

CHAPTER V

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DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

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5.0.0 Discussion

5.1.0 Implications

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## DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

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5.0.0 Discussion

The present inquiry aims at studying how the role of a teacher as a change agent is perceived by the teachers, pupils, community and education authorities. The International Conference on Education at its 35th Session held at Geneva in 1975 discussed the changing role of the teacher. The conference recommended that the role of the teacher was not fixed and unchangeable, but was evolving under the influence of changes taking place in society and in the education system itself. It further recommended that the principle role of the teacher was in providing his pupils with a scientific world outlook. Since the role of the school is no longer limited to instruction, the teacher has now to assume more responsibility for the preparation of the young for community life, family life, productive activity, leisure time activities etc. Teachers need be aware of the important role they are called upon to play as agents of development and change. The Conference further

declared that ' it should be recognized that the effectiveness of school education depends largely upon the development of new relationships between the teacher and his pupils, who become more active partners in the education process, between the teacher and his colleagues and other agents who may be called upon to co-operate with him, between the teacher and his pupils' parents and others in the community concerned with the process of education.' (Goble and Porter, 1977).

The UNESCO has thus defined the role of the teacher as an agent of development and change. His task is not confined to classroom instruction only. In order to understand this role it is necessary to study the teacher's perceptions of the various dimensions in the emerging societies in developing countries. In the present study, nine dimensions have been kept in view. They are (1) Literacy, (2) Customs and Taboos, (3) Political Education or Creating Political Awareness, (4) Use of Science in Everyday Life, (5) Working for the Population Policy. (6) Economic Life of the Society, (7) To make Education <sup>more</sup> Scientific, (8) Implementation of Government Schemes, and (9) Social Relations. Along with the study of the perceptions of teachers, the perceptions of pupils, community and educational authorities have also been studied.

The analysis of the data gives differential perceptions of the roles of the teacher as an agent of change by different agencies. Some of the salient findings are discussed below :

(1) One of the functions of the teacher in the society is to spread literacy. This is specially important in a developing country like India where the majority of the population is still illiterate. In order to bring about social change, education has been considered to be a powerful instrument. Teacher is still supposed to be the agent to impart education through one of the formal channels viz., schooling. Literacy is both an instrument of social change as well as the evidence of social change. The analysis of the data shows that by and large, the teacher's self-perception and the perceptions of the pupils and the community are quite favourable as far as the role of the teacher in the programme of spreading literacy is concerned. They are also more or less identical. The educational authorities however have a completely different perceptions of the role of the teacher. The authorities believe that the teachers are not exerting as much as they should do in the spread of literacy. One finds a gulf of difference between the perceptions of the community and the perceptions of the authorities in this

regard. The same is the case regarding pupils and the authorities. The community by and large is of the opinion that the teacher is spreading literacy in the community. These perceptions of the community are based on their day to day experiences whereas the perceptions of the educational authorities are based on secondary sources viz. the reports of the supervisors and inspectors. The community's perceptions are more favourable than even the perceptions of the teachers themselves.

(2) Social customs and taboos born out of traditions have always acted as barriers to the process of modernisation and social change. Beliefs, mainly religious in nature, prevent community from adopting behaviours which will radically alter the way of life. In the present enquiry, perceptions of the teachers, pupils, community and authorities were studied regarding customs and taboos. The teacher perceives himself as one who influences customs and taboos in a more favourable way than pupils and the authorities. The teacher differs significantly from the pupils and also from the authorities. In case of community, teachers perceptions are more or less identical with the perceptions of the community. The perceptions of the pupils in relation to the teacher's role as an agent of change in the area of customs and taboos are

significantly different from those of community and the authorities. The same is the case with the perceptions of community and those of the authorities. The results indicate that the authorities do not see the teacher role as a change agent in the area of customs and taboos. Their views are significantly different from the views of the other three groups. and they are less favourable.

(3) As far as the teacher's role in creating political awareness amongst the members of the community is concerned, one does not find much difference between the perceptions of the four groups. In fact the teacher is perceiving his role in this field more clearly though not significantly different<sup>from</sup> that perceived by other groups. In Indian society this has always been a controversial issue. The teacher discusses different political philosophies with the community. Should the teacher discuss the political thinking of different political parties in the country ? In normal times, this does not create any confusion but if the teacher crosses the boundry and provides evidences of his identification with a political group the teacher runs into rough waters. Political awareness does not mean taking sides with political groups. It only means that the teacher explains in an objective way what different

political philosophies imply and what different political parties promise to the people at the time of elections. As an educated individual in a rural community, this is his social function and the teacher cannot remain away from it. Dynamic democracy demands this. Even the authorities also perceive this role of the teacher more or less at the same level as the community or the pupils or the teachers.

(4) To bring about social change, science and technology play a major role. It is not merely the development in physical and natural sciences but even the development of scientific thinking as applied to humanities and social science, that is important in the change process. The perceptions of the four groups are favourable as far as use of science in everyday life.

Teachers' perceptions of the use of science in everyday life are significantly more favourable than those of pupils. As far as community and authorities are concerned the teachers' perceptions do not differ from the perceptions of these groups. Again there is a significant difference between the perceptions of the pupils and the community regarding the teacher role in the use of science in everyday life. The authorities do not differ in their perceptions from those of

pupils and community in this dimension. Thus one sees that teachers and pupils perceptions of the teacher role in this dimension are more favourable than those of community and authorities.

(5) In the dimension of working for population policy the teachers' perceptions do not differ significantly from those of pupils and authorities, whereas they differ significantly from the perceptions of the community. Again the perceptions of community also differ significantly from those of pupils and authorities. The clear finding is that the communities' perceptions are most favourable with respect to the perceptions of teachers, pupils and authorities in the area of teacher working for population policy.

(6) A change agent influences all aspects of social development. He will not only influence the social customs and taboos, but he will also influence the economic life of the society. The perceptions of the teachers, pupils and the community, as far as the teachers' role in influencing the economic life of the society are more or less similar. The authorities however, have a very low image of the teacher's role in influencing the economic life of the community. The educational authorities do not think that teachers encourage



people to undertake small savings, discuss with people the processes of modernisation of the hereditary occupations, encourage people to take advantage of government scheme, or inspire people to use modern scientific techniques in agriculture etc. The perceptions of the pupils regarding the teacher role in the economic life of the society, are more or less identical with those of the community and the authorities. But the community has a more favourable view of the teacher in this area than the authorities.

(7) With the advancement of science and technology and the rise of educational technology, it has become necessary for a progressive teacher to make the educational process more scientific. This is his new role. The results of the analysis of the perceptions show that the perceptions of the teacher in this dimension are identical with the perceptions of the pupils and the community. On the other hand the perceptions of the authorities are significantly different and less favourable than those of teachers, pupils and community. The pupils have identical perceptions with those of the community.

(8) As regards the teacher's role as a change agent in the dimension of implementation of government schemes, the perceptions of all the four groups are identical. The authorities do not differ significantly in their perceptions from the other three groups, though their perceptions are slightly unfavourable. The results indicate that the perceptions of the authorities are below average as far as teacher's role in implementing the government schemes is concerned. The authorities are cautious in their perceptions of the teacher regarding : (a) encouraging pupils to appear at scholarship examinations, (b) paying taxes regularly to the government, (c) encouraging the people to pay the taxes regularly etc.

(9) In the dimension of social relations the teachers do not differ in their perceptions from the pupils and community whereas the authorities differ significantly in their perceptions of teachers' social relationship from those of teachers, pupils and the community. The authorities' perceptions are less favourable in this dimension than those of teachers, pupils and community.

The major trends of the findings of the present study can be summarised as under :

- (i) The teachers, pupils and the community perceive the teachers' role as more or less equally favourable, in case of a majority of dimensions.
- (ii) The perceptions of educational authorities regarding the role of the teacher as a change agent are comparatively less favourable than those of the teachers, pupils, and the community in at least five dimensions.

These trends are healthy in some aspects and a matter of concern in other aspects. The healthy trend is revealed in the identity of the perceptions of teachers and pupils, and teachers and the community. The perceptions of teachers and pupils are identical in all the dimensions except those of customs and taboos, and use of science. Again the perceptions of the teachers and the community are identical in all the dimensions except that of population policy. Here also, community's views are rather more favourable. Such identity of perceptions augures well for teachers as that will provide a good climate for the teacher to act as a change agent. There will not be any serious resistance from the pupils and the community when the teachers will try to bring about change in these areas.

The matter of concern arises from the fact that by and large the perceptions of the authorities are consistently less favourable in all the areas compared to those of teachers and community in particular and to a considerable extent the pupils too. The authorities do not see eye to eye with the teachers as regards the role of teacher in literacy, customs and taboos, economic life of the society, making education more scientific, and social relations. They do not see eye to eye with the community as regards teacher role in literacy, customs and taboos, working for population policy, economic life of the society, making education more scientific, and social relations. Again they do not see eye to eye with pupils' views of the role of the teacher in literacy, customs and taboos, making education more scientific and social relations. This state of affairs provides a ground of tension in the socio-educational field.

With a gulf existing in the perceptions of the teacher and the educational authorities, there is a possibility of the teacher morale being affected. It is a matter of grave concern as the educational authorities who are responsible to build up a body of teachers with a high morale and a sense of dedication do not have comparatively a favourable perception of the role of the teacher.

#### 5.1.0 Implications

One of the implications of the findings of the present study is for the colleges of education and specially the teacher educators. It is their responsibility that through the process of training they build up a better image of the teacher among the society, the pupils and specially the educational authorities.

It is only through an improved programme of teacher education that the teacher will develop still better perceptions of their new roles as a change agent which would enable them to function as catalytic agents, bringing about desirable changes in all walks of social and economic life. This should further result into a definite change in the perception of the authority regarding the teacher's role in the process of social change.

This investigation throws out two major issues of further research. They are (i) to study the causes for the less favourable perceptions of the educational authorities regarding the role of the teacher as an agent of change, (ii) to devise a better training programme that will further improve the teachers perceptions of their role as agents of social change.

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