

## Attitude towards Primary School Teaching Profession in Kerala

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### Abstract

Kerala holds a peculiar place in the Indian scenario as it is the pioneer in the field of cent percent literacy. The people of Kerala with their intellectual excellence pervaded to the different parts of the world and acquired knowledge to proclaim the tradition of the state. The state has so far given much importance to the attainment of knowledge and winning laurels in life. But the analysis of the teacher education sector of Kerala reveals the truth that professional fields are given much importance than the teacher education sector. The parents compel children to be a part of the professional field and encourage them to be either an engineer or doctor. The branches of humanities and much valued profession of teaching are ignored to the margins. The primary level teaching profession is considered to be an unprofitable job by the parents. The younger generation finds teaching job suitable only for the ladies who find no other way to spend their time in the house hold. They are not realizing the dignity of the job and find it as the last refuge to earn an income. The variation in the number of male and female teachers in the primary education sector reveals that the men folk are not encouraged to the sector. The parents compel the boys to turn towards the highly paid professional fields and the primary education sector is always neglected.

This paper discusses the attitude of the Kerala people towards the primary school teaching profession.

**KEYWORDS:** Kerala, teaching profession, primary schools, future of children.

Kerala holds a peculiar place in the political and historical realm of the motherland India. The state had so far overpowered the challenges of colonial aggression and the social evils of caste system and feudalism with ferocious fights and unparalleled courage. The elegant flora and rich natural resources not only attracted the foreign invaders but also played a pivotal role in determining the unavoidable presence in the different manifestations of the motherland. Relieved from the shackles of colonization and with the eradication of caste system and feudalism the state began to search for the resources of sustenance as the country was broken without proper resources to fulfill the needs of the state. Debilitating poverty and hardships compelled the youth of the state to search their livelihood even crossing the oceans through adventurous sojourns. The gush of oil in the dry deserts of Arabian sands opened the gates of livelihood for Kerala as the toil of the youth brought growth to the very the veins of Kerala state. The struggle for development of the state and strife to alleviate poverty of the family resulted in the overall development of the state as the flow of gulf money or remittance became the back bone of Kerala economy.

The flow of gulf money brought about changes and improvement in the different manifestations of Kerala life. Along with the eradication of caste system and feudalism through the enactment of land reforms the people of Kerala got liberated from the chains of confinement and constraints. The freedom and liberation from the

external and internal forces encouraged for the intellectual growth of the state. The state became the pioneer among the states in Indian motherland to attain cent percent literacy. The improvement in literacy and eradication of the constraints in attaining education encouraged the improvement in education of the state. The realization of the value of education in the modern world achieved through the exposure to the outside world compelled the gulf migrants to educate the younger generation to attain laurels in their life. The need for efficient professional in the globalized world and the determination of the migrants to encourage education among the younger generation helped to sprout innumerable educational institutions in the very nooks and corners of the state. Even the remote areas once drenched in the darkness of illiteracy and ignorance began to enjoy the nectars of education and intellectual growth. As a result of this boom so many schools- both in the private sector and public sector – emerged to educate the younger generation.

Though the state accomplished in bringing revolutionary changes in the primary education sector the hands worked behind the success are not well realized or recognized by the mainstream society. The teachers in the primary schools are not recognized as their profession is looked down by the mainstream society. Kerala primary education consists of government schools in the public sector, government aided schools run by private managements and private schools recognized by the education department of the state. while the government comes forward to uplift the standard and quality of education in the primary schools the condition of the teachers is not under consideration. The salary and remuneration for the primary schools teacher is lower than an uneducated laborer. The teachers after the completion of essential qualifications and accomplishing the criteria put forward by the authorities joins the school with better performance in the public service examinations. The income and salary from the profession is not enough to meet the expenses of the family and individual. This makes the primary school profession an unattractive job for the young aspirants. The only attraction is the pension benefits at the time of retirement. But the steps to uplift primary education falls upon the teachers and they are burdened with the assignments and responsibilities assigned as a part of the measures for improvement. The teachers are concerned and worried about the correctness of the paper work to be submitted before the government authorities than concentrating on the future of the children. The government authorities compel the teachers to implement and organize programs and methods to improve the quality of education. The condition of the teachers is in such a way that they are not rewarded based on the toil they undertake for the completion of the assignments. Promotion and benefits are not based on performance of the individual teachers but are on the basis of political influence. This attitude of the government authorities discourages the efficient and effective teachers and affects their performance in the teaching. Lower salary and burden of assignments discourage the young aspirants to join the primary schools. Especially the male candidates find it uncomfortable with the job. The day to day programs of the schools and implementation of the methods fail to accomplish in the rural schools due to the lack of sufficient number of male teachers. The women teachers are unable mingle with the mainstream society to fulfill the needs of the school and the children. Proper bridging of the school with the society is limbed due to the absence of male teachers in the primary section. Moreover the parents are discouraging the younger generation from choosing the teaching job in primary school because of the low remuneration and salary benefits. The young able aspirates join the professional fields aiming at better salary and recognition in the society. The

branches of humanities and social sciences are opted by minority and the professional fields are given much importance in the education sector. The future of the students in the primary schools is affected as they are forced to learn and build their future under inefficient teachers. The involvement of local self-government departments and parents and teachers associations in the improvement of schools had made revolutionary changes in the condition of schools as the quality and standard of teaching improved. But the attitude towards the school teachers remains unchanged.

The recruitment of teachers for the government aided schools run by private managements is purely based on corruption and political influence. The managements demand lakhs for the appointment of teachers in the primary schools. Inefficient teachers join the schools with poor academic and intellectual abilities spoiling the future of the students. The inefficiency of the teacher is exploited by the private managements as the teachers are enslaved to the discrepancies of the management. The corrupt teachers are teaching the students to make their future life better and safer. According to Smith (1986) teaching is a profession that profoundly affects lives of every individual and ultimately the strength and well-being of the nation. But the reputation and recognition of the teaching job is maligned as the teacher are selected based on the money power and political stronghold. The moves and steps to appoint the teachers for government aided schools based on the merit in public service selection is opposed by the private managements and stakeholders. This ditches the quality of education in the aided primary schools and the recognition and reputation of the teachers fade from the mainstream society and the sector is drenched in corruption and mismanagement.

The condition of primary teachers in the private sector is pathetic that they are forced to work like slaves for hours with minimum salary and benefits. The teachers' attitude is an important variable in classroom application of new ideas and novel approaches to instruction (Reinke & Mosley, 2002). The low salary and burden discourage the male candidates to work in the private schools as this opens the way for the private managements to exploit the female candidates as the chances of protest is minimum. The private managements select candidates with minimum qualification and efficiency for minimum salary to teach the students in primary schools. While most of the private schools conduct the learning process with minimum facilities and infrastructure the voices of the teachers are silenced at the cost of losing their jobs. Though government implemented measures and rules regarding the salary benefits and remuneration of the teachers and necessity of appointing efficient teachers in the private primary teachers, the words remains in papers and fails to come out as deeds and implementations. Moreover most of the teachers in private primary schools are career by accident group. Krecie and Grimek says (2005) "It is important that an individual choose the right profession especially if they choose teaching". But teachers join the schools as leisure activity in order to get employed and earn an income. The number aspiring candidates with efficiency and effectiveness in teaching aiming at the better future of the students and younger generation is diminishing. The duty of the teacher in primary schools has diminished to the complete the assignments and orders put forward by the authorities. The future of the students and the quality of learning never come to the forefront of discussion in the private schools. Quality of education has confined to the packing of information into the very brains of the students to perform well in the examinations. The skill and abilities of the students are used for the reputation and recognition of the schools as the school education had grown to competitive business in the state of Kerala. The teachers are suffocated in

the strict rules and regulations of the authorities without freedom of teaching and learning process. The condition of the teachers in private schools is pathetic that they are not even allowed to sit in the school buses along with their students.

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