

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG B. ED. TEACHER EDUCATORS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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This paper studied the level of professional commitment of teacher educators serving in secondary teacher training institutions of Himachal Pradesh. The data were gathered through 'Scale for Professional Commitment of Teacher Educators' from 135 teacher educators of 25 B. Ed. colleges of Himachal Pradesh. Results showed that the level of professional commitment of B. Ed. teacher educators in Himachal Pradesh is moderate. Significant differences were found in professional commitment of B. Ed. teacher educators with regard to gender, marital status and teaching experience. However, NET qualified and Non-NET qualified teacher educators were found to have similar level of commitment towards their profession. The paper discusses certain suggestions for enhancing the professional commitment level of B. Ed. teacher educators.

INTRODUCTION

The progress of a country depends upon the quality of its teachers and for this reason, teaching is the noblest among all professions and the teachers are called the nation builders. But, a teacher can not perform his or her multifarious tasks and responsibilities until he or she is not updated professionally and personally. So, like various other professions, teacher education has assumed special significance. Teacher education is not only meant for teaching the teacher, how to teach but also to kindle his initiative to keep it alive to minimise evils of the "Hit and Miss" process and to save time, energy and money of the teachers and the taught. It would help the teacher to minimize his/her trouble and to discharge his/her responsibilities with efficiency and effectiveness. Teacher education is no longer a training process but an education strategy for enabling teachers to teach and concern for their well-being. NCTE (1998)

has pointed out that teacher education programmes shall focus on competencies and commitment in much greater magnitude. It calls for bringing out a transformation in teacher preparation strategies as well as in behavioural challenges in pupils under their charge. A sound programme for professional education of teachers is essential for the qualitative improvement of education. To improve the quality of teacher education, we should not only see that what type of students are selected but it is of vital importance that competent and committed teacher educators are given due place for this pious task of preparing future teachers. It is of vital importance that teacher educators should internalise their changing role and make themselves ready for this change. It is the role of teacher educators to prepare future teachers to be life long learners and educational workers to create a learning society. But, teacher educators can play such type of role effectively only if their own education is better and is imparted in a proper manner. Since the role of teacher educators is of prime importance for effective implementation of teacher education curriculum, they need to be given suitable in-service and orientation education.

Presently, India is having a large system of teacher education with more than 2,500 elementary teacher education institutions, colleges of teacher education and departments of education wherein more than 30,000 teacher educators are engaged in the preparation of school teachers. The NCERT organises various professional development programmes for teacher educators in areas like student teaching, micro-teaching, research and evaluation activities, upgradation of teacher education curricula and so on. The UGC also implements various teacher education programmes and offers financial support for conducting seminars, workshops and research projects for teacher educators. Despite all these efforts, there has not

been any substantial improvement in this field. While there is clear and categorical recognition of the vital role that the teacher educators have to play in preparing school teachers in terms of professional competencies and commitments on their part, surprisingly, in the total enterprise of teachers, the most neglected group is the teacher educators themselves. In fact, there is little information about who these people are, what are their motivations to enter the field, their perceptions of the area of their work, their social origins and their world view. In this regard, Kohli (2005b) rightly remarked that the study of teacher educators remained an area that was neglected by researchers. Further, Raina (1998) strongly advocated that the research on teaching teachers stands in sharp contrast to research on teaching youngsters.

Very few research studies have been conducted on teacher educators and their characteristics. A brief account of these studies is provided here. Goyal (1980) indicated that a large majority of teacher educators were favourably inclined towards their profession, satisfied in their job but not well adjusted as well as had low professional interest. Baugh & Roberts (1994) studied professional and organizational commitment among engineers in relation to job performance and satisfaction and revealed that individuals high on both forms of commitment were also high on level of satisfaction and performance. Hung & Liu (1999) depicted that stay-back is the factor which is most highly and significantly related to commitment. Apart from this, the other factors like marital status, age and tenure were also found to be significantly related to commitment. Bogler & Somech (2004) examined the distinctive relationship of teachers' professional and organizational commitment with participation in decision making and with organizational citizenship behaviour. It was inferred that participation in managerial domain was positively associated with both the professional and organizational commitment, whereas; participation in the technical domain was positively related with only teachers' professional commitment. Choudhury (2007) indicated that no significant relationship exists between professional awareness and job satisfaction of college teachers. The factors like type of institution and educational qualification of teachers at higher level did not seem to have any bearing on relationship between professional awareness and job satisfaction. Usha & Sasikumar (2007) revealed that teacher commitment is the best predictor of job satisfaction among school teachers. Shukla (2009) demonstrated a high positive relation between professional commitment and job satisfaction but the relation between teaching competence and job satisfaction came to be positively very low for most of the dimensions and for some of the dimensions, negative relation was observed. Sylvester (2010) held that the factors like gender, location of institute, educational qualification and years of teaching experience of teacher educators have no impact on their attitude towards teaching profession as well as level of job satisfaction. From the aforesaid discussion, it is clear that there is acute shortage of studies related to professional commitment of teacher educators while studies on attitude towards teaching, job satisfaction level and other socio-psychological characteristics are abundant in number both in India and abroad but most of such studies have been carried out either on secondary school teachers or college teachers. None of the studies have been carried out on professional commitment of 'teachers of teachers'. Hence, the present study was undertaken to find out different factors that influence professional commitment of teacher educators. Commitment was presumed to be a natural ingredient of teaching from its very beginning. NCTE (1998) emphasised the need for quality teacher education in terms of competency based and commitment oriented teacher education. It is presumed that if teachers acquire professional competencies and commitment, it will result in sound teacher performance. In the functional sense, professional commitment on the part of teacher-educators essentially consists not only in doing their best for introducing teacher-trainees to the competencies that they would need as teachers in school, but also practically inspiring them to inculcate values of the teaching profession. A normative view of commitment puts commitment as value-based and normative evaluation of organization related behaviours. It mainly depends on the teacher characteristics such as knowledge base, sense of responsibility, the student characteristics such as opportunity to learn and academic work, the teaching factors such as lesson structure and communication, the learning aspects such as involvement and success and the class room phenomena such as environment/climate and organization/management. If the teachers take care of these factors, they can enhance their commitment

level to the optimum. The professional accountability or responsibility of teacher educators includes instructional and non-instructional responsibilities. It was suggested that no single technique or method should be used for their appraisal; rather a combination of students' ratings, administrator and peer ratings, systematic observations and performance tests should be employed for evaluating teacher educators' functioning.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Effective school education anticipates effective teacher education. In making teacher education truly effective and functional, the role of teacher educators is most crucial. It is universally recognized that the onus of the quality of education of teachers rests squarely on the teacher educators. From the available literature on professional commitment of teachers and of teacher-educators, nothing is clear-how teacher-educators stand in terms of their commitments as teachers. No verified knowledge comes to hand on the actual nature of professional commitment of the teacher educators from the study of said kind of literature. The need for the improvement and enhancement of professional commitment of teacher-educators is now universally emphasised and highlighted in educational circles and forums. How to effect its improvement to the optimum desirable degree is the formidable problem which teachers and educationists face. Hence, the present study was undertaken to assess the level of professional commitment of teacher educators and identify the factors responsible for declined commitment and dedication among teacher educators that consequently result in undesirable role played by them in teacher training institutions.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To study professional commitment among B. Ed. teacher educators.
- 2.To study gender-wise and experience-wise difference in professional commitment of B. Ed. Teacher educators.
- 3.To study difference in professional commitment of married and unmarried B. Ed. teacher educators and NET qualified and non-NET qualified B. Ed. teacher educators.

HYPOTHESES

- 1.There exists no significant difference in professional commitment of male and female and married and unmarried teacher educators.
- 2.There exists a significant experience-wise difference in professional commitment of B. Ed. teacher educators and
- 3.There exists a significant difference between NET qualified and non-NET qualified teacher educators with respect to their professional commitment.

METHOD

Survey technique under 'Descriptive Method of Research' was used to conduct the present investigation.

Sample

For collecting the requisite data from B. Ed. teacher educators, a total of 25 B. Ed. colleges from 5 districts of Himachal Pradesh were selected on the basis of convenience. Afterwards, all the teacher educators serving in these teacher training colleges were approached for data collection. Thus, a total of 135 teacher educators (46-Male, 89-Female) were selected. Out of these, 80 teacher educators were either NET qualified or having M. Phil./Ph. D. (Education) degree, whereas remaining 55 teacher educators were only having M. Ed. as their highest qualification.

Tool

The data were collected from the teacher educators by administering 'Scale for Professional Commitment of Teacher Educators' developed and standardized by Kanchan Kohli. This scale is having 30 statements which are to be rated on five points Likert type scale.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data were analysed through certain descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The normality of data (professional commitment scores) was assessed by calculating the values of mean, median, S. D., skewness and kurtosis. In order to study the significant differences in professional commitment of teacher educators with regard to gender, marital status, teaching experience and educational qualifications, t-test was employed. The significance of differences was checked at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis of data revealed that the mean value of professional commitment scores of B. Ed. teacher educators was 98.88 with a standard deviation of 11.287. This indicates that the professional commitment of B. Ed. teacher educators in Himachal Pradesh was of moderate level. The mean professional commitment score (100.53 with S. D. 11.43) of female teacher educators was found to be significantly high ($t=2.10$, $p<0.05$) in comparison to mean professional commitment score of male teacher educators (96.30 with S. D. 10.94), thereby, rejecting null hypothesis (H_0) that there exists no significant difference in professional commitment of male and female teacher educators. Hence, it was inferred that female teacher educators tend to be more professionally committed than male teacher educators. This finding is in agreement with Srivastava (1986) who reported that female teachers are significantly more professionally honest as compared to teachers. However, there is disagreement between the present finding and results reported by Sengupta (1990) who indicated that a large proportion of male teachers had higher professional involvement in comparison to women teachers.

Marital status of B. Ed. teacher educators also seems to affect their professional commitment as unmarried teacher educators have scored significantly high on professional commitment (Mean 101.87, S. D. 10.26) as compared to their married counterparts (Mean 96.59, S. D. 11.88). The t-value testing the significance of this mean difference was arrived at 2.77 which was much higher than the table value of 't' at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis (H_0) that there exists no significant difference in professional commitment of married and unmarried teacher educators stands rejected in favour of unmarried teacher educators. Srivastava (1986) and Hung & Liu (1999) also reported that marital status is significantly related to teachers' commitment and unmarried teachers are significantly more committed towards their profession as compared to their married counterparts. It was found that highly experienced teacher educators (Mean 100.65, S. D. 12.04) were professionally more committed in comparison to less experienced teacher educators (Mean 96.36, S. D. 9.74). The mean difference was 4.29 and the 't' value of this mean difference was 2.25 which is higher than the critical value ($t = 1.98$, $p<0.05$). Hence, the hypothesis that there exists significant experience-wise difference in professional commitment of teacher educators was retained in favour of highly experienced teacher educators. This finding is also supported by Hung & Liu (1999) who reported that tenure of teachers is significantly and positively related to commitment level of teachers.

On the other hand, the mean difference in professional commitment scores of NET/M. Phil./Ph. D. qualified teacher educators (99.47, S. D. 10.48) and non-NET qualified teacher educators (Mean 98.54 S. D. 12.71) was not found to be significant as the computed 't' value (0.44) fall short of the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there exists significant difference between NET qualified and non-NET qualified teacher educators with respect to their professional commitment, stands rejected. It may be averred that the level of professional commitment of NET qualified and non-NET qualified teacher educators was more or less the same.

CONCLUSION

The results discussed above indicate that the professional commitment level of B. Ed. teacher educators in Himachal Pradesh is moderate and factors like gender, marital status and teaching experience seems to have an impact on their professional commitment level. There is a need to enhance the professional commitment level of B. Ed. teacher educators so that they can give their optimum to the teacher trainees. The teacher educators should be provided healthy academic environment in the training colleges so that they feel satisfied and comfortable. The teacher training institutions should give the teacher educators

opportunity to attend orientation programmes, refresher courses, workshops etc. organized by various agencies. This will help in updating their knowledge, skills and competencies and ultimately will result in enhanced commitment towards their profession. In this regard, it has been recommended by Maheshwari (2003) that professional development programmes like seminars and refresher courses could help teachers to become professionally more committed. Further, there is a dire need that regulatory bodies in the field of teacher education like NCTE and affiliating universities should strictly initiate steps to enforce rules and regulations especially which are related to welfare of teacher educators. Healthy academic environment, more salaries and other facilities might enhance commitment among teachers. This initiation will be a great boon and boost for enhancing the professional commitment among teacher educators.

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