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Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Teaching Profession

Shri Kant Dwivedi

Assistant Professor, Galgotias University, Uttar Pradesh

E-mail: shree280@rediffmail.com

Abstract: *The main aim of study was to measure the attitude of primary school teachers towards their teaching profession. This study was descriptive in nature. Teacher Attitude Inventory developed by S.P. Ahluwalia, having ninety items was administered to the respondents to determine the subjects' attitude towards teaching profession. All the primary school teachers, teaching at primary level in district Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) constituted the population of the study. Fifty primary schools comprising male and female, rural and urban, and public and private were selected as a sample of the study. Four primary school teachers, each science and arts, were selected at random from the sampled institutions. Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, correlation were applied to measure and compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards their profession. The analysis of the data revealed that the majority of the primary school teachers does not possess positive attitude towards the profession. It was also found that the female primary school teachers have more positive attitude towards the profession as compared to the male primary school teachers. The teacher working in the public sector institutions were found more committed and satisfied as compared to the teachers working in private sector. It uncovered the fact that the majority of teachers working in the rural areas was more committed and satisfied as compared to the teachers working in urban areas. The in-depth qualitative study should be conducted to investigate variables affecting attitude of primary school teachers.*

Keywords: *Primary Education, Teacher's Attitude, Teaching Profession, Positive attitude, Rural and Urban, Primary School Teachers.*

Introduction

Attitude is important to understand human behavior. To define what exactly an attitude is, many attempts have been made in literature. Generally it is defined as a complex mental state involving beliefs. Anastasi (1957) defines attitude as a tendency to react in a certain way towards a designed class of stimuli. People's attitude towards their profession have an effect on their performance. It is also valid for teaching profession. The quality of education is directly related to the quality of instruction. Teacher is instrumental for better instruction. He is required to have a higher professionalism because of rapidly changing circumstances. He is expected to use the best practices and strategies to meet the challenging demand of his career, which involves imparting knowledge and developing essential skills in the students. A good teacher is expected to be committed to his work and have the ability to take the initiative

(Sparks, 1979). Teacher is expected to not only to master the subject and various methods of teaching but also to show that he is capable of selecting the various study materials according to the teaching goals and varied group of pupils. He also possesses the potentials to create a learning environment for the students (Vermunt and Verschaffel, 2000).

Gupta (1996) describes that the task of teachers is central to education. Teachers must transmit to new generation the cultural heritage of society - the knowledge, skills, customs, and attitudes acquired over the years. They must also try to develop in their students the ability to adjust to a rapidly changing world. The effective teacher is capable of creating a desire to learn (Conant, 1993). Teaching is a complex and demanding profession. To sustain their energy and enthusiasm for teaching, teachers need to maintain personal commitment to the job (Day, 2000).

Smith (1990) has claimed that teacher's personality in the attitudinal sense is a significant factor in teacher's behaviour and it has great impact on student's achievement. The teachers must know the art of communication, understanding others and ability to learn from the experiences. They should be able to facilitate learning effectively (Reddy, 1992). Bhatia and Bhatia (1988) describe that the teacher is a servant of the society entrusted with the task of modifying and developing the behavior of the young child for maintaining and improving social patterns. The teacher can render this service to society only if he, above all, is a humanist - a human being in the true sense of the world. He is a person of high ideals and engaging personality. Wright (1987) describes that the primary function of teachers is to motivate the learners who are not motivated and to nurture those who are already well motivated to the task of learning.

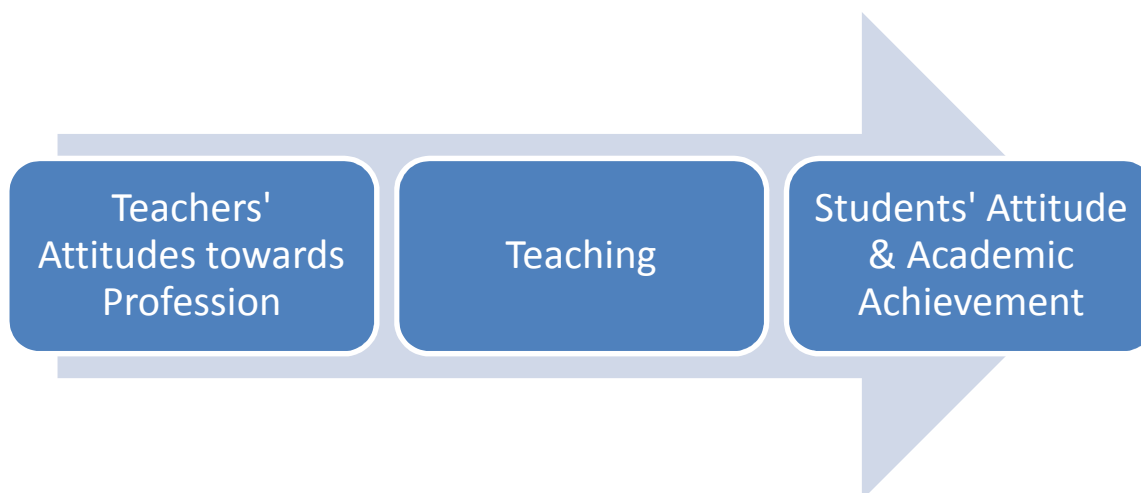
A teacher is required to have a higher level of professionalism because of rapidly changing circumstances. The importance of teachers' professional development is being too much emphasized today. Hayon (1989) says that the teachers who possess professional and interpersonal skills are more effective in their classrooms in terms of students behaviour, attitude and achievement. Every individual has a variety of attitudes, which might be positive or negative and can vary according to their favourability and un-favourability for various attitudinal objects. Luthans (1993) says that professional attitude serves in many valuable ways and knowing these attitudes can also serve a lot.

Attitude of teachers largely depends upon their personal characteristics and disposition, both seems to be highly interlinked. The teaching profession requires certain dominant behaviors which show teacher's intellect, desire to excel, extended professionalism and teaching as a life concern. This is a profession, which exalts service above the personal gains (Goodings et al., 1995). Teaching involves human nurturance, connectedness, warmth and love (Hargreaves, 1994) and the teacher's beliefs about his role in caring for the students plays a crucial part in developing the personality of the students (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002).

Attitude of teachers have also been determined to be influenced by gender (Dodeen, et al., 2003). They found that female teachers have more positive attitude towards teaching profession as compared to male teachers. Flores (2001) explored from the newly graduated teachers that what affects their attitude towards teaching profession. They indicated that social and political control existing over teachers and the profession, in addition to the economic problem. She also reported that the workplace also plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' attitude towards teaching, especially behavior of principal, and the nature of the communication within the school.

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Teaching is perceived as a difficult job among people. Many reasons can be named for this perception. It can be said that teachers face several difficulties when they start teaching. They start to feel deprived, alone and isolated in the society. It may cause a negative attitude towards the teaching profession. Attitudes of teachers play a crucial role in the teaching profession. Negative attitude of a teacher may have a negative impact on one's teaching. Smith (1993) has summarized the relationship between teachers' attitude and teaching as:



Teaching is actually one of the oldest professions. It is true that the requirements for entrance into the teaching profession have not always been as high as those for some other professions. It is also true that in the profession of teaching, there are some members who have not lived up to the desirable level of conduct and service. Furthermore, many persons have used teaching as a stepping-stone to other professions. It is always blamed that our teachers are not discharging their duties and responsibilities adequately and satisfactorily.

The quality of education is deteriorating; it can hardly be challenged by anyone. Taiwo (1980) has observed that the teaching profession had gone down on the scale of respectability. Omoregie (1994) reported that the majority of primary school teachers does not possess positive attitude towards their profession. Studies conducted in Brazil (Garrido et. al., 1991) indicate that teachers show little interest and lack of compromise toward innovation in school. Barros and Elia (2008) describe that professional and social status; school infrastructure, poor libraries and laboratories, safety conditions etc., create new variables that define the attitudes of even most devoted and well prepared teachers.

The teaching profession has considerably suffered, as it could not attract the best talent because of the poor pay scale, limited prospects of promotion and insecurity of service, particularly in private institutions. No one can deny that the success of any system of education depends upon the quality of teachers. Therefore, an effort was made to assess the attitude of primary school teachers toward teaching profession. The destiny of nation lies in its classroom. This implies that teacher, who is the organizer and the controller of the classroom is mostly responsible for the future of nation. He is building future citizens of the country. As he moulds the children so the country will be molded. From this point of view, a lot of responsibilities lie with the teacher.

Attitude towards profession means a person's feelings, behaviours and commitment to the profession or job. If the teacher is committed and has positive attitude then it is sure that his performance will be better and his efforts will be fruitful. Richardson (1991) narrated that education is a nation building activity. The quality of education depends upon ability and

efficiency of teachers. If the teachers are well trained, motivated and committed with their profession, learning will be enhanced. This study may provide a searchlight towards developing a positive attitude among primary school teachers towards teaching profession.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards teaching profession?
2. Is there any relationship between the attitudes towards teaching profession and the gender of primary school teachers?
3. Is there any impact of environment (rural & urban) on the attitude of primary school teachers towards the profession?
4. Is there any relationship between the attitude of primary school teachers and their subjects (Science/Arts)?
5. Is there any effect of school administration (public & private sector) on the attitude of primary school teachers towards the profession?

Hypotheses of the Study

Since the study was descriptive in nature, following null hypotheses were formulated to carry out the study:

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between the attitude towards teaching profession and gender of primary school teachers.
- H0₂:** Attitude towards teaching profession does not vary significantly with environment (rural & urban).
- H0₃:** There is no significant relationship between the attitude of primary school teachers towards teaching profession and their subjects or stream (Science/Arts).
- H0₄:** School administration (public & private) does not affect the attitude of primary school teachers towards the teaching profession.

This study may provide guidelines to increase the professional efficiency of teachers. It will enable the teacher educators to focus their attention and direct their efforts on developing such skills and attitudes among the student teachers as needed for the schools of the India. This study may also provide feedback for the curriculum developers in framing suitable curricula for teacher training programme. This study may provide bases for further research.

Methodology of the Study

This study was descriptive in nature and conducted to measure the attitude of primary school teachers towards teaching profession.

Population and Sample

All the primary school teachers, teaching at primary level in district Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) constituted the population of the study. It was not possible for the researcher to visit all the respondents individually. Therefore the sample was drawn from the population. Fifty primary schools comprising male and female, rural and urban, and public and private were selected by stratified random sampling. Four primary school teachers, each science and arts, were selected at random from the sampled institutions.

Table 1: The Distribution of Respondents

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| Public Sector | | | | Private Sector | | | | Total |
|---------------|-------|--------|-------|----------------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 100 | | | | 100 | | | | 200 |
| Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | |
| 50 | | 50 | | 50 | | 50 | | 200 |
| Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Urban | |
| 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 200 |

Tools Used For the Study

Keeping in view the objectives of the present investigation, “Teacher Attitude Inventory developed by Dr. S. P. Ahluwalia (1978), National Psychological Corporation, Agra” was used to measure attitude towards teaching of teachers and collection of relevant data. It was designed specially to measure the potential of a graduate intending to take up teaching job at the secondary or senior secondary level of school education. This inventory is a 90 item Likert instrument consisting of six scales. The inventory appears to have content validity, and the method of selecting items supports this supposition. Reliability was estimated by split half method and found 0.79 (corrected to 0.88) for a sample of 239 prospective teachers.

Data Collection

Teacher Attitude Inventory was administered to the headmasters and teachers simultaneously. All the headmasters of the sampled schools were requested to give their impartial opinion about their primary school teachers. Some schools were found without headmaster, therefore the acting headmaster or the senior teacher was requested to give the opinion or rate the primary school teachers.

The researcher personally contacted all the respondents to collect the data. Clear instructions were prepared for the respondents. They were requested to go through the general instructions first and then to respond. The respondents were asked to decide about their agreement with the statements and mark the relevant response category honestly on the answer sheet. Attitude inventory and personal information sheet were distributed to the subjects with the request to complete and return it as soon as possible.

The measurement of attitudes of these groups and the comparisons therefore were undertaken to find out the differences in the attitude of different groups. The comparisons were aimed at locating the differences in the attitude towards teaching profession affected by the variables a) the area of residence rural and urban, b) gender differences – male and female, c) subjects impact - science and arts, d) working environment – public and private sector.

The Results

Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, correlation were applied to measure and compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards their profession.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Total Attitude Scores of the Subjects

| S. No. | Statistical Measure | Responses |
|--------|---------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Mean | 186 |
| 2 | Standard Deviation | 22.6 |

The mean score of the subjects on attitude scale is 186 out of 360 which indicates the primary school teachers don't possess highly positive attitude towards teaching profession.

Table 3: The Distribution of Subjects in Terms of Teacher Gender

| Group | N | Mean | S. D. | T Value | |
|--------|-----|------|-------|-----------|------------|
| | | | | Tabulated | Calculated |
| Male | 100 | 168 | 16.2 | 1.98 | 5.22 |
| Female | 100 | 204 | 12.3 | | |

Table of the attitude towards teaching profession and gender of teachers shows that score of female teachers is higher than the male teachers. To see the significance of difference between the mean scores of the male and female t-test was applied. It was revealed that the scores of females on Teacher Attitude Inventory (M = 204, SD = 12.3) was significantly higher than male teachers (M = 168, SD = 16.2). The calculated value of t = 5.22 was found greater than the tabulated value t = 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4: Comparative Analysis of the Attitude of Primary School Teachers Working in Public and Private School

| Group | N | Mean | S. D. | T Value | |
|---------|-----|------|-------|-----------|------------|
| | | | | Tabulated | Calculated |
| Public | 100 | 217 | 25.8 | 1.98 | 9.94 |
| Private | 100 | 155 | 23.4 | | |

Table 4 shows the attitudes scores of primary school teachers working in public sector was higher as compared to the teachers working in private sector. t-test was applied to see the significance of difference between the mean scores of the public and private sector teachers. It was found that the scores of public sector teachers on Teacher Attitude Inventory (M=217, SD= 25.8) was significantly higher than private sector teachers (M=155, SD=23.4). The calculated value of t = 9.94 was found greater than the tabulated value t = 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 5: Comparative Analysis of the Attitude of Science and Arts Primary School Teachers

| Group | N | Mean | S. D. | T Value | |
|---------|-----|------|-------|-----------|------------|
| | | | | Tabulated | Calculated |
| Arts | 100 | 151 | 17.9 | 1.98 | 10.93 |
| Science | 100 | 221 | 29.4 | | |

Table 5 shows the attitudes scores of science and arts primary school teachers. The attitude score of science primary teachers was found to be higher as compared to the arts teachers. The t-test was applied to see the significance of difference between the mean scores of the science and arts primary school teachers. It was found that the scores of science teachers on Teacher Attitude Inventory (M = 221, SD = 29.4) was significantly higher than arts Primary teachers (M = 151, SD = 17.9). The calculated value of t = 10.93 was found greater than the tabulated value t = 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 6: Compare analysis of the Attitude of Rural and Urban Primary School Teachers

| Group | N | Mean | S. D. | T Value | |
|-------|-----|------|-------|-----------|------------|
| | | | | Tabulated | Calculated |
| Rural | 100 | 203 | 21.8 | 1.98 | 6.70 |
| Urban | 100 | 169 | 13.6 | | |

Table 6 shows the attitudes scores of rural and urban primary school teachers. The attitudesscore of rural primary teachers was found to be higher as compared to the urban teachers. The t-test was applied to see the significance of difference between the mean scores of rural and urban primary schoolteachers. It was found that the scores of rural teachers on Teacher Attitude Inventory (M = 203, SD = 21.8) was significantly higher than urban primary teachers (M = 169, SD = 13.6). The calculated value of $t = 6.70$ was found greater than the tabulated value $t = 1.98$ at 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The attitude of teachers towards teaching profession is very important for the teachers' performance and their students. The analysis of the data revealed that the majority of the primary school teachers does not possess positive attitude towards the profession. It is very alarming situation for our education system. Primary education is an important sub-sector of the entire education system. It provides the primary level workforce for the economy. The steps should be taken by the concerned authorities to develop positive attitude of primary school teachers towards teaching profession.

It was also found that the female primary school teachers have more positive attitude towards the profession as compared to the male primary school teachers. This may be the result of the stereotyping belief that "teaching is a feminine job". Female teachers might feel the job appropriate for them. This result is concordant with the study made by the Dodeen et al (2003), in which it was reported that female teachers have more positive attitude towards the profession as compared to the male teachers. The qualitative study may be carried out to investigate the reasons gender factors in identifying attitude towards the profession.

The score primary school teachers working in private sector, on Teacher Attitude Inventory was less than the teachers working in public sector. It might be due to the uncertainty of the jobs in the private sector. The majority of the teachers in the private sector join teaching profession as a stepping stone. They quit the job whenever they get another opportunity in a public sector. Those teachers working in the public sector institutions were found more committed and satisfied as compared to the teachers working in private sector. A comprehensive study should be conducted to find out the reasons of negative attitude of teachers working in private sector.

The comparison of science and arts primary school teachers exposed that science teachers possess more positive attitude toward teaching profession as compared to the arts teachers. The score of the science teachers on Teacher Attitude Inventory was found more in perception and personal trait components as compared to the art teachers. But at the same time the arts teachers were found more committed and satisfied as compared to the science teachers. The arts teachers are in majority in our primary school and unluckily they don't have positive attitude towards teaching profession. Some suitable measures should be adopted to improve the chaotic situation in our primary schools.

The impact of rural and urban environment on the attitude of primary school teachers was also studied. It uncovered the fact that the majority of teachers working in the rural areas was more committed and satisfied as compared to the teachers working in urban areas. The score of the urban primary school teachers was found higher than in the personal trait component than the teachers working in rural areas. The in-depth qualitative study should be conducted to investigate variables affecting attitude of primary school teachers.

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