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## **TEACHER MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON TEACHERS IN THREE DISTRICTS IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study explores the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers with the objectives to study the factors that related to the choice of their job and their job satisfaction. Population of the study involved the teachers in Sri Lanka and the target population of the study consisted of teachers in three districts in Northern Sri Lanka. A sample of one hundred and fifty teachers participated in a workshop was purposively selected for this study. A self-developed questionnaire, built up by reviewing related literature was used for data collection. Quantitative data collected through questionnaire survey was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed by categorizing and coding into emerging themes. Findings from the study revealed that, 79% of the teachers agreed that they selected teaching profession on their own choice. 82% of them involve in teaching with full satisfaction. However 29% of the teachers wanted to go to some other jobs. Further, the results of this study indicated that, teachers selected this profession as they preferred it, it is a permanent job and it has long holidays and less working hours. Among the teachers who involved in teaching with full satisfaction, 45% expressed that they loved it. Based on the findings, the study concluded that, teachers have motivation towards their profession. However, some of them felt that, they are not fully*

*satisfied with their job and wanted to get some other jobs. It is therefore recommended that teachers should be provided with relevant training and professional development opportunities, salary increase and respect and recognition to motivate them and to increase their job satisfaction.*

### **Keywords**

Teacher motivation, Job satisfaction, Northern Sri Lanka

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## **1. Introduction**

High quality education is emphasized as the key tool for the development of young citizens with the competences they need to adapt to the globalized society. Several inputs contribute to the quality of education, which in turn determines the quality of children's learning outcomes. However, the success and failure in achieving quality education lies primarily on teachers. Teachers play a vital role in ensuring high quality education. Nyakundi (2012) explains teacher motivation is the most important factor in the promotion of teaching and learning excellence. He further adds, motivated teachers are more likely to motivate students to learn and to ensure the implementation of education reform. Therefore quality of an educational system cannot outperform the quality of its teachers.

While teacher motivation is fundamental to the teaching and learning process, research studies show that many teachers in the developing countries are not highly motivated. According to Michaelowa (2002), several factors negatively influence teacher motivation and job satisfaction in developing countries. This should be taken seriously and an investigation into teachers' motivation and job satisfaction is therefore necessary to achieve the educational goals.

As a developing country, teachers are the key sources of knowledge and education in Sri Lanka. According to the general examination results, in the recent years educational achievements of students in northern Sri Lanka have been dramatically decreasing. According to the 2015 December General Certificate in Education (Ordinary Level) results, Northern Province was ranked last among the nine provinces in Sri Lanka. Further, only 60.38% of the students from Northern Province were eligible to follow Advanced Level classes. Several studies found that teacher motivation and job satisfaction play crucial role in the educational achievements of students. As education is considered as the tool for the

development of the northern Sri Lanka in the post war context, scant attention is needed to address the problems in the education sector. However, in the northern Sri Lankan context, research studies on teachers' motivation and job satisfaction are practically nil. Therefore the present study tries to explore the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers in three districts in northern Sri Lanka.

## **2. Literature Review**

Related literature on teacher motivation and job satisfaction both national and international were reviewed. Further, various theories were explored and the main factors that influence teacher motivation and job satisfaction were also examined. This review provides an overview of the trends in teacher motivation and job satisfaction.

A number of researchers, for the purpose of their studies have developed a working definition for teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Richardson (2014) defines teacher motivation as the internal and external factor that stimulate desire or energy in teaching to be continuously interested and committed to make their best effort to support students' learning goals. Whereas Guajardo (2011) describes motivation as the willingness, drive or desire to engage in good teaching. According to Gulnaz et al. (2015) the word "motivation" can be defined as the intrinsic and extrinsic drives or forces that determine focus, and direct behavior of the learners towards a specific target or goal.

Further, Nyakundi (2012) defines job satisfaction as the feeling by the employee towards the job they do with regard to conditions of work and the rewards accrued. Employees' satisfaction in their jobs is essential for the company which will prevent bad performance and huge losses.

Several studies found that teacher motivation and job satisfaction play vital roles in the success of teaching and learning process. According to Ololube (2005) teacher motivation and job satisfaction are not only crucial to the long term growth of any educational system but also very essential in the lives of teachers as they form the fundamental reason for working. Further, Nyakundi (2012) indicates that teacher motivation is the important factor for classroom effectiveness and school improvement. He argues that high levels of job dissatisfaction, stress and burn out negatively influence motivation and job performance.

Sharif& Nazir (2016) ascertain that different components and factors effecting employee's job satisfaction and found that, working environment, pay and promotion, job

security, and level of fairness have significant relationships with job satisfaction. They further extend Low job satisfaction of the employees' leads to lack of productivity, job stress, poor overall performance, and employee turnover rate. They suggest by giving good salaries and promotion opportunities, the performance of the organization, service quality and job satisfaction among employees can be increased

The review of empirical studies on teacher motivation in low income countries indicate that teacher motivation and job satisfaction is low and decreasing. Further, Arachchi and Edirisinghe (2011) emphasize that, motivation and satisfaction of teachers are vital to play their role in schools effectively and teachers directly influence by facilitating more than four million students in Sri Lankan government schools. They also found that most of the teachers in Sri Lanka were dissatisfied with lack of autonomy and job security. And some empirical evidences also showed that teachers' motivation and job satisfaction are declining in Sri Lanka. Therefore the present study was designed to explore motivation and job satisfaction of teachers in three districts in northern Sri Lanka.

### **3. Research Objectives**

The study was designed to address the following objectives.

1. To identify the factors that related to teachers for the choice of their profession
2. To examine teachers' satisfaction in relation to their job
3. To investigate the special objectives that teachers have in their job
4. To suggest ways to improve job satisfaction of teachers

### **4. Significance of the study**

The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Teachers are the key elements in the success of any educational system. Teachers' motivation and job satisfaction positively bear impact on their teaching and learning excellence. Therefore the significance of this study is to critically analyze the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers.

### **5. Methodology**

The study used a survey research design. This study involved the population of teachers in Sri Lanka. The target population was teachers in three districts namely Jaffna, Kilinochchi

and Mullaitivu in northern Sri Lanka. A total of 150 teachers including 100 from Jaffna District, 25 each from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts participated in a workshop were purposively selected for this study.

Researcher designed survey questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers. For the design of the questionnaire survey, the language used in the survey instrument was Tamil as Tamil is the mother tongue of the teachers in this study. Among the 150 questionnaires distributed 72 were returned.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire survey was analyzed using simple descriptive techniques such as frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data for the open ended questions were analyzed by coding and categorizing into emerging themes.

## 6. Results and Discussion

This part presents the findings of the study. A questionnaire survey was utilized to explore the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers. Data under three thematic areas were examined. Table 1 summarizes the back ground information of the teachers participated in the study.

**Table 1:** Back ground information of the teachers

		Districts						Total	
		Jaffna		Kilinochchi		Mullaitivu			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	Male	9	20	5	33	2	18	16	22
	Female	37	80	10	67	9	82	56	78
Age	21-25	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	1
	26-30	18	39	1	7	4	36	23	32
	31-35	18	39	5	33	2	18	25	35
	36-40	9	20	3	20	3	27	15	21
	41-45	0	0	6	40	1	9	7	10
	>45	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Experience	1- 5	19	41	4	27	5	45	28	39
	6- 10	18	39	5	33	4	36	27	38
	11- 15	8	17	5	33	1	9	14	19
	>15	1	2	1	7	1	9	3	4
Educational Qualifications	GCE (A/L)	0	0	6	40	5	45	11	15
	Degree	28	61	7	47	6	55	41	57
	Masters'	18	39	2	13	0	0	20	28

	degree								
	Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Field	Arts	25	54	11	73	5	45	41	57
	Commerce	18	39	0	0	0	0	18	25
	Science	1	2	2	13	4	36	7	10
	Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fine Arts	2	4	1	7	1	9	4	6
	ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	others	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	1
Professional qualifications	Trained	0	0	5	33	1	9	6	8
	Teaching Diploma	17	37	6	40	6	55	29	40
	PGDE	8	17	3	20	1	9	12	17
	Not obtained	21	46	1	7	3	27	25	35

From the sample selected for the study 46 teachers from Jaffna district, 15 teachers from Kilinochchi and 11 from Mullaitivu responded to the questionnaire survey. Among them 22% were male and 78% were female. 67% of them were more than 30 years age. At the same time 77% of them had less than 10 years teaching experience. More than 85% of teachers were graduates whereas 28% of them had Masters' qualifications. 57% of the teachers belong to Arts field, 25% from Commerce and only 10% belong to Science field. 35% of the teachers didn't have any professional qualifications. According to the data, the educational qualifications of most of the teachers in the sample are very high, however only 65% of them had professional qualifications.

Part II of the questionnaire survey deals with the factors related to teachers for the choice of teaching profession and their motivation towards teaching. The following table illustrates the findings.

**Table 2:** Factors related to the choice of the profession and motivation.

No	Item		Districts						Total	
			Jaffna		Kilinochchi		Mullaitivu		N	%
			N	%	N	%	N	%		
q9	Did you select teaching profession on your own choice?	Y	34	74	15	100	8	73	57	79
		N	12	26	-	-	3	27	15	21
q10	Did anybody pressurize you to select this profession?	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		N	46	100	15	100	11	100	72	100
q11	Do you want to go to any other profession?	Y	17	37	1	7	3	27	21	29
		N	29	63	14	93	8	73	51	71

q12	Did you get any other jobs?	Y	19	41	4	27	3	27	25	35
		N	27	59	11	73	8	73	47	65
q14	Are you involve in teaching with full satisfaction?	Y	40	81	10	62	9	82	59	82
		N	6	20	5	38	2	18	13	18
q34	Do you like yourself as a teacher	Y	44	95	13	87	10	90	70	97
		N	2	5	2	13	1	10	2	3
q32	Do you think you have a lot of abilities?	Y	46	100	13	87	11	100	70	97
		N	0	-	2	13	0	-	2	3
q37	Are you satisfied with your present performance?	Y	46	100	12	80	10	90	68	94
		N	0	-	3	20	1	-	4	6
q38	Have you self-confidence?	Y	46	100	14	93	11	100	71	98
		N	0	-	1	7	0	-	1	2
q33	Do you feel yourself better than others?	Y	46	100	10	67	11	100	67	93
		N	0	-	5	33	0	-	5	7

The findings in the above table indicates that, 79% of the respondents agreed that they selected teaching profession with their own choice. However 21% of them disagreed with this statement. On the other hand all of them stated nobody pressurized them to choose this profession. Surprisingly, 29% of the respondents indicated that teaching was not their most preferred profession and they wanted to go to some other profession. However, 35% of the respondents said that, they got some other jobs and left it and joined in teaching. Eight teachers responded to an open ended question regarding the reasons for choosing teaching profession. They stated the following reasons for their choice.

1. Preferred teaching career than their previous jobs
2. Teaching is a permanent job
3. Teaching has long holidays and less working hours comparing to other jobs.
4. Absorbed to teaching from their previous job.

However one teacher mentioned that, he never likes teaching, but continues in this profession as there were no choices for him.

81% of the teachers from Jaffna and 82% from Mullaitivu agreed that they involved in teaching with full satisfaction. However only 62% of teachers from Kilinochchi district accepted this statement.

Further, 97% of the teachers said that, they like themselves and they have lot of abilities. 94% of them stated that they are satisfied with their own performance, while 93% of them feel themselves better than others. 98% of the teachers are confident about themselves. This results revealed that teachers have good self-concepts.

Among the teachers selected for the study only forty teachers were responded to the open ended question on job satisfaction. Among them 13 were male and 27 were female. The following table explains the factors related to the job satisfaction of teachers.

**Table 3: Factors related to the job satisfaction of teachers**

Reasons for the satisfaction	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Loving teaching profession	1	8	17	63	18	45
Getting awards through improving students' achievement	9	68	1	4	10	25
Self-satisfaction	1	8	5	18	6	15
Like to teach students and to improve their lives	1	8	3	11	4	10
Feeling happy to be with students	1	8	1	4	2	5

Among the respondent teachers 82% indicated they involved in teaching with full satisfaction. They were asked to indicate the reasons for their satisfaction. From the above table it is clear that most (45%) of the teachers involved in teaching with full satisfaction because they loved it. Comparing to males, more female teachers stated that they loved teaching. 25% satisfied by getting awards through improving students' achievement. Most of the male teachers indicated this reason. Less than 15% stated that they involve in teaching for their self-satisfaction, to improve students' lives and for the happy to be with students.

For the open ended questions regarding the special objectives of teachers in their job, 69 teachers responded including 16 male and 53 female. Table 4 describes teachers' objectives towards their job.

**Table 4: Teachers' objectives in their jobs**

Teachers' objectives	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Like to be a good teacher	4	25	20	38	24	34
Developing good citizens	3	19	25	47	28	41
Create a good society	6	37	-	-	6	9
Teach students for the high achievement	-	-	8	15	8	12
My personal development in the field	3	19	-	-	3	4

Most of the teachers (41%) expressed that their objective in teaching is to develop good citizens. While 34% of them said they like to be a good teacher. Others stated that their aims



in teaching are to teach students for high achievement and to create good society. 4% of the teachers' objective is their personal development.

Teachers were asked to respond a question regarding their expectations to improve their job satisfaction. 42 teachers responded to the question and the following ways were suggested.

1. Conducting seminars and training workshops to update their knowledge and to learn new technologies.
2. Participating in the in-service professional development programmes and learning communities.
3. Increasing teachers' salary.
4. Motivating parents, society and other stakeholders to respect teachers and to value their service.
5. Transfer to nearby schools from the distant school.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study investigated the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers in three districts in Northern Sri Lanka. Most of the teachers selected teaching profession with their own choice. But, all of them not satisfied in their job. Some of them want to go to any other job. However, their self-concepts as teachers are seemed to be high. As teachers expressed their expectations to improve their job satisfaction, it is recommended that awareness should be raised among parents and other stakeholders to respect and recognize the status and importance of teachers in education. Further, Teachers should be provided with appropriate training and professional development opportunities.

## **8. Recommendations for further research**

Job satisfaction and motivation are very critical components in the performance of any institution. This study targeted only the teachers in northern Sri Lanka and used a small sample to examine the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers. This study has not investigated the impact of job satisfaction and motivation on teachers' performance and students' achievement. So, this study can be extended to other parts of the country. Further studies can be designed to explore the impact of teacher motivation and job on student achievement. Researchers could also explore the factors that influence teacher motivation and job satisfaction in Sri Lankan context.

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