



PRODUCTIVITY OF TEACHERS IN EDUCATION: A STUDY OF SELECT COUNTRIES

Divya Thankom Varghese¹, Prof. Kalyanasundaram P² &
Dr. Shubha Chandra³



¹Research scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

²Department of Management Studies, Garden City College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

³Department of Management Studies, Garden City College, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

Student performance is a resultant outcome of efforts of strong teachers. Improving teacher quality can have a profound impact on educational and societal outcomes. Clearly, investment in teacher quality could yield vast returns. This paper is an attempt to bring out the factors that improve the productivity of teachers and compares the education systems of select countries, namely, India, Singapore and Finland with special emphasis on teacher education. Suggestions are given to improve the Indian education system based on the comparative study.

KEYWORDS: Productivity, Quality, Teacher Training, Pupil-Teacher Ratio.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A teacher plays a major role in building a career growth in a student life. Innovative educators today are often referred to as 21st century teachers. The main responsibility of a teacher in the education system is to direct students to resources that provide reliable information. Teaching can better be described as a philosophy of learning. In order to be an effective teacher he or she must focus on student learning and adjust teaching strategies in response to the pace and depth of student understanding. Teaching is an interaction between a teacher and a student. Students look up to teachers whom they respect, and good teachers take pride

in learning from their students. As a teacher, it is his or her job to stimulate and encourage thinking rather than to provide answers and resolve problems. This way of process can increase the productivity in the professionalism of a teacher. A teacher must always have a mission and vision to improve their productivity in teaching. In an education institution, productivity for a teacher values as an important aspect for his or her career growth and also to gain a complete satisfactory professionalism. Teaching is always a knowledge gaining aspect for an individual. Being productive to an institution creates a sense of accomplishment

and pride for an institution and also for self for working in that atmosphere.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study attempts to bring out a comparison between the education systems in three countries, namely, India, Singapore and Finland. Education input/output indicators sources from UNESCO Institute of Statistics and UNDP like % of public expenditure on education, Human Development Index etc. were compared for the purpose of this study. The teacher education systems of the three countries were also considered for the purpose of the study.

3.0 DISCUSSION

Productivity can increase the morale of a teacher to work and also morale can increase the productivity. Productivity involves in getting as much as possible accomplished in a little span of time as possible. This always increases the value of a teacher in an education institution atmosphere. Productivity is usually measured in terms of both the quality and quantity. Productivity in terms quantity refers to the performance resulting in improvement of students' knowledge and skills. Some will measure their productivity through the comparisons with the same level of the individuals. Productivity is a multidimensional term, the meaning of which varies depending on the context in which it is used (Tangen, 2005). Productivity of teachers is impacted by work relationships, work life balance, job security, work overload, resources and communications, pay and benefits, job attitude towards the institution, psychological well-being and physical health. Productivity of a teacher can be measured in two different aspects - i.e., through comparison with coworkers and also with self-performance and through the assessment procedure. To be more productive there are several points to be noted: a) Commitment b) Quality c) Psychology. These points have to be noted by either parties, it is like a give and take policy what you give to the institution and what the institution gives to you to be productive. Let us see how these points can really have an effect on productivity of a teacher. Conditions in Indian educational institutions

impact productivity due highly skewed Pupil:Teacher ratios that allow little or no attention to students. This needs to be addressed.

Commitment:-

Commitment towards the organization increases the productivity among the teachers. This influences the employee-employer relationships. Productivity helps a teacher to continuously grow, improve his or her professional skills; being innovative in the tasks they do which all drives them for their greater job satisfaction. Educational Institutions require teachers who are committed to their profession and the well-being of the students. The effectiveness of a teacher is determined largely by the way he or she feels about the job and colleagues with whom he or she works and by his or her attitude towards the organization that employs him or her. A teacher strong in commitment finds it easy to be interested in whatever he/she does and involve themselves in it wholeheartedly (George and Sabapathy, 2011). Committed teachers have a strong desire to upgrade their knowledge, skills to reach their students level which will boost their productivity.

Quality:-

For being productive one should always keep upgrading the knowledge, wisdom and ideas. The quality of education should produce individuals with the value orientation, dedicated hard work in spirit of service which can change the attitude of the people they manage towards work and towards each other to ensure a quality of life and of a proper work life balance. In the present scenario, quality in productivity in an education Institution is a matter of concern. Quality of a teacher is ensured when the lecture is been given beyond the text books, sharing the experiences in and around the subject areas, and when the teacher pays enough attention to the knowledge based concepts and tries to develop the skills and teaching to reach to the students and this will enhance the teacher productivity. Curriculum design is also a major task in the quality aspect of productivity. Rather following the old curriculum or the out dated lesson plans it is best to keep on updating continuously information upon the advancements and share it with the students. If

this part is also updated it is another factor of being productive in the subject areas and to gain much knowledge. For this up-gradation research culture has to be fostered in institutions because research not only leads to updating of knowledge in the particular subject but also leads to innovation Apart from the theoretical aspect of knowledge, the other way round to improve the productivity is to get the practical knowledge with the interactions with the industry experts based upon the real industrial exposure which will enhance quality of productive teaching. A teacher has never completed his learning. A teacher must be a continuous learner and keep on learning every day and updated knowledge is the need of the hour so that society is given relevant skills and competencies.

Psychology:-

Productivity is also associated with psychological well-being. A motivated teacher produces motivated students. The positive state of mind of the teacher improves the productivity of teacher as well as the student. Here the positive state

of mind of a teacher can lead to positive relationships and negativity can affect the teacher towards burnout and emotional exhaustion that can lead to stress. So the best way to keep self-productive is to plan, organize and direct the mind to a positive health of productive nature. Hence productivity is an important aspect to increase the level of knowledge and skills among the teachers and can build self-confidence. Educational systems that aim at better students should focus on developing committed teachers and their psychological well being so that they can produce quality students.

Investing in Quality Education - India, Finland and Singapore – A Comparative Study:-

Improving teacher quality and productivity can have a profound impact on educational and societal outcomes. Clearly, investment in teacher quality could yield vast returns. A comparative study of India, Finland and Singapore is presented below in terms of Education Input, Outputs and Socio-Economic Environment.

Table 1: Education in India, Finland and Singapore

Indicator	India	Finland	Singapore
Public Expenditure on Education (% of total Government Spending)	11.33	12.24	18.11
Human Development Index	0.59	0.8	0.9
GDP per Capita	\$5460	\$38221.20	\$78658.20
School Life Expectancy in years (Primary to tertiary)	11.70	17.07	-
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	35.15	13.56	17.44
Labor Force with tertiary attainment	9.80%	38.20%	29.40%
Literacy Rate (15 years and over in %)	74.04	99.75	96.37

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics & UNDP

As seen from the table, Singapore and Finland invest more in education. It is clearly evident that due this higher investment Finland and Singapore lead in the human development index. The human development index is a composite measure of achievements in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to education and a decent standard of living. For ease of comparability, the UNDP puts the average value of achievements in these three dimensions on a scale of 0 to 1, where greater is better. In the above table School life expectancy is the number of years a pupil of school entering age is expected to attend school from primary to tertiary.

The table also shows the public expenditure is more in case of Finland and Singapore compared to India. Total public expenditure on education (current and capital) is expressed as a % of total government expenditure in a given financial year. It is not a surprise that due this emphasis on education by the developed nations like Singapore and Finland the literacy rates are much better and GDP per Capita is higher in these nations. As it is evident from the table the literacy rates in Singapore and Finland are much higher compared to that in India.

The Education Index, published with the UN's Human Development Index in 2008, based on data from 2006, lists Finland as 0.993, amongst the

highest in the world, tied for first with Denmark, Australia and New Zealand. The Finnish Ministry of Education attributes its success to “the education system (uniform basic education for the whole age group), highly competent teachers, and the autonomy given to schools.” Finland has consistently ranked high in the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study, which compares national educational systems internationally. It is unfortunate that the Indian government chose not to participate in the study. In 2009 it ranked 73 out of 74 countries. Citing unsuitable testing parameters the Indian government decided to opt out of the study. It is important that the Indian government acknowledges that there is a problem with the education system and make efforts to rectify the issues. Fleeing the study will not resolve issues. It is also seen from the table the labor force with tertiary education attainment is more in Finland (38.2%) and Singapore (29.4%) compared to India (9.8%). This shows that there is much left for us to in terms of productivity to achieve as regards to our higher education system.

4. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the comparative study the following suggestions are presented: 1. Indian spending on education should be increased; 2. Finland and Singapore lay phenomenal emphasis on teacher education and India should try to emulate the Finland model of teacher education. For example in Finland, only the top 10% qualify for teacher education programs and it takes five to

six years of intensive training to become a teacher. Strong teachers, many experts believe, constitute the single most important factor behind strong student performance. Singapore has taken this belief to heart, establishing one of the world’s most comprehensive systems for teacher selection, training and development and turning out some of the world’s top students in the process. A vital component of Singapore’s success has been its quality teaching force, and the systematic approach it has taken towards building this asset. It has improved teacher compensation, standardized training and development programmes for new recruits and existing teachers, and established clear paths for promotion. At the centre of these efforts lies the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore’s national teacher training school. India should try to learn from the proven models of Finland and Singapore with regard to teacher education. 3. Greater autonomy should be given to teachers in terms of pedagogy and assessment in India. 4. With the largest pool of young population in the world, India should evolve scalable and sustainable models with viable student-teacher ratios as comparable to Finland and Singapore as the current levels will not allow adequate attention to students.

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