

Professional ethics of secondary school teachers with special reference to rural urban dichotomy

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out the Professional ethics of teachers working in Government and Private schools of Kashmir Division. The study was descriptive in nature and was conducted over a sample of 800 rural and urban secondary school teachers. Whole sample was selected by using random sampling technique. For collection of data, the investigator has used Professional Ethics Scale developed by Mattoo, M. I. & Thoker, A. A. The data was subjected to statistical treatment by using percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and 't' test. Results revealed that locality has significant impact on level of professional ethics of teachers. However, urban School Teachers were found high level of Professional Ethics as compared to rural school teachers.

Keywords: professional ethics, secondary school teachers, type of locality, rural, urban dichotomy

Introduction

Obviously speaking, professional ethics means knowing what is good and what is bad in one's profession and subsequently doing only that what is good. The code of professional ethics may be defined as a set of self-imposed professional ideals & principles necessary for the attainment of professional excellence & self-satisfaction (Arora, & Chopra, 2004) [6]. Ethics deals with moral principles, which are usually accepted voluntarily by an individual or a group. The code of professional ethics may be defined as a set of self-imposed professional ideals and principles necessary for the attainment of professional excellence and professional efficacy. Professional ethics means an establishment made by professional organisations to help professionals in performing their job functions according to sound and consistent ethical principles (Centre for the Study of Professional Ethics, 2002). Professional ethics is a set of standards or codes or value system by which free human actions are determined as ultimately right or wrong, good or evil. A teacher's job is not easy unless high professional ethics is developed. It leads to moral consciousness which helps a teacher in the promotion of academic integrity and excellence amongst the learners. Professional ethics acts as a guiding principle in the teaching behaviour of the teacher. It provides moral obligation on part of the teacher to respect the basic principles of the profession. Professional ethics helps a teacher in the maintenance of transparency and confidentiality in the system of education. Professional ethics establishes mutual respect and trust in teaching and learning process through which students' confidence building measures may be enforced to its optimistic approach. Every profession considers the development and application of a Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct (PCEC) as a means of maintaining acceptable professional standards. As far as teaching profession, teachers are supposed to exhibit a high level of professionalism, responsibility, integrity, competence, character, respect and

honesty; so as to stand on their professional principles and such moral virtues are imperative for teachers.

The term professional ethics, is the combination of two words, "profession" and "ethics". "Professional" is a term which denotes a level of knowledge and skills possessed or required by an individual to perform an assignment through extensive education and training. Secondly, ethics means principles, morals, beliefs, values, moral code etc. The word "Ethics" is derived from the word "Ethos", which means character. In this way, Ethics is a science of character, habits of activity or behaviour of human beings. It evaluates human habits, character and voluntary determinations and discusses their property or otherwise. Ethics adds to the professional obligation that a profession abides by. In the words of Mackenzie (2010) [30], Ethics is be defined as the, "study of what is right or good in conduct". Any profession demands its worthy existence, acceptance and enforcement of code of ethics which in return makes the profession self-regulating, self-governing and self-satisfying. Professional ethics in teaching, being a multi-dimensional concept, includes four areas: a) Honesty and sincerity: It is considered a building block for establishing professional ethics in one's teaching profession. Respecting, integrating, honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, decency, punctuality, virtual approach etc. come under this dimension. While realizing the importance of professional ethics in teaching Douglass (1987) puts forth his views as, "the life of the nation gets rejuvenated and secured, if its teaching personnel are: honest, truthful, and virtuous". Professional ethics of teacher being the science of discrimination enforces that always teachers should associate their behaviour towards honesty and sincerity. b) Transparency and confidentiality: This dimension is a fundamental constituent for establishing professional ethics in one's profession. Professional ethics acts as the strong revolt against bias, discrimination, favouritism, prejudice etc. in one's teaching profession. Ethical consciousness and sense of

unbiased judgements are given important place in one's profession as far as this dimension is concerned. c) Respect towards student and society: Teaching being a tri-polar process which consists of teacher, student and society. Respect towards student and society should be given prime importance. Champa (2015) ^[14] identified few components in this regard : i) professional ethics, honesty, integrity, transparency, accountability, confidentiality, objectivity, respectfulness towards student and society, obedience to law, creative discipline, optimism, respect, trust, and impartiality etc. Professional ethics is said to treat other members of the profession in the same manner as they wish to be treated by themselves. So, it is the professional obligation of the teacher which take care of the uniqueness and the dignity of each learner. It ameliorates them from any kind of psycho-social complexity. Besides, the professional teacher shall nurtures students for lifelong respect and compassion towards him regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, social class, disability, religion, gender. d) High quality of teaching: The dream of modern education is to realize the aims of education through the means of high quality of teaching and learning process. Professional ethics acts as a runway through which teacher travels with the restoration of high quality teaching. Professional integrity and high quality of teaching are considered as the basic determinants of professional ethics. Teacher's professional ethics means a set of dignified principles put into practice by the teachers themselves.

Professional ethics is an attempt to provide direction and guidance to teaching personnel in the restoration of their dignity to ensure professional work. It is universally felt that like all other professions, the teaching profession should follow a code of professional ethics to ensure dignity and integrity. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 entrusts teachers with some onerous professional responsibilities to be internalized by them in the performance of their duties. Accordingly, it was considered necessary that the Code of Professional Ethics be evolved and adopted by the teaching community. According to Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics Ireland (2013) ^[24] professional ethics includes: a) *respect for the dignity of the person*, b) *professional responsibility and accountability*, c) *trust and confidentiality*, d) *quality of practice and e) collaboration with others*.

Significance of the study

In modern global village, scientific and technological developments are observed to be unimaginatively progressing. The character and conduct of the individual, society, teaching personnel and the students are at the lower ebb with some unpleasant situations reported in major parts of our country. Besides, reports of molestation, racial discrimination, bribery, and favouritism are galore. Teaching personnel are required to help the society to control these unwarranted tendencies with their intellectual potentialities. This is possible if a code of professional ethics is evolved, enforced and practiced. Ethics basically is a science of discrimination between the right and the wrong. Conduct and character development should be considered an integral part of teaching profession. Since teachers are the makers of history who prepare the future responsible citizens of our country. The teachers of India

should resolve to adopt the professional ethics of day to day dealing with those entire concerned. To make the human relationship sacred, worthy, fruitful and productive, professional ethics are must. In our present society, there is violence, injustice, oppression and we witness more broken communities, to remove these social evils, responsibility lies on the shoulders of teachers. Professional ethics in teaching is the only effective medium through which we can achieve peace, justice, love through the process of reconciliation. Thus, the code of professional ethics for teachers provides a framework of principles to guide them in discharging their obligations towards students, parents, colleagues and community. Increased awareness of the ethical principles governing the teaching profession is essential to ensure 'professionalism' among teachers. In pursuance of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986), a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers (CPET) was jointly developed by National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the All India Federation of Primary and Secondary School Teachers Organizations. The preamble of the draft code of the professional ethics (2010) gives a professional obligation message in the field of education that teachers should integrate their professional behaviour with below mentioned qualities of professional ethics: i) recognizing that every child has a fundamental right to education of good quality, ii) recognizing that every child has an inherent potential and talent, iii) recognizing that education should be directed to the all-round development of the human personality, iv) recognizing the need for developing faith in the guiding principles of our polity, viz., democracy, social justice and secularism, v) recognizing the need to promote through education the concept of composite culture of India and a sense of national identity, vi) recognizing that teachers, being an integral part of the social milieu, share the needs and aspirations of the people, vii) recognizing the need to enhance self-esteem of teachers, viii) recognizing the need to organize teaching as a profession for which expert knowledge, specialized skills and dedication are pre-requisites, ix) recognizing that the community respect and support for the teachers are dependent on the teachers' professionalism, and x) recognizing the need for self-direction and self-discipline among the members of the teaching community. Thus to conclude from the above observations it is evident that level of consciousness in teaching profession is need of hour. Therefore, keeping this thing into consideration efforts have been made by the present researcher to study the research problem as:

Statement of the Problem

Professional Ethics of Secondary School Teachers with special reference to Rural Urban Dichotomy.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been formulated for the purpose of investigation:

- 1) To study and compare professional ethics of rural and urban school teachers on below mentioned dimensions:
 - a) honesty and sincerity,
 - b) transparency and confidentiality,
 - c) respect towards students and society and
 - d) high quality of teaching,

Hypothesis

Based upon the above mentioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) There is significant difference between professional ethics of rural and urban school teachers on below mentioned dimensions:
 - a) Honesty and sincerity,
 - b) Transparency and confidentiality,
 - c) Respect towards students and society and
 - d) High quality of teaching,

Operational definitions

Operational definitions of terms and variables are given as under:

- 1) **Professional ethics:** Professional ethics in the present study refers the set of scores obtained by the respondents on Professional ethics Scale developed by the Mattoo, M. I. and Thoker A. A.
- 2) **Secondary School Teachers:** Secondary school teachers in the present investigation refer to those teachers who are working at + 2 level (Higher Secondary schools level).
- 3) **Urban school teachers:** Urban school teachers in the present study refer those teachers who are working in secondary schools of Srinagar District.
- 4) **Rural school teachers:** Rural school teachers in the present study refer those teachers who are working in secondary schools of Rural Districts like Shopian, Anantnag, Pulwama and Kulgam.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study delimited to:

- a) The rural and urban teachers working in higher secondary schools and
- b) Five districts of the valley viz. Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam.

Methodology

For the present study descriptive survey method has been used by the investigator.

Sample

The sampling frame of the present study comprises a sample of 800 teachers working in Secondary Schools of Kashmir Valley. These teachers were drawn from five districts: Srinagar, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Kulgam. The teachers teaching in Srinagar District were considered as urban and remaining as rural. A random sampling technique was adopted to carry out the investigation. The age of the subjects was between 30 to 50 years.

Tools used

Professional ethics Scale developed by the Mattoo, M. I. and Thoker A. A. was used for data collection.

Statistical Techniques Employed

Information gathered was put to suitable statistical analysis by computing:

- Percentage,
- Mean, S.D. and
- Test of significance (t-test).

Analysis of data

The data was analysed into below mentioned captions:

- SET-I (Descriptive Analysis)
- SET-II (Comparative Analysis)

SET-I (Descriptive Analysis)

Table 1: Showing the Percent-wise distribution of Rural and Urban School Teachers on Various Levels of Professional Ethics.

Levels of Professional Ethics	UST		RST	
	N	%age	N	%age
Strongly Disagree	67	16.75	73	18.25
Disagree	70	17.5	86	21.5
Undecided	31	7.75	38	9.5
Agree	103	25.75	98	24.5
Strongly Agree	129	32.25	105	26.25
Total	400	100	400	100

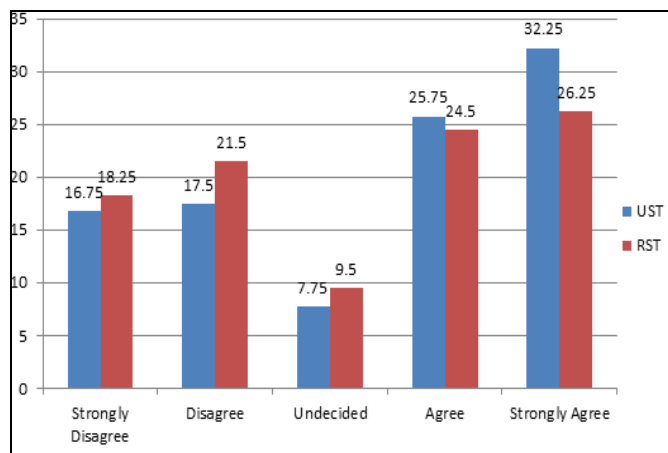


Fig 1: Comparison of Rural and Urban School Teachers on Various Levels of Professional Ethics.

Index: RST: Rural School Teachers
UST: Urban School Teachers

Table 2: Showing the Significance of Difference between the Mean Scores of Rural and Urban School Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics (N=400 each).

Dimensions of Professional Ethics	RST		UST		t-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
I Honesty and Sincerity	20.31	3.97	23.07	5.13	3.44**
II Transparency and Confidentiality	20.58	5.14	24.93	6.32	7.61**
III Respect Towards Students and Society	22.59	4.75	26.89	5.86	6.08**
IV High Quality of Teaching	22.15	3.73	25.22	5.31	9.43**
V Composite Score	85.66	12.01	99.98	16.51	14.01**

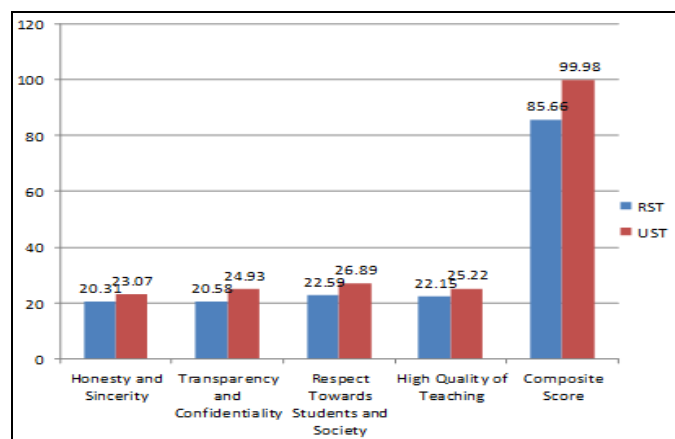


Fig 2: Comparison of Rural and Urban School Teachers on Various Dimensions of Professional Ethics.

Index: RST: Rural School Teachers

UST: Urban School Teachers

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

In order to find out the percent-wise classification (Refer Table 1, Fig. 1) of rural and urban school teachers on various levels of professional ethics, the results revealed 16.75% urban school teachers strongly in disagreement and 17.5% in disagreement towards their professional ethics. However, among urban school teachers, a small percentage, (7.75%) was found unable to decide their professional ethics. The table further reveals 25.75% urban school teachers in the level of agreement towards professional ethics. Majority (32.25%) of the urban school teachers were found strongly agreed to have their professional ethics. However, rural teachers 18.25% were found in strong disagreement and 21.5% in agreement towards their professional ethics. Moreover, 9.5% rural teachers were found unable to express their professional ethics. 24.5% rural teachers were found in the category of agreement with regard to their professional ethics. Among rural school teachers, majority of the respondents (26.25%) were found agreed to have their professional ethics. The comparative percent-wise distribution of two groups under discussion revealed that a significant percentage of urban school teachers were strongly inclined towards their professional ethics. Therefore, it can be said that locality (rural urban dichotomy) may influence the professional ethics of school teachers.

A fleeting look on Table 2 (Fig. 2) shows the mean comparison of rural and urban school teachers on various dimensions of professional ethics. The dimension wise reporting is given as under:

On the first dimension of professional ethics scale (*Honesty and Sincerity*) of rural and urban teachers, the results revealed urban teachers with high mean score on (M= 23.07) as compared to rural teachers; (M=20.31). The obtained 't' value has been found significant at 0.01 level of confidence ($t=3.44$). The mean difference seems to favour urban group of teachers. From these results it can be inferred that urban teachers have a favourable tendency to be honest and sincere as far as professional ethics is concerned. It is further reported, that urban teachers exhibited a high level of professional integrity as compared to rural ones. This may be attributed to

the fact that ethical consciousness among urban teachers seem to be higher with considerate consideration during teaching learning process.

With regard to second dimension i.e. *Transparency and Confidentiality*, the results revealed urban teachers with a mean score of 24.93 which seems to be higher than the mean score of the teachers belonging to rural schools (M=20.58). Both the groups were found to different from each other and difference was found significant at 0.01 level of confidence ($t= 7.61$). It can be inferred that urban school teachers may be more transparent and objective in their professional behaviour as compared to rural teachers. Further, it appears that urban teachers seem to demonstrate democratic attitude during teaching process. The effect of caste creed and religion has not been seen to intervene in the restoration of professional ethics among urban teachers.

While perusing the results given in the same table on *Respect towards Students and Society* of the professional ethics scale, the mean score (M=26.89) of urban school teachers was observed to be higher than the mean score of rural teachers (M=22.59). The calculated 't' value came out to be 6.08 which is statistically significant at 0.01 level of confidence. It can be concluded that urban teachers may be more conscious towards the stakeholders of education than the rural group of teachers. It was further revealed that, for enhancing their professional competence, urban teachers showed to respect the healthy suggestions and recommendation of the community members including policy makers.

Coming to the last dimension of professional ethics scale (*High Quality of Teaching*), urban teachers were found to have a higher mean score (M=22.15) than the teachers belonging to rural group (M= 22.15). The calculated 't' value has been observed to be 9.43 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. Thus, it may be said that urban school teachers remain successful in the maintenance of high quality of teaching as compared to rural teachers. It was further observed that urban teachers try to employ excessive and innovative techniques in their teaching process as compared to their comparable group (rural teachers).

In order to find out the overall comparison of rural and urban teachers on professional ethics scale, the mean score of urban teachers has been found to be higher (M=99.98) as compared to mean score of rural teachers. (M=85.86). It may, therefore, be said that urban teachers possess high level of professional ethics as compared to rural teachers. The operational 't' value came out to be 14.01 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. On the basis of the obtained results *honesty and sincerity, transparency and confidentiality, respect towards students and society and high quality of teaching*, urban teachers were seen to be dominant on professional ethics as compared to rural teachers. Therefore, it may be inferred that locality (rural urban dichotomy) has a significant effect on the professional ethics of teachers. The results may attribute to the facts that urban teachers have high level of professional integrity and ethical consciousness. In the light of the results reported above the hypothesis which reads as: "*There is significant difference between professional ethics of rural and urban higher secondary school teachers.*" stands retained. As it has been observed that is a significant difference between the two groups under discussion. The results are in line with

the findings of host of the researchers (Abhishek, Sarita, & Gopal, 2016; Dhinakaran & Sivakumar, 2014)^[2, 21, 22]. Abhishek, Sarita and Gopal (2016)^[2] revealed that regional background influences a person's ethical value. Teachers belonging to under developed areas might develop a wrong mind-set and an unprofessional attitude at the workplace due to lack of ethical values. Further, it was recommended that there is a dire need to inculcate ethical consciousness to under developed/ socially disadvantaged groups belonging to rural areas, backward areas, female groups. Dhinakaran & Sivakumar (2014)^[21, 22] found impact of locality as significant on cultural values, morality and professional ethics of teachers. The investigators further revealed urban teachers as high on morality and professional ethics as compared to rural teachers.

Conclusions of the study

The conclusions of the study are as under:

1. Percent- wise distribution revealed urban male teachers as high achievers on all levels of professional ethics as compared to female to teachers.
2. Urban teachers were found to have higher level of profession ethics as compared to rural teachers on all four dimensions of professional ethics on all dimensions of Professional ethics viz.
 - a) honesty and sincerity,
 - b) transparency and confidentiality,
 - c) respect towards student and society and
 - d) high quality of teaching.

Educational implications

The study enhancements towards the below mentioned implications:

- 1) In order to enhance the level of ethical consciousness at secondary school level, conferences and seminars should be organised.
- 2) Draft Code of professional ethics should frame at District level so that ethical awareness may reach in every corner of the state.
- 3) Value and moral education should be imparted at secondary school level. So that importance of values is realised to a great extent.
- 4) For the smooth establishment of effective administration and supervision in educational institutions, bond of agreement between Government and incumbents need to be made stronger.

Suggestions for Further Research

- 1) A comparative study on professional ethics is recommended to be conducted on teachers at various levels like: primary, secondary, college and university.
- 2) The present piece of research was confined on variables-professional ethics, in relation to type of school. Therefore, similar investigations are recommended to be carried out on the variable of demographic profiles, socio-economic status, length of service and marital status.
- 3) It is recommended to undertake co-relational studies on the variables of professional ethics, professional commitment and occupational self-efficacy by involving teachers regulated by different autonomous organizations.

- 4) The study may be conducted to find out the impact of various draft code of professional ethics on cross cultural based teaching.
- 5) Studies are suggested to be conducted on job satisfaction of teachers at different levels in relation to their professional ethics.

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