



A Study of Urban and Rural School Teachers on the Role of Teacher Unions in School Education

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, an attempt was made to study of urban and rural school teachers on the role of teacher unions in school education. Teacher unions are democratic bodies and it represents the interests of their members. The objective was to explore locale wise differences in different dimensions of perceptions of school teachers on the role of teacher unions in school education. The data was collected from 600 school teachers of three circles Nabha, Jalandhar and Faridkot of Punjab through self-prepared questionnaire. The sample was chosen randomly. The reliability of the questionnaire has been done by internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Cronbach Alpha was used to check dimension wise correlation whose value was estimated to be 0.93 and also inter-item correlation was employed. The findings of the study revealed that there are 11 dimensions, out of which factors related to institutional aspects, factors related to organizational structure, factors related to financial aspects, factors related to service conditions, factors related to pension, promotion, transfer and other allowances, factors related to evaluation and assessment, factors related to organization conflicts and crisis and total of different dimensions indicate that there were significant locale wise differences in different dimensions. Urban school teachers were found to be significantly higher on total of different dimensions than rural teachers on the role of teacher unions in school education. Education implications of the results have been discussed.

Keywords: Teacher Union, Locale, Perceptions, School Teachers, school Education

Introduction

Teacher organizations show the ways through which educators and the public can understand how this system works effectively. For schools, there were district boards in Punjab before Independence and because of that teachers were facing a lot of problems. For representing these problems, the already established District Board Teachers' were active during the 5th decade of 20th century. The activities were very high and the control of the district board school has to be taken with the staff as well as by the government because of the intense pressure of the union. This lead to success of District Board Teachers' Union that not only bought change in school education system and thus bought a sigh of relief to the teachers. Name of the state board teachers' union is converted with Government Teachers' Union (GTU). From the initial days only, in this union there has been a lot struggle and achievements in many movements for teachers. One of the acts was a movement for applying Kothari Commission report which started on 1st January, 1966 and it was against the state government and at last state government agreed to it. When this report was approved, salaries of teachers were increased and upon that it was the fight for the honor and status of the teachers in society. When all this was happening, other organizations for teachers were growing with their own leadership but all the teachers wanted all the unions for teachers to have one motive only and finally, in November 1972, there was a gathering of all these groups at Philaur and it was called Philaur convention leading to the formation of the constitution of Government Teachers' Union. The motive of this constitution was to given the right to all teachers to elect their block and district presidents by direct and secret votes. Five elections were held under this constitution between the years 1973 and 1983 and in these elections, 98% to 99% polling was seen. Majority was seen Dhillon Group when the first elections were fought in 1973 and in the next elections Rana Group got the first position. This union was not limited only to the Punjab but it was biggest in northern India during this movement. There were different groups in the teachers' organizations. In this competition to leave behind other groups, the Rana Group was doing everything to fight for the rights of teachers and it was the famous group among the teachers and all this was happening during 1986. As a result of its popularity, other groups decided to boycott the elections by giving silly excuses like this election is tiring and expensive. Till now, this constitution is the best democratic constitution and still it is followed by teachers.

Significance of the Study

Teachers play the major role in the field of education in spreading school education. They are directly involved with students, community, parents and by working in the functioning of schools. In Punjab, teacher organizations are struggling for service conditions, salary structure, teaching profession related issues and so no. In addition, some of them also are struggling on other issues such as academic, research, organizing seminars and for different sections of teachers. Some guidelines have already given in Report of the Education Commission (1964-1966) and Chattopadhyaya Committee Report (1982-83). The role of union is important but in current situation decline of union strength and its effects is seen on public education. Moreover, they are

important opinion leaders, especially in rural India and are also socio-economically quite powerful, especially when compared with parents who access government schools. Teacher unions also offers several state-specific and nationwide opportunities for teachers to develop as a professional.

Review of Related Literature

Rebne (2017) have found that teachers felt secure and supported to serve students well in urban districts in America so more teachers recruited in cities because unions raise their demands from time to time. However, the results showed that urban-centric locale was not a predictor of teachers' perception of school leadership (Dara & Tamara, 2021).

Objective of the study

To explore locale wise differences in different dimensions of perceptions of school teachers on the role of teacher unions in school education.

Method and Procedure

The study was conducted through descriptive method of research.

Participants

A stratified random sample of 600 school teachers were selected from different government schools in Punjab. Out of the sample of 600 school teachers, 366 female teachers and 234 male teachers.

Instruments

The following tool was used by the investigator in the present study:

Self-Prepared Instrument: Self-prepared instrument designed to assess the perceptions of government school teachers about the teacher unions. The self-prepared instrument was translated into Punjabi language for the convenience of respondents and validated by the investigator herself. The scale consist of 74 items and these items are divided into 11 different dimensions namely (i) factors related institutional aspects, (ii) factors related to organizational structure, (iii) factors related to community/social interaction (iv) factors related to financial aspects (v) factors related to political influence (vi) factors related to service conditions (vii) factors related to pension, promotion, transfer and other allowances (viii) factors related to evaluation and assessment (ix) factors related to teachers welfare (x) factors related to reforms in education and policy related issues (xi) factors related to organization conflicts and crisis. All 74 items of self-prepared instrument are scored from four alternative response scales from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (no response). It statement is strongly agree then it is to be tick 4 and if no response then 1 is to be tick. If the statement is strong or disagree then it is to be tick accordingly. The reverse scoring is done for the responses of negative statements of this reliable and valid scale.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics namely mean, medium, and SD was used to study role of teacher unions. The use of t-test was made to study locale wise differences.

Table I

Locale-wise Differences in Perceptions of School Teachers Regarding Various Dimensions related to Teacher Unions

S. No	Dimensions	Local-wise	N	Mean	SD	t-value
1	Factors related to Institution Aspects	Urban	272	27.12	4.77	3.34**
		Rural	328	25.80	4.86	
2	Factors related to Organizational Structure	Urban	272	32.55	5.47	4.82**
		Rural	328	30.33	5.76	
3	Factors related to Community/Social Interaction	Urban	272	19.74	4.02	1.11
		Rural	328	19.37	4.17	
4	Factors related to Financial Aspects	Urban	272	15.64	2.17	3.22**
		Rural	328	14.99	2.71	
5	Factors related to Political Influence	Urban	272	8.14	1.59	0.25
		Rural	328	8.11	1.65	
6	Factors related to Service Conditions	Urban	272	28.65	4.30	3.91**
		Rural	328	27.13	5.04	
7	Factors related to Pension, Promotion, Transfer and Other Allowances	Urban	272	29.90	4.23	3.72**
		Rural	328	28.36	5.65	
8		Urban	272	20.32	3.03	3.59**

	Factors related to Evaluation and Assessment	Rural	328	19.30	3.77	
9	Factors related to Teachers Welfare	Urban	272	25.14	3.69	1.52
		Rural	328	24.62	4.57	
10	Factors related to Reforms in Education and Policy Related Issues	Urban	272	5.38	1.55	1.66
		Rural	328	5.59	1.54	
11	Factors related to Organization Conflicts and Crisis	Urban	272	8.44	1.87	3.61**
		Rural	328	7.88	1.91	
Total		Urban	272	221.02	28.43	3.74**
		Rural	328	211.47	33.26	

**p<0.01

The table I shows the mean and SD along with t-values testing the significance of locale-wise differences in perceptions of school teachers regarding various related to teacher unions. The perusal of the table II reveals that the t-value testing the significance of locale-wise differences in factors related to institutional aspects, factors related to organizational structure, factors related to financial aspects, factors related to service conditions, factors related to pension, promotion, transfer and other allowances, factors related to evaluation and assessment, factors related to organization conflicts and crisis and total of different dimensions came out to be 3.34, 4.82, 3.22, 3.91, 3.72, 3.59, 3.61 and 3.74 respectively. This indicates that there were significant locale wise differences in different dimensions. Further, urban teachers were found to be significantly higher on different dimensions than rural counterparts. The table II shows that the t-value testing the significance of locale wise differences in factors related to community/social interaction, factors related to political influence, factors related to teachers' welfare and factors related to reforms in education and policy related issues turned out to be 1.11, 0.25, 1.52 and 1.66 respectively, which were not significant even at 0.05 level. This indicates that there were no significance locale wise differences in factors related to community/social interaction, factors related to political influence, factors related to teachers' welfare and factors related to reforms in education and policy related issues among school teachers.

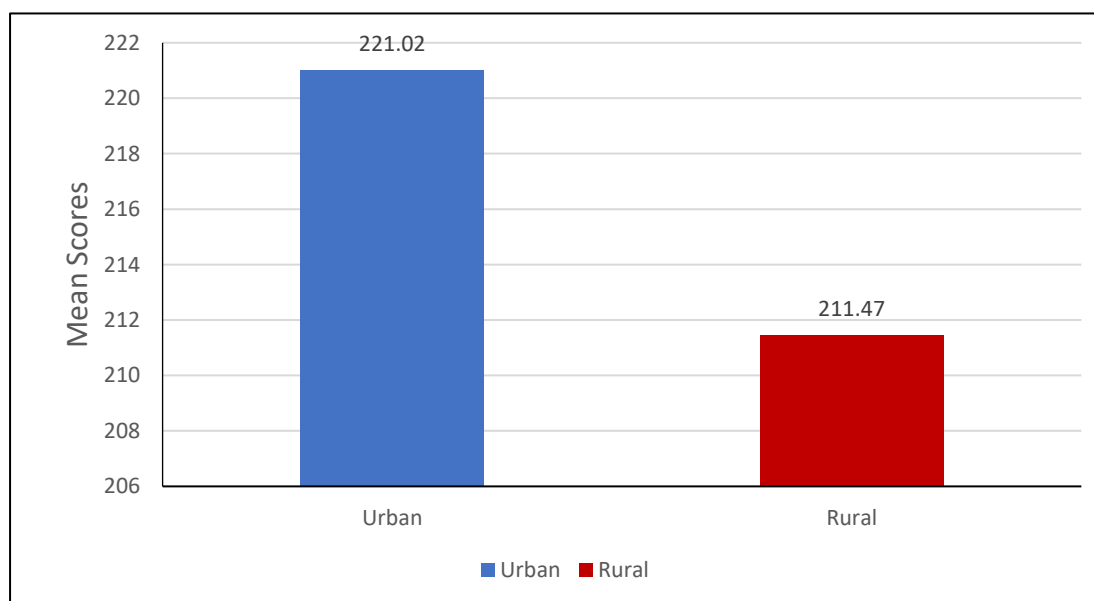


Figure I: Locale-wise Differences in Total of Different Dimensions among school teachers

The perusal of the table I reveals that the mean score of total of different dimensions for urban and rural school teachers turned out to be 221.02 and 211.47 with SD of 28.43 and 33.26 respectively. The t-value testing the significance of locale wise differences in total of different dimensions among school teachers came out to be 3.74 which was significant at 0.01 level. Figure I indicate that urban school teacher was significantly higher on total of different dimensions related to teacher unions than their rural counterparts.

Educational Implications

- It is essential for teacher unions to provide facilities such as library, science labs, school infrastructure etc. at school level so that rural teachers can contribute to uplift the level of education among the students.
- Teacher unions members should create awareness in rural schools so that rural teachers can develop interest in union membership which can help to strengthen union structure.

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- Service conditions should be better so that teachers can concentrate on the education of the students.
 - Teacher unions should come forward to aware about the rights of pension, promotion and transfer to the teachers.
 - There should be no space for conflicts among unions members, they can do collective efforts for improving the education level of the schools.

References

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