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Why become teachers? Case study of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo¹

Abstract

This study aimed to understand the reasons that encouraged student teachers who are following the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Degree at the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo to join the teaching profession. A purposive sample of thirty undergraduates were selected for study. Data gathering was done using semi-structured interviews. The reasons presented by the student teachers were categorized into intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons. Belief in one's personal characteristics as being suited for a career in teaching and personal interest were among the intrinsic reasons identified. Extrinsic reasons included reasons such as admiration for the physical appearance of teachers, social position attributed to teaching as a 'noble' profession, secured job with an adequate income, opportunities offered for career advancement and benefits for a balanced family life. Altruistic reasons were among the least mentioned reasons. Some participants mentioned a desire to contribute towards the wellbeing of children. The study also found that joining the B.Ed. programme with the sole intention of securing a job could lead to the recruitment of less suitable (though qualified) individuals to the profession. The findings of this study could be used to increase the quality of the process of producing and recruiting teachers.

Keywords: student teachers' expectations, undergraduate career

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Introduction

Teachers can be identified as the cornerstone of every society; they are one of the key factors that play an important role in the success of any educational institution. In the past, people were not trained to become teachers during the colonial period and in fact very few teachers remained in the profession for longer than five years (cf. Fraser, 2007). Teaching was basically seen as a stepping-stone to prepare men for white or blue-collar jobs and women for motherhood (Ingersoll, 2003). However, skill requirements for teachers have become more rigorous over time. Now, teacher education has become comprehensive academic programmes with internship placements.

Agarwal (1983) points out that teaching is essentially concerned with translating the objectives of education into action and practice. It is concerned with how best to bring about pupil learning by various activities. Effective teaching may be defined as the teacher's ability to stimulate students intellectually and move them emotionally to instill in them a love for learning and develop suitable skills and attitudes.

Sri Lankan teacher education is largely provided by the government training institutions along with few private teacher training institutions. According to the New Education Act for General Education (National Committee for the Formulation of a New Education Act for General Education, 2009) in Sri Lanka teacher training is seen as providing the relevant training and skills for individuals selected for the profession. Teacher education is also aimed at enabling teachers to acquire professional skills that include competence, performance and conduct. Despite the importance placed on the professional development of teachers, the social recognition once attributed to teachers has declined to some extent (Gorrell & Dharmadasa, 1994). However, the B.Ed. Degree, for which undergraduates are selected from among the students in their second year of study in the Faculty of Arts, is probably the most desired degree programme for specialization² by those entering the Faculty of Arts. Therefore, an understanding of why undergraduates desire to become teachers will be beneficial for improving the quality of the B.Ed. Degree programme and the process of recruiting teachers.

With this in mind, the current study intends to investigate the reasons outlined by student teachers for wanting to become teachers in the future. The findings of this study could be important to policies focusing on teacher education while contributing towards the improvement of the quality and

² The students are selected for specializing in a certain subject in their second year of study.

professionalism of teaching in Sri Lanka. Findings could also provide guidelines on how to make the teaching profession more attractive in such a way that it draws the most suitable people into it.

The paper opens with a discussion of some background information relevant to the study followed by a discussion on some key literature. The sample and methods adopted will be presented thereafter followed by a discussion of the key findings.

Background

The teacher's role is vital in the development of every society especially as they hold the responsibility of developing the future generations that would contribute to the labour force in the country. Every individual in the labour force has been taught (and may be influenced) by a teacher at some point in their life. Both teachers and parents live with the children for a long time and they are capable of imparting knowledge and skills that cannot be easily challenged by society (Sibanda, 2015).

A teacher can also be described as a professional who is able to deliver knowledge that will help learners develop, recognize and gain skills that will be used to face life's challenges. A teacher also offers the information, skills, and values that promote development. The educated person can easily secure employment as well as having life skills that will enable him/her to interact well in the society. As a result it is important to recognize teacher education as a specialized field that has the capacity to influence all other professions.

In Sri Lanka, a majority of teachers are qualified with either G.C.E. (Advanced Level)³ or a Bachelor's degree (Raju, 2017). Raju (2017) explains that national school teachers tend to be more academically qualified than provincial school teachers⁴. Majority of teachers undergo either in-service or pre-service teacher training. However, around 13% of the country's teachers have not received any training.

Teacher education is provided as a special degree programme in universities around the world with the intention of producing worthy educators to the teaching profession. University of Colombo in Sri Lanka is one state university that offers a special degree in education in the Faculty of Education. The mission of the Faculty of Education is to facilitate the development of committed professional educators with relevant knowledge, favorable attitudes and useful skills for teaching, research and service to the nation.

³ National level examination taken after 13 years of schooling. This examination determines university entrance.

⁴ Both national and provincial schools are government schools. National schools are governed by the central government while the provincial schools are governed by provincial governments. National schools also meet certain prestigious criteria.

These undergraduates will be appointed to government schools upon completion of their degree. As a result of this assured job opportunity, there is a significant competition among undergraduates in the Faculty of Arts to enter the Faculty of Education.

Literature Review

According to the professions public interest and competition policy of Australia, “a profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards. This group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and is recognized by the public as such. A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others” (The Professions Public Interest and Competition Policy, 2000: p.5). Teaching can be identified as a profession where the teacher as a trained professional practitioner gives knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to the students (Sibanda, 2015).

Existing studies show that teaching is viewed both as an attractive and unattractive profession in different cultural contexts where the expectations placed on and perceptions of the profession differ. Teaching has been identified as an unattractive career choice in the South African national school system due to many reasons (Sibanda, 2015). Furthermore, According to Cosser & Sehlola (2009 as cited in Sibanda, 2015) teaching as a profession in South Africa has been falling into disrepute for some years and as a result it has gradually lost its appeal. Motivation to join teaching has declined due to growing issues within the profession such as class size, workload that is not synchronized with the salary and other benefits. Lumadia (2008) also records that inadequate resources, a poor career path, HIV and AIDS pandemic, contractual employment, low remuneration, heavy workload and placement result in high turnover among teachers in South Africa.

Sibanda (2015) has also identified many motivational factors which student teachers consider before they join the profession. The most considered factor was the renowned social position attached to the profession as contributing to the maintenance of moral values giving teachers a certain social status. Furthermore, teachers are seen as receiving more holidays.

The renowned social position attributed to the teaching profession has been highlighted as a reason for wanting to join the profession in a study conducted by Weinstein (1989). Teaching is considered a career that gives one the opportunity to fulfill moral obligations towards society. Furthermore, teaching is considered a popular career choice based on pragmatic and developmental reasons such as income, security, self-identity and self-esteem (Weinstein, 1989).

In a study on career changers, i.e. those leaving the business world for a career in teaching, Crow et al. (1990) describe a group of individuals whom they call *homecomers*. The homecomers are a group that have been ‘dreaming’ of a career as a teacher. The dissatisfaction in their previous profession and a desire to engage in something ‘more fulfilling’ has encouraged them to pursue a career in teaching. A study done in Australia by Alexander et al. (1994) also shows that teaching is opted for by individuals because it is personally fulfilling, safe, and adequately paid in Australia. In another study by Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1997), they found five main reasons that motivated undergraduates in two universities (one in Cyprus and the other in USA) to pursue a career in teaching. These reasons were 1) variety of benefits, 2) internal motives, 3) status of the profession, 4) interpersonal influence and 5) academic ability. Among the variety of benefits identified by these student teachers were the job assurance provided immediately after graduation, job security and longer vacations. The researchers conclude that extrinsic factors seem to be highlighted in contexts where teaching is highly rewarded (Cyprus), while more intrinsic factors (e.g.: love of teaching) are emphasised in contexts where the extrinsic benefits were not so high (USA).

Another study by Mccray et al. (2002) shows the influence of sociocultural factors in pushing African-American women into the teaching profession. Among these socio-cultural factors are the influence of 1) their mothers, 2) other women in the community and 3) other woman teachers in the community. These three groups have managed to ensure that girls remain in education/school which later prompted these girls to seek a career in teaching.

All above factors can be categorized into three broader categories, namely extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic motives for choosing a career in teaching (Bergmark et al., 2018; Yaakub, 1990). According to Bergmark et al. (2018) and Yaakub (1990) *extrinsic* motives involve aspects not inherent in the immediate work, such as salary, status, and working conditions while *intrinsic* motives encompass inherent aspects, relating to the meaning of teaching and the passion for teaching, subject knowledge and expertise. *Altruistic* motives include perceptions of teaching as a valuable and important profession and the desire to support children’s development and to make a difference in society. It is claimed that intrinsic and altruistic reasons are commonly found in developed countries than in developing countries (Azman, 2013; Watt et al. 2012).

Methods of Data Collection

The current study was conducted using a sample of student teachers from the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Currently, the Faculty has a total of 318 undergraduates with 100 students being admitted

into the Faculty every year. Students who enter the Faculty of Arts and complete certain prerequisite during their First Year of study are able to apply for admission into the Faculty of Education from the Second Year onwards.

Study Sample

From among the 318 undergraduates enrolled in the Faculty of Education, 30 undergraduates were purposively selected for the study. Ten students from each year (i.e. 2nd, 3rd and 4th Years) were selected to the sample with at least one student from each year representing the three media of instruction (Sinhala, Tamil and English) in the Faculty.

Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interview method guided by a set of themes was used as the main data collection technique. Data was collected from each respondent individually. Even though data was gathered from students studying in all three media, data collection was done in either Sinhala or English due to researchers' inability to work in Tamil. Data was analyzed manually using the thematic analysis method.

Analysis and Discussion

Data obtained by way of semi-structured interviews have been analyzed under three main themes as mentioned by Bergmark et al. (2018) and Yaakub (1990), namely intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic reasons for desiring a career in teaching.

Intrinsic Reasons

The student teachers in the study sample identified several personal characteristics that a teacher is expected to possess in order to succeed in the profession. They also believed that they were 'worthy' of the teaching profession as they possess these characteristics that are essential to succeed in the profession. These characteristics are, 1) willingness and interest in teaching others; 2) communication and coordination abilities, and discipline; 3) patience; 4) equality, i.e. being fair and just; 5) intelligent with a pleasant personality; 6) a genuine concern about the wellbeing of children; and 7) willingness to engage in lifelong learning. The above is presented in order of importance as identified by the participants.

The list indicates the need for intrinsic motivation to succeed in the profession. The 'willingness' described above is an expression of passion or a love for teaching. In other words, some participants explained that becoming teachers would be meaningless without this characteristic.

"I wanted to become a teacher since I was a little child. I have the ability to explain or teach something to another in a creative an

interesting manner plus sharing my knowledge makes me happy that is why I chose teaching as a career” (Maduka⁵, 3rd Year student).

“I personally do not like a job which has the same routine where I’d be stuck at desk and a computer. I want to actively engage in something and be energetic at what I do. I think teaching needs that kind of energy and passion as it deals with children” (Naduni, 2nd Year student).

Fraser (2007) points out that teachers should be energetic to become successful in teaching. It is expected that they would evolve through experience as students of education. While completing a teacher preparation program, individuals are exposed to a variety of situations to practice teaching, but much of the learning for new teachers happens as they progress through the first few years of teaching on their own. This is highlighted in the last characteristic identified above, i.e. willingness to engage in life-long learning.

Personal interest is another intrinsic reason pointed out by the student teachers. Opting to become teachers appeared mostly to be a personal choices made by the participants. Many (57%) pointed out that they were interested in the profession for a long time and that it is this interest that motivated them to select the B.Ed. Degree.

“I wanted to become a teacher since I was schooling. I thought of joining a government teachers’ training college after my Advanced Level examination, however I passed the examination really well and everyone encouraged me to join university without wasting my opportunity. I was in a dilemma, however one of my teachers advised me to choose university of Colombo as it has a Faculty of Education” (Dharshani, 3rd Year student).

“I always wanted to be a teacher since I was a kid. I used to drape a saree around me and role play as a teacher. My goal was to earn a degree and then sit for the Sri Lanka teachers’ service examination; however in my First Year at the university I got to know about the B.Ed. programme and managed to get into it” (Seetha, 4th Year student).

Extrinsic Reasons

Several extrinsic reasons have been identified by the study sample. As pointed out by Sibanda (2015), physical appearance associated with certain professions is a significant extrinsic factor that can influence one’s career choice. For instance in a case study where students were asked why they opted for a certain career (such as lawyers, doctors etc.), many pointed out the physical appearance of those professionals instead of how much one could

⁵ Fictitious names with the actual study year is presented here. Comments made by participants have been translated into English by the researchers.

earn by engaging in that profession. These explanations included descriptions of how smart the doctors dress and their distinctive appearance that is visible because of their white coat. In the case of lawyers, their black suits were admired (Sibanda 2015). The same is true for some participants of the present study. They too pointed out a life-long admiration of teachers' appearance.

"I was willing to become a teacher since I was a little child. I always used to admire my teachers and their personality. They drape themselves in lovely sarees and are admired by the students" (Erandi, 3rd Year student).

"Both my parents were teachers, I also have several cousins who are teachers. Since my childhood I was drawn to their personality. Especially seeing how my mother used to go work wearing saree and the way teachers conduct themselves in front of the class seemed attractive to me" (Kavindya, 3rd Year student).

Albert Bandura's theory of social learning could be used to explain how one's choice of career may depend on observations associated with social interactions (Nabavi, 2014). The theory explains how children may imitate what they see. As in the case of the above examples, this desire to imitate one's parents or teachers could be a reason for any child to desire a certain profession.

Furthermore, the social position attributed to any profession gives a particular identity to those engaged in that profession (Sibanda, 2015). The 'nobility' of the teaching profession has been pointed out by the participants as a vital reason prompting their decision to opt for a career in teaching. The characteristics listed under intrinsic reasons also confirm the nobility of the teaching profession as identified by many previous authors (Sibanda, 2015; Weinstein, 1989). The sense of social responsibility attached to this 'noble' profession is clearly indicated in the characteristics patience, equality, concern for the wellbeing of children and willingness to engage in lifelong learning. The participants saw the teaching profession as giving individuals an esteemed social status because of these characteristics that are attributed to teachers. According to Richardson et al. (2005), as opposed to Alexander et al. (1994), Australians considered teaching as a low-end job due to feminization of teaching and certain problematic situations. However, to a larger extent Sri Lankans still seem to give teaching the noble position that it has held historically. According to Sibanda (2015), teachers take pride in being teachers and in establishing teaching as the noblest profession in society. In the Sri Lankan context (and may be in other Asian contexts to some extent), the teacher is seen as a person worthy of one's veneration and is considered second only to one's parents. The student teachers who were the participants

of the current study, also pointed out these factors pertaining to the ‘nobility’ of the teaching profession as reasons for desiring a career as a teacher.

“I didn’t have a fixed goal of becoming a teacher before coming to the university but when I got to know about the B.Ed. programme I felt like it’s a good career choice as normally people places the teaching profession in a very noble position in society. Though it has a considerably lower salary than other white collar jobs people tend to honour teachers” (Saduni, 3rd Year student).

“I had no goal, I felt lost when I was preparing for my Advanced Level examination. During this period I met this wonderful teacher who taught Sinhala Language. He was a life changer for me... I wanted to become a teacher like him and be a life changer for children such teachers will always live in the hearts of children” (Nirodha, 4th Year student).

“I think being a teacher is special, teachers have a huge responsibility in forming children into better individuals. Their way of teaching will determine whether a child will become a weak personality or a decent, caring individual. So the future generation depend on teachers, that’s why we call them Guru Devi comparing to gods” (Indunil, 2nd Year Student).

Material reasons such as a secured job opportunity and stable income are also identified as reasons for opting for teaching as a career (Sibanda, 2015). Among the several Faculties in the University of Colombo, the Faculty of Arts is the only Faculty that deals with a curriculum which is not oriented towards a particular job after completing a three-year or four-year degree. This, as pointed out by some participants, is probably the strongest reason for the high demand placed on the B.Ed. Degree. As it is, this is the only ‘promising’ job prospect available for Arts graduates. Consequently, most of the respondents (93%) in the study sample consider joining the Faculty of Education as an opportunity to secure a job. In fact, some respondents explained that the major reason for them to opt for a career in teaching is not merely interest but the doubt of whether they will be able to find another opportunity that would give them access to government service.

“I got to know about the B.Ed. programme during my First Year through seniors in the University, it was known as a very popular and competitive programme among the students as it has a secure permanent job opportunity which is pensionable job after graduation. Having a secure job opportunity is among one of the major reasons why I selected the B.Ed. programme” (Sachini, 3rd Year student).

“When I was doing my Advance Level examination my goal was to enter Faculty of Law in any university, however I couldn’t get the necessary Z-Score⁶ even though I took the exam three times. I was disappointed yet decided to enter Faculty of Arts university of Colombo then only I got to know about the B.Ed programme. I decided to join the B.Ed. programme as it has a secure government job at the end of the degree. And also teachers are well recognized in the society” (Sithmi, 3rd Year student).

Financial stability that comes with a secured job is another reason pointed out by the respondents. A job as a teacher is seen as a panacea for all the financial problems encountered by them as individuals and their families. Majority (93%) of the respondents in the sample are still financially dependent on their parents. A job as a teacher in the government sector with the assurance of a pension after retirement, gives them the much required financial stability. The basic pay scale for public school teachers fits within the country’s overall basic pay scale for public sector employees. It follows a single pay system, based on grade of service and years of service. In addition to basic pay, regular cash incentives include a flat-rate living adjustment allowance and, at times, a special allowance, but there is no incentive pay linked to the performance of the teacher (Ministry of Education, 2014).

However, according to Raju (2017) the current pay level for public school teachers in Sri Lanka appears to be low relative to other countries in South and Southeast Asia. Average public school teachers’ pay in Sri Lanka is equal to national income per capita. In contrast, in other South Asian countries, average public school teacher salaries are two to three times their respective national incomes per capita. As Raju (2017) points out, teachers’ pay is perceived as chronically and acutely low in Sri Lanka, and there have been many prompting constant calls for a substantial pay hike.

Some respondents in the study sample pointed out the possibility of engaging in private teaching (or private tuition as popularly known in Sri Lanka) for an additional income. Having a position as a government teacher essentially improves one’s recognition as a private tuition provider.

“Teaching has a lower salary compared to other professions, but teachers have the advantage of doing private tuition. Normally government school teachers are well recognized for tuition and demanded as they actively engage in paper marking for these exams. Since these exams are very competitive, tuition is considered as mandatory and having a government teacher who does paper marking

⁶ The Z-score is calculated by subtracting the raw mark of the subject by the mean mark of the subject, and then dividing by the standard deviation of the marks of the subject, which is used as the university entrance marks.

to teach is considered an advantage by students.” (Aruni, 4th Year student).

Another extrinsic reason considered by those joining the teaching profession, or any other profession for that matter, is the possibilities available for professional development (Sibanda, 2015). According to the respondents in the sample, B.Ed. graduates are placed in a higher grade of the teaching profession with a higher salary scale to that of other teachers coming into the profession with different qualifications. Therefore, these student teachers are placed at a higher position right at the beginning of their career. Furthermore, as B.Ed. graduates, they do not have to fulfill any other professional training requirements placed on other teachers. This puts them in an advantageous position as it gives them the opportunity of completing their postgraduate studies sooner than other teachers. Additionally, after completion of five years in service they are allowed to join education administrative services. These career advancement opportunities were highlighted by respondents as reasons for choosing a B.Ed. Degree and a career in teaching thereafter.

“Teaching is a well-recognized profession in the society, plus with the completion of B.Ed. degree we get a government teaching appointment to a National school⁷ in the province we are living... Most importantly B.Ed. graduates get their first appointment as a Grade 2-II teacher. Other teachers may take at least 3-4 years to get promoted from Grade 3-I to Grade 2. Plus they would also have to complete postgraduate diploma in education to be promoted” (Sakuni, 4th Year student).

“B.Ed. graduates get their first appointment as a Grade 2- II level teacher in Sri Lanka Teachers Service, which is a higher paid level compared to other entry level teachers. In addition after 5 years’ experience in the profession teachers get to join Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS) or Sri Lanka Teacher Educator’s Service (SLTES) through an exam. These positions are well recognized and well paid government positions” (Aruni, 3rd Year student).

Sociocultural reasons were also highlighted by the study sample as reasons for opting for a career in teaching. In Sri Lanka, there are some gender stereotypes that promote certain professions as more suited for women; teaching is one such profession (Kelleher et al., 2011). According to the latest statistics presented by the Ministry of Education (2018), a majority of teachers in the country are female. 99% of the study sample were also females. Some (40%) female respondents claimed that they were ‘indirectly forced’ into

⁷ A National school (Jathika Pasala) in Sri Lanka is a school that is funded and administered by the Ministry of Education of the central government as opposed to Provincial schools run by the local provincial government.

teaching by their families and/or future/marriage partners as they saw teaching as more suited for managing a family. Compared to other professionals, teachers are seen as having lesser working hours (from 7.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.) and more holidays.

“My father always encouraged me to be a teacher. He believes that teaching is a very well suited career for a girl and teachers are identified as good marriageable partners” (Thushari, 2nd Year Student).

“My Parents and my fiancé encouraged me to join the B.Ed. programme. Even my future mother-in-law said it’s better if I can join teaching as it has less number of working hours and more holidays” (Navoda, 3rd Year student).

“I personally think teaching is a very suitable job for a girl, with its less working hours it allows you to come home early. Especially after marriage it’s the woman’s responsibility to manage everything at home and with a different job it would be difficult to manage them well. My mother was a teacher I remember how she managed and spent quality time with us as a teacher” (Nimali, 2nd Year student).

This has been raised by Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1997) as a reason for opting for a career in teaching. As a results it is believed that teachers would have more time to spend with their families. Teaching is, therefore, seen as a wiser career choice for women as it would not hinder their other stereotypical gender responsibilities as mother or wife. All Muslim female respondents explained that their culture indirectly force them into teaching as they are to be soon married.

“Most of Tamil medium Muslim students in the Faculty of Arts come to University of Colombo with the intension of joining the B.Ed. programme. Most of our families are waiting to get us married or some are already married, so it is better to secure a job as soon as possible. B.Ed. in that sense seems like a good opportunity as it would provide a secure job and also free time compared to other professions” (Ashra, 3rd Year Student).

Altruistic Reasons

Altruistic reasons, compared to intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, were less commonly stated by the participants as the main reason for wanting to become teachers. They (27%) explained that their love for children and to work with them would make teaching an excellent career choice for them.

“I used to work as a Dhamma school (Sunday religious school) teacher for 4 years, I started doing it because I love working with kids.

I find it refreshing and energetic to be around children” (Amali, 2nd Year student).

“Teachers unlike any other professionals must have special emotional intelligence. Especially at times the teacher would have to play the role of a parent other than being teacher. To do that one must be emotionally sensitive, caring and more than anything should love to work with children” (Samadi, 3rd Year student).

However, as has been pointed out by Azman (2013) and Watt et al. (2012) about developing countries such as Sri Lanka, these reasons were not very commonly stated by the respondents. When stated, it seemed as if the respondents were highlighting altruistic reasons to prevent appearing as a “non-altruistic person” who chose a teaching career solely based on materialistic/ instrumental reasons. Furthermore, these reasons were always coupled with intrinsic or extrinsic reasons for wanting to become teachers.

According to Bastick (2000), in most of the developed metropolitan countries student teachers join teaching for altruistic reasons while in developing countries such as Zimbabwe and Jamaica individuals do so mostly for extrinsic reasons. These global trends are confirmed by the current study. However, it does not confirm the patterns observed by Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1997). Teaching is not seen entirely as a rewarding job even though extrinsic reasons dominate the scenario. In the case of Sri Lanka, the ‘noble’ social position attributed to teaching seems to be emphasised over its materialistic value resulting in the observed pattern.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons outlined by student teachers for desiring a career in teaching. A purposive sample of 30 students enrolled in the Bachelors of Education Degree in the Faculty of Education, University of Colombo were studied.

These student teachers highlighted mostly extrinsic reasons for desiring a career in teaching. Even though intrinsic and altruistic reasons were also mentioned, they were less common compared to extrinsic reasons. The findings confirm the most common worry among Arts graduates, i.e. the concern about employment after completing their degree. The student teachers, who have had their initial enrollment in the Faculty of Arts, claim that they opted for the B.Ed. Degree because of the job assurance it provided. All B.Ed. graduates were assured jobs as teachers in the government sector with a reasonable monthly income and a pension upon retirement. The added benefits of less working hours per day and longer periods of vacation allowed them to engage in extra income generation activities such as private tuition which makes it possible to improve income.

The emphasis placed on extrinsic reasons could be an indication of a 'less committed' caliber of teachers. Their interest is neither entirely generated out of a genuine interest in the profession (intrinsic) nor for the sake of developing the country by way of ensuring the wellbeing of children (altruistic). These findings suggest important implications for improving the B.Ed. Degree programme and other teacher training programmes. These training programmes must attempt to develop a sense of altruism in the student teachers in order to make the training useful for children and the country.

The findings also suggest a need for revisiting the recruitment criteria applicable for teachers. Instead of recruiting all individuals with the required qualifications, it is proposed that a more objective measure of identifying their motives be used in the process. The teaching profession and children are likely to benefit if teachers with at least some amount of altruism can be recruited. All extrinsic reasons identified in the study are in fact focusing exclusively on the benefits to the individual teacher (and his/her family).

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