

An Examination of Teaching Aptitude of Teachers Working at Primary Level: Demographic differences

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Abstract—Primary education is no doubt a cornerstone of general education and to expect success at secondary and higher level. Without viable teaching aptitude, success will be merely a wishful thinking; therefore, the purpose of the present study was to explore the teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools and to investigate demographic differences. A total number of 600 teachers participated in this study. A self-developed instrument was used to measure teaching aptitude of teachers after pilot testing. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient (i-e 0.79). The results revealed that under the established norms, overall high teaching aptitude was found among primary teachers. Among the regions of Punjab, Southern Punjab's teachers were significantly low in their teaching aptitude. However, the teaching aptitude was found to be changed when participants were examined demographically. The average aptitude was revealed low among the teachers working in rural areas as well as on contract basis.

Keywords— Teaching aptitude, Primary teachers, Demographic variables

I. INTRODUCTION

EDUCATION is a dynamic force in the life of every person because it influences his physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, ethical, social and economic development. The rise and fall of any civilization and standard of living is directly linked with the education of its men and women. The system of values, attitudes, behaviour and the ideals of the older generation is transmitted to the younger generation through education. Islam gives a high meaning to education and requires the Muslim to pray for it [1]. Education is considered a right of every child without differentiation of race, sex, region and religion. Education plays very important role in the development of a child's personality. It is also considered that education is vital for nation development and there is a strong correlation between education and economic development of a country. It [Education] plays a critical role in building human capabilities and accelerates economic growth through knowledge, skill and creative strength of a society (Pakistan Economic Survey 2007-08).

Education may be defined as the process of drawing out least in an individual. The complete process of education

must contain four common factors (i) Educator (teacher) (ii) Educand (Student) (iii) the subject matter (iv) the context (setting). If, quality education is a pre-requisite for national, regional and global development, then for delivery of quality education, we need quality teachers who are committed to teaching, having aptitude towards teaching profession and equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for effective teaching. [2]. GOP [10] demonstrated that no system is better than its teachers. Therefore, teacher is very important person in the process of education. If education should build nation builders, teachers should concern it with providing master builders, well-equipped physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

Quality teachers and teaching only can be the strong agents of social re-engineering and national reconstruction. Educationists, no matter, how different their educational philosophies and ideologies may be admit that the ultimate test of nation's greatness is the quality of her citizens which depends upon the quality of her teachers. Bhatti [5] stated that teacher is truly the pivot of any educational system and educational standards are directly linked with quality of teachers available in the field how knowledgeable, professionally trained, committed and their teaching aptitude towards profession they are.

The success of any educational system depends upon good teachers. We cannot replace the teachers with any other type of instructional material. It has been well said that the teacher of a school are always better than the system of education, teacher is the basic factor for its success. A teacher is more than what is commonly talked about him. His duties of profession have many dimensions. He helps students to learn things [3].

Green [11] emphasized that teaching is the task of the teacher which is performed for the development of child. Teaching in the modern era is a challenging profession that requires good subject knowledge, good questioning skills, an emphasis upon Introduction instruction, clear objectives, good time management, effective planning, good classroom organization, effective use of human resources, good interaction, effective communication skills, attitudes,

perceptions, interests, etc. That is why, teaching, “as the actions of someone who is trying to assist others to reach their fullest potential in all aspects of development”.

Aptitude is considered to be an important characteristic in order to fulfill above responsibility, because aptitude can predict the future success or failure of an individual in one occupation or areas of occupation. According to Tasleem and Hamid [12], aptitude may be describe as a specific ability or a specific capacity distinct from the general intellectual ability, which helps an individual to acquire degree of proficiency or achievement in a specific field.

The word “aptitude” is derived from the word “Aptos” which means “fitted for”. The term aptitude is differently defined by different psychologists, as many cases do happen, but these different definitions agree in certain essentials such as “Present ability” role of training case of acquiring proficiency interest in activity and so on [4].

Feiman [7] has defined an aptitude as a ‘combination of characteristics indicative of an individual’s capacity to acquire (with training) some specific knowledge, skill or set of organized responses such as the ability to speak a language, to become a musician, to do mechanical work”. He has also pointed out that the aptitude is different from skill and proficiency. “Aptitude refers to those qualities characterizing person’s ways of behaviour which serve to indicate how well he can learn to meet and solve certain specified kinds of problems”.

Aptitude refers to "quality of being fit for a purpose or position". If so, Teacher Aptitude is the quality of being fit for teaching profession. That is why, Teacher Aptitude is considered as the Introduction determinant factor of effective teaching. If the teachers are empowered with necessary skills and competencies, they can inculcate the skill in other persons and mainly in pupils [4].

A teacher with teaching aptitude encourages students to use active techniques to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understandings are changing. Researchers suggest that teacher's knowledge of subject matter; student's learning and teaching methods are important elements of effective teaching, which are very much related to Teacher Aptitude. Although an educational system has excellent resources, or if the teachers are lacking teaching aptitude and are incompetent or indifferent to their responsibilities, the whole program is likely to be ineffective and largely wasteful.

Anees [2] has provided substantial evidence favoring teaching aptitude, for quality education. Complexity and

multi dimensional nature of teaching aptitude warrants a comprehensive study of the factors related with it. A modern view of teaching aptitude includes professional activities on the school level, such as co-operating in teams, building professional learning communities, participating in school development, and evaluating and changing working conditions [6]. These activities shape the learning environment on the school level, i.e. the school climate, ethos and culture, and thus directly and indirectly (via classroom-level processes) affect student learning. Many factors are responsible for shaping the quality of education in the country. These factors range from ideological and socio economic needs to the existing structure of education system as well as it defined theories, practices of teaching, learning and teachers’ teaching aptitude.

The developed, and many developing, nations have attained universal or near universal access to primary education. Now the focus is on the quality of students’ learning. The concern is valid not only for nations who have attained the quantitative targets; it is also valid for nations still striving for expansion of educational access. It has been established that access and quality are not sequential elements. Quality is rather considered, in the light of growing evidence, a means for achieving the universal access and equity.

“Primary-school teaching has the lowest status of any profession and offers few chances for promotion. Most teachers start at government service Grade 7 – a rank they consider demeaning and remain there throughout their careers. Unlike other government employees, who can enter at low grade but can move up to be supervisors, teachers have no career ladder [13]. Primary education is no doubt a cornerstone of general education and to expect success at secondary and higher level without a viable in primary education is nothing but a wishful thinking. Primary school teachers’ aptitude is important for understanding and improving educational processes. They are closely linked to teachers’ strategies for coping with challenges in their daily professional life and to their general well-being, and they shape students’ learning environment and influence student motivation and achievement. Therefore, the primary purpose this study was to examine teaching aptitude of teachers working in Primary Schools in Punjab. Specific research objectives for this study were to

1. Examine teaching aptitude of the primary school teachers.
2. Compare the teaching aptitude of teachers in three region of the Punjab.
3. Measure the teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools in terms of selected demographic variables such as gender, area of working, teaching experience, and nature of job.

II. METHODS

A. Subjects

A survey method was used for this research. The target population for this study included all the teachers working in primary schools in Punjab, Pakistan. A total of 600 primary school teachers were selected. In order to ensure the representation of all primary teachers working in Punjab, a stratified random sampling technique was employed. In this way Punjab province was divided into three strata (1) Central Punjab, (2) Northern Punjab, and (3) Southern Punjab, and from each stratum 200 primary school teachers were conveniently taken.

B. Research Questions

Teaching aptitude and Primary teachers were two variables involving in this study. The results were interpreted in two steps, first, the measurement of aptitude, and then it was compared. For this following research questions were posed:

1. What is the level of teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools?
2. What is the level of teaching aptitude among teachers working in primary schools of different regions of Punjab?
3. What is the status of teaching aptitude of primary school teachers with respect to the following demographical variables?
 - Gender (male/ female)
 - Area of working (rural/urban)
 - Teaching experience (more and less than 10 years) and
 - Nature of job (regular/contractual)

C. Instrument

A teacher with teaching aptitude encourages students to use active techniques to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understandings are changing. Aptitude questionnaire attempts to predict the capacities or the degree of achievement that may be expected from individuals in a particular activity. Aptitude tests measure and describe special abilities, capacities or talents which are supposed to determine the level of achievement that can be expected from individuals in specific fields of study and activity. In light of related literature a self developed questionnaire as an instrument for data collection was used to determine the aptitude of primary teachers (ISTA, instrument for school teacher's aptitude). Initially 66-itemed questionnaire was developed and after pilot testing a 50- item were finalized. This instrument organized in a five points Likert scale format that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient. The value obtained was 0.69. Demographical information of respondent gender and working are (urban or rural) was also solicited.

D. Analysis of Data

The collected data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, T-test and ANOVA in order to find out the aptitude and comparison at 0.05 levels of confidence. There are 50 items is the questionnaire. The total score of teaching aptitude of each teacher was taken to find out the level of teaching aptitude possessed by teacher. The maximum score that a respondent can obtain is ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) i-e 250 to 50. In order to interpret the findings the following is accepted by the norms:

1. Obtained mean score from 50-100 (Very low teaching aptitude)
2. Obtained mean score from 101-150 (Low teaching aptitude)
3. Obtained mean score from 151-200 (High teaching aptitude)
4. Obtained mean score from 201- 250 (Very high teaching aptitude)

III. RESULTS

The basic purpose of the study was to examine the teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools in Punjab Province.

The mean score of teaching aptitude numerically found higher (Mean/SD = 189/10.36). It is revealed that the teachers working in primary schools are falling under the norm of high category (Table I). This indicates primary school teacher have high teaching aptitude.

TABLE I
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF OVERALL TEACHING APTITUDE

Teachers'	N	Mean	SD
Aptitude	600	189.163*	10.36

*significant for 3rd category of norm

According to obtained results from analysis of Ho2, the analysis of variance depicts (Table II), a joint effect of the Central Punjab, Northern Punjab and Southern Punjab to the teaching aptitude of Primary teachers ($F_{2, 597} = 4.44$; $p < 0.05$). For examining which mean differences among the three mean (i-e 166.37 for Central Punjab, 161.34 for Northern Punjab and 161.54 for Southern Punjab) the teaching aptitude of primary school teachers' scores are significant, a Schaffer analysis is employed. The values are found to be 0.031, 8.61 and 7.34 for Central, Northern and Southern Punjab respectively. Therefore, it is revealed that the teaching aptitude of Southern Punjab is significantly lower than the teaching aptitude of Central and Northern Punjab. Moreover, there is significant difference between the teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools of Central and Northern region of Punjab.

TABLE II
ANOVA OF TEACHING APTITUDE AND DIFFERENT
REGIONS OF PUNJAB

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F
Total	75703.5	599		
Between groups	3435	2	1717.3	4.44*
Within groups	72268.3	597	304.845	

* Significant at 0.05 level of

TABLE III
COMPARSION BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND
TEACHING APTITUDE

Demographic Variables	Category	N	Mean	SD	t-test
Gender (Ho1)	Male	300	155.55	25.83	2.38*
	Female	300	154.44	27.72	
Working area (Ho2)	Urban	370	161.47	25.99	1.20
	Rural	230	149.50	22.77	
Job nature (Ho3)	Regular	365	157.49	24.69	0.88
	Contractual	235	153.06	28.37	
Teaching Experience (Ho4)	> 10 years	258	148.48	23.19	3.12*
	< 10 years	342	140.46	27.94	

* Significant at 0.05 level

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study an attempt to provide empirical evidence to comparing the teaching aptitude of teachers working in Primary schools of Punjab. Quality education is a pre-requisite for national, regional and global development. For delivery of quality education, we need quality teachers who are committed to teaching and equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for effective teaching. For teachers to be more effective and quality professionals, teacher education must be brought into the mainstream of the academic life of our institutions at all levels. Planning and implementation of futuristic, exhaustive and farsighted reforms and recommendations can make a real breakthrough and vitalize teacher education.

Aptitude is one's potential for success in a specific field. Simply put, if a teacher has a high aptitude for teaching, they typically respond quickly and demonstrate more understanding to teaching and try to engage him in many types of learning for functioning effectively. Teaching is not a mechanical job. It is social and professional activity and development process. It requires skills like any other skills. It calls for exercise of talent, creativity, love for knowledge, patience, and dedication towards job [4].

The teaching aptitude plays a significant role in deciding performance level in the teachers. High aptitude has been observed in this study perhaps the primary education is not looking up to the mark. Unfortunately no study has been

found in this perspective to validate the findings of this study. In literature, there are many complaints about Pakistan's primary schools and the lack of quality education found in them. One of the main concerns is the lack of proper teaching aptitude and motivation. This problem has been continues to lead to the erosion of standard in the nation's schools. Southern region of Punjab is to be appeared low in teaching aptitude; this region is deprived of basic facilities in primary schools and less number of teacher training opportunities, that's why teachers are facing indifferent classroom practices.

It was found that primary teacher educators have high teaching aptitude. Out of three region of Punjab province i-e Central, Northern and Southern, the teaching aptitude of teachers working in primary schools of Southern region was low. Equality is the teaching aptitude was found in males, females, teachers having teaching experience less than or greater than 10 years. However, significant difference was observed between urban and rural primary teachers in terms of their teaching aptitude. And moreover, less aptitude was also observed in the teachers working in primary school on contract basis. The overall teaching aptitude in the Punjab was found to be better. Further studies need to be carried out to confirm the nature of the findings of this study. However, before considering the implications of this study, it is important to consider the size of the sample, the environmental setup and some other variables may be playing some role for such findings. Therefore, care should be taken when generalizing from the results.

It has been seen, teaching aptitude plays significant role in developing professionalism in teachers. The teaching aptitude of teachers can be enhanced through in-service teacher education programs. According to Khan [8] generally, primary teachers do not have sufficient opportunities for in-service training on a continuous and regular basis. Usually there is no recurrent budget allocation for this activity. Some provinces fund teacher training from their development budgets, but none of the provinces have a sustainable and coherent model for continuous in-service teacher training. Only a few teachers from the public sector attend the limited number of in-service courses on offer because of favoritism in the selection process. The policy is that every teacher should have in-service training after five years on the job. If this is to happen, then 20 percent of the stock of teachers will have to be trained every year. However, there is lack of infrastructure and human resource capacity to deliver in-service on this scale. We found that teachers have low self-esteem and feel they are not respected by communities and society in general. Schoolteachers in general and primary school teachers in particular feel that compared to other professions, teaching is a low status job. In fact, the status of teachers, particularly male teachers, has suffered so severely that educated unemployed become

teachers only as a last resort and leave immediately when better and more respected job opportunities comes along.

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