

Lecture No. 12

Assessing Problems and Needs of Teachers

Education is the backbone in the development of any nation. It is a fact that countries that have an effective system of education also happen to be the leaders of the world, both socially and economically. In short it is education, which can turn the population of any country from a burden to human resource. Pakistan is one of those very few countries where the system of education has constantly eroded since independence. One of the key indicators of the above is the fact that since independence a lot of socially un-acceptable professions had achieved social acceptance, whereas teachers have lost their social acceptance. Following are some of the problems and needs faced by the present era teachers.

1. Respect in Society

The first and foremost factor in choosing a profession anywhere is the respect that it gives to a person who joins it. As already mentioned above, teaching is constantly losing its respect. The situation is so bad today that qualified people opt for other professions and majority of persons joining this profession are of quit a low caliber.

2. Financial Problems

The other most important factor, which in majority of the cases is as important as social respect that a profession commands is the financial benefits which a person, derives from it. The salary of our teacher is quite meager and is not enough to lead a decent life and support a healthy family. Due to this, majority of teachers adopt a number of ways and means to supplement their income. This not only diverts the attention of the teacher but also brings a bad name to this once the most respected profession. If it is ensured that a teacher gets enough financial benefits with which he can lead a decent life, he will then be in a position to invest all his energies in doing justice to his profession.

3. Frequent Transfers between Schools

It has been observed that majority of the teachers are not only posted away from the cities/villages they belong to but are also subjected to very frequent transfers. It is a human nature that it takes time to accustom to any new environment. By posting teachers away from their native cities/villages and then subjecting them to frequent transfers, they never get accustomed to the schools and students, which greatly diminish their productivity. This also has another angle i.e. the students too need time to get to know a teacher and it is only when they understand each other they can communicate positively. Frequent transfers also have a negative effect on the family life of teachers especially the education of their children.

4. Unavailability of Accommodation

Accommodation is a major irritant in the sound family life of teachers. Due to absence of official accommodation majority of the time of a teacher is spent in finding an accommodation, which he can afford. It has been observed that when finally, a teacher finds an accommodation his next transfer is almost due. This keep the teacher greatly disturbed, normally they are away from their families most of the time. According to teachers, this is one of the major factors why the children of teachers on the average are poor in their studies.

5. Transportation

Transportation is related to accommodation. It has been seen that in majority of the cases, teachers reside at distance from the schools. Also, they cannot afford decent transport due to which they are reported to come late and leave as early as possible. Due to recent hike in transportation costs it is reported that the cases of unreported absence from duty has also become very common.

6. Training and Education Qualification

It is a fact that once teachers are inducted in our education system, they are seldom provided any training of substance. Due to lack of training they are not aware of challenges of the future and hence are unable to prepare their students to play their due role.

7. Political and Social Problems

Since independence, all the institutions of our society have become much politicized. Teaching profession is no exception to this. Majority of the induction is on political grounds. A teacher inducted through this system is not liable to merit but to the political interest of the political force that has inducted the person and so commits all kinds of blunders to favor them. The negative impact of politics is so great that whoever wants to uphold merit is punished severely.

8. Teacher and Head Teacher Relations

The negative influence of politics in education is deep rooted. Due to this factor only those persons who work for the political forces get to the top. Persons who reach to the top using their political influences pay no attention to develop cordial relations with their staff. Good relations of head teacher and his teachers are very important in improving the overall performance of teachers.

9. Grouping in Schools

Our educational institutions are greatly infected with negative politics. The number of groups within an educational institution is equivalent to the number of political parties in our country. These groups fight among themselves the way our politicians fight on the national scene due to which they are never able to play their positive role. This, in majority of cases engulf the student community too, which makes things worst.

10. Over Crowded Classrooms

Due to lack of realistic investment in our educational institutions since independence, the pressure on schools has increased many folds. On the average a single teacher teaches at least sixty students in a classroom which was basically meant for thirty students. The scene of multiple classes being taught in a single room by a single teacher is very common in our primary schools. It should be kept in mind that it is here that students require maximum personal attention. In our educational system mostly, the teacher is unable to recognize his student; the question of personal attention cannot even be imagined.

11. Communication Problem

Our system of education lacks communication between teaching staff, parents, head teachers, and the concerned higher authorities. Due to this they are unable to coordinate and make consolidated efforts for the uplift of the educational system and end-up blaming each other.

12. Medium of Instruction

Due to the existence of multi-medium of instruction as well as ever changing medium of instruction confuses both the giver and the recipient. The absence of proper orientation confuses the teachers so greatly that they lose interest in their profession. What can be expected from a teacher who has lost his interest?

13. Inefficient and Insufficient Teachers

Majority of our teachers are inducted through political connections who lack ability to teach. On top of this they are never provided training, which can transform them into good teachers. These coupled with the fact that they are made to face an overcrowded classroom, which even a qualified teacher cannot face, makes a nightmare of the whole situation. In majority of our primary schools, a single teacher not only teaches multiple classes under a tree or in a shabby room but also administers/ manages the school too. In case the teacher goes on leave the school is closed till the teacher returns or another teacher is posted.

14. Absence of Quality Teacher Training Programmes

Once a teacher is inducted, he seldom goes through any training. In case a teacher is fortunate enough to go for training it never ever is of any quality and hence there exists no grooming facility for a teacher.

15. Absence of Proper Physical Facilities and Educational Instruments

In order to impart proper education a teacher requires a number of aids to achieve this goal. These include a variety of audio-visual aids also known as teaching kits etc. In the absence of these aids a teacher fails to explain all the concepts theoretically and mostly ends-up confusing the students.