

Feminisation of the Teaching Profession and Patriarchy

Anusri Kundu^{1,*} and Anindya Basu²

*Department of Geography, Diamond Harbour Women's University,
Sarisha 743 368, West Bengal, India*

**Contact: 98363560907, *E-mail: anusri1509@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT School teaching has long been controlled by women wisely. This global phenomenon of gender-bias is interrelated with the status of women in society. The purpose of the study is to achieve a better insight about the prominent female domination in the school teaching profession catering aspects like interest level and job satisfaction. The study involves the teacher education institutions, and secondary and higher secondary schools in Kolkata city, and is based on both quantitative and qualitative methods involving purposive random sampling and snowball sampling. A perception survey along with a focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted for school teachers (n = 249) and B.Ed. college students (n = 318). The key findings are that there exists a strong relationship between teaching as a profession and the feminine role of female teachers. Unremunerative return and related low socio-economic status are the crucial factors in men not being fascinated with the teaching profession.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a service that provides opportunities to individuals for doing something with their own capabilities (Cumhur and Yarimsakalli 2021). And teachers are the ones who play a pivotal role in the society for developing its structure by providing education to the future of the country. Across time and space, women have significantly pursued teaching as a career. To develop as a teaching professional, one needs to imbibe characteristics of a true team player concentrating on service delivery (Lieberman 1956). Gradually, from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, a gradual change in the occupational preferences can be noticed, and certain careers like clerical jobs, bank telling and school teaching started accommodating women more into their realms (Reskin et al. 1990). The data from the last decade shows that economic and social changes accompanied the feminisation of teaching (Wallace 1996), as the scope for women in many other sectors was limited. He also stated that many women viewed teach-

ing job as an extension of motherhood and felt that they had a role in the public territory too through school teaching. According to Montecinos and Nielsen (1997), the teaching career is often not the first choice for males, while women have a tendency to choose the teaching profession rather earlier in their lives than the men do. Cushman (2005) investigated the reasons behind the presence of lesser number of male teachers in the school-level and uncovered four factors, namely, status associated, remuneration amount, working in an environment which is largely dominated by women and constant interaction with children. Few studies enlighten the course content, textbooks and teacher-pupil communications in academic milieus at schools including the aspects of gender bias and stereotypes (Arikan 2005), as there has been increasing feminisation of this profession to maintain balance of how more men can be drawn into this 'women's profession' have also been discussed (Bolton and Muzio 2008).

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

- ◆ To find out the difference between male and female students in terms of interest level towards the teaching profession.
- ◆ To examine whether gender equality is maintained while recruiting teachers in secondary schools.

**Address for correspondence:*

Anusri Kundu

Research Scholar,

Department of Geography,

Diamond Harbour Women's University,

Sarisha, 743 368, West Bengal, India

Postal Address: 235/5, S.K.B. Sarani,

Kolkata 700 030, West Bengal, India

Contact: 98363560907

E-mail: anusri1509@gmail.com

- ♦ To measure the difference between male and female teachers in terms of job satisfaction.

Review of Literature

Feminisation of the Teaching Profession

Urwick (1987) recommended that, for improving the standard of teaching profession, Nigerian leaders have to adequately involve qualified teachers in its teaching force. Though there is need of expanding the educational infrastructure, quality through better service delivery should not be compromised. Through learning resources and student teacher interactions the gender parity approach should be enforced continuously within and also outside of the four walls of classrooms (Skelton and Hanson 1989). Traditionally teaching has been seen as extremely gendered profession. The philosophy of 'Men are financial providers' formed not only public attitudes towards teachers, but also resulted in diverse salary for male and female employees (Adams 1990). But male teachers who teach in primary schools, generally are conspicuous due to their masculinity and also the parents are very concerned about their child's safety and security related issues, when male teachers are involved (Thornton 2001). Few studies observed how level of education and selection of profession has been affected by the cultural norms like caste, class, ethnicity, community and gender. These cultural features are also responsible in forming the attitudes of youngsters towards social interaction (Archer et al. 2001). It also reveals that females with high qualification are being attracted in glamorous professions with higher status while women from middle class background are interested in law or medical field which are labelled as upper class professions and at last the women coming from lower socio economic background are compelled to choose such professions like teaching which are currently underrated in modern society (Teresa et al. 2005). Bolton and Muzio (2008) argued that, in our society professions are categorised as either women's work or men's work on the basis of traditional cultural views around masculinity and femininity for maintaining the hierarchical structure of supremacy, patriarchy and male authority. All professions are not appropriate for women because of physical strength and traditional cus-

toms, and there are inadequate working choices for women caused by innate gender preference and societal restrictions, this kind of perception leads to feminisation of teaching. In their opinion teaching has always been dominated by women from all aspects be it from temporal lenses or by sheer numbers as the profession involves vocationalism, dedication and nurturance, all which are essentially 'women's work', drawing on the notion of the caring female. The stereotypical sexual division both in public and private spheres of life affects women's lives in the traditional male dominated society thus undermining their professional roles. He also argued that in case of primary school teaching, soft skills are more required than technical skills. Stereotypically, these soft skills are anticipated as an accepted aspect of being a woman and thus confining them as preschool and school teachers. In the field of education, the role of women is a very relevant area of study and developing countries are trying to find out the contribution of women including the challenges of educational growth, keeping in mind the quality and impartiality context. Historical analysis of such countries focused that, due to the inflow of female teachers into this noble profession, the aim of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and gender equality have been successfully accomplished. Around the world, progress of girl child education and adult women education is possible only for the involvement of women teachers, which ensure the vision of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) goals. In few countries, dearth in women teachers within the school education system has been recognised as one of the basic obstacles to gender parity in learning, and these countries are still suffering from the low female literacy rate, most specifically where girl child retention in school is concerned. The presence of female school teachers have strong connections, in promoting girl's education, so the matter of women teaching and the process of feminisation has a sincere impact on gender equality in society (Kelleher 2011). The study of female teachers in Rajasthan by Ramachandran et al. (2005) described that the focus and thrust on women teachers is still a very contemporary issue, but it had been in the limelight of the educational ground since the 19th century. In India, especially in conservative society, there are several constraints to

educate girl child, which are mainly controlled by caste and religious limitations. In this circumstances, higher education plays a crucial role which not only discourages biasness based on gender, faith, religion and social class, but also supports the understanding of societal norms, gives individuals self-reliance. Several governmental planning documents made repeated recommendations on the issue of female education and harped on the need to make conducive conditions for more women faculties.

Position of Female Teachers

Greenglass and Burke (1988) examine that female teachers often experienced more despair, and difficulties than male teachers in terms of role conflict, marital responsibilities, and lack of social support and thus it reflected inferences of gender roles for women and men. Lease (1999) explored work-related stress and strain in the female faculty community in his work and measured differences between male and female teachers in terms of professional stress and individual anxiety and examined the controlling factors too. Though there were not much significant differences, overwork and absence of surviving mechanism were significant predictors of stress measures. Sanders (2002) also considered that females are more unsurprisingly inclined towards caring for children than males are. Damiano-Teixeira (2006) in her study pointed out that women's role in their family and their contribution to the profession, these two kinds of situations are responsible for creating dilemma in women's attitude. The paper recommends that female teachers generally select their job on the basis of their household responsibilities and after getting a job, they are highly influenced by the stress coming from family and profession. Academic activities, and workload largely contribute to the stress level of female faculty (Manzano 2021).

Rationale of the Study

Becoming a teacher requires highly proficient skills and teacher education programs are set up specifically to help prospective teachers by familiarising them with various modern teaching methods, strategies and techniques. A professionally trained teacher can communicate with

students from different background and different psychological level with ease. The teacher training institutions, which are popularly known as B.Ed. colleges in India, prepare a student to work as a schoolteacher with a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. Interestingly, the number of female students is remarkably high in B.Ed. colleges in Kolkata. The reason behind this skewed distribution has not been studied much. Since women are seen as nurturers, the society in general feels safer to give the responsibility of moulding the youngsters to them and women on the other hand utilise their maternal instinct along with the gathered domain of knowledge.

Hypotheses

- H₁***: There is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of interest level in the teaching profession.
- H₂***: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of job recruitment.
- H₃***: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of job satisfaction.

Study Area

Kolkata, a metropolitan city has a population of 4,486,679 according to 2011 census and among all the metropolitan cities of India it ranks 5th. It has a density of 27,306 per sq.km. The sex ratio is 908 females per 1000 males (Census 2011), which is lower than the national average. As shown in Figure 1, Kolkata Municipal Corporation area has registered a growth rate of 4.1 percent. The literacy rate of the city population is 80.86 percent (Census 2011). This city has a large number of educational institutes, colleges, universities for higher education and different professional courses. There are 19 B.Ed. colleges in Kolkata, out of which 6 are government colleges, 6 government aided colleges and 7 are self-financed (entirely privatised) institutes.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The population for this study covers the students of teacher education institutions, that is, B.Ed. students and schoolteachers of Kolkata.

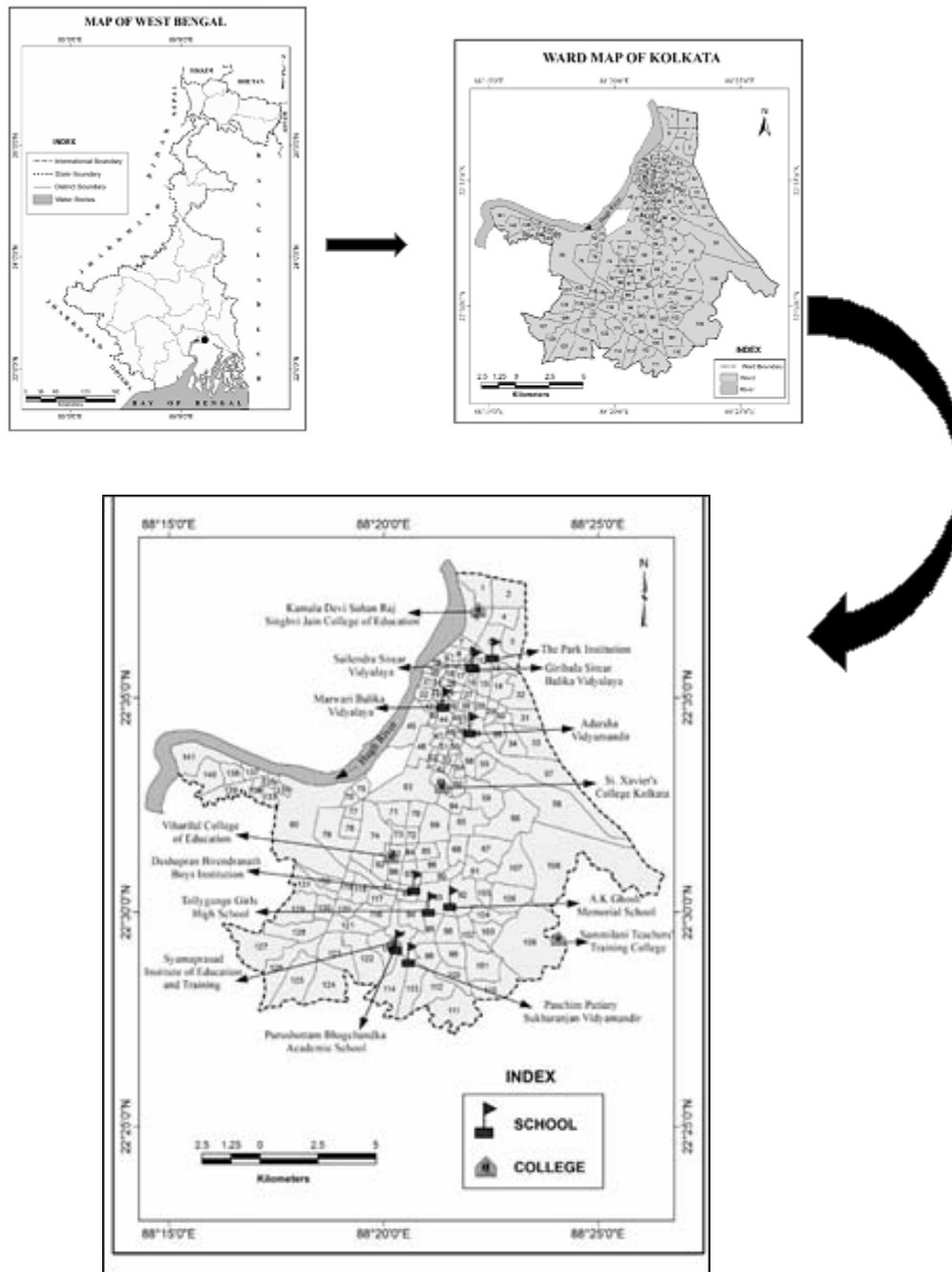


Fig.1. Location of the study area
 Source: NCTE, 2020 and NATMO 2020

Demographic variables of the students' respondents included their age and gender, while for the teachers' included their age, gender and year of experience. The population of this study comprises 1,900 B.Ed. students (NCTE 2020) and 5,190 schoolteachers (School Education Department, Government of West Bengal) in Kolkata.

Sample

As a sample for this study a smaller group was obtained from the population. A perception survey was conducted involving schoolteachers ($n = 358$) and students of B.Ed. colleges ($n = 318$). The desired sample size has been selected on the basis of the following formula (after Krejcie-Morgan) with a five percent margin of error.

$$\frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)/e^2}{1 + \left(\frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right)}$$

The survey covered 19 B.Ed. colleges and 23 schools following purposive random sampling and snowball sampling. The convenience sample size was 318 B.Ed. students and 358 schoolteachers. The majority of schoolteachers were between the ages of 30 to 46 years with few aberrations. The eldest and youngest respondents' age were 53 and 27 years, respectively. On the other hand, respondent students aged from 22 to 27 years.

Methods

The study adopted a mixed method including quantitative and qualitative methods, where the tools will be administered before and after the internship sessions. The primary data was collected by survey method. For qualitative methods the researchers considered Focused Group Discussions and an interview.

Tools of the Study

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared for different target groups, namely, students of B.Ed. colleges and schoolteachers. These questionnaires consisted of two sections. The first section requested for demographic data including the participant's gender and age. The second section of the questionnaire dealt with various aspects of the students' and teachers' perspective

regarding this B.Ed. course as well as the teaching profession itself. A standard five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neutral = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5) was constructed to get their views regarding feminisation and its resultant effect on the teaching profession, if any.

The aim of the focus group discussions was to bring out the teachers' take on gender distinction in teaching profession, involving the perspectives of teachers as well as B.Ed. students towards teaching profession. There are 7 participants in each group and the discussions continued near about 40 minutes. The views concerning were - teaching as a profession, gender balance in teaching, and factors affecting gendered recruitment.

Data Collection

For conducting the survey, at first, consent was taken from the head of the department of geography at the Diamond Harbour Women's University. Data was personally collected. Respondents were briefed regarding the importance and purpose of the study and why their opinions were important.

Data Analysis

After collecting all the data, quantitative derivations like ANOVA, t-test and representations using descriptive statistics were conducted using IBM SPSS version 23.0 and Microsoft Excel version 13.0. From the qualitative observations, the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis of the feminisation process of the school teaching profession was identified so that the future roadmap can be well charted by the concerned authorities.

RESULTS

In most of the B.Ed. colleges, students who are pursuing the B.Ed. course are predominantly females. It is clearly found that in the secondary sector of school education too, women teachers hold the majority of positions. As shown in Table 1, it is clear that that women are more inclined towards school teaching and the number of female teachers is also high than their counterparts in selected secondary schools of Kolkata.

Table 1: Nature of gender distribution of students and teachers in selected B.Ed. colleges and in selected secondary schools of Kolkata, respectively

<i>B.Ed. students</i>		<i>School teachers</i>	
<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
87	231	112	246
27.36%	72.64%	31.3%	68.71%

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

As highlighted in Table 2, a significant number of respondents stated that it was their childhood dream to be a schoolteacher and many said their educational qualification was suited for this job profile. Delving deep into this, one could easily point at the societal outlook and upbringing as the prime causes, for a female child the guardians mostly aspired for a school teaching career and accordingly moulded them.

Table 2: Major reasons cited by female students of B.Ed. colleges behind opting for the teaching course in Kolkata, India

<i>Childhood dream</i>	<i>Appropriate academic qualification</i>	<i>Suits individual nature</i>	<i>Balanced work-life culture</i>
47	63	24	97
20.26%	27.16%	10.78%	41.81%

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

From the primary survey it can be said that most of the women (who are already school teach-

ers) generally prefer the teaching profession because of it has a balanced work pattern, as shown in Table 3. Most of them opined that this profession helps them to balance their home and the workplace. The manageable teaching hours and formidable number of holidays help the women to find a balance between work and their family responsibilities.

As one has seen, with female students are leading the pack in B.Ed., a genuine concern rises to know the difference between male and female students in terms of interest level towards the teaching profession. For this purpose, a one-way ANOVA has been done to verify the first hypothesis, which states, "There is no significant difference between male and female students in terms of interest level in the teaching profession." As shown in Tables 4a and 4b, the Mean and Standard Deviation of male students are 1.44 and 0.25 and female students enrolled for B.Ed. programme were 1.79 and 0.16, respectively. The obtained F value is 41.08, which was higher than the F critical value of 3.87 at 0.05 level of confidence. So, a significant difference exists between the male and female students in terms of interest level in the teaching profession. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Influence of Gender Variation on Teachers' Recruitment in Secondary Schools

Teaching is recognised as worthiest profession for women, as it allows women teachers to

Table 3: Underlying reasons mentioned by female schoolteachers for selecting teaching as a profession in Kolkata, India

<i>Interesting and balanced work</i>	<i>Opportunity to be with children</i>	<i>Provision of long vacations</i>	<i>Bright career prospect</i>	<i>Attractive pay packet</i>
91	46	58	29	22
36.99%	18.69%	23.57%	11.78%	8.94%

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

Table 4a: Mean and standard deviation of students of B.Ed. colleges according to gender

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Interest level of male students	87	126	1.44	0.25
Interest level of female students	231	415	1.79	0.16

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

Table 4b: ANOVA results of difference between male and female students of B.Ed. colleges in terms of interest level in the teaching profession

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between groups	7.66	1	7.66	41.08	5.3E-10	3.87
Within groups	58.95	316	0.18			
Total	66.61	317				

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

balance between family, children and occupation, covers the family budget also. Hence girls are inspired to teaching profession in their career choices intentionally or unintentionally. Supporting this myth, a test of significance has been run here by the researcher to ascertain whether there is any difference in the teachers' recruitment in secondary schools in terms of gender sharing. The result of t-value (2.47) is higher than the table value at 0.05 level, as shown in Table 5. Thus, it is significant at 0.05 level. So, from this result one can clarify that gender variation has significant influence upon teachers' recruitment in secondary schools. There is no equality in secondary schools in terms of male and female teachers' recruitment.

Table 5: t-test result of difference among the gender groups in teachers' recruitment in secondary schools

Gender variation	No. of colleges	Mean X	SD calculated	t-value
Male teachers' recruitment	112	16.01	29.00	2.39
Female teachers' recruitment	246	19.69	16.08	

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February 2021

Status of Female Teachers: Focus Group Discussion

Focus group discussions delivered significant acumens into the way in which participant teachers shared their own opinion about the teaching profession. The highlights of each FGD in nutshell are as follows.

Secondary School Based Focus Groups

First School Group: The selected school is situated in a posh urban area with more than 1,000 pupils. This is an English medium private co-edu-

cational school and the school's catchment population mainly belongs to higher economic strata. Almost ninety percent teachers are female in this school. There are 5 women and 2 men in this group for in-depth discussions.

Second School Group: This school is situated in an urban area with about 500 students. This is a vernacular medium government co-education school. Most of the students of this school come from lower and lower middle economic class. The male to female ratio of teachers is nearly 50:50. There are 4 female and 3 male teachers in this group.

Teaching as a Career: Positive Views

In this discussion men and women teachers viewed teaching profession with a positive approach. They opined that teachers are the 'nation builders' and it is 'not a job', it is a 'social service' and they are doing a work, which is 'truly worthwhile'. Both teachers' groups endorse the following comments.

"I think as a working mother, teaching is the best career option I would say when it comes to the working hours in school, and when it comes to the holidays - that is advantageous. So that is a very favourable point for me and my family also." (High Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, female, aged 41 years)

"I am working in such a school where most of the students are first generation learners and for them, we are not just a teacher, but a guide moreover. I see the job as a responsible, prestigious one with high social status." (Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, female, aged 34 years)

A number of male teachers expressed their positive approach towards teaching too.

"I am working in this field for more than 10 years and I am quite satisfied with this profession. I am a total family man and this job suits me very

well.” (High Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, male, aged 43 years)

“I love my city and don’t want to go anywhere to look for a job, and since my working place is situated in my locality I am very satisfied. Moreover, I get lot of gratification to see that my known ones send their wards to me for knowledge impartation.” (High Secondary private schoolteacher, male, aged 30 years)

Status of Female Teachers

In the workplace most of the female teachers opined that there is little scope for them to take any decision regarding academic matters, as in this case most of the time the head of the managing committee takes the decisive role and who generally is a ‘man’.

“I think males are also drawn to the status thing as teaching profession is not that much high profile job as a doctor or a lawyer so it is less fascinating.” (Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, male, aged 32 years)

“Our pay and allowance are not adequate for a high standard of living. But for maintaining the balanced lifestyle I opted for this particular profession.” (High Secondary private schoolteacher, female, aged 29 years)

“School teaching suits women, as it is a job between breakfast and lunch time, for especially the primary sections, which does not affect their mothering role. It allows women to comfortably manage their domestic chores after school time.” (Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, male, aged 38 years)

“For me, pay scale, social security benefits and working conditions proved to be some of the most critical factors affecting my occupational status and self-esteem positively.” (High Secondary Government Sponsored schoolteacher, male, aged 40 years)

B.Ed. College Focus Group

First College Group: This college is situated in proper urban area having a very good communication network around. This is a government B.Ed. college with a student strength of 50 per semester, out of which near about seventy percent students are female.

Second College Group: This college is also located in proper urban area with good infrastruc-

ture. This is a self-financed B.Ed. college where out of 100 students more than ninety percent students are female.

Teaching as an Occupation

In this discussion male and female students gave their opinions regarding the teaching profession as a career option.

“Teaching profession is very close to my heart because I have grown up looking my mother as a teacher and I have seen how much love and respect she received throughout her carrier. This was possible only because of her way of teaching, her caring attitude towards her students. I just want to follow her path, and that is why I am here.” (Private B.Ed. college female student aged 26 years)

“I have chosen this course because I am a mediocre student and in higher secondary level my result was not very good, so I had to opt for a general degree course and following that path, today I am here. I like this course but in the real field how long I will sustain, don’t know.” (Private B.Ed. college male student aged 26 years)

Teaching Attracts More Women than Men

In the discussion, female members agreed that teaching as an occupation is opted for by most of the women. They opined that this is a trend in every B.Ed. college where female students are the dominating section.

“I believed that women are inspired by an inherent love of the work rather than an aspiration for progression. We were very happy when during our practice teaching stint we received so much innocent love and admiration from the youngsters. This kind of affection made my day and it gives a lot of encouragement to improve my teaching strategies every day.” (Government B.Ed. college female student aged 25 years)

“I think there are much more responsibilities on our shoulders than women. We have to settle at a certain age and lessen the burden of the parents. So for this kind of expectation we need speedy recruitment, which gives us sufficient amount of money to sustain. The teaching profession does not fulfil these requirements and the result shows in the male students’ strength.” (Private B.Ed. college male student aged 26 years)

On the basis of Likert scale, teachers' perception has been recorded and this is categorised as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree, as shown in Annexure 1. It indicates that most of the teachers considered that the teaching profession has the most balanced work life (mean = 4.10) and that is the prime reason for choosing this profession, whereas lack of regular promotional opportunities and low pay package of teachers are the deterrents (mean = 2.22).

Difference between Male and Female Teachers in Terms of Job Satisfaction

As one observes different views of school teachers and B.Ed. students regarding the school teaching profession, a sincere attempt has been made to know whether there is any difference between male and female teachers in terms of job satisfaction. For this purpose, t-test has been run to verify second hypothesis, which is, "There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of job satisfaction." The calculated t value (7.69) as presented in Table 6, was significant at 0.05 level. So, it can be said that there was a significant difference among those female and male teachers' job satisfaction that are already involved in this particular field.

Table 6: t-test result of difference between female and male teachers in terms of job satisfaction

Gender variation	No. of teachers	Mean X	SD Calculated	t-value
Female teachers	246	18.62	4.42	7.69
Male teachers	112	23.12	1.26	Significant

Source: Field study, December 2020 - February, 2021

DISCUSSION

The main findings of the study indicate that salary in most cases is not a significant factor behind selecting teaching as a profession for women teachers in Kolkata. Female B.Ed. students are also interested in the teacher education program because of long vacations and close association with children in the profession. As

Dillabough (1999) opined, teaching is considered as a more accepted occupation for women, still there is a fusion of teaching with motherhood. Thornton and Bricheno (2009) assert that socio-economic and political factors are jointly responsible for shaping and forming various career choices of men and women teachers both. Stacki (2002) states that a significant movement is required to achieve quality education and empowered women teachers who are very fond of gender equality can inspire the students specially girl students to access education. Whitehead (2002) explains that due to offensive nature of some male teachers with their students, an unreliable ambience has been made for those who actually want to work with children. In fact, in UK men are not selecting school teaching as a suitable profession. Moreover, men are not fascinated by this profession as low salary is a genuine concern of men more than women. Male graduates opt to go elsewhere with more promotional avenues (Miller et al. 2004). They found that girls are quite flexible about their career choices when they are in school but after leaving the school when it comes to subject choices for higher education, traditional thinking plays the major role. He also identified how academic counsellors also encourage the freshers to follow their outmoded thinking rather than to challenge the gender labelling (Riddell 2005). Harford (2020), and Marklund (2020) observed that teaching has been viewed as most suitable career for female. Heinz et al. (2021) identified family expectation as another significant factor for women selecting teaching as a career. Female teachers who are already in this job provide much importance to this balanced work culture, and majority of the B.Ed. students who are preparing themselves for entering this field have made their choice based on this particular reason. It ultimately reveals that since women have to undertake multiple responsibilities at a time, they are comfortable with the teaching profession with stipulated and flexible hours (Virtic et al. 2021). The traditional patriarchal gender structure is always in favour of men and prefer women to balance between familial and professional responsibilities, and finds the long vacations or limited working hours highly satisfactory in fulfilling their needs. As Drudy et al. (2005) noted, though there has been progress in women's access to education, still gender discrimination is more prominent in this field of the

teaching profession. Women prefer the profession because of the job security and flexibility which helps them to accomplish household works too. Proper training of teachers can help them to improve employment rate also (Ahmed 2021). In Sadaquat and Sheikh's view (2011), women have fewer job options due to gender bias in the third world society, and teaching is the only option, which provides them economic security within the domestic sphere. Dominant feminisation and low societal status are part of a vicious cycle as one influences the other (Thomas 2012). It is quite obvious to recognise the nature of motivation for choosing teaching as a profession because it affects teaching style and commitment to the profession (Watt et al. 2013). Female college students generally responded more positively towards the teaching profession than the male students (Giersch 2021). Skelton (2012) believed that to some extent women make their decisions regarding career, on the basis of their own insights, necessity and desire. In case of B.Ed. students, they also feel that female students are more inclined towards teaching profession than the male students and the result shows in the gender distribution pattern of students in teacher education institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that majority of the students of teacher education institutions has indicated constructive response towards the teaching profession, and specifically female students are in the prime focus of this study as a majority. Female B.Ed. students do have an interest in the teaching profession, as they think it provides a different socio-cultural and economic context, which is essential to them for increasing not only their socio-economic status but also through the stipulated working hours, handful of holidays and comparatively secured surroundings they shall find several ways to balance between work and family obligations. In spite of this, female schoolteachers opined that they have a biological predisposition towards teaching because children are involved and the salary and working environments were the most crucial factors found to be strongly linked to their occupational status and personal self-esteem. Having acknowledged this, there exists a multifaceted dichotomy within the matters that female dominated working ambience, relation with child handling and low salary are the foremost factors for

men, that they are not interested in the teaching profession. Women and men's gender roles are closely associated with this issue in society. This is the reason why there is a negative connotation in viewing school teaching particularly as 'women's work'. However, the findings revealed a significant difference between male and female students and teachers also in terms of interest level and overall perception towards teaching profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The teaching profession is one of the most prestigious professions in the society, as the teachers are providing a noble service to the society by educating the future generation. As a result, the teacher education programme should receive adequate importance for all the teaching aspirants regardless of gender. Despite the fact that balanced work culture and engagement with children are the two elements appealing women towards the profession, family support and social security are the crucial factors for why women choose this profession. As a result, family, society and all the stakeholders of education should be aware of the need of male teachers in the teaching profession for children's future and gender equity. To ensure this parity, the pay scale for teachers should be improvised, male teachers' involvement is required, and it is however needed to secure the child's protection and education from both female and male teachers. Family and society should encourage male students towards selecting teaching as a career. It is also important to find out the effectiveness of the B.Ed. course in terms of career prospects for both female and male students in the current scenario.

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