

THE ROLES AND PROBLEMS OF RETIRED TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED VILLAGES IN EASTERN SRI LANKA

¹Dr.S.M. Ayoob, ²Dr.I.L.M. Mahir

Abstract

Human society has evolved and run through the exchange of knowledge from one another. Therefore, it is believed that teaching is one of the most valuable professions in the world. Retirement of the teachers brings both positive and negative outcomes. And the retired teachers play significant roles in the society and on the other hand they face numerous problems too. In this regard, this study was carried out among retired teachers from selected villages in Ampara and Batticaloa districts. Primary data were collected mainly through questionnaire, focus group discussions, case studies and key informant interviews. The study identified that the retired teachers played immersive and immersive role by involving in enthusiastic activity, provide financial assistance, working with school development society, teaching. Further considerable amount of retired teachers takes the role of leadership and involve in literary activities. The study also identified the problems of retired teachers related with finance, school and society.

Keywords: Education, Pension, Problems, Retirement, Retired teachers

I. Introduction

Teaching is considered one of the most rewarding professions. It is a noble profession where most of the people enlightened through proper education and the knowledge is usually transferred to young minds through education. Human society has evolved and run through this exchange of knowledge from one another. Therefore, it is believed that teaching is one of the most valuable professions in the world. More successful futures and hope for betterment are only brought thorough proper education. Discriminations, disparities and marginalization are overcome through the equal education to all. Teachers are the second deity who bring the better individuals with intelligence and implement practical experiences of our future. Teachers help the young people to grasp their

¹ Head of Department of Sociology, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

² Department of Social Sciences, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

goals. Teachers are benefits to the society with intellectual motives. Along with the rewards and demands of the profession and services of the teachers, retirement of the teachers is also another important matter to be focused here.

The retirement after the work is obviously a common agenda in the working career. Retirement is considered as the time when one permanently leaves his or her job due to official or personal (Musila, Maithya and Masinde, 2019). It is impossible to work continuously until the death. Therefore, retirement is an unavoidable and the man should get rest in their last period of life and let the youngsters to get in the work force. Teaching is not only a valuable profession, but also a very unique and lifelong career opportunity. Teachers are very much sensitive and have close attachment with schools and students' education. They usually have the mentality of learning and teaching to others. After the retirement also, the retired teachers continue their career as a teacher and play significant and needed roles in the society. They are very helpful in the needed situations of youngsters. The retired teachers are also willingly engage and provide their best to the society. On the other hand, these retired teachers are having some problems related with their retired life who have gone for number of years on teaching. Along with the problems of ageing, retirement has also become another problem. This retirement has further fuelled the existing problems of fast-accelerating ageing population.

Studies have been conducted about the retired teachers and their challenges. Musila, Maithya and Masinde conducted a case study on 'Retirement Lived Challenges Experienced by Retirees' from teaching in 2019. This research analysed the challenges faced by the retired teachers in Makueni County (Kenya). The study identified that retired teachers have financial, health and social problems. The same researchers also (Musila, Maithya and Masinde) conducted another study on Social Construction of Retirement among Retired Teachers in 2019. They stressed through research that retirement is a time to engage in development activities and to endure suffering and social ridicule. They concluded that retirement is constructed either positively or negatively depending on if the retiree had planned for it and invested for the future (Musila, Maithya and Masinde, 2019). The research article of Osborne T.W., (2012) discusses about the psychological consequences of leaving the working life and the transition to retirement. The article of Kleiber and Linde (2014) explains the real nature of retirement by identifying its gains and losses. The writings of Undiyaundeye (2016) elaborates the psychological consequences of disengagement from a work world and the challenges of societal life. In this regards, this study focuses on the roles and problems of the retired teachers with special reference to selected villages in Eastern part of the Sri Lanka.

II. Research Methodology

This study was carried out among retired teachers from selected villages (Akkaraipattu, Sammanthurai, Karaitheevu, Kalmumai, Pandiruppu, Maruthamunai, Batticaloa, Katthankudy, Eravur, Valaichenai, Arayampathy and Kaluwanchikudy) in Ampara and Batticaloa districts of Sri Lanka.

Primary and secondary data were collected to conduct the study well. Secondary data were collected from Divisional Secretariat handbooks, government and private official records, NGOs records journal articles, published books online archives and other relevant documents. Primary data were collected mainly from

questionnaire survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. Following section describes the field research methodology of the study in detail.

A. Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions were the main data sources for the qualitative information gathering. Four focus group discussions were carried out with selected retired teachers in all selected villages.

B. Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interview is a useful qualitative method to generate subject specific information that may not available from secondary sources. For this study 11 key informants have been selected to gather qualitative data. Data gathered from key informants helped the researcher to understand the social network of senior citizens.

C. Household Questionnaire Survey

In order to collect some of the primary data and the individual information of retired teachers, a household survey has been carried out. For the survey a sample of 200 retired teachers were selected by snowball sampling. The sample is mainly focus male retired teachers. For the survey, a questionnaire has been used and it included questions related to roles and problems of retired teachers.

Case Studies

Case study method is a useful tool to collect more in-depth qualitative information. The case study provides an opportunity to understand the individual narratives of their life. In order to get uncovering personal experience, roles and problems of retired teachers three cases are included in this study.

Data analysis was done both manually and through computer software. Qualitative data from FGDs and Key informant interviews were analyzed manually and compared and contrasted through triangulation method.

III. Results and Discussions

Roles of Retired Teachers

The existence of society depends on education as it transmits the culture of the society to the new born child. Without education the community will stagnate in every field. There may be other material resources in society. There must be people who are qualified to use it for the benefit of the people.

The study identified that 25% of the retired teachers in the study area are involving in making their grandchildren as well the other children in the neighbourhood enthusiastic in education. The parents who were not keen in educating their offspring get awakened by the involvement of retired teachers in sending their children to get educated have also become enthusiastic in their children's education. Through being as enthusiastic retired teachers in the family, the grandchildren are more engaged and more willing to take part in the studies and more willing to discuss any problems or obstacles in their studies with retired teachers in the family. FGDs indicated that their grandchildren and other children in their street and neighbourhood are more committed to their studies and make the most of their time in searching new knowledge based on their studies. The retired teachers share and stress the importance and values of education to the future world of knowledge and technology among the

school children in the study area every time they meet. This role has become popular among the people of the study area too about educating everyone.

The study area includes number of families who are struggling with financial difficulties. These conditions are highly prevailing in village areas among Tamils and Muslims. The children find difficulties to go to school because of lack of stationary items. The daily wage labours of this area loosely concerned about their children's education due to their severe financial burden. In this respect 10% of the retired teachers help the poor and needy children to overcome the difficulties in schooling necessities. It is clear from the FGDs retired teachers helped the poor children to buy school necessities such as exercise books, pens, pencils and clothing. This is a great help to the poor children in the study area who will drop out of school without standard supplies. The retired teachers impart facilities such as free books, educational appliances as a mechanism to enable the younger generation to become valuable society members.

Retired teachers' involvement in teaching is inevitable in society. The knowledge and wisdom of them are precious and transferable in any means of way. The study indicates that 35% of the retired teachers in the study area are often involving in teaching school children. The FGDs and interviews pointed out that retired teachers not only teach their own grandchildren in improving their reading, writing, speaking and listening facilities but also they also help and give their support to the children in their neighbourhood as well as sometimes in the total area. The teaming of retired teachers and children provide a natural and effective combination which make the children to get easy understanding. Especially, the poor families are highly advantaged through this support. They not only cover the school syllabus but also provide historical knowledge about the relevant field of the study.

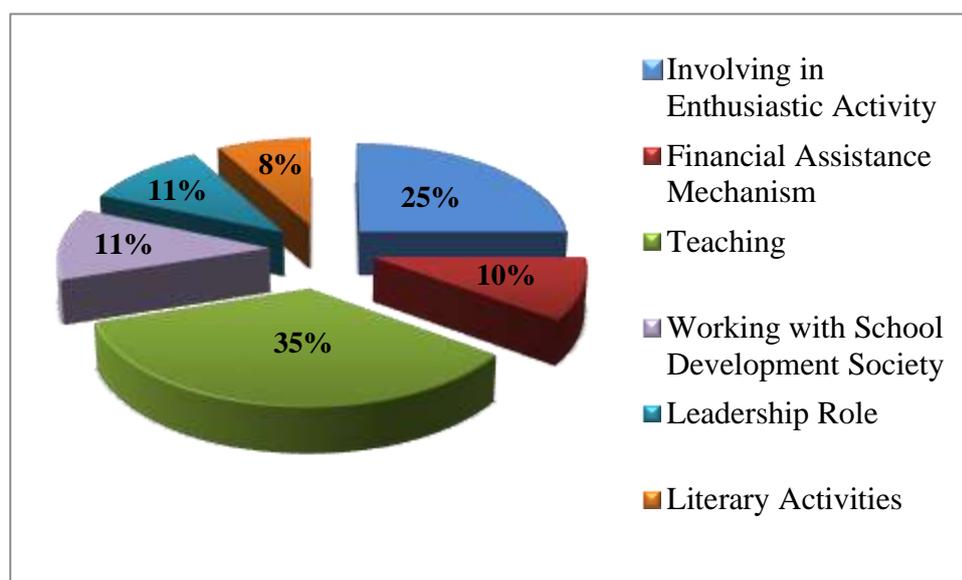
School development society is one of the most needed and successful organization for the development of school curricula and extra-curricular activities. Here, the retired teachers play an important role by making link through the School Development Society with the school and children's education. The retired teachers have enough knowledge and previous experiences to guide the young teachers and school administration staff. The study found out that 11.5% of the retired teachers work with School Development Society to enhance the educational standards of school and to increase the achievements of students. The retired teachers in the study area usually share their ideas and advices in the common meetings conducted by the School Development Society. The knowledge, experiences and pregnant ideas of the retired teachers have become strength to the school development. Arranging trips and field visits, holding functions, honouring the achievements of the students, conducting awareness programs on special issues are some of the activities of retired teachers here. As well as conducting awareness programs to uneducated and poor educated parents with School Development Society is the key activity of the retired teachers. Retired teachers also analyse the shortage prevailing in the school in every terms and they put their best effort to rectify the needs from relevant people and authorities.

The retired teachers in the society are mostly considered as the leaders of the younger generation. The younger generation follow the steps and advices of the elders. In this respects, the youngsters give more respect to the educated people in the society. So, the retired teachers often play the leadership role among the people with the help of the wisdom. The study found out that 10.5% of retired teachers in the study area serve as counsellors, advisory members, mediators and leaders and facilitating the followers to move forward in proper ways. They also give their support to the youngsters to guide them in proper way, especially, the religious based activities and

moral supportive activities. The disputes and different opinions are inevitable in the dynamic society. Therefore, the retired teachers serve as mediators and solve the problems in a decent and constructive ways. In this respect, the retired teachers who are well experienced, educated and unbiased engage in solving problems and conflicts among all the age category people in the study area without any financial motives.

Literature is an easy and wonderful way to attain peace of mind and contributing towards mental and physical relaxation. Literature reflects the life. A writer brings his life experience and difficulties in his writings. The study found out that 08% of the retired teachers involves in literary activities after the retirement. The retired teachers have constant contact with books, magazines and media assimilating their life experience to others through literary activities. Their knowledge and learning mentality encourage them to involve more in literary activities. Retired teachers take part in literary meeting and deliver speeches at such meeting. They able to answer the questions ask by the audience. This way time is fruitfully employed and they find immense satisfaction in their life. Retired teachers play many types of literary roles according to their capacity, physical fitness, financial entitlement and easy access.

Figure 01: Roles of Retired Teachers



Source:
Primary data, 2020

Problems Faced by the Retired Teachers

Problems are found in everywhere in the society today. It is difficult to find a person or a society without problems. Teachers are considered as respectable members in the society where the future generation is fully handed over to them. All the future leaders, working forces and younger generations are brought up and educated by the teachers. Education and educators are strength to the society where social development relies in it. Teachers serve as the pillars of the community construction since past. Almost all the teachers in the education system educate the younger generation until their retirement with good intention of uplifting the society. After the retirement, the life and living standard of some retired teachers become questionable and they face challenges in continuing their life due to multiple reasons. In this regard, this section focused and analysed on the problems faced by the retired teachers after their retirement in the study area as follows.

A. Financial related problems

The study found out that 78% of the retired teachers face problems related with finance. Most of the people try their best to cover the expenses within their total income, though they have found overlaps. All the teachers in the study area have not settled before their retirement. They found difficulties in order to tally the income versus expenses after the retirement. In this sense, the retired teachers found financial difficulties where they only get the pension. This situation has created financial crisis in the family. The respondents mentioned that they have family responsibilities which should be accomplished after their retirement too. As the breadwinner of the family, they have family responsibilities. They need to look after all the family members within that salary and the cost of living has been increasing every day in the country. The pension amount is not enough for them to cover all the expenses. The late marriages and child birth after the 30s among the educated people led to this situation of raising young children after their retirement. Providing education to the children is also required a considerable amount of money from the retired parents. The highly increased tuition fee of tertiary education is also become a burden to them.

The retired teachers also pointed out that they need to finish the housing construction for their daughters within the pension. The people of the study area have the custom of gifting well-constructed houses to their daughters for their wedding. Constructing a good house with all facilities attract well-educated and high profile groom to their daughter. Therefore, this situation of retirement has brought a difficult situation of allocating finance for the housing construction among the teachers. There is an unwritten law and a mentality prevail in the study community that the government workers mostly seek private medical care for treatment to them and their family members. This cost of medical treatment in the private clinics and hospitals is another burden to the retired teachers. Providing donations is another financial need among the retired teachers. The social well-wishers and the local people who live under the poverty line often find help from these retired teachers. In this situation, the teachers found difficulties without having enough money. Though, they donate what they have in their hand without hesitation because of their good will as well as to save the social reputation too. The following case study 01 portrays the actual situation of a retired teacher who faces financial problem after his retirement.

Case Study : 01

Mr. Abdul Saleem, age 61 is a retired teacher. He has 3 daughters and 2 sons. His two daughters were married and living in the house constructed by Mr. Abdul Saleem. He lives with his wife and other three children separately. Mr. Abdul Saleem's two sons are studying Advanced level and Ordinary level respectively. He retired 3 years before and his total family is running from his pension money now. Mr. Abdul Saleem was married in the age of 35 because he helped his father to construct a house for his own sister. Therefore, he failed to settle his own family and find financial stability before his retirement. Currently, Mr. Abdul Saleem is planning to construct another house for his third daughter Hazeeba, who is in her 20s. However, his income is not sufficient to do that task. He has fear about the construction of the house and he doubts the possibility of finding a good groom for his daughter. Mr. Abdul Saleem's family usually bought groceries from a near shop and settled the amount once he received the salary every month. However, the grocery owner now closed the account of Mr. Abdul Saleem because of his little income asked him to pay immediately once he or his family members buy the goods. Mr. Abdul Saleem is facing severe financial issue where his pension is insufficient to cover the cost of living such as food, education, medical needs and other at the moment.

B. School related Problems

As human beings, we are more attached with our usual living and working environment where we used to spend most of the time in both places. Teachers are sensitive and responsible people who have special attachment with the students' educational attainments, school based development and other school related works. The retired teachers worked for 05 days in a week in the schools and even they have engaged in other extra-curricular activities at the weekends too. Almost all the teachers who were included in the study mentioned that they have close connection and sentimental value in the school where they have taught. They treat the school as a space of sharing knowledge and experiences. This attachment and involvement prior to their retirement have become another problem for the retired teachers. Retired teachers have found that separating them from the school and school matters after the retirement is difficult. 85% of the respondents reported that they get ready and going along with their children every morning to the school. Passing their time after the retirement has become a huge task for the retired teachers and they become used to get up in the morning and get ready to the school every day.

The retired teachers have got a habit of involving in the curricula and extracurricular activities of the school after their retirement. This has become another issue in the study area. Especially, the retired teachers who served as the principal, vice-principal and sectional head of primary, secondary and tertiary school sections involve in the administration activities of the school under the name of members of School Development Society (SDC) after their retirement too. Even, some of them are visiting the Zonal Education Office and inquire the matters related with schools and complain and criticize about the current administrative system of the school. The case study 2 depicts the situation of a retired teacher who faces school related problems after the retirement as follows.

Case Study : 02

Mr. Jowfer is a retired principal who served as a teacher for 15 years and then served as a principal of the same school for 08 years. He has three children and two of them are still studying in the school. Mr. Jowfer is a very energetic and enthusiastic person in the area. He always seems to be very active not only in his young ages but in his old age. He is 62 years old now, though he looks like around 40 years old man. He concerns very much on social development and he has the habit of involving in the societal development activities, especially in education matters. After the retirement from teaching and principal service, Mr. Jowfer has the habit of getting ready early in the morning and going to school with his children every day. He usually go to school to drop his children after the retirement, however that is not the only reason. He is still interested to visit school every day and involves in school related activities and questions about administrative works and efficiency of the teachers and etc. The involvement of Mr. Jowfer in the school matters has become a problem to others. He considers that the current principal of the particular school is not working efficiently like him. Even he inquires about the cleanliness of the classroom and toilets in the schools. He strictly advices to the administrative officers of the school and even he made a complaint to the Zonal Director of the area too. This way of life of the retired teachers has become a serious issue here. Even Mrs. Jawfer is also facing some sort of hesitant towards the behavior of Mr. Jawfer. She not only needs to get up early to making breakfast and send her children but also her husband

after the retirement. The involvement of Mr. Jowfer in the school matters after the retirement has brought more problems here.

C. Social related problems

The retired teachers also face a kind of problem related with social relationship. These social related problems have become another weapon to destruct the life and happiness of the human society slowly. 87% of the respondents emphasized that they have some social related problems after their retirement. They had a good relationship among the family members, relatives, neighbours, area people, colleagues who worked together and the important people in the community. And they received prominence, priority and respect from everyone when they served as teachers. However, the retired teachers grumbled that they feel a decline in their social status and respect they have received while they were serving as teachers. The previous relationships, links and connections are weakened and they feel social distance after the retirement now. Degrading social status has become a common phenomenon among the retired teachers today. The teachers have all the powers and they actively engaged in all sort of activities in education and other social works. However, after the retirement this power and active engagement is slowly diminishing among the retired teachers. They started to feel powerlessness. And the teachers behave in a strict manner to control the students and teach the subjects with discipline. After the retirement, this strictness has no value among the known people and most of them are not in a position or ready to respect the each and every word of the retired teachers. This also become as a problem to them.

The retirement has brought the situation of remaining at home. This condition of being at home without work creates a mess and conflict environment in the family. The family members started to treat the retiree in a second hand position where they give priority to the other working and schooling members who go out. Small kind of abusive environment such as verbal abuse is prevailing towards the retired teachers in the families. This condition is also made the retired teachers to face neglectful behaviours from the family members and the society. Loneliness also paves a way to increase the problems among the retired teachers. This sort of social problems often led to the psychological problems which last longer and cause health related problems among retired teachers in future. The following case study 03 exposes the social related problems of a retired teacher.

Case Study : 03

Mr. Ravikumar is a retired teacher who lives with his wife and four children. He is usually a very strict man with kind heart. He is the eldest son in a big family of ten children and all the other siblings have obeyed his words and their partners also do the same. In the earlier days, the family members often discussed any matters with him even a simple thing. He also had a great respect from other teachers and students. He often gave advices and preached students and family members about world education as well as religious teaching too. He has a good reputation in his community. However, this situation has changed after his retirement. His own family members started to reduce the contacts of him and they only focus about their family matters. Mr. Ravikumar is a person who wishes to be with others and share the experiences and knowledge. After his retirement he is having a few contacts in his circle and he feels loneliness. Mostly, he stays alone in his room. His children and relatives have works to do and they do not often meet each other. Nowadays, Mr. Ravikumar is remaining in silence, reading books and listening to stereo to manage his time of the day. Even he visits beach for relaxation alone.

Mr. Ravikumar is started to talk alone without having a proper companion to share his views. Mrs.Ravikumar tries to company him, but it would not work effectively. Mr. Ravikumar mentioned that the retirement has made him as a disabled person like he lost one of his hands.

IV. Conclusion

Teaching is a noble profession and teachers are assets to the society with intellectual motives. Along with the rewards and demands of the profession and services of the teachers, retirement of teachers is also another important matter to be focused. After the retirement also, the retired teachers continue their career as mentors and play significant and needed roles in the society. On the other hand, retirement has also further fuelled the existing problems of ageing population. This study identified the roles and problems of the retired teachers. The study found that the retired teachers played immersive role in education sector by involving in enthusiastic activity, provide financial assistance, working with School Development Society, teaching the children. Considerable amount of retired teachers play the role of leadership and involve in literary activities. The study also identified the problems of retired teachers related with finance, school and society.

References

1. Musila, A. K., Maithya, J., & Masinde, H. (2019). Social Construction of Retirement among Retired Teachers in Makueni County. *International Journal of Research in Sociology and Anthropology (IJRSA)*, 5(3), 9-19.
2. Musila, A. K., Masinde, J., & Maithya, H. (2019). Retirement Lived Challenges Experienced by Retirees: The Case of Retired Teachers in Makueni County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 6(9), 17-26.
3. Undiyaundeye, Florence (2016, September). *Psychological issues and social adjustment in life after retirement*. Retrieved from
4. Giddens Anthony. (2005). *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
5. Haralambos, M., & Heald, R.M. (2004). *Sociology: Themes and perspectives*. London: Harper Collins Publishers Limited.
6. Kleiber, D.A. and Linde, B.D. (2014) The case for leisure education in preparation for retirement transition, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 32 (1),111-128.
7. Landis Paul, H. (1990). *Sociology: An introduction*. Massachusetts: Ginn and Company a Xerox Education Company.
8. Mohanthy. (1989). Retired governments servants and their problems of socio-psychological adjustment. In R.N. Pati, & Jena, B (eds.), *Aged in India*. New Delhi: Ashish Publication House.
9. Osborne, J. W. (2012). Psychological effects of the transition to retirement. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 46 (1), 45–58.
10. Rao Shankar. (2002). *Sociology: Primary principles*. New Delhi: S. Chand and Company Ltd.
11. Sharma, Y.K. (2007). *Indian society: Issues and problems*. Agra: Lakshmi: Narain Agarwal Publication.

12. Sullivan, T.J. (2016). *Introduction to social problems*. New York: Pearson.
13. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308293701_Psychological_Issues_and_Social_Adjustment_In_Life_After_Retirement