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Problems of Elementary school teachers of tea garden area of Dibrugarh District

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Abstract: Elementary education plays a significant role in human resource development by accelerating the pace of social change process. It is the foundation of life of a child. It helps a child to become a civic citizen of the society. The teacher of elementary schools has more responsibilities and challenges to educate the children. Because elementary education is the beginning of formal system of education and the quality of whole education system is depended upon the raw materials of pupils into specialized and resourceful human beings. But sometime it is seen that the teachers of elementary school face various problems, which are related with school life and real life situation also and it directly hampers on education system. This paper tries to highlight the existing condition of elementary school teachers of tea garden elementary school of Dibrugarh district. Necessary information regarding problems of teachers was collected through questionnaires of 70 teachers teaching in 37 different tea garden elementary schools. The results indicated that tea garden elementary school teachers of Dibrugarh district faced enormous problems in relation to various aspects of education which hamper their competency and development in the teaching learning activities. These include poor classrooms, insufficient teaching aids, lack of proper sanitation, non-availability of teacher's quarter, shortage of time to carry out academic assignments, lack of proper in-service training facility, frequent transfer of teachers, lack of community involvement, insufficient and delayed payment of teacher's salary, etc. The study also suggested various important measures to solve the existing problems of elementary school teachers.

Keywords: *Elementary Education, Elementary School Teachers Problems, Tea garden Elementary Schools.*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is regarded as the foundation on which learning, growth and development of the individuals takes place. It is of utmost significance to initiate programs and schemes that would lead to progression in the system of elementary education. The quality of education mainly depends upon the elementary school teacher because elementary school teachers are the first formal teacher. Teachers are the maker of the society and form the backbone of any educational system. All the administrators, statesmen, physicians, engineers, lawyers, and other worthy citizens are the product of teachers. The importance of teachers cannot be over emphasized and therefore, so many commissions and committees have acknowledged the important role of teachers and recommended for the upliftment of their status in the society. Unfortunately, the condition of our tea garden elementary schools teachers are not satisfactory in view of the present-day demands of life with over-rising prices and other related problems. Teachers' problems are real and will not go away with the accumulation of teaching experience. If these problems are extremely bothersome they will affect teachers' performance and job satisfaction (Engelking, 1989; Leslie, 1989). In addition to that problems in the workplace or environmental stressors' and job dissatisfaction contribute to stress and teacher burnout (Gold et al., 1992). There are many variables which act as a detrimental factor in developing teachers into competent and efficient teachers such as poor working environment, faulty administration, poor salary, etc. All these factors together give a psychological and social blow to the teachers which in turn make them dissatisfied with their teaching profession.

According to Cruickshank and Myers (1975), there is a common assertion that if you can find out what teachers' problems are, you have gained enormously valuable insight into their world and are in a position to help them at some level to consider and thus accept, reduce, or eliminate those problems. Therefore, this study has been undertaken with an aim to identify the various problems which bothers elementary school teachers in tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district, Assam.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the various problems of elementary school teachers in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district.
2. To suggest measures to solve the problems of elementary school teachers in the study areas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district in Assam. Dibrugarh is an administrative district in the state of Assam in India. The district headquarters are located within the city of Dibrugarh, which the district itself is named for. The district occupies an area of 3381 km². Officially, there are total 233 tea gardens in Dibrugarh. The first tea garden was at Chabua owned by Maniran Dewan. Dibrugarh is also the headquarters of the Directorate of Development of Small Tea Growers in India. Dibrugarh a district of Assam is having about 6 Blocks in its District. In tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district there is total 122 elementary school. In the present study 37 elementary schools were selected to represent the entire tea garden elementary schools of Dibrugarh district with the assumption that teachers in all the tea garden elementary schools faced similar situations or problems. The present study adopted descriptive survey research method in which the investigator visited different tea garden elementary schools in the Dibrugarh

district. A sample of 70 tea garden elementary school teachers were drawn by following simple random sampling method. Necessary information regarding the existing problems of teachers at elementary schools were collected through questionnaire. The data collected were entered and then analysed systematically by using appropriate statistical techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Problems Relating to Physical Facilities

4.1.1. Classroom partitions

The study found out that majority of the elementary school teachers in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district faced problem due to the poor system of classroom partitions. Although 70.40% of the elementary schools had separate rooms for each class, majority of the classroom partitions were not sound proof partitions such as plywood, wooden plank, mud and bamboo. The remaining 29.60% elementary schools did not even have partition between classrooms and therefore, classes of different standards were conducted in a hall without any partition.

4.1.2. Teaching staff-room

Majority (84.40%) of the elementary school teachers reported that teaching staff-room is not provided in their schools. Infrastructure such as chairs, tables, benches, desks, cupboards and Almirah are very limited in the teaching staff room. However, in many cases, the conditions of the staff rooms were pathetic and the infrastructural facilities were below average.

4.1.3. Teacher's quarter

Teacher's quarter has been one of the major problems especially in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district. Due to frequent transfer and posting to far places, teachers felt that they should be provided accommodation. However, a large number (92.40%) of tea garden elementary schools teachers in the study reported that teacher's quarter was not provided, while the remaining 7.60% reported that the same was provided in their school.

4.1.4. Drinking water and toilet facilities

According to 55.40% elementary school teachers in the study, safe drinking water was provided in their schools, while the remaining 44.60% teachers reported its absence. Regarding toilet, only 30.00% teachers reported the availability in their schools, while the remaining 70.00% reported the absence of this facility. The situation revealed the poor hygienic condition of tea garden elementary schools in the study areas and the difficulties faced by teachers and students under such circumstances.

4.2. Academic Problems

4.2.1. Text-books, teacher's guide book and magazine

In the present study 93.00% teachers reported that textbooks were available in their schools. However, other materials such as guide books and magazine were scarcely provided in the study areas. Only 28.80% teachers responded that teacher's guide books were provided while 21.40% reported that monthly magazines were provided.

4.2.2 Completion of syllabus

The study found that 61.00% of the tea garden elementary school teachers completed their syllabus within the stipulated time. However, the remaining 39.00% of them could not complete their syllabus in time owing to attending extra duties, such as election duty, awareness programmes, etc.

4.2.3. Teaching aids

Majority (96.20%) of elementary school teachers reported that teaching aids were provided in their school although in-sufficient. Among them, only 25.20% reported that pictorial chart and plain chart were available in their schools.

4.2.4. In-service training facility

It is very unfortunate to observe that in-service training facility was not readily available among the elementary school teachers in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district. Most of the DIETs (District Institute of Education and Training) in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district headquarters were reported to be non-functional. As a result, majority (57.77%) of the elementary school teachers responded that in-service training facility was not provided. Besides, some teachers reported that they were not permitted to attend such training programmes by the school authorities, due to shortage of teachers.

4.2.5. Examination and evaluation

Regarding examination, cent percent of the elementary school teachers responded that examinations were conducted in half yearly and yearly basis. Majority of the teachers reported that marking system of evaluation was followed in their schools. The study also revealed that 60.80% of the elementary school teachers did not have problems while evaluating student's performance. However, the remaining 39.20% teachers stated that language problem, bad handwriting, too many students and shortage of time were the main problems faced by them while evaluating student's performances.

It was also found out that progress report card was maintained by all the elementary school teachers in the tea garden areas. All the teachers also opined that maintaining progress report card is useful for the students as well as teachers and parents. Despite its importance, 48.00% of the teachers were reported to face problem while preparing the progress report card due to time constraint.

4.2.6. Co-Curricular activities

The study observed that 50.40% elementary school teachers were not satisfied with the type of co-curricular activities conducted in their schools. The main problems include lack of financial aids, insufficient sports materials, lack of first-aid supply, shortage of teachers and lack of adequate space to organize.

4.3. Administrative Problems

4.3.1. Interference of the headmaster

In the present study, 46.20% elementary school teachers reported that headmasters usually interfere in the work of the teachers, giving them very little freedom in performing their duties.

4.3.2. Participation in school administration

Table 1: Showing teacher's participation in school administration

Types of Activities	No. of Respondents	%
Yearly basic planning	19	27.14%
Time table preparation	45	64.29%
School accounts	6	8.57%

Table 1 depicts the preparation of teachers in school administration. It is observed that teacher's participation was highest in preparing the school time table with 64.29% of them involved in it. Only 27.14% and 8.57% of them were involved in the yearly basic planning and maintaining the school accounts respectively.

4.3.3. Leave facility

The study also found out that 91.60% tea garden elementary school teachers enjoyed one or more leave facilities. However, the remaining 8.40% teachers reported that they did not enjoy any leave facilities. The different types of leave provided were casual leave, medical leave, maternity leave, special leave, and earned leave.

4.3.4. Interaction with School Management Committee

Table 2: Showing the frequency of interaction with managing committee

Frequency of interaction	No. of Respondents	%
At least once in 2 months	40	57.14%
3-4 times a year	18	25.71%
1-2 times a year	12	17.14%
No interaction	0	0

As shown in Table 2, there were 57.14% tea garden elementary school teachers who had interaction with the School Management Committee while the remaining 25.71% have interaction with the Managing Committee 3-4 times a year, 17.14% had interaction with the Managing Committee 1-2 times a year.

4.3.5. Transfer and posting of teachers

Regarding transfer and posting, a large number (80.00%) of elementary school teachers were found to have faced problems due to lack of proper transfer and posting policy by the state government. Teachers were frequently transferred and posted at different places even in the middle of the academic sessions, which definitely obstruct the quality improvement of the educational system.

4.3.6. Parent/Community Participation

Participation of parents/communities in children's education at tea garden elementary schools was very unsatisfactory. Majority of the teachers reported that there was lack of parents/commu ity involvement in the educational process as parents completely depend on teachers for their children's education. Most of the parents were even ignorant about the importance of education which resulted in a sub-standard attitude towards educational values.

4.4. Financial Problems

4.4.1. Teacher's salary

Table 3: Showing the time for payment of teacher's salary

Time for payment	No. of Respondents	%
Regular	35	50.00%
After 2-3 months	14	20.00%
After 4-5 months	21	30.00%
After 6-7 months	0	0

Table 3 depicts the irregularities of receiving teacher's salary at tea garden elementary schools. Majority of the teachers (50.00%) reported that they received their monthly salary in time. However, 20.00% of teachers received their salary after 2-3 months, 30.00% teachers received after 4 to 5 months.

4.4.2. Sufficiency/insufficiency over salary

Majority (63.00%) of the tea garden elementary school teachers in the study reported that their salary was sufficient to meet their basic requirements. In the contrary, 37.00% teachers stated otherwise forcing them to take up some other part-time jobs including extra tuition to supplement their salary.

4.4.3. Allowances

With respect to allowances 62.40% of the tea garden elementary school teachers were given annual increment while only 17.40% and 7.80% were given house rent and medical allowances respectively. However, 12.40% of the elementary school teachers reported that they were not granted any allowance.

Measures To Solve The Existing Problems of Tea Garden Elementary School Teachers

1. The concerned authority must provide proper physical facilities such as school building, sufficient rooms and furniture, etc.
2. The government or the tea garden committee must provide quarter/accommodation to teachers.
3. Teaching staff room along with safe drinking water and toilet facilities should be provided.
4. Sufficient teaching-aids and teacher's guide book should be provided to every teacher.
5. Each school must be given adequate number of teachers according to their requirements.
6. Teachers should not be engaged in extra duties besides teaching; they should have ample time for academic purposes like teaching, examination, evaluation, etc.
7. In-service training facility must be provided and made compulsory to all the tea garden elementary school teachers.
8. Co-curricular activities must be improved and sufficient sports materials must be provided to each school.
9. Teachers must be given more opportunity to take part in the educational planning and administration.
10. Definite transfer and posting policy should be adopted and followed by the state government.
11. Parents/guardians of students should give full co-operation to the teachers to uplift the quality of education.
12. Awareness programme on educational values must be arranged for parents.

13. The garden committee or the state government must pay teacher's salary regularly, and the salary of quasi permanent teachers should be increased so as to meet their basic requirements.

14. The garden committee or the government must tackle effectively the problems faced by the tea garden elementary school teachers.

15. Political interferences to the educational system should be minimized to the greatest extent.

CONCLUSION

Elementary school teachers in the tea garden areas of Dibrugarh district faced enormous problems due to poor working environment, improper administration, academic related problems, financial aspects, etc. The study would ensure the state government, local governing body, school authority, community, non-governmental organisations, and educationists to gain insight on the various problems encounter by the elementary school teachers and enable them to provide a better working environment and help them in solving those problems that bothers the teachers.

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