

## **The Plight of Non Government Teachers in India**

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**ABSTRACT:** *They enter the institutions at the mercy of someone; they quit at the fury of some other. The vicious cycle of silent and never reported violence continues. Private teachers especially those who work in small privately owned schools are vulnerable to lack of job security and hostile and stringent work environment at work place. Such an oppressive state of affairs has led to the job dissatisfaction, depression, and lack of interest in work and sense of alienation among most of the teachers working mostly in small private schools. As per experiences and observations, they are beset with myriad of issues today which even the state has ignored. Besides exploitation, overwork, minimum wages, discrimination in salaries and lack of mental satisfaction and happiness at work place are some pressing problems of such school teachers though such problems vary from institution to institution and cannot be generalized for all the privately owned educational institutions at any place of the country This paper gives a conceptual outline based on the grass root observation pertaining to the issues and challenges faced by such a vulnerable lot on routine basis.*

**Keywords**—*Private Teachers, Discrimination, unstable workplace.*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Private schools have grown at a rapid rate in India. According to recent estimates, 25% of all enrolment in primary education in India is in private schools (SRI, 2005; DISE 2006-07). Attendance in these schools is not limited to the non-poor or children in urban areas. A large number of children belonging to poor households study in private schools which charge low fees; nearly 30% of villages in India have access to a private school within the village itself (Kremer and Muralidharan, 2006; De et al. 2002). It is now obvious that government alone cannot single handedly satisfy the educational needs. This is partly the reason that has led to the emergence of private schools, across the country. These schools cut across nursery, primary and secondary schools, and more recently have been extended to private universities. Their complementary role in the achievement of the nation's educational objectives can hardly be overemphasized. It should however be noted that the success of any educational system whether private or public to a large extent is dependent on the adequacy and commitment of its teaching staff.

These private unaided schools are owned and funded privately with no state support. For purposes of recognition, they have to ensure adequate pupil-teacher ratio, conform to certain qualifications regarding recruitment of principal and teachers and assure their financial viability. However, all management decisions are taken by the school, including recruitment procedures and teacher salaries. They frame their own admission rules and fee structure for students. These schools are growing as small and medium scale business houses, making extra profits, but they do not make the required payment to the teachers.

While the term 'small school' can be defined in many ways, common measures refer to pupil enrolment, the number of teachers and the number of classrooms. An exploration of data available from the country's District Information System for Education (DISE) reveals that in 2005 approximately 78% of primary schools in India had three or fewer teachers to attend to all grade levels, and more than 55% had 100 or fewer students (DISE, 2006). However, because of poor quality of public education, 27% of Indian children are privately educated. While the enrolment stood at 48.39 per cent in 2010-11 as against 48.12 per cent in 2009-10, it dropped by 0.05 per cent between classes I and V, standing at 48.41 per cent in 2010-11. While there has been an overall improvement in enrolment at the elementary level in the country during 2010-11, a study has reported that enrolment in private schools has been better than the government ones. In the present scenario, private schools have blanket protection from any potential local political policy or movement to redress teacher's grievances and teachers perceived to be hostile to private interests are dismissed at will. The Government exercises very little regulatory authority over most functions of its constituent states, especially with respect to education policy. As a result, there is tremendous socioeconomic, cultural, and political variation within the states also.

School teachers' salaries are often perceived to be lower than those of other professionals; this perception is especially strong among teachers. This affects the teachers' motivation to educate (OECD 2009; Figlio and Kenny 2006; Ortega 2010, Player 2009, Heutel 2009, Loeb and Page, 2000); causes good teachers to leave the profession (Imazeki 2005; Harris and Adams, 2007; Scafidi et al., 2007); and good students to avoid choosing an education major in college. These in turn would produce negative effects in students' learning. To improve the quality of education it is essential to pay special attention to teachers and to implement policies to attract, motivate and retain the most talented individuals in the profession. The Ministry of Human Resource Management (MHRD), on its part, accepts there is a problem. "It is unfortunate that we are unable to attract bright minds," says the current Minister of Human Resource Development "The private training institutes are of poor quality and the government-run ones lack infrastructure." The minister, however, has ambitious plans of reviving education colleges. "We have set up a committee that supersedes the National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and will be inspecting training institutes. Universities will open up more training colleges," he says. "Under RTE, all government school teachers will get 18 months of refresher training," adds Minister of human resource development. The government, he adds, has allocated Rs 6,000 crore in the 12th Five Year plan for strengthening these institutions. Six lakh teaching posts have already been sanctioned. The MHRD wants all schools to adhere to RTE norms by 2015. Non-compliance could lead to closure. (Source: Hindustan Times; 6th June 2012, 59th meeting of (CABE) Central Advisory Board of Education)

The recent changes that are to monitor the quality of teachers are that every teacher who is hired by government and aided private schools will have to appear in a Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) conducted by the CBSE. However, in 2012 — the second year of the CTET — 93 per cent of teacher candidates failed the test. This proves that there is a problem with the teacher training institutes that produces teachers in this country. Those languishing in government institutions need to be trained to impart skills of modern teaching methodologies," says Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyay, former joint director, "NUEPA. It is rightly said that; a good teacher explains, a superior teacher demonstrates and a great teacher inspires" and so it is expected of all teachers to have certain qualities like content mastery, love for profession, and love for children.

Research studies shows that (a) private schools have higher teacher attendance and activity compared to government schools (b) private school teachers get a fraction of the salary of government school teachers, and (c) private schools have smaller class sizes (LEAPS 2007; Goyal 2006a and 2006b; Kremer and Muralidharan 2006; Tooley and Dixon, 2006; Kingdon 1996a and b).<sup>iii</sup>The PROBE Report (1999) notes that "In a private school, the teachers are accountable to the authorities (who can fire them), and, the parents (who can withdraw their children). These teachers also face a different recruitment and reward structure from those at government schools, they are forced to sign bonds and agreements by the school administrations where they cannot quit the school in any condition for years together by themselves; In case they leave, their salaries of months together is devoured and cut off by the school authorities, this is the reflection of many big city schools also. Private schools hire teachers who often do not have a teaching certificate and pay them a fraction of the salaries of government schools, but they hire more teachers to reduce class sizes. The heads have far greater control over hiring and firing of teachers and thus are able to exhibit tighter control, have higher attendance and only retain effective teachers. (Nechyba, 2000, Peterson et al., 2003)

Recent reforms in the school examination in the Central and the State Boards introduced Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system. Under CCE, various activities and projects have become a part of the grading system and teachers are struggling to finish their syllabus on time. Fagbasmie (2002) observed that teachers are very unhappy with their lot and that most of them are negatively disposed towards their jobs. According to him, teachers can be effective and productive when they are happy with their job because productivity is a function of human frame of mind and motivation is a necessary requirement for effectively in the long run.

Furthermore, Farber (1984) assessed the sources of stress of suburban teachers in the United States and found that excessive paperwork, unsuccessful administrative meetings, and the lack of advancement opportunities in teaching were related to stress. Workload, lack of resources, poor professional relationships with colleagues, inadequate salary, pupil misbehaviour, difficult interactions with parents and expectations of other staff have been identified as sources of stress in many studies (Borg, Riding & Falzon, 1991; Boyle, et al., 1995; Pierce & Molloy, 1990; Pithers & Soden, 1998; Travers & Cooper, 1993). Smilansky (1984) examined teachers' work satisfaction and reports of job-related stress in some English elementary schools, and he found that teachers' general satisfaction and stress at work were related mostly to their reported feelings about what had happened within class (such as relations with pupils, the process of teaching, and pupil behavior in school) rather than to administrative or policy questions (such as degree of work autonomy, relations with principals). Negative self-perception, negative life experiences, low morale, and a struggle to maintain personal values and standards in the classroom all take their toll (Goodman, 1980; Schnacke, 1982; Schwanke, 1981). Stressed teachers had more illness, medicine intake, anxiety, depression, and sexual passivity. More psychological and psychosomatic symptoms were reported by teachers experiencing high burnout (Bauer et al., 2006). As it

happens, many studies have brought out that private/non-government schools can supply a reasonable quality of school education at almost 25% to 35% of the cost of government education (Pankaj Jain 1997; Tooley et al 2007; Vachani and Smith 2008). This happens because the salary of a schoolteacher in the private sector is almost 25% to 35% of the government salary as found by several studies (see for instance, Bajpai et al 2008a and 2008b) (p 41).

**Review Literature** was undertaken of existing literature on small schools in India, where appropriate, relevant national and international literature on small school issues and management was also consulted. Lack of job satisfaction of teachers in small private schools in India is one such issue. Job satisfaction has been the most frequently investigated variable in organizational behavior (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction varies and researchers, for example Peretomode (1991) and Whawo (1993), have suggested that the higher the prestige of the job, the greater the job satisfaction. Many workers, however, are satisfied in even the least prestigious jobs. That is, they simply like what they do. In any case, job satisfaction is as individual as one's feelings or state of mind. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a variety of factors, for example, the quality of one's relationship with their supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which they work, the degree of fulfillment in their work, etc. However, there is no strong acceptance among researchers, consultants, etc., that increased job satisfaction produces improved job performance. In fact, improved job satisfaction can sometimes decrease job performance (McNamara, [n.d]; War, 1998).

Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggested that jobs differ in the extent to which they involve five core dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and task feedback. They further suggested that if jobs are designed in a way that increases the presence of these core characteristics, three critical psychological states can occur in employees: (1) experienced meaningfulness of work, (2) experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and (3) knowledge of the results of work activities. According to Hackman and Oldham, when these critical

Psychological states are experienced, work motivation and job satisfaction will be high. Job satisfaction can be affected by age, sex, marital status, designation, job tenure, academic qualification, professional qualification, training course, teaching experience etc. A difference in job satisfaction on the basis of age is a widely researched issue. It is essential to realize that pattern of satisfaction, as a function of age is likely to differ from occupation to occupation and possibly between the services (Gruenberg, 1976); Lee and Wilbur (1981) investigated the relationship of age to job satisfaction. They reported that level of satisfaction is higher among young workers, because they are fresh, energetic, having high expectations, values for the future, this is reference to their beginning years of job, but as the job years increase and their high expectations do not seem to be fulfilled, they feel dissatisfaction. Level of education, moral values, cultural background and life experiences are different at different age levels.

The basic purpose of any educational Institution is to ensure quality education through its dedicated and committed teachers. Over time, there is an apparent gap in providing appropriate salary and support to the teachers as per the government rule. This study was taken to understand the condition and satisfaction level of the teachers in the small private schools in India.

**Methodology** of the Study was descriptive in nature and the population for this study comprised of all the private schools of Baroda City. 10 private small schools from the Baroda city were selected purposively as sample of the study. List of schools was taken from District Education Officer. Instrument used to collect data for this study was a Questionnaire for teachers that consisted of 50 items with 4 possible responses that range from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Values were assigned to each of the response possibilities with very dissatisfied having an assigned value of 1 and very satisfied having as assigned value of 4. An interview schedule was prepared for both the Directors and the Principals of the Schools. Most of the questions were of the open-ended category and were designed to solicit reflective responses on different issues, were checked for content validity by the faculty in the department of educational administration. It was then field tested with practicing teachers for clarity and the nature of responses. Probing questions were used to clarify responses to obtain the reasons behind responses. The original questionnaire was in English but it was translated into Gujarati language for the Gujarati Medium schools that were part of the sample. Content analysis techniques were used to summarize the results impact upon the schools and teachers because of the microcosmic setting in which they occur. The data for this study were collected by personally visiting the schools.

### **Findings**

- Teachers do not get free time though it is shown as free periods in the timetable.
- They do not get sick leaves; have to take leave without pay if they get engaged in some unavoidable circumstances.

- Teachers are kept on probation and have no pension system.
- They are in constant threat of expulsion by school employers.
- Teachers lack administrative support from the principals
- Teachers have a feeling that the parents and students have no respect for them
- Teachers are underpaid and have extra working hours
- Schools follow hire and fire system.
- Directors are of the view that teachers are available at low pay.
- Principals follow the rules laid by the trustees.
- The principals do not decide the salary or appointments of teachers.
- Teachers feel they do not get respect from parents, students and management.
- Teachers are overloaded with administrative duties.
- Teacher's salary not at par with sixth pay commission.

## **II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Generally, teachers were less satisfied with advancement, compensation, supervision human-relation, and working conditions. These findings support the findings of Stephen and Fish (2010). They showed that most of the interviewees reported satisfaction with in their job, but noted excessive demands and lack of administrative support as contribution to job dissatisfaction. This study indicates that the fresh aspirants desperate for jobs are ready to work at a bare hand to mouth salary which indirectly affects experienced teachers. In the interview the teachers with four to five years of experience candidly admitted that management is happier to lay off such teachers and appoint new teachers as they would be able to get two teachers at the price of one teacher. Director of one school, said, "Many applications that we receive for secondary schools do not have a professional degree or sometimes they have a degree in home science and are themselves not qualified to teach, but since they are willing to work for such low wages why would schools raise the bar? For every post that is advertised we get at least more than 25 applicants though we do not feature in the top schools." When this is the condition where is the question for these private schools to pay according to sixth pay commission?

There are some schools that have put teachers in the sixth pay scale but have their own calculations not as per the government, thus these teachers never get equal pay scale as in case of government school teachers. With the low level of salaries, the immediate concern is clearly on the quality of education being imparted

Adequate payment will motivate teachers to put maximum efforts and enjoy their work." Poor salary is one major factor to the lack of talent flow in education sector. It was thus known from the responses of the teachers that these schools have a stringent pay policy for their teachers. Today neither the parents nor the students respect the teachers. This is what the teachers have to say about what they feel about the teaching profession and what is the attitude of parents, students and principals towards them. It becomes more important for principals to be aware of the importance of their supervisory styles in relation to teachers' job satisfaction and should adopt the supportive principal behavior such as criticism should be handled constructively, praise should be given genuinely, and principal should listen and accept teachers' suggestions. An atmosphere of trust, confidence and cooperation should be fostered, where teachers can interact with each other than disengage behavior. Efforts should focus on to improving job attraction for talented male population and retaining those already in the profession. The data clearly indicate that teachers derive less satisfaction from advancement, compensation, supervision human-relation, and working conditions, so the private trusts should take more interest in advancement, compensation, supervision human-relation and working conditions than other factors. Similar type of researches should be conducted at colleges and university levels.

Jacques Barzun-a French American philosopher has rightly said that, 'Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition'. Teachers Day as usual is observed every year and theoretically the teacher, their position and the prestige of their profession is glorified like anything, and also the philosophical discourses are conducted about what and how a teacher should do in this prophetic profession. But hardly we empathize with them and understand their problems or highlight the silent violence which the poor stock faces throughout.

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<sup>i</sup> Right to Education

<sup>ii</sup> National University of Educational Planning and Administration

<sup>iii</sup> Public Report on Basic Education