

## **A Comparative Study of Progressive and Aggressive Teachers' Unions and Their Effects On Students' Achievements at Secondary School Level**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to analyze critically the two main categories of teachers' unions as progressive and aggressive teachers' unions and their positive and negative effects on students' achievements at secondary school level. The researcher therefore determined to find out the exact role of teachers' unions. All secondary school teachers of district Shangla were selected as population of the study while 100 teachers at SSC level from twenty high schools were chosen as sample of the study. For this purpose, simple random sampling technique was used. The main tool for the collection of data was a survey questionnaire. The findings based on the statistical calculations showed that there are two main categories of teachers' unions. Progressive unions play positive role for the progress of education system while aggressive unions play negative and destructive role in education system. Progressive teachers' unions work for the professional development of teachers, support teaching learning process and improve quality of education. On the other hand aggressive teachers' unions work for the increase of salary, promotion, better working condition and defend their unproductive members. All Teachers' unions may consider themselves as an integral part of the education system. They may perform their assigned duties and responsibilities honestly and sincerely.

**Keywords:** teachers' unions; categories; progressive; constructive; aggressive; destructive

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## **Introduction**

Teachers' unions are the important factors for the promotion or decline of education system. They are highly united and organized manpower which exert great influence on the whole education system. According to Moe (2001), it is a common belief that teachers' unions exert heavy influence upon the system of education positively as well as negatively. The main purpose of such unions is to gain great power by increasing their number to dominate over the system of education. By doing so, they will become able to demand high benefits and attractive salaries. According to Ungerleider (2003), teachers' unions protect their members, demand high benefits and defend teachers' rights. A famous journalist Brimelow (2003) also searched out that these teachers' unions expand the circle of their membership to strengthen their power. After becoming a powerful unit, they start to enlarge wages of their members and to demand favorable working conditions. They also create hurdles for authorities and administrators to gain their own benefits. On the other hand, teachers' unions push the overall system of education because they are the integral part of education system. They arrange seminars, workshops and refresher courses for the professional development of teachers' community. According to Vaillant (2005), many unions of teachers in all over the world have arranged their own network system for providing training facilities to their members. These co-Operative exchange systems work for standardization of education. Such associations bring reforms in the system.

Eric (2011) has discussed two different arguments related to unions. Supporters of unions argue that unions improve the quality, standard and value of teaching, therefore it is the integral part of the system. On the other hand the non-believers on unionism supported their own arguments. According to their opinion, these unions are responsible for the misuse of resources, so they are useless and destructive for the system. Eric used the two important words, progressive and aggressive, which became the two broad categories of teachers' unions.

## **Literature Review**

Various teachers' unions are working in the Khyber pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. They include, Wahdat-e-Asatiza, Tanzeem-e-Asatiza, All Pakistan Teachers' Associations (APTA), Higher Secondary School Teachers Association (HSSTA), All Teachers' Association (ATA), Malgari Ustazan, Secondary School Teachers' Associations(SSTA) and

Tanzeem-ul-Ulma etc. Similarly in district Shangla, the chapters of the said associations are functional. All these teachers' associations have their own motto. They have their own demands and their own purposes. Some of them work for their own interests while some of them work for the betterment of education system.

### **Various categories of Teachers' unions**

Teachers' Unions are of various categories and various levels. Villant (2005) categorized teachers' unions on the bases of negative and positive approaches. He pointed out that teachers' unions are both good and bad. Many of them are professional while some are traditional and protests-based. Some teachers' unions are classical and bring reforms in education system. They fight for true cause, improve professional skills of teachers and develop learning experiences of the students.

### **Teachers' unions; as welfare organizations**

According to the report of Eden Teachers (2012), most of the teachers' unions struggle for the welfare of teachers, students and education system. They generally provide opportunities for the development of education system and for the progress of educational facilities and opportunities for all the children of the society. According to Johnson (2004), teacher unions provide useful opportunities for students to achieve knowledge is a better way. They also distribute resources in a more effective and useful way to make teaching-learning process much easy.

### **Two broad divisions of Teachers' unions**

According to Masenya (2013), teachers' unions are divided in two broad divisions, progressive teachers' unions and aggressive unions. According to this concept, progressive kind of unionism always play positive role for the development of education system. They bring reforms and productivity, improve school management, encourage professional development of teachers and support learners. Such kind of unionism always works for the development of whole education system. This kind of unionism is really necessary for the development of community and nation. Contrary to this, Masenya explained the aggressive kind of unionism, which always creates problems for management, defends unproductive teachers, wastes precious time of the students, creates

conflicts with other unions' members and works for political parties or any other agency. Aggressive type of union usually proves very destructive for teachers, learners, schools and even for the whole community.

### **Teachers' unions; as a source of fringe benefits**

Most of the aggressive teachers' unions work for the betterment of their workers. They regularly demanding for the increase in salary, seek promotions, reducing working hours and wanting ease and other facilities. Podgursky (2003) explored that a great portion of teachers' unions successfully increase fringe benefits and upper status and pension facilities for their members. Similarly Lovenheim (2009) also highlighted that the foremost purpose of teachers' unions is to maximize the well-being of its members. For this purpose they demand higher wages, reducing working time and claiming higher facilities for their workers. Similarly Hannaway and Rotherham (2006) highlighted that teachers' unions are not much different than other unions. They also mend their own axe, means that they only work for their own benefits and don't care for the betterment of learners.

### **Teachers' unions; the defenders of teachers' rights**

Teachers have their own rights to live in the society with respect and dignity. They need attractive salary, job protection, promotion and other basic facilities. Sometimes they are unable to achieve their due rights in a legal manner. They need unity to raise a collective voice, to achieve their rights. In such situations teachers' unions play vital role to perform. Progressive unions always settle such situations by negotiations with authorities. They convince government by different ways to solve the problems peacefully. Aggressive unions generally solve their problems with the help of strikes, protests and conflicts, which prove very harmful for the department, government as well as for the teachers.

### **Rights and duties of teachers' unions**

The main purpose of teaching profession is to teach the student in a more effective way to achieve the fixed objectives, goals and aims of education. But some teachers and their unions generally ignore their aims and duties. They usually fight for their personal well-being. According to Rosenfeld (2010), the foremost duty of teachers is to perform all the

activities of classroom in a more effective way. They should restrict their activities to classrooms. But teachers engaged in unionism make a struggle for achieving their rights, status, dignity, personal ease and benefits. According to Wright and Gunderson (2008), teachers unions although design attractive salaries for teachers to attract qualified teachers and to hire them for teaching profession but they forget the fact that higher salaries affect quality of teaching negatively.

### **Teachers' unions; as educational reformers**

Progressive teachers' unions always bring reforms in education system to make it more affective and successful. Contrary to this progressive unions generally don't care for reforms and quality education because they are much concern with their rights and not with their duties. Carini (2002) argued that same teachers unions are harmful because they block educational reforms, raise the cost of education, and create disunity among teachers and damage relationships among the people of the community. They also make difficulties for authorities to remove unproductive teachers and to hire productive teachers instead. As a result, these unproductive teachers create hurdles in the field of education and affect learners' achievement badly. Carini (2002) also found that some teachers unions defend ineffective teachers from dismissal, degradation and transfer. Lieberman (1997) criticized that teachers unions sabotage educational reforms and education system.

### **Teachers' unions increase their membership**

According to Dagostino (2001), teachers' unions aggressively develop policies and compel authorities to provide them more facilities. They also demand more teaching staff to increase their membership but great number of teachers decreases the available resources of the school. Zwaagstra (2001) investigated that most teachers unions struggle for expanding their membership, favorable working hours and attractive salary. Powerful unions exert much pressure upon authorities to fulfill their demands. Therefore, all unions try to increase their number.

### **Teachers' unions work only for their own members**

According to a common observation, progressive teachers' unions work on merit bases to a great extent. They work for all teachers equally

with justice. On the other hand aggressive teachers' unions usually work for their own members only. According to Zengele (2013), south promote their loyalists to the key posts of the department. It exposes the negative aspects of the union. Unions generally work for their own members. They strongly recommend their own members for key posts for promotion, transfer and other useful activates.

### **Teachers' unions are responsible for students' achievement**

Teachers' unions can play vital role for the progress or decline of students' achievements. Progressive teachers' unions undertake the responsibility to direct students towards success, while aggressive unions do not care for such duties. According to Carini (2002), many unions are responsible for the decline of learners' achievement. They are also responsible for the increasing dropout rate of the learners. Similarly Masenya (2013) also found that unions are playing the game of politics with our children's' education. According to Kingdon and Muzammil (2008), here are some factors responsible for vitiating the environment of educational institutions. Among these factors, much responsible are teachers' unions and teacher politicians. They usually work for the welfare of political parties as they get benefits on return.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were given as below:

1. To find out various categories of teachers' unions at secondary school level.
2. To distinguish between progressive and aggressive teachers' unions at SSC level.
3. To indicate some useful suggestions for the betterment of teachers' unions at SSC level.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study was survey type and descriptive in nature. Required data was collected with the help of questionnaire from the targeted population. Research tool was administered personally, the collected data was

analyzed properly with the help of SPSS and the result was shown in percentage and mean score with the help of tables and graphs.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the study consisted of all secondary school teachers in District Shangla of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. 100 teachers of twenty high schools were chosen as sample of the study. For this purpose, simple random sampling technique was used.

### **Research Instrument**

The main tool for the collection of data was a survey questionnaire. For this purpose, a closed-ended questionnaire was designed for teachers to get responses.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS through percentage, mean value and standard deviation. It was also presented with the help of graph as shown in figure 1.

{(1) SA= Strongly agreed, (2) A= Agreed, (3) UD= Undecided, (4) DA= Disagreed, (5) SDA= Strongly disagreed}

Table 1  
*Summary of Responses of Teachers on Rating Scale*

S.No	Statements	S.A (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)	Mean	S.D
1	Teachers' unions are necessary for education system.	53	16	07	11	13	3.86	0.685
2	Teachers' unions are welfare organizations.	62	16	05	06	11	4.12	0.917
3	Progressive teachers' unions support teachers, students and community.	41	25	08	15	11	3.70	0.864
4	Aggressive teachers' unions are very useful.	18	05	06	19	52	2.14	0.178
5	Teachers' unions can easily achieve fringe benefits.	38	21	13	20	08	3.61	0.519
6	Unions' leaders generally ignore their school duties.	61	16	12	05	06	4.21	0.983
7	Teachers' unions do not pressurize authorities and department.	12	06	14	48	20	2.42	0.481
8	Progressive teachers' unions are necessary for education system.	42	22	13	17	06	3.77	0.629
9	Unions' leaders are very punctual in school duties.	18	12	11	31	28	2.61	0.579
10	All unions work hard to increase their membership.	51	16	09	13	11	3.83	0.697
11	Teachers' unions are responsible for students' achievement.	10	14	12	38	26	2.44	0.489
12	Unions defend the rights and dignity of teachers.	58	26	07	03	06	4.27	0.978



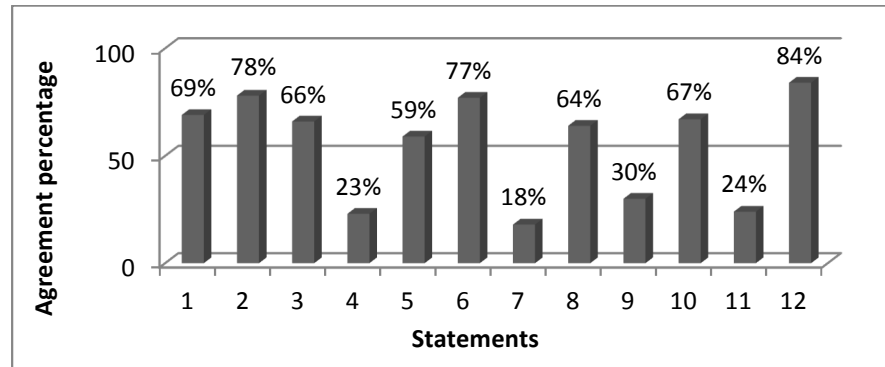


Figure 1: Percentage agreement of the respondents of the given statements (vertical bars)

## Results and Discussion

The analyzed data proved that there are two main categories of teachers' unions i-e the progressive and aggressive teachers' unions. Progressive teachers' unions play positive role in the system while aggressive teachers' unions play negative and destructive role in education system. The responses of the very first statement indicated that teachers' unions are necessary for education system. Out of 100 respondents 69% were agreed, 7% were undecided while only 24% were disagreed with the statement that all teachers' unions are necessary for the system. Mean value ( $M=3.86$ ) and standard deviation ( $0.685$ ) also supported the statement. Same results were drawn by Moe (2001) as he argued that teachers' unions improve the quality of education. Similarly, Masenya (2013) divided teachers' unions in two different groups as progressive and aggressive teachers' unions. Progressive or positive group of teachers' unions work for the development of education system. Aggressive or radical group of teachers' unions always work for the betterment of their own members. 78% of the respondents are agreed and only 17% are disagreed with the statement that most of the teachers' unions are welfare organizations. Mean score ( $M=4.12$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=0.917$ ) also supported the statement strongly.

The analyzed data also shows that Progressive teachers' unions support teachers, students and community because 66% respondents are agreed and only 26% are disagreed with the statement. The mean score ( $M=3.70$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=0.864$ ) also supported the statement. According to the Eden Teachers' Association's report (2012)

most of the associations work for the welfare of students, for the progress of education system and for the development of educational opportunities for all the children of the society. Majority of the respondents, (71%) are disagreed with the statement that aggressive teachers' unions are very useful. Only 23% are agreed with the same statement. The mean value which is 3.14 also not supported the same statement. It means that aggressive teachers' unions are harmful for education system.

Teachers' unions can easily achieve fringe benefits as indicated by the finding that 59% of the respondents are agreed, 13% are undecided while 28% are disagreed with the statement. Mean score 3.61, also supported the statement. Podgursky (2003) also showed that teacher unions effectively increasing fringe benefits, high status and pension facilities for their members. Rosenfeld (2010) also investigated that the foremost duty of teachers is to perform classroom activities in an effective way, but unfortunately, they have neglected their duties and making efforts for attractive salary, promotions, facilities and benefits. 77% of the respondents are agreed, 12% are undecided and only 11% are disagreed with the statement that teachers' unions' leaders neglect their duties in favor of union's activities. Mean score is 4.21 which highly supported the statement. 68% of the respondents are opposed the statement that teachers' unions do not pressurize authorities and department. Only 18% are agreed and 14% are undecided. Mean score is 2.42 which do not support the statement. So, the finding showed that most of the teachers' unions pressurize authorities and department. So, they produce hurdles for department and authorities. 64% of the respondents are agreed with the statement that professional teachers' unions are necessary for the productivity in education system. 23% are disagreed while 13% are undecided. (M= 3.77, SD=0.629) supported the statement. Only 30% of the respondents opted for agreed, 59% opted for disagreed and 11% were undecided with the statement that teachers' unions' leaders are very punctual in school duties. Mean score is 2.61 which shows the reality of the respondents. 67% of the student respondents opted for agreed, 24% opted for disagreed with the statement that teachers' unions work hard to increase their membership. Mean score is 3.83 which support the validity of the statement.

Only 24% of the respondents were agreed, 64% were disagreed and 12% were undecided with the statement that teachers' unions are responsible for students' achievement. Zwaagstra (2007) also investigated that teachers' unions work for expanding their membership, increase teachers' salaries and provide favorable working conditions. A large number of 84% of the respondents were in the opinion that teachers'

unions work for the right and dignity of teachers. Only 09% of the respondents were disagreed while 07% were undecided. (M= 4.27, SD=0.978) which highly supported the reliability of the statement.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The core findings of this survey indicated that there are various unions of teachers in district Shangla. Most of them are progressive unions while some are aggressive. Progressive unions always work for the betterment of education system. They brought reforms and modernization in the system. They have close collaboration with other stake holders for the development of teaching learning process. They are always useful because they create harmony among teachers, administrators and other stake holders. On the other hand aggressive teachers' unions generally work for the increase of salary, promotion, allowances, and better working conditions. They always defend their unproductive members from dismissal. They also create hurdles for authorities and administration.

Some recommendations were made on the basis of conclusion for the betterment of teachers' unions. Teachers' unions may consider themselves as an integral part of the education system. They may feel their actual responsibilities and duties. They may also perform their assigned duties honestly and sincerely. All the unions may combine in a single unit or single federation so that they may solve all their problems in a more effective and systematic way. Teachers' unions may adopt modern ways of solving their problems. They may avoid the old traditional ways like strikes and protests. Teachers' community may encourage progressive teachers' unions and discourage aggressive teachers' unions so that they may bring progress, reforms and modernization in the whole education system. Teachers' unions may arrange refresher courses, seminars, workshops and other necessary training facilities for teachers. It will keep teachers updated, so teachers will fulfill the needs of modern students in a better way. Union leaders may not work only for their own members but may work for all the teachers on merit bases with equality. Teachers unions may co-operate with authorities and department in solving the problems. They may not create hurdles for them.

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