that they had requested for them and 28 teachers said that disagreement and influence was the reason for their transfers. About 56 teachers remained non-committal on the transfer reasons. However, 166 teachers said that the transfers were effected as per rules inspite of the fact that there are no such hard and fast rules available.

- [8] The promotions of the primary teachers however, are strictly effected as per the rules. It was noticed that almost all the teachers were aware of the rules and opined that seniority is the main criteria for the promotion. Priority is also given to the SC/ST/BC categories. Out of the 265 respondents, 17 teachers from the Zilla Parishad,

3 from the municipal and 1 teacher from the Ashram schools were promoted as head masters. No teacher from the private school was promoted as a head master, this may perhaps be due to the fact that in private schools there are no such rules and the management decides who is to be promoted.

[9] The primary teachers are the least paid teachers in the education system though they perform the most vital role of laying the foundation for further education and it is they who are the true people responsible to bring up good citizens of the country. In view of the escalating prices and growing inflation the salary paid to the primary teachers is very meagre. 185 teachers have stated that their salary is not sufficient to meet their needs. Moreover the government has prohibited them from engaging private tuitions thus reducing their chances of additional income. Of the 265 respondents only 9 have a subsidiary income in the form of farming and small scale business. Most of the teachers feel that after the long working hours they put in and the additional work they are forced to undertake there is very little time and energy left to pursue alternate source of

income and improve their standard of living.

[10] The teacher is totally held responsible for the result of the class. If the result of a class is persistently poor the teacher may be given a memo or even transferred. However, on the other hand the teachers have stated that when the results of the class are excellent they receive no award or recognition for the same.

[11] Nowadays political interference is very common in every field and more so in the education field as the political leaders draw their work force for canvassing and other purposes from the students. The teachers have plainly stated that their work is disturbed in one way or the other due to this political interference. Any disagreement with the local political leaders results in their harassment in many ways. The figures are very alarming; 202 teachers have been transferred, 50 said they gained a bad reputation, 105 were issued a written memo and 14 teachers have reported of harassment in other forms due to disagreement with the political higher ups. The teachers have stated that they are always under pressure and this affects their teaching quality.

[12] When the teachers were asked about their opinion regarding the help they get from the society, the teachers from the urban areas were satisfied and said that the parents helped in motivating their children and paid attention to their progress. Further they also cooperated and helped the teachers. However, in villages the teachers stated that the rural society helped little. In fact the parents often need the children's help in the farms and at home and dissuade the child from attending the school, further due to poverty they are unable to provide their children with school uniform, books, etc.

[13] The primary teachers in addition to their regular work are made to perform jobs such as preparation of electorate lists, family planning propoganda, census, etc. Moreover the remuneration paid for such jobs is very little and refusal to do such work invites harassment. The teachers have stated that this kind of work affects their work performance, reduces the time they can give to their families, causes fatigue, and affects their teaching. The lady teachers moreover complained of bad experiences in doing these jobs.

[14] About 33 percent of the schools in Satara district are one teacher schools. These are often situated in remote areas and hilly regions, where transportation is a problem and modern amenities are non-existent. The schools do not have proper building or other teaching aids. Of the eight schools surveyed in this study seven had no building or infrastructure & the classes were conducted in open space or in temples or private houses. The teacher student ratio is more in 5 of them. The problems the teachers face in these schools are of a different sort, they have no proper housing facility and hence prefer to keep their families in their native place, secondly they do not get leave easily as there is nobody to relieve them of their duties and they find that the students are also not very interested in learning. Of the 8 teachers questioned, five stated that they were dissatisfied with their job.

[15] The pre-primary school teachers face several problems such as job insecurity, low salary (On an average Rs. 200 - 400), no other benefits such as provident fund, pension etc. Out of the 13 teachers 11 have expressed dissatisfaction

with their jobs. In addition to these problems the teachers have to cope up with lack of space teaching aids, toys and other facilities.

[16] Though our country is predominantly made up of villages many essential amenities are still not available there. As a result teachers posted to teach in villages have to cope up with many difficulties. Of the 265 teachers 210 teachers have worked in the village at one time or the other. When asked about their difficulties 201 have stated that accomodation is the main problem They have to leave their families behind due to lack of housing facility, no higher schools for their children and lack of adequate transportation. 201 teachers have complained of lack of transportation and all have stated that medical facility and entertainment is not available. 190 teachers said that their children's education suffered and they had to spend more in sending them to nearby towns. The lady teachers in addition complained of harassment from the local hoodlums.

[17] The government gives the best teacher award by selection process. Though the most sincere and dedicated teacher has to be selected, most of the teachers feel that the selection is often not fair. Factors such as favouritism, political intervention and others play an important role in selection. Out of the 265 teachers 154 stated that political intervention is present while 91 stated that no such practice was existant.

[18] The grants for Municipal schools are given by the government through the municipality; and the Zilla Parishad schools by the Zilla Parishad. The latter gets grants for a teacher per forty students while the former gives them for fifty per teacher. However, it is learnt that 21 percent of the Zilla Parishad and 12 percent of the other schools get no grants whatsoever. Often the grants are delayed causing much anguish to the teachers and their families. Also the funds given for purchase of chalks and other material is insufficient and often the teacher has to pay through his pocket. Many a times in private schools the parents help with the funds raising. However, by and large the funds are insufficient to meet the needs.

- [19] Out of the 265 teachers, 110 teachers are lady teachers and hence they were asked if they faced any special problems. 99 of these teachers said that they had to shoulder the family responsibility. Many of them felt as any working woman that their children and family suffer because of their absence at home. However, 50 to 55 percent feel that their profession has a positive effect on the career of their children and that their children are proud of them. At the same time the lady teachers state that they are harassed some time or the other due to their sex.
- [20] The primary teachers have to attend the training courses compulsarily so as to keep them abreast of the latest knowledge. However, 224 teachers have stated that adequate knowledge or skills cannot be imparted in a short period of a week or so. Most of the teachers try to get themselves excused from the training programme as they have to bear the travelling and other lodging & boarding expenses as the allowances given by the government rarely suffice to meet the needs.
- [21] It was found that only 3 schools employ a clerk and 11 schools employ peons. It is hence obvious that this work is done by the teachers & headmaster.

[22] The infrastructural facilities are very poor in the primary schools studied. Especially, in villages separate school buildings do not exist. Of the hundred schools surveyed only 39 schools have their own buildings while 61 did not have any. Asked as to where they conduct the classes, 68 said that they conduct many classes in the same room or divide it, 18 teachers said that they conduct them in school's verandahs, 20 in temple, 12 in private houses and 2 even conducted the classes under a tree. More surprising still is the fact that in 53 schools there is no water facility and in 46 schools there is no electricity. The facility of the play ground was available with 62 schools while 38 had no such facility.

[23] Finally, the reasons for which the teachers had joined this profession were enquired into. Of the total sample, 137 teachers said they took up the job for money, 112 in order to help their family & 6 as a stopgap arrangement. Only 80 teachers have chosen the profession out of interest and 22 teachers as a social service. Yet inspite of the reasons stated 259 teachers have stated that they are satisfied with their jobs.

SUGGESTIONS

In view of the inferences drawn on various matters related to primary education and the problems of primary teachers with special reference to Satara district, following suggestions are put forth.

- {A} The appointments of primary teachers in different types of schools are different. Since most of the schools except private schools, are under the control of Government, it is suggested that the appointments should be made through a centralised recruitment board thereby eliminating present malpractices and disparity in the selection process.
- {B} Since there is no clear-cut transfer policy in these schools resulting in indiscriminate transfers of teachers due to political intervention thereby harassing some of the primary teachers, it is suggested that a uniform transfer policy should be formulated and strictly implemented. This will ensure fair treatment to all the teachers which will enable teachers to perform their best without any mental agony and pressure.

- {C} Unlike transfer policy there is explicit promotion policy which is strictly adhered to in all the primary schools except in private schools. However, there are limited promotion avenues resulting in demotivation of primary teachers. This may be reduced by introducing junior and senior primary teachers similar to those of senior and junior lecturers in colleges. (Scales)
- {D} The training centres should be provided with all the infrastructural amenities thereby eliminating the expenses that are needed to be put in by the teachers. Also efforts should be made to impart as much recent knowledge and skills so as to hold the teachers interest.
- {E} The salary scales of primary teachers are revised after a decade in 1986. However, the scales according to the teachers are inadequate in present inflationary conditions. The researcher feels that this can indirectly be solved by placing the teacher in a school nearby his native place which will subsequently reduce double establishment cost. At present many respondents stay in villages, away from the native place, and incur additional expenses for travelling and establishment.

- {F} The selection for the best teacher award is made at respective levels namely, taluka, district, etc. An impartial committee at every level should be formulated to reduce favouritism and injustice to the deserving teachers.
- {G} There are large number of one teacher schools in Satara district. Efforts should be made by the concerned authorities to gradually convert one teacher schools to two teacher schools where the student to teacher ratio exceeds the stipulated number. A proper substitute arrangements should be made especially when the teacher wants to avail leave.
- {H} The pre-primary teachers on the other hand, have no job security and other benefits. The salary paid to these depends on the discretion of the management. In view of this the Government should see that suitable and uniform scales are formulated and implemented uniformly.
- {I} The lady teachers experience considerable difficulties when they are placed in villages and remote places. Though women are treated at par with men in all the fields some consideration

should be given so that they are placed in urban or populated villages.

{J} In view of the problems experienced by teachers posted in villages such as lack of transportation, medical facilities, local politics, and higher education facility for their children, it is suggested that these can partially be solved by regularising the transfer policy so that few individuals are not the sufferers for ever.

{K} Unfortunately primary teachers are burdened with variety of extra-educational work which not only reduces their efficiency but hampers the teaching. Hence, the Government should think over the matter and reduce such work as far as possible in progressive stages.

{L} Appropriate authority should sanction at least one peon and clerk in medium sized primary schools so that the teachers are relieved from the clerical and peon's job.

{M} Except private schools all other primary schools get grants from the concerned authorities. However, these grants are insufficient and delayed.

This results in teachers having to pay out of their pockets for the purchase of chalks and other teaching aids, besides delaying their salary payment. The authorities therefore, should consider this issue seriously and take appropriate remedial measures.

{N} The infrastructural facilities in almost all the schools are inadequate. Majority of them do not have the basic amenities such as building, classrooms, water, electricity, playground and teaching aids. This problem should be given the top priority and it is expected that all these would be taken care of if adequate grants are sanctioned.

{O} Though most of the teachers expressed that the syllabus for the primary education especially for the rural students should be made easy, it is practically impossible to do the same. The researcher feels that persistent efforts of the primary teachers would certainly bring the rural pupils at par with their urban counterparts. Furthermore, practically all the rural schools should be provided with books, uniforms and other

material free of cost or at a subsidised rates to the students. This would generate interest among the pupils and also improve their attendance. Furthermore, the teachers should take personal interest in motivating the parents and make them aware of the importance of education.

AN OVERVIEW

The present study conducted in the Satara district on the problems of the teachers in the primary schools is perhaps a representative of the problems faced by the primary teachers in the country. The Government of India has made primary education compulsory in the country. However, even after forty years of independence we find the conditions of the rural people are much the same. In spite of the many grants awarded to the various departments it is often noticed that the money does not reach those for whom it was intended. Another major defect is that there is no uniformity in implementation of various policies. For example, in the present study it was noticed that the Zilla Parishad had a set of rules for the appointment of teachers and the transfer policy of the primary teachers while the municipal and other schools had another. The Government should pass

legislation to avoid such disparities.

Another major alarming fact noticed in this study is the report of the teachers of harassment such as transfer, written memos, bad publicity and others at the behest of the local political leaders. Political intervention in the education system is like a parasite which needs to be uprooted completely. Only a clean and just administration will improve the standard of education and living of the people of this nation.

The present study is restricted to a district in a state, a more broader study involving the whole nation will project a true picture of where our education system stands at present. Also a similar study needs to be extended to the high schools and colleges encompassing not only the problems of the teachers but those of the administrators and students as well. This will help the Government to formulate the necessary changes and thus improve the level and standard of education.