

ROLE OF THE SCIENCE TEACHERS AND THEIR STATUS IN THE SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

History is the witness of the fact that teachers in the past commanded high respect in the community. Teaching was considered to be a prophetic mission. On one hand it was a moral and religious obligation on the people to bestow high respect upon the teachers whereas on the other, the teachers were also of extra-ordinary calibre and character.

In that regard not only the people but Holy Quran also assigns a very important and respectable position to a teacher. The first revelation of the Holy Quran is:

In the name of Allah, the Most
Gracious, the Most Merciful.

1. Recite with the name of your
Lord Who created,
2. He made man from the clot of
blood,
3. Recite, for your Lord is the Most
Generous,
4. Who taught writing by the pen,
5. Taught man what he knew not.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ①
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ②
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ③
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ④
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ⑤
(1)

Again in Surah Al-Juma of the Holy Quran, the status of teachers is further explained as:

2. It is Who sent among the unlettered people a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His signs and purifies them and bestows them the knowledge of the Book and wisdom, although they had been necessarily in manifest error before that.

وَمِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ
كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ٥

3. And purifies and teaches others among them who have not met to those formers. And He is the Esteemed One, the Wise.

وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لِقَاءَ الْحَقُّوَابِهِمْ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ٦

(2)

In fact all the prophets of God were teachers, whole of their lives were spent in educating the people for Holy scripture and the secrets of nature.

In the light of above historical facts, the teacher occupied very important position in the society such as Ibon-Khaldoon, Ibne Sina, Imam Ghazali etc. The teacher scaled the heights of social and moral prestige and enjoyed a specially unique status in the Islamic world, which continued till Mughal period in sub- continent and the same became to decline in the British period where they were paid very low salaries and were made subordinates to the Bureauratic class. As such the teachers for the fulfilment of their economic liabilities started going to the door steps of others for obliging them fairly as well as by unfair means.

After independence in Pakistan same British system was initially adopted in which again the teachers were paid low salaries and they were treated inferior in the society.

In November 1947, All Pakistan Education Conference was held which gave its suggestions as under:

"It is suggested that the provinces should take necessary steps to ensure (i) the proper training of the teachers, (ii) an adequate scale of salaries".³

Further the guideline provided by Qaid-e-Azam the Founder of Pakistan for All Pakistan Education Conference also emphasized upon scientific, technical and Vocational Education. But due to limited resources and political poroblems faced by the country in the begining years of Independence the proposals mentioned were not Implimented properly.⁴

In the New Education Policy (1972-80) announced in March 1972 which was considered more experimental and innovative, though greater emphasis was laid on the science education and the teachers teaching the relative subjects were provided charming and attractive facilities such as science teacher allowance, quick HST scale etc. But slightly better remunerations alone do not make an improvement in status.

As the researchers themselves being the teachers in the University have observed the low status of secondary school science teachers coming to complete their B.Ed and M.Ed trainings have been stimulated to perform the critical study of the causes of this low status of secondary school science teachers in District Hyderabad.

IMPORTANCE

From the recommendations of All Pakistan Educational Conference and the proposals of Education Policies implemented in the country from time to time one can imagine clearly that in such Pakistan Education Conferences and the Policies, the experts on their own have devoted their full attention generally on the education and their teachers and particularly on science education and upgrading the status of the science teachers. But still the status of science teachers is not of that level which other Government Officers of the same grade are enjoying. The major areas where difference is clearly observed are as under:

- Upper-grade officers send their children in private school and openly show their dissatisfaction toward the government schools and their teachers including science teachers.
- They try to have science teachers at their home for coaching of their children.
- They pay the monthly remuneration of coaching and ask about any absence or late coming through their children.
- In educational weeks or other activity (if any) performed in the school the parents don't try to come and thus discourage the teachers.
- The science teachers are transferred and harassed by the authorities during the session which ultimately bring negative impact on the science teachers.
- Efficient and hard-working teachers are not given any reward of their honesty.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

On the above discouraging attitude of society towards secondary school science teachers, a study was conducted keeping in view the following objectives:

- To study the present socio-economic status of science teachers in the society.
- To study the factors influencing the status of science teachers.
- To suggest ways and means to improve the status of science teachers in the society.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE OF STUDY

To achieve the above objectives following procedure was adopted to collect, analyse and interpret the data.

SAMPLE

A questionnaire consisting of 23 items based on the following division:

- (i) Professional Education,
- (ii) Economic Factors,
- (iii) Personal Traits and,
- (iv) Socio-Economic Factors.

was mailed at random 65 different trained science teachers of Hyderabad District and 58 trainees of B.Ed and M.Ed teachers; out of which 108 questionnaires (87.8%) were recieved back dully filled with necessary information.

TABLE "A"
SHOWING THE NUMBER OF ITEMS IN EACH DIVISION

No.	Head of the Division	Serial Number of Questions	Toal No.of Items
1.	Professional Education	1 to 5	5 Nos.
2.	Economical Factors	6 to 13	8 Nos.
3.	Personal Traits	14 to 20	7 Nos.
4.	Socio-cultural Factors	21 to 23	3 Nos.
Total			23 Items.

INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL FACTORS ON THE SOCIAL STATUS

The total number of items pertaining to this division of questionnaire is 5.

The analysis of these questions is given as under:

ITEM NO.1

About academic qualifications 91.6% of the secondary school science teachers have answered that they have passed B.Sc where as 8.3% are Masters in science.

ITEM NO.2

Answering the professional qualifications 75% of the science teachers are B.Ed where as 19.4% are M.Ed and 5.6% are fresh having professional qualifications NIL.

ITEM NO.3

When the teachers were asked whether they have received any overseas scholarship to improve their qualifications 2.8% answered as Yes and 97.2% as No.

ITEM NO.4

Whether the science teachers have received any (inland) professional training other than B.Ed and M.Ed 20.4% responded in affirmative and 79.6% in negative.

ITEM NO.5

Against this question whether science teachers will continue present profession of teaching if they are provided better earning job, 85.2% of the teachers showed their inclination towards the same profession whereas 12.9% are not in favour to continue and 1.9% have not given any response.

INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC FACTORS ON SOCIAL STATUS

The total number of items pertaining to this division i.e. economic factors is 8. The analysis of those items is given as under:

ITEM NO.6

For the number of family members being supported by the secondary school science teachers, 80.5% have informed that they support more than five members where as 19.5% have indicated that they support less than five members.

ITEM NO.7

Being the joint family system in our society it was asked that how many earning members do they have in their family, for which 76.8% replied that they have some other earning members also in the family whereas 23.2% answered that they have no other earning member.

ITEM NO.8

About the residential facility where they possess their own house, 66.7% of the science teachers replied affirmative and 33.3% of the teachers answered in negative.

ITEM NO.9

Further for the residential facility, the teachers were asked whether they have purchased after entering the teaching profession. 26.3% accepted that they have purchased the house during their services whereas 73.6% have showed that they have parental residence.

ITEM NO.10

About the conveyance facilities 36.1% of the teachers answered that they possess their own conveyance whereas the rest of the teachers i.e. 63.9% have no personal conveyance.

ITEM NO.11

Against the question whether science teachers have any other source of income, 56.5% of the teachers accepted that they have some other source of income and 43.5% depend only on their salaries.

ITEM NO.12

Further when the science teachers were asked about the feasibility of supplementary income, 85.2% of the secondary school science teachers expressed it unavoidable and just 14.8% indicated it undesirable.

ITEM NO.13

From the teachers who have accepted other earning sources, 68.9% the teachers informed that they are coaching the students whereas the rest i.e. 31.1% have some other type of side business.

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL TRAITS ON THE SOCIAL STATUS

The total number of items under this section of questionnaire regarding personal traits which influence the social status of the teachers is seven. The analysis of these items is given below:

ITEM NO.14

Asking about the parents of the pupils whether they come to consult the teachers in connection with the problems of their children, 17.6% of the teachers have replied in affirmative but 82.4% have shown their response in negative.

ITEM NO.15

For the question whether head-master invite the opinion of science teachers on certain important administrative or educational matters, 59.3% of the teachers are satisfied from their concerned head, whereas 40.7% have replied in negative.

ITEM NO.16

To get the idea whether the teachers are of that repute that other institutions invite them with their names in their function, 10.2% of the teachers informed that they are invited, 86.1% replied that they are not invited and 3.7% have not answered.

ITEM NO.17

Regarding the parents of the children it was asked whether they invite the teachers in their special occasions like marriage etc., 28.7% replied in affirmative whereas 68.5% in negative and 2.8% gave no response.

ITEM NO.18

For the contacts with local authorities of the district, 38.9% of the teachers accepted that they have, and 61.1% informed that they don't have such contacts.

ITEM NO.19

Whether the teachers get any invitation from the local authorities in their functions like "Sports Day", "Pakistan Day", "Defence Day" etc., 51.9% of the teachers answered that they are invited, 43.5% replied in negative and 4.6% gave no reply.

ITEM NO.20

About the membership in any non-government organization, 13 out of 108 teachers i.e. 12% answered that they are members whereas 88% expressed that they don't have any such membership.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS ON THE SOCIAL STATUS

Under this division of questionnaire, there are 3 items. The analysis of these items is as under:

ITEM NO.21

About the consideration of the persons having same grade and calibre but earn more in other professions command more respect in the society than the teachers, 80.6% replied in affirmative, 14.8% in negative 4.6% gave no response.

ITEM NO.22

When the teachers were asked to give their

considerations whether they think that teaching is a respectable profession in the society as compared to other professions of the same grades, 30.6% feel that teaching profession has lost its respect whereas 7.4% have no idea.

ITEM NO.23

When the teachers were asked to give their consent whether they will like to bring their children in the teaching profession, 26.9% were inclined, 66.7% refused and 6.5% have no response.

CONCLUSION

From the study of the responses received, it is clear that a majority of the teachers is of the opinion that they are not having better prospects in the teaching profession.

From item no.8 of the questionnaire it will be revealed that majority of the teachers possess their own houses, but it may be mentioned here that about 40% of the teachers have houses by in-heritance where as 26.3% only have purchased (Item no.9) but that may have been purchased jointly with other members of the family because in item No.7, 76.8% of the science teachers have accepted that they have other earning members too in the family.

Further it has been observed that majority of teachers have some other sources of income also which indicate that salaries of the teachers are not sufficient to make both ends meet and they have to look for other sources of income to earn their livelihood.

It is a discouraging report given by the teachers that only 17.6% of the parents of pupils contact the concerned teachers about the problems of their children.

Similarly only 10.2% of the teachers have admitted that they are invited by name in the functions or other

special occasions of other institutions. It is due to personal characteristics of individual teachers.

Further that the percentage of the science teachers involved in the social activities such as members of any club, social welfare association, community - based gatherings, is also very low.

It has also been observed that teachers have serious feelings that persons of their calibre are being paid more in other professions and they enjoy better status in the society.

SUGGESTIONS

The survey has revealed many problems regarding the social status of the science teachers at secondary school level. Some propoals and humble suggestions are presented in the following section to remedy the situation:

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY

It is felt that low competency at academic and professional fields produce incompetent science teachers which in turn are given low status in the society, for up-grading social status of science teachers, it is suggested to select competent and interested personnel for this noble job and general improvement in the quality of education.

FINANCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS

As it has been generally observed in the society that pupils who seek high percentages in their intermediate examination try to get admission in medical colleges or engineering universities, thus only low percentage candidates enter in B.Sc. courses out of which again the high rank students get appointed in industries or other better earning jobs and they are less interested to enter the teaching profession due to low salaries and lack of other facilities.

In this respect Revis and Judd have made the following statement:

"The most important factor in determining the economic security of a group of professional workers in their salary status, remuneration must be adequate to provide the necessities of life, food, shelter, clothing and transportation. It must be sufficient to enable the teacher to meet other demands such as cultural and recreational requirements, civic and religious obligations, personal health services".⁵

TEACHER PARENT COORDINATION

The importance of good teacher-parent relations is not observed in our educational system whereas modern educationists realize that the school and education cannot do its effective work without the active cooperation of the parents. Bremback Gole, in this respect explains that "teachers are expected to keep parents well-informed about the progress of their pupils. If they do this systematically and regularly it can prove to be the most faithful avenue of bringing together the public and the school".⁶

IMPROVING SOCIO-CULTURAL STATUS

Teacher services must be recognized not in theory but in practice also. Teacher community as a whole must be considered as a highly privileged class. He should be invited by name in the public gatherings such as Independence Day, Defence Day or any other occasion of national importance. He should be provided his seat in a suitable place.

In this regard the Commission on National Education 1959, has given the remarks as under:

"Teachers should receive special award for merit from the President of Pakistan and Governors on appropriate occasions. The achievements of good teachers should also be featured in the press, the social recognition of teachers".⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

After going through the valuable responses, the researchers have concluded that the secondary school science teachers find themselves at the lowest level of the socio-economic standard. It is an admitted fact that no educational scheme can be successful unless the teachers are reasonably kept satisfied and contented in their work. The success of an educational plan will depend upon the teacher and his attitude towards his profession.

Further that we must admit that if the secondary school science teachers are lethargic, then no training or any other monetary inducement can make their status up-graded. Thus, it is essential to include talented young people having high sense of duty and integrity in the teaching profession. But, the talented youth will not join the teaching profession in large number unless we make it as attractive and lucrative as other professions such as Engineering, Medicine etc.

We will, therefore, suggest a reconsideration of the pay scales and status of the teachers in view of their qualifications and work of the national importance. In the world of today when material gains out-weigh the moral and spiritual values, we can not force the teacher to lead a life which may be deprived of all comforts. Teacher after all is a member of the same society, where-as a doctor, a lawyer and an engineer is enjoying far better social status than the teacher. Teachers are source of great potential power. This great potential power must not be made to lie dormant. It must be made dynamic of infusing in the teachers qualities of leadership which will enable them to participate intelligently in the progressing affairs of the community. It will be then, that the teachers will feel at par with the other professions in the community and will produce wonderful fruits for the nation.

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