

# Perceptions of Higher Secondary School Teachers of Mizoram on Their Levels of Empowerment on Decision Making and Professional Growth

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**Abstract:** - *This paper presents the findings of a study which attempted to find out the perceptions of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on the level of their empowerment on areas of decision making and professional growth. 400 higher secondary school teachers from selected 4 districts of Mizoram were taken as the sample for the study. The study found that majority of higher secondary school teachers perceived themselves as moderately empowered in decision making (91.25%) and professional growth (93.75%).*

**Keywords:** - *Perceptions, teacher empowerment, higher secondary school teachers*

## Introduction

For a very long time it has been understood that the role of a teacher is confined to classroom teaching and other activities related to teaching-learning within educational institutions. Teachers took up the task of teaching students the required courses and contents and also took active part in assessing and evaluating the performance of students throughout an academic year. However, with massive progress in society and developments taking place in different aspects of human life, the role of the teacher has increased to a very great extent which goes beyond classroom teaching and related activities. The many role that teachers are now expected to take up includes variety of responsibilities like curriculum planning, research and professional development. Besides this teachers are also expected to carry out task which is given to them from time to time by the government as well as the society. These responsibilities often put great pressure on teachers which sometimes hinders their own growth as teachers and also make them unsatisfied with their profession.

It is important that teacher feel satisfied with their profession so that they can cope with the increasing responsibilities given to them. Teachers can play a major role in bringing positive change and improvements to their students in particular and society in general, which can happen only when

They feel satisfied with their working conditions. Many teachers feel unsatisfied because they feel that they are not empowered enough to make their own decisions and that they are just a tool in the hands of authorities.

Teacher empowerment is a concept used to describe the process by which a professional educator can increase his/her enthusiasm, effectiveness and skill when it comes to transmitting information to students. An empowered teacher appreciates his/her role as an educator and feels that the job she/he does has real value. An empowered teacher will be confident in his/her subject-matter because of the works he/she has done to learn it himself/herself, thereby ensuring a higher degree of accuracy in students' work. An empowered teacher will also exude an aura of enthusiasm and love for the subject, which will rub off on students and inspire them to enjoy the learning process (Sable, S. & Gupta, M. 2012).

Empowerment is assigning responsibilities, authority and decision-making power to employees and holding them accountable for results. Empowering employees enhances their skills and performance. Heloisa Faragoso (2000) defines empowerment as enlargement of employees' jobs giving them the responsibility and authority to make

decisions about their work without supervisory approval while creating value for ultimate customers. The essence of empowerment is to release, rather than ignore or underutilize employees experience, initiative, knowledge, wisdom and vision. Employee performance is the major factor that leads to success and failure of business (Swain, S. K., & Harichandan, S. 2012).

## **The Two Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment Studied In the Present Study**

### **1. Decision Making:-**

This dimension of empowerment relates to the participation of teachers in critical decisions that directly affect their work. In many cases, this means participation in and responsibility for decision involving budgets, teacher selection, scheduling curriculum and other programmatic areas. Providing teachers with a significant role in school decision-making and is a key element in teacher empowerment. Teachers gain the opportunity to increase control over their work and environment. The kind of school climate that encourage involvement in decision-making is characterized by openness and risk taking. This environment encourage teachers to try new ideas and approaches.

### **2. Professional Growth**

Teacher's perception about the opportunities their school provides for them to grow and learn about their occupation defines professional growth. Many researchers have recognized teacher professional development as imperative (Coble, 2011; Terry, 1995; Tischler, 2004). According to Klecker and Loadman (1998) professional development refers to facilities that schools provide for teachers to increase their professional assets in an uninterrupted fashion, especially in terms of their teaching skills. They can develop their skills and learn more about the work via these professional development activities. In this respect, administrators can enhance teachers' effectiveness by supporting their professional development efforts (Short & Greer, 1997; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). By empowering teachers via these kinds of developmental activities, administrators can create more teacher leaders.

They can also prevent teachers' stress as well as identifying their needs and offering professional learning experience as administrators (NCCTQ, 2007)

### **Rationale of the Study:**

With the increasing responsibilities of the teachers and the demand imposed on them by the government and the society, it has become more important than before that teachers are satisfied with their profession and do not feel that they lack empowerment in different areas of their tasks. Teachers should be empowered with policy making governance and management within the system of education in which they play a major role they should be provided the right kind of conditions assistance and other incentives relative to their responsibilities. When teachers feel less empowered, they are likely to lose interest to grow and develop professionally as a teacher which can have negative impact on their students as well as the society. Therefore, it is essential that teachers' perception about their own empowerment is studied and understood to create a conducive educational environment for the benefit of all the stakeholders.

Robertson and Tang (1995) reported that empowerment for teachers often depend on their commitment to professional growth. An increased commitment to professional growth often made teachers feel that the work they did has personal meaning. They explained that making a difference and having fulfillment in the area of teaching could be directly correlated to the amount of time spent in close contact with students (Robertson and Tang). By monitoring the personal growth of students, teachers often gained unique perspectives on student achievement based on student inquiry (Garden hour, 2008).

In Mizoram no studies has been done so far relating to teachers and their empowerment. The present study is the first attempt to find out the perceptions of teachers towards their own empowerment which is expected to throw light on the existence of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among teachers regarding their increased responsibilities.

**Objectives of the Study**

- I. To find out the perceptions of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on their levels of empowerment in decision making.
- II. To find out the perceptions of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on their levels of empowerment in professional growth.
- III. To compare the perception level of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on their levels of empowerment in decision making and professional growth.

**Tool used**

For collecting the necessary data, the researcher used self-developed ‘Questionnaire on perceptions of Teachers on their Empowerment.’

**Sample and population**

The population consisted of all teachers of higher secondary schools in Mizoram.

The study sample consisted of 400 higher secondary school teachers selected randomly using multi-stage stratified cluster sampling technique.

- I. 4 districts (Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai, and Mamit district) were selected
- II. Proportionate numbers of higher secondary schools in the selected districts were selected randomly
- III. Proportionate number of government and purely private schools were selected

**Findings**

**Perceptions of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on their empowerment in Decision Making**

**Table No. 1**

Sl. No	Level of Empowerment	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Highly Empowered	32	8
2	Moderately Empowered	365	91.25
3	Less Empowered	3	0.75
	Total	400	100

Table 1 shows that among the 400 respondents, 32 of them, which is 8 percent perceived themselves as highly empowered, 365 respondents, which is 91.25 percent perceived themselves as moderately empowered and only 3 respondent, i.e. 0.75 percent perceived themselves as less empowered.

**Perceptions of higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram on their empowerment in Professional growth**

**Table No. 2**

Sl. No	Level of Empowerment	No. of teachers	Percentage
1	Highly Empowered	23	5.75
2	Moderately Empowered	375	93.75
3	Less Empowered	2	0.5
	Total	400	100

Table 3 illustrates that among the 400 respondents, 23 of them, which is 5.75 percent perceived themselves as highly empowered, 375 respondents, which is 93.75 percent perceived themselves as moderately empowered and only 2 respondent, i.e. 0.5 percent perceived themselves as less empowered.

**Comparison of the perceptions of teachers on decision making and professional development dimension of empowerment among Higher Secondary School teachers of Mizoram**

**Table No. 3**

Level of Empowerment	Decision Making		Professional Growth	
	No. of teachers	%	No. of teachers	%
Highly Empowered	32	8	23	5.75
Moderately Empowered	365	91.25	375	93.75
Less Empowered	3	0.75	2	0.5
Total	400	100	400	100

The above table reveals that the percentage of teachers who perceived themselves as highly empowered is more in decision making than in professional growth whereas those who feel moderately empowered is more in professional growth than decision making. Those who feel less empowered in both dimensions are negligible with higher percentage in the dimension of decision making.

**Conclusion**

The findings of the present study reveals that majority of the higher secondary school teachers of Mizoram perceived themselves as moderately empowered in decision making (91.25%) and professional growth (93.75). The percentage of teachers who perceived themselves as less empowered is negligible. Majority of the teachers falling in the moderate level of empowerment is not satisfactory as everyone in any profession should feel satisfied and empowered enough to do justice to his profession. The low percentage of teachers who perceived themselves as highly empowered in decision making (8%) and professional growth (5.75%) is one issue that needs to be addressed so that all teachers feel satisfied with a profession which is so important for the growth of the nation.

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