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### *Teachers and Their Qualifications*

There is variety in the standards of recruitment of teachers across the country. The qualifications prescribed for teachers is one of the sources of this variation. A study for the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) by N. K. Jangira and others (1995) revealed that Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu prescribe twelve years of schooling and a two-year course of diploma in elementary education (training) while Kerala and Orissa are satisfied with ten years of schooling with a diploma in teaching. Assam is happy with ten years of schooling, and does not insist on training.

In this context it is to be noted that the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and Parliament envisaged the raising of the general education level of teachers to twelve years of schooling. In a personal communication to the World Bank in 1996, the Secretary, Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), informed them that 10 of the 15 major states, viz. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have already raised the minimum qualifications to twelve years. (The states left out are Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Orissa, and West Bengal) (World Bank 1997).

The observation of the World Bank report in this regard needs to be quoted: This places India ahead of other countries with comparable education indicators and on a par with some OECD countries. For example China required nine years of general education for Primary teachers, and Pakistan ten years.'

There are other problems with regard to educational-qualification requirements of teachers and their teaching work in primary schools. The pattern of education structure adopted in India can broadly be described as consisting of 10+2+3 years.

### TEACHER-PUPIL RATIOS AT ELEMENTARY STAGE

Pupil-teacher ratios at all-India level at two points in time 1986 and 1999 have already been discussed. The states/UTs of India can be classified under eight categories as follows:

- States/UTs where teacher-pupil ratios have come down both at lower-primary and higher-primary: Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Pondicherry.
- States/UTs where the ratios have remained almost the same at both lower-primary and higher-primary stages (variation of 2 to 3 at lower-primary and 4 at higher-primary): Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Sikkim, Lakshadweep.
- States/UTs where the ratios have gone up both at lower-primary and higher-primary stages: Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
- States/UTs where the ratios have come down at lower-primary stage but remained stationery at higher-primary stage: Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu.
- States/UTs where the ratios have come down at lower-primay stage but gone up at higher-primary stage: Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Gujarat.
- States/UTs where the ratios are stationery at lower-primary stage but have come down at higher-primary stage: Assam, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Chandigarh.
- States/UTs where the ratios are stationery at lower-primary stage but have gone up at higher-primary stage: Andhra Pradesh.
- States/UTs where the ratios have gone up at lower-primary stage but remained stationery at higher-primary stage: Madhya Pradesh, Daman and Diu, and Delhi.
- There is no state/UT where the ratios have gone up at lower-primary stage but come down at higher-primary stage.

States/UTs which cause concern are Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli where ratios have gone up both at LPS and HPS stages. In Karnataka, Rajasthan,

Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat, the higher-primary stage where the ratios have gone up is a cause for concern. Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Daman and Diu have recorded increases in the ratio at lower-primary stage.

Pupil-teacher ratios are only crude indicators of the health of a school system. They should be read along with several other variables such as classroom organization, effective enrolment rates, increasing/declining population growth rates (demand for schooling), community involvement, and task analysis of teachers.

### *Salary Scales of Elementary Teachers*

Teachers are lowly paid in developing countries. It is true of India also. The Kothari Commission had recommended a uniform national scale of pay for elementary teachers in India. This has not been possible to implement because of various reasons including differentials in supply of qualified, trained teachers belonging to both general and reserved categories. The World Bank Report on Primary Education (1997) gave an update on the entry-level salaries of teachers and other government employees with comparable education. In many parts of the country, teachers receive lower salaries than upper division clerks, revenue inspectors, trained nurses, and pharmacists. They are better placed than police constables and in some places better placed than lower division clerks.

Salaries of teachers are revised periodically (every ten years) along with those of other state government employees. Such revisions are generally preceded by revisions of salary scales of central government employees. The latest revision took place in 1997 (see Table 14.2). Variations in salary scales between teachers whose qualification to teach in primary schools is either tenth or twelfth standard and those who are trained teachers is understandable. But if teachers in one state who have completed class xii and also two years of diploma in teaching at primary level are paid much lower than teachers in a neighbouring state with similar qualification and training, then it is felt to be unjust.

It is on this count that The Karnataka State Primary School Teachers' Association sent a memorandum to the President of India as recently as 15 March 2000.

It is pertinent to note that the salary of elementary teachers in Karnataka is much lower than that in Kerala state whereas the entry qualification for teachers in Karnataka is twelve years as it is in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, while it is just ten years in Kerala state. In the case of headteachers also such inter-state anomalies exist.

### *Promotion Opportunities*

The promotion opportunities of teachers are very limited. There is no separate cadre and recruitment provision for primary teachers. Some of the teachers may hope to become headteachers of primary schools on the basis of seniority and experience. The lucky ones may get promotion as inspectors of schools. But these positions are limited in number. There were around 400 inspectors of schools in 1995 for a 200,000 strong primary teaching force. In some states, posts of educational assistants to assist block-level education officers have been created and teachers at these posts are paid salaries higher than that of a headteachers of a primary school. But the posts are again quite limited in number (385 posts in Karnataka state). At any point in time, promotional opportunities for elementary teachers may be limited to 25 per cent of the teachers who enter the profession. In 75 per cent of cases, teachers retire with the same status with which they had joined but with higher salaries as commensurate with their length of service in the profession. The majority of teachers surveyed by N. K. Jangira and others perceived their economic status to be low which is a fact.

### *Welfare Benefits for Primary Teachers*

A National Foundation for Teachers' Welfare (NFTW) located at New Delhi was set up in 1962, under the Charitable Endowments Act 1890. The objective of the

TABLE 14.2  
Salary Scales of Elementary Teachers

	<i>Primary teachers</i>		<i>Head teacher</i>	
	<i>Pre-revised</i>	<i>Revised 1997</i>	<i>Pre-revised</i>	<i>Revised 1997</i>
Central govt	1200-2040	4500-7000	1400-2600	6500-10,500
Tamil Nadu govt	1200-2040	4500-7000	1400-2600	05900-9900
Maharashtra govt	1200-2040	4500-7000	2000-3500	7500-12,000
Goa govt	1200-1800	4000-6000	1400-2600	05000-8000
Kerala govt	1125-1725	4000-6090	1640-2900	05500-9075
Karnataka govt	1130-2100	3300-6300	1400-2675	04150-7800

(Rs)

NFTW is to provide relief to teachers who are in indigent circumstances. Every year 5 September is celebrated in India as 'Teachers' Day' in memory of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who rose to the position of President of India from a university teacher during his early life. The NFTW collects donations for Teachers' Day through the sale of a 1 inch colourful flag. The Central Social Welfare Board of India, the All India Women's Conference, the National Council for Women's Education, universities, colleges, schools, and other organizations and prominent citizens help the NFTW collect donations in this way. The NFTW allows states/UTs to retain 80 per cent of the collections with them and the remaining 20 per cent is transferred to the corpus fund of the NFTW. The Memorandum of Association and the Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the NFTW are issued by the MHRD, as incorporated in a twenty-two page monograph.

Some states of India are quite vibrant and involved in the facilitation of the welfare to teachers. The case of Karnataka in the form of a case study is insightful.

## ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The dynamics of status is both subtle and complex. It is inherent in the valuation of an individual, an institution, an occupation, a profession, a custom, or any similar element or phenomenon or process of a group by the group. This is true of elementary teachers also. The status of a teacher is the value attributed by the society to her/him. How does the valuation take place? How can the status/valuation of elementary teachers be appreciated/raised? What, after all, is value?

The value of a person or her/his activity/occupation/profession is unconsciously measured by a society on the basis of the perceptions a society has of the contribution the person makes to the furtherance of its goals. What is the contribution that elementary teachers make to society? Do they add value to the lives of the people around them? The answer to these questions depends upon the answer to another question. What do people value in life? People value something which gives satisfaction to them. In this sense, there is a hierarchy of satisfaction/values in life. Physical and physiological needs form the base of this hierarchy. Pursuit of education and culture, preservation and promotion of democratic values, citizenship, global concerns, and the like become leisure-time pursuits which get attention only after the satisfaction of the physical needs of life. In a country like India, where, as per official figures, one-third of the people are not completely free from starvation, poverty and food insecurity haunt the people. Elementary education is a higher value of life, higher than food needs and social security. The main challenge is to create a demand for elementary education in a society that is besieged by a variety of problems.

Are teachers conscious of the need to prove their value to the community in which they function? Teachers are not chosen by the community to serve them. They are appointed by the government. A primary school teacher is looked upon as a 'government employee' and for some teachers 'teaching' is just a 'job'. It is one of the many 'jobs' that they would have been happy to get. In contrast, those teachers who have been taking interest in the attendance and learning of their students get recognition over a period of time and thus earn respect and love from their community. How can all teachers be made to involve themselves in the schooling process and earn 'status' from the community?

closed down. The CWW was accommodated as a CWO. The CWO gets lower emoluments than the AW centre.

Teachers are rarely aware of the value of their work in day-to-day contexts with the overall goals and values of EFA. EFA is not integral to their thought process. When such a thought process sets in, they shall take a proactive role in enrolment and retention drives. They shall organize remedial teaching for slow learners and ensure that all children realize expected attainment levels. They need to be oriented to 'EFA goals' though such orientation by itself will not metamorphose a tradition-bound society. Along with it, there is need to build ethos and traditions which sustain the school system.

As of now, along with teachers, everything else in the school system is imposed by an 'invisible force' called the government. The curriculum, syllabus, examination, records to be maintained, working days and working hours, holidays in the year, monitoring system, textbooks, incentives and facilities, school equipment are all 'given' to the community. There is no autonomy at grassroots level in the system. How can there be accountability without autonomy?

Autonomy given to a community to organize and manage the education of its children automatically generates a sense of ownership. Ownership leads to possessiveness and responsibility. Non-performing teachers are taken to task. Performing teachers are rewarded. A market for good teachers is set in place. The village *panchayat* should be given the responsibility for education of children of the community.<sup>4</sup>

Several arguments object to the transfer of the management of education to *panchayats*. It is observed that 'you can delegate authority to an agency, but not responsibility. It has to come from within'. '*Panchayats* are not competent to manage education.' Basically, the well-entrenched bureaucracy in education which has evolved over a 150 years is not in favour of such transfer of authority. Elementary teachers also find it more convenient to function in relation to an educational bureaucracy that is at a distance rather than with the immediate community represented by *panchayats* many of whose members are looked down upon by the teachers as inferior to themselves in caste status, educational attainments, and exposure to the world outside. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Indian Constitution have democratized Indian polity and provided for decentralization of powers and functions. Right opportunities have been created and the climate is favourable. But Indian society is still inequalitarian in its structures and functioning. It is also male dominated. The distance between the system of education and the grassroots communities

<sup>4</sup> In the United States and the United Kingdom, education of children is the privilege of the Local Education Authority. Teachers are hired for the job. Salary scales differ from country to country. Well-performing teachers find better markets for themselves.

needs to be bridged. Teachers' social status will go up if they cooperate with this process.

The foregoing arguments about teacher status in the context of EFA goals and community ownership may not find immediate acceptance within the teaching community. Teachers are more concerned with the anomalies in the country. For similar levels of qualifications, certification, and performance teachers are paid different salaries. At times, they are paid lower salary in one state (Karnataka) which prescribes higher qualifications (class xn) than in another state (Kerala) which is satisfied with lower qualifications (class x) for elementary teachers.

There is no harmony in the salary scales of elementary teachers across the country. This is the problem of a federal polity. It has led to militancy among teachers and it is difficult to sell EFA philosophy to agitated teachers.

Teacher militancy at elementary level of schooling is not strong in India. Elementary school teachers do not constitute a force to be reckoned with. They cannot hold up public examinations (unlike college/university teachers) as there are no such examinations at elementary level. When elementary education itself is not valued by the people (village India), where is the question of valuing teacher militancy at this level. While there is an All India Association of Primary School Teachers which is a registered body and State Associations affiliated to it, they are not very strong. In some states, the president of the State Association or his nominee (office-bearer) is involved by the state government in selection of teachers for state/national awards. The State Association has a limited role. District Associations hold district-level annual conferences. These associations are not professional bodies and academic matters are hardly discussed at these conferences.

Formerly, teacher transfer was a big issue among teachers. Now some states of India, as in Karnataka, the transfer of teachers is computerized. There is transparency in the transfers. Ground rules are laid down and not violated. Incidentally not only transfer of teachers, even their recruitment (at district-level) and selections for teacher training courses are computerized in several parts of the country. Transparency and systemic logic have reduced resentment, tensions, and militancy among teachers. It is only with respect to salaries, promotion opportunities, and service conditions that there is agitation among teachers.

State investment in elementary education is an important determinant of teacher status. Specifically, the non-Plan expenditure of the state is a variable in salary scales awarded to teachers. It may be observed that the total expenditure on education in India went up from

Rs 172,139 million in 1990-1 to Rs 323,333 million in 1995-6, an increase of 88 per cent from 1990-1, at current prices. Of the total expenditure 99.2 per cent is on revenue account. Of the total revenue expenditure on education in 1995-6, that on elementary education was Rs 155,548 million, almost double the expenditure of the base figure for 1990-1, in current prices. Non-Plan expenditure in 1995-6, which mostly goes to teachers' salaries (general administration and salaries of educational officers), was around 80 per cent of total expenditure. It has come down from 88 per cent in 1990-1, perhaps because of expenditure under the DPEP. Non-Plan expenditure on elementary education as per cent of total educational expenditure in India was 39 per cent in 1995-6. Hence, as a proportion of total expenditure, not much is spent on elementary school teachers' salaries in India.

Per pupil expenditures across Indian states in 1995-6 (at 1980-1 prices) reveal interesting insights although it must be cautioned that inflation rates vary from state to state and the expenditures are not strictly comparable. While Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana record high levels of per pupil expenditure, states like Karnataka, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal spend very little on elementary education.

While more meaningful analysis would perhaps have been an inter-state comparison of expenditure on salary and other benefits to elementary teachers in relation to enrolment, retention, and attainment levels, data are not available for such an analysis.

#### PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING AND TEACHER STATUS

Teacher status will improve when teaching is transformed into a profession (Stinnet 1965, Corwin 1975, and Singh 1969.<sup>5</sup> A profession renders an essential, definite, and specialized service to society. When the knowledge base of the teachers, their standards and quality of certification, are enriched, teachers will get better status. This also relates to non-bookish knowledge, especially that concerning the community in which a teacher is serving.

Teachers should develop a professional approach. Teacher centres for a cluster of villages/urban areas are required. Teachers should meet there regularly and discuss problems of school management, children's

<sup>5</sup> There is a National Union of Teachers in England and National Educational Association in the United States. They are quite professional in their work. There is a vacuum in India in this regard. The present All India Federation of Teachers' Association has not made a mark.

behaviour, subject curriculum, and evaluation procedures. They should share findings/insights of action research that they may have conducted during the year. In this way, they can break isolation among themselves and get rid of the 'government servant' tag. The centre can maintain a small library and subscribe to useful magazines/journals. In this way, primary education can become vibrant at the grassroots in an otherwise dormant school culture.

There is also a need to formulate, adopt, and get committed to a professional code of ethics. Teachers should become more and more self-disciplined and autonomous in their functioning. The level of autonomy enjoyed by a person in her/his work is an index of her/his professional status.

#### TEACHER STATUS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Teachers are employed by the state/government for the benefit of society. The state, however, is a creation of civil society. Neither teachers nor civil society appear to be conscious of this basic fact of civic life. Teachers' identity is confined to the government/corporation. A teacher is hardly conscious that she/he is an Indian teacher, promoting the goals of national life in India. He is a teacher in the classroom, at the same time a role model for students. Democracy in India will succeed and prosper if the proverbial 'man-on-the street' can question authority with information, frankness, and fearlessness. Teachers have to develop a questioning

attitude of mind themselves and encourage their students to develop such attitudes, respect the dignity and individual worth of every student and promote a dialogical culture in the school. They should become knowledgeable not only about their subjects but also about current affairs and issues of common interest to civil society. This way they can enhance their self-regard. Ultimately, it is teachers themselves who hold the key to status in their own hands through their character, temperament, personality, scholarship, and services.